
THESIS SUBMISSION

Experiences of History Teachers in Implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools

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Bloemfontein

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*Inspiring
excellence,
transforming
lives through
quality,
impact, and
care.*

DECLARATION

I, George Dangarembwa, hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**Experiences of History Teachers in Implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools**” is my original work. It has been independently written by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Chimbi.

I further declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis has not been previously submitted, in whole or in part for the award of any degree or qualification at this or any other institution of higher learning. All sources of information used have been duly acknowledged.

Signed

Date: 26.11.2025



DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Mr. Dangarembwa Michael, who passed away while pursuing his undergraduate degree in English at Africa University, Zimbabwe. His passion for education and unwavering belief in my potential inspired me to persevere. Completing this PhD is not only a personal achievement but also a fulfilment of the dream he so dearly cherished.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of History teachers in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The HBC was introduced as part of broader curriculum reforms aimed at promoting cultural identity, critical thinking, and national consciousness through heritage-centred learning. While the policy intentions were ambitious, little was known about how history teachers, the central agents of implementation, experienced and enacted the curriculum in their Form 3 classrooms. This study was grounded in the interpretivist paradigm and adopted a qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of History teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum. A multiple case study research design was employed to generate data from four purposively selected History teachers, representing a distinct case. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and classroom observations enabling methodological triangulation and enhancing the credibility of the findings. Thematic analysis was conducted, with Michael Fulani's Triple I theory (Initiation, Implementation and Institutionalisation) providing the analytical lens for illuminating the study and interpreting the findings.

The results revealed significant variations in history teachers' experiences of the HBC philosophy. Some demonstrated partial alignment with the policy vision, while others lacked clarity, reflecting gaps in professional development and conceptualisation of reform policy intentions. At the curriculum implementation level, teachers adopted diverse pedagogical strategies, often constrained by large class sizes, limited resources, and high-stakes examinations. These challenges fostered pragmatic adaptations and, at times, resistance. Conversely, resistance was found to be context-driven rather than attitudinal, rooted in structural barriers rather than unwillingness to embrace reform. At the attained level, teachers' experiences reflected these uneven practices, with examination performance often prioritised over heritage-based learning outcomes.

The study concludes that while the HBC holds potential to transform history education by fostering heritage consciousness and critical skills, its successful implementation remains undermined by systemic and contextual challenges. The

findings highlight the need for inclusive professional development, resource provision, assessment reform, and continuous policy monitoring using the Triple I framework. By foregrounding teachers' voices, this research contributes to the discourse on curriculum reform in Zimbabwe and provides insights for aligning policy aspirations with classroom realities.

Key words: Curriculum; Curriculum Reform Implementation; Heritage Based Curriculum; History Education; Teacher Experiences; Triple I Theory

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ACRONYMS

B. Ed	Bachelor of Education Degree
BUSE	Bindura University of Science Education
CA	Continuous Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CDTS	Curriculum Development and Technical Services
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
Dip.Ed.	Diploma in Education
DSI	District Schools Inspector
FET	Further Education and Training
GZU	Great Zimbabwe University
HBC	Heritage Based Curriculum
HOD	Head of Department
ICTs	Information Communication Technologies
M. Ed	Master of Education Degree
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
PBL	Projects-Based Learning
SA	Summative Assessment
SANRAL	South African National Roads Agency Limited
SBP	School-Based Projects
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Curriculum implementation is a complex and often contested process that demands sustained attention to the realities of classroom practice. This complexity arises from the dilemmas, anxieties, unfulfilled promises, tensions, resistance, and weariness that educators commonly experience. Research underscores that teachers play a pivotal role in the success or failure of curriculum reforms, which require significant shifts in beliefs, knowledge, and pedagogical practices (Bas & Sentürk, 2019; Frinnanger & Prøitz, 2024; Labaree, 2024; Marishane, 2014; Mathura, 2019; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021; Spillane et al., 2002). Education policies and programmes can only achieve their intended outcomes if teachers are able to translate them meaningfully into practice.

It is paradoxical that practitioners, including classroom teachers, may not have even realised that they are going against the creators' goals when they commit such acts of infidelity or failed to follow intended innovative recommendations (Cohen, 1990; Madondo, 2020; Spillane & Zeuli, 1999; Priestley & Drew, 2017). Typically, curriculum reformers and policy-makers lay out their requirements in writing, with little regard for the opinions of local actors or teachers. Implementation, or converting the written policy into practice, is where the difficulty lies. "Curriculum reform may not be successfully enacted if teachers' perceptions are not taken aboard when deciding novel ways to refine instructional practice" (Sengai & Mokhele, 2021:917).

Cuban, a renowned expert in education reform, has extensively explored the phenomenon of repeated reform efforts in the education sector. He poses the question, "Why do reforms return again and again?" (Cuban, 1990:3) and seeks to explain this recurring phenomenon by examining various examples of school reforms that have been introduced, abandoned and reintroduced again. A critical oversight in educational discourse is the pervasive nature of failure within schools, which remains unaddressed by reform initiatives. Despite, numerous efforts, schools reform programmes have yielded minimal successes (Cuban & Usban, 2003; Cuban, 2023; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Chimbi & Jita, 2021, 2023; Fullan, 2010; Fullan & Pomfret, 1977; Labaree, 2024; Herman, 2012; Murphy, 2020; Harris & Reynolds,

2018).

Zimbabwe is currently implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum. The Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) 2024-2030 is the official document outlining the curriculum reform aligned to the National Vision of Zimbabwe, of becoming an empowered and prosperous middle-income society by 2030 (MoPSE, 2024). It is also building on the strength of the preceding framework 2015-2022 and an adopting a Heritage-Based Curriculum. A Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) aims to foster deep appreciation for local histories, traditions, and cultural narratives, encouraging learners to engage meaningfully with their own identities and communities (Bondai & Muzira, 2020; Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Grever et al., 2012; MoPSE, 2024; Magwa, 2019; Pakombwele & Maphosa, 2023; Soinenen, 2017; UNESCO, 2013). This approach is vital in rural secondary schools where educational practices can be profoundly influenced by the unique socio-cultural landscapes that shape these environments.

Although history teachers are critical to translating this curriculum into practice, little research has examined how they experience, interpret, and respond to such reforms in rural secondary schools. Implementing the HBC in these contexts is likely to present unique challenges as well as opportunities, given the influence of diverse socio-cultural and material conditions. By acknowledging and exploring these challenges, I will obtain a deeper knowledge of the dynamics at play and establish more effective strategies for successful curriculum implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in Zimbabwean secondary schools. In an increasingly globalised world, the significance of local heritage and cultural identity has become paramount in education discourse, particularly within the field of history education.

This study delves into the experiences of history teachers in secondary schools as they navigate the implementation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum. Engaging teachers in critical dialogues about curriculum reform is essential for their professional development and for ensuring that reforms are responsive to classroom realities. By examining the triumphs, challenges, and adaptations of history teachers, this research aims to provide deeper insight into the complexities of integrating the Heritage-Based Curriculum in rural settings and to inform strategies that support effective, contextually relevant implementation. This thesis attempts to bridge critical gaps and pioneers new frontiers in research, theoretical discourse, policy formulation

and practical application. It highlights an emerging yet imperative demanding rigorous exploration, necessitating a reconceptualisation of research inquiries and the formulation of context sensitive theoretical frameworks to adequately capture the profound contextual diversity characterising global school history reforms.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Globally, curriculum reform and teachers' experiences have become a major focus among educational researchers and policymakers. A worldwide wave of curriculum reforms is underway across America, Europe, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. These efforts are driven by the need to re-design curricula in response to shifting societal, political, and technological demands (Gouëdard et al., 2020; Guerrero & Camargo-Abello, 2023; Korhonen et al., 2023; Tabulawa, 1999; Thelma & Phylis, 2020). Global trends indicate that countries are reviewing their curricular to meet changing societal demands so that students are furnished with information, services and aptitudes needed for the future. As societal expectations evolve, education systems are under pressure to equip learners with relevant skills and competencies for the future. Education is inherently purposeful and must continuously adapt to it so that humans can live meaningful lives (Fullan, 2015). Sahlberg (2007, 2018) aptly observes that nations renew their curricula because existing ones fall short of expectations, or because there is a belief that curriculum change will improve educational outcomes.

Despite these efforts, educational reforms often remain incomplete, giving rise to repeated reform cycles (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Cuban, 1990, 2023; Labaree, 2024; Murphy, 2020). A prominent trend has been the shift from content-based curricula towards competency-based, learner-centred approaches intended to promote skill development and critical thinking (Hipolite, 2019; Isaboke et al., 2021; Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Mugabo et al., 2021). However, this shift has frequently produced limited improvements in learning outcomes. Some researchers have concluded that implementing curriculum reforms is a complex process shaped by numerous factors, including teachers' anxieties, beliefs, preparedness, and tiresome experiences (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Dhlomo & Mawere, 2020; Fullan, 2015; Gouëdard et

al., 2020).

Evidence from high-income countries shows that reforms are often met with a mixture of scepticism, optimism, and resistance from teachers, who are central to successful implementation (Bradfield & Exley, 2020; Cohen & Ball, 2001; Labaree, 2024; Harris & Graham, 2019; OECD, 2019b). Persistent systemic challenges such as fast tracking of reforms, limited knowledge on policy, stages of concern, teachers sense-making of the reform policy, overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional time, inadequate teacher training, and unsuitable instructional materials frequently undermine reform efforts (Cuban, 2023; Harris & Graham, 2019; Johnson & Fitzmaurice, 2025; Murphy, 2020; Shin, 2020; Sung & Choi, 2022). For all of the reasons mentioned above, curriculum-reform efforts over the previous three or four decades have resulted in a lot of activity but little substantial change in the curriculum that teachers use in classrooms or the learning that students achieve in these classrooms. Studies across contexts-such as England, United States (US), Czech Republic, Ireland, Brazil, China, Bangladesh, and Cyprus-highlight that teachers' attitudes, understanding of policy, and perceptions of school environments all play critical roles in shaping how reforms unfold (Byrne & Prendergast, 2019; Costin & Pontual, 2020; Cuban, 2023, Harris & Graham, 2019; Johnson,& Fitzmaurice, 2025; Peskova et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2019; Wang, 2019; Xenofontos, 2019). Notably, successful initiatives often invest heavily in teacher training and support.

In Africa, many countries have pursued curriculum reforms, yet learning outcomes have not improved markedly (Cunningham, 2018; Khumalo, 2024; Isaboke et al., 2021). Research in South Africa, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Somalia, and other contexts has consistently identified barriers including inadequate funding, poor teacher preparation, ineffective assessment strategies, teacher shortages, and resistance to change (Bertram, 2019; Boadu et al., 2020; Hipolite, 2019; Khumalo, 2024; Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Nsengimana et al., 2023; Anjorin-Ojewole, 2023; Mohamed & Mohamud, 2024; Ndeshimona, 2024; Ugbede & Alyegba, 2025). Furthermore, reforms often exacerbate existing inequalities by privileging well-resourced schools, while marginalising underprivileged communities (Ngoben et al., 2023; Chimbi & Jita, 2023). Challenges such as overcrowded

classrooms, insufficient learning materials, and lack of infrastructure remain pervasive (Ndomondo et al., 2022; Katshuna & Shikalepo, 2023; Sithole et al., 2024).

In Zimbabwe, independence in 1980 ushered in a series of curriculum reforms intended to dismantle colonial legacies and align education with global standards. The 1999 Nziramasanga Commission underscored the need for curricular transformation (Matowo & Tenha, 2023; Ndongwe, 2025), leading to the introduction of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2015. However, the CBC faced significant implementation challenges, including inadequate consultation with teachers, lack of preparation, insufficient resources, and perceptions of top-down imposition (Banda, 2025; Chimbi & Jita, 2019, 2021, 2023; Chimbunde & Kgari-Masondo, 2021; Dhlomo & Mawere, 2020; Gasva et al., 2019). In 2024, the CBC was replaced by the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC), guided by the Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2024–2030 (Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; MoPSE, 2024; Ndongwe, 2025). This framework aims to promote heritage education, integrate technology, and strengthen learners' sense of identity and citizenship (Magwa, 2019; Gumbodete, 2024).

The Heritage-Based Curriculum has sparked mixed reactions. Some teachers have welcomed its emphasis on local heritage, while others have expressed scepticism about its compulsory focus on Zimbabwean history and the frequency of curriculum changes linked to political leadership transitions (Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Gumbodete, 2024). Despite the critical role teachers play in implementing reforms, existing research has focused predominantly on primary schools (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Dhlomo & Mawere, 2020; Gasva et al., 2019; Matowo & Tenha, 2023) or urban secondary schools (Chimbi, 2018; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021; Sithole et al., 2024). Limited attention has been given to rural secondary schools, where unique contextual challenges can shape curriculum enactment.

Accordingly, this study explores History teachers' experiences in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in rural Zimbabwean secondary schools. By documenting the challenges and opportunities these teachers encounter, the research seeks to generate insights that inform policy and practice, and to contribute

to broader global understandings of curriculum reform implementation. The main question regarding reforms posed by Cuban (1990:3) is partially addressed in this study: "Why do reforms return again and again?" By exploring how History teachers understood the Heritage-Based History curriculum reforms and the extent to which their interpretation of the policy affects or do not affect their instructional practices, it aims to contribute new information to the discussion surrounding the implementation of reform.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The process of implementing curriculum reform policies in History classrooms is intricate and has presented significant challenges in many countries including Zimbabwe. The pivotal role of teachers in implementing curriculum reforms has emerged as a global apprehension due to the multitude of failed reform endeavours in various nations (Bradfield & Exley, 2020; Chirwa et al., 2023; Plunkert, 2024). The Zimbabwean government adopted the HBC in May 2024 to replace the Competency-Based Curriculum, which was discredited as ineffective. The successful implementation of Zimbabwe's newly-introduced Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in secondary schools is threatened by the unresolved challenges of previous curriculum reforms. Zimbabwe's curriculum implementation efforts are faltering, despite having well-crafted policy documents to guide the process. As a result, some schools are opting to continue with out-dated curricula, while others are making adjustments to the new curriculum, highlighting the need for more effective implementation strategies. Education reforms exhibit a cyclical pattern, re-emerging in adapted forms over time. However, a striking phenomenon exists: most classroom-focused reforms fail to leave a lasting legacy, rarely transcending initial adoption to effect enduring change (Cuban, 1990, 2023; Tabulawa, 2013). Large school reform initiatives often stall after initial or partial implementation, ultimately becoming stagnant and targets for future reform efforts.

Expected changes in other aspects of the education system have not materialised, highlighting the need for a revised approach to curriculum reform. Going forward, future reforms must be informed by past experiences and lessons learned, building on the current state of the education system. A new curriculum on its own will not

transform learning. Studies conducted by Dhlomo and Mawere (2020), Chimbi and Jita (2023), Chimbunde and Kgari-Masondo (2021), Gasva et al. (2019), Madondo, (2021), Matowo and Tenha (2023) and Ngwenya (2020), in Zimbabwean schools, showed that the teachers criticised the CBC because it was ill-planned, imposed and fast-tracked. Prior studies published on curriculum reform policy implementation imply that implementation can be hindered by a myriad of factors within and outside the school system (Bryne & Prendergast, 2019; Fullan, 2015; Sithole et al., 2023; Vinervik, 2020).

The current study is concerned that the newly-introduced Heritage-Based Curriculum may encounter a similar fate because it has already sparked criticism from several stakeholders, with some teachers arguing that the Heritage-Based Curriculum was hurriedly introduced (Chatindo, 2025; Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Gumbodete, 2024; Ndongwe, 2025). There are a lot of disgruntlements among teachers over the newly-introduced HBC, which I feel are predominantly based on teachers' previous experiences with reform policy implementation. Gumbodete (2024) argues that the following questions have been raised by teachers: Is there a difference between the Competence-Based Curriculum and the new one? Which sections are changing and which are staying the same? Given that the previous campaign was stalled by the failure to address the resource question, how does the Minister plan to address it?

Despite a plethora of studies examining the experiences of History teachers in preceding curriculum implementations in Zimbabwe (Bentrovato & Moyo, 2025; Chimbi 2018; Chimbi & Jita, 2019, 2021, 2023; Chitate, 2019; Hlungwani, 2021; Moyo, 2014; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021), a significant lacuna exists in the literature regarding the pedagogical experiences of History teachers in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum. This knowledge gap has been primarily attributed to the novelty of the initiative, resulting in limited written documentation of teachers' experiences in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum. Furthermore, the scarcity or absence of studies on History teachers implementing previous curriculum reforms in the Hurungwe District, where this study was conducted, amplified the need for empirical research. The limited attention given to rural secondary school contexts in reform scholarship reveals a tension between universalising aspirations of SDG 4 and the uneven patterns of knowledge production within curriculum

studies. By examining History teachers' lived experiences in Hurungwe District, this study contributes to a more contextually grounded understanding of educational quality thereby advancing the equity and inclusion imperatives embedded within SDG4.

From my unique research perspective, this study constituted a pioneering effort in incorporating the voices and experiences of History teachers from Hurungwe District within the context of curriculum reform in Zimbabwe. Notably, this exploration seeks to fill a geographical and methodological gap in existing literature, as it is one of the few studies to specifically focus on the perspectives and practices of history teachers in Hurungwe District. As a result, an empirical study is required to gain a better understanding of history teachers' experiences during the early phases of implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum. This thesis aims to provide new knowledge to the discussion about reform enactment in Zimbabwe and around the world. This research seeks to come up with recommendations on how a Heritage-Based Curriculum can be made more attractive and acceptable to different stakeholders who include learners, teachers and parents.

1.4 VALUE OF THE STUDY

This study is deemed useful to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) at all different levels as the policymakers will be able to identify the areas of improvement and provide necessary support for teachers. My study is important to the Curriculum Development Unit, because by understanding the successes, difficulties, and strategies employed by teachers, curriculum designers can refine and improve the curriculum to better meet the needs of both teachers and the students. To the parents, by exploring how History teachers implement the Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum, the study could shed light on how to promote critical thinking, cultural awareness, and responsible citizenship among parents and students.

This thesis contributes to the existing body of literature by exploring the gaps in curriculum implementation, specifically focusing on the experiences of History teachers in secondary schools. As one of the first implementation studies on

Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum, this research provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by history teachers in Hurungwe District's rural secondary schools. Notably, this study fills a significant knowledge gap, as there has been no known prior research that has been conducted on the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwe since the initiative is still new. By observing how History teachers are implementing the Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum in Form Three classrooms and analysing how history teachers' implementation of the Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum can be understood and explained, History teachers, policy-makers and curriculum planners will be fully equipped to effectively implement the Heritage-Based Curriculum. This research will also come up with recommendations on how the Heritage-Based Curriculum can be made more attractive and acceptable to different stakeholders who include learners, teachers and parents.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is driven by a primary question: What are the experiences of History teachers in implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwean secondary schools?

1.5.1 Research Sub Questions

To unpack the main research question, the following sub-research questions were developed:

1. What are the prominent features and interpretation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?
2. How do History teachers conceptualise the Heritage-Based Curriculum?
3. How are History teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Form Three classrooms?
4. How can History teachers' implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum be understood and explained?

1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.6.1 Research Aim

The study intends to unravel the experiences of History teachers in implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwe's secondary schools.

1.6.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives for this study are to:

1. Establish prominent features and interpretation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum.
2. Examine History teachers' conceptualisation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum.
3. Investigate how History teachers are implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in form three classrooms.
4. Analyse how History teachers' implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum can be understood and explained.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

While several studies in the Global North have employed Michael Triple I Theory to examine curriculum reform implementation (Abidin et al., 2020; Haque & David, 2022; Wang, 2019), research in the Global South has predominantly drawn on alternative theoretical frameworks such as curriculum theory, sense-making cognitive theory, Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) and Critical Pedagogy as lenses for understanding curriculum change (Blignaut, 2008; Chimbi, 2018; Chimbi & Jita, 2021, 2023; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2025; Chisholm, 2002; Phaiphai, 2020; Spillane et al., 2002). Distinct from these approaches, the present study is explicitly grounded in Michael Fullan's Triple I Theory (2007). This theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex process of curriculum reform.

The Triple I Model comprises three distinct phases: Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalisation. The Initiation phase involves the planning and preparation of the reform initiative, including the mobilisation of resources, skills, and stakeholders. The Implementation phase, which is the primary focus of this study, entails the initial attempts to put the reform into practice, supported by ongoing planning, feedback,

and revision. The final phase, Institutionalisation, marks the successful integration of the reform into the school's culture and system, rendering it a sustainable and enduring component. Fullan (2007) underscores the imperative of successful Initiation and Implementation phases in achieving the ultimate goal of Institutionalisation.

Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) argue that Initiation comprises bringing about change by informing implementers of its necessity, setting goals for tracking advancement, and allocating the resources required for a successful roll-out. Implementation encompasses a “process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change” (Fullan, 2007:84). The Institutionalisation phase is characterised by the reform becoming an integral part of the school's culture, practices, and policies. My study examines the experiences of history teachers in implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum, with a particular emphasis on the Implementation phase.

The Triple I Theory was relevant for this study because through Initiation phase, History teachers needed to be conscientised on what the new policy expects them to do in terms of the content teaching and the pedagogical methods use. During the Initiation phase of the change process, it was assumed that history teachers were informed of the required resources to kick-start the envisaged changes at school and classroom levels. As Fullan (2016:58) reminds his readers, “change is a process, not an event”. So, the Initiation phase was valuable in the sense that History teachers needed to be initiated into the expectations and dynamics of the Heritage-Based Curriculum. They would likely appreciate that a change process is complex and characterised with a lot of complexities and dilemmas.

The Implementation phase was important for this study because during this phase the History teachers would comprehend that change is non-linear as asserted by Fullan (1993). The Triple I Theory through the Implementation stage would help me to make sense of how change occurs in schools from the viewpoint of the History teachers who were implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum. The Implementation phase was a suitable framework for this study because it enabled me to identify the factors that facilitated or hindered the successful implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwean secondary schools. This theory

offered a comprehensive approach to analysing the curriculum implementation process, identifying key factors that influence its success or failure.

The Institutionalisation stage offers a thorough framework for examining the process of implementing curricula and pinpointing important elements that affect their success or failure. The institutionalisation phase is essential for history teachers implementing the HBC as it ensures the curriculum's long-term sustainability and integration into schools' culture and practices as noted by Miles (1987). Additionally, the Institutionalisation phase emphasises on constructive feedback, continuous professional learning, and refining teaching practices aligns with the study's goals, ultimately enhancing the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (Fullan, 2007).

This theoretical lens was particularly relevant to the Global South context, where curriculum reforms frequently encounter resource constraints, uneven, teacher agency and policy-practice gaps. By applying the Triple I Theory, this study sought to provide a more nuanced understanding of how history teachers navigated the reform process, thereby bridging the theoretical perspectives from the Global North with practical realities of education systems in the Global South. A detailed discussion of the Triple I Theory as the theoretical framework for this thesis is presented in Chapter 2.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

This study explored the experiences of History teachers implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in rural Zimbabwean secondary schools. This study was framed within an interpretivist paradigm, enabling a thorough exploration of History teachers' experiences and perspectives as they put the Heritage-Based Curriculum into practice. This paradigmatic choice was justified by its capacity to facilitate a nuanced understanding of the real-life experiences and meanings attributed by History educators in the context of curriculum implementation. A qualitative research approach was employed to achieve this objective. This choice was grounded in the understanding that individuals can articulate and defend their perspectives (Rakotsoane, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this context, History teachers' insights on integrating the Heritage-Based Curriculum were invaluable.

This thesis employed a multiple case study approach to deeply explore History teachers' experiences with the Heritage-Based Curriculum. Within this multiple case study, four teachers participated, with one teacher selected from each school. As advised by Yin (2014), the complexity of the issue under examination necessitated a larger number of cases. This multiple case study methodology aimed to establish the factors influencing the individual behavioural patterns of History teachers as they embraced the newly-introduced Heritage-Based Curriculum. The four history teachers were selected from four rural secondary schools, drawn from a pool of 17 rural secondary schools in Hurungwe District using a convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is "a non-random sampling method in which the researcher selects anyone he or she happens to come across" (Neuman, 2014:248). The primary criterion for selecting these schools was their proximity to the researcher. This aligned with Neuman's (2014:248) assertion that in a convenience sample, "cases will be easy to reach, convenient, or readily available".

Purposive sampling was used to choose key participants for this study. Flick (2009) and Cohen et al. (2018) assert that purposive sampling involves selecting cases that fit a particular criterion, enabling in-depth exploration of the research phenomenon. By adopting this approach, the study ensured that the selected participants possess relevant experiences and insights, thereby enriching data and contributing to nuanced understanding of the research topic. The sample of this study comprised 4 History teachers (1 from each school) who were purposively sampled out of a total of 37 targeted History teachers on the grounds that they were teaching the Form Three Heritage-Based History in high school classes, considered to have spent three years or more teaching history with a minimum of an undergraduate degree in history. Gender considerations for the four History teachers were considered when selecting the teachers.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS

The study focused on History teachers within the designated four rural secondary schools situated in Hurungwe District, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe. A deliberate selection of 1 History teacher from each school was conducted for this comprehensive case study, resulting in a total of four teachers. The primary aim of

this study was to delve into the encounters of History teachers when implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in the aforementioned four rural secondary schools, thereby offering valuable insights into the dynamics of Form 3 history classes within Hurungwe District. This study was delimited to the period 2024-2025, marking the transition from CBC to HBC in Zimbabwean secondary schools. The focus was on the early implementation phase of the HBC, as this period provided critical insights into institutional adaption and history teachers' experiences.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As noted by Best and Kahn (2012), limitations refer to unforeseen circumstances beyond the researcher's control that may restrict the study's findings and their generalizability to other settings. Marshall and Rossman (2006:42) posit that "all research projects have limitations." I encountered reluctance from some participants, particularly the history teachers, in disclosing important information regarding to their opinions on the implementation of a Heritage-Based Curriculum due to legal constraints imposed by the official secrecy act. To address this concern, I assured the participants that this study was going to be used for research purposes only and their input would not be divulged to anyone. To minimise potential biases and ensure the trustworthiness of the data and findings, a comprehensive 10-week data generation period was undertaken. During this period, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and classroom observations were carried out to collect detailed insights from history teachers regarding their experiences with implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in four chosen rural secondary schools.

There were drawbacks to this research's use of a multiple case study design, including the fact that it focused on several phenomena, which could limit how broadly the results could be applied (Yin, 2014). High rationality of purposively selected instances was a result of qualitative research's emphasis on the rigor, authenticity, and depth of data generation rather than the representativeness or generalizability of conclusions. The current study was based on this characteristic of qualitative research. I addressed this challenge by observing and interviewing individual teachers for a prolonged period of time (8 to 10 weeks).

While the lesson observation method was valuable, it also had its limitations. The information obtained through this method was often incomplete and unforeseen factors could interfere with the observational process. In order to overcome these obstacles, great thought was given to what should be observed, how to ensure the correctness of observations and how they should be documented as noted by Kothari (2019). A thorough case study was also developed thanks to the utilization of several data generating methods and the examination of the occurrence in its context (Rowley, 2002). This was further reinforced by my position as a researcher, given my direct involvement and first-hand experience as a participant in the curriculum implementation process.

1.11 DEFINITIONS OF KEY WORDS

In this study, key terms include: Curriculum, Curriculum implementation, Heritage-Based Curriculum, Competence-Based Curriculum, Teacher Experiences, and Triple I Theory.

Curriculum: Mulenga (2018) defines curriculum as a comprehensive plan of educational activities planned and facilitated by school authorities to achieve special learning outcomes that contribute to personal growth, skills development, societal change, and life improvement. Tanner and Tanner (1975:35) characterise curriculum as “a planned and guided learning experience and learning outcomes formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of the school for the learners’ continuous growth in personal-social competence.” Curriculum is a set of planned interactions through which teachers and pupils engage in content, instruction, and assessment in order to achieve personally and socially valued aims. Therefore, in the current study, a curriculum is a planned and systematic approach provided by the Heritage-Based Curriculum to education that outlines what pupils will learn, how they will learn it and how their learning will be assessed.

Curriculum implementation: Nevenglosky (2018:17) defines it as, “...how teachers deliver instruction and assessment through the use of specified resources provided in a curriculum.” In other words, “curriculum implementation is the actual teaching

and learning activities occurring in schools through interaction between learners and teachers as well as among learners, that is how the intended curriculum is translated into practice and actually delivered” (IBE-UNESCO, 2013:30). Maba (2017) defines curriculum implementation as a complex process that involves translating planned curriculum elements into actual classroom practice. This process requires collaborative efforts from various stakeholders, including educators, students, school administrators, parents, and the effective utilisation of physical facilities, instructional materials, and social environments. Ultimately, effective curriculum implementation requires the collaborative effort of all stakeholders to ensure that educational goals are met across all levels. It entails interactions amongst history teachers, students, and other relevant parties with the ultimate aim of fulfilling the goals of education.

Implementation involves a number of steps and stages and takes time. But in the end, teachers must implement a new curriculum at the classroom level, or micro-level. To put it in another way, instructors' actions and thoughts determine how the curriculum is implemented (Fullan 1991:117). When History teachers adopt a new curriculum, they must, among other things, alter their attitudes about it, how they use new teaching strategies and resources, how they set up the classroom, and how they evaluate their pupils. Curriculum implementation in this study refers to how History teachers interpret the reform policy papers and how they modify, innovate, and enhance their teaching methods in accordance with Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum 2024–2030.

Heritage-Based Curriculum: The Heritage-Based Curriculum is an educational approach that emphasises a nation's rich cultural heritage and lived experiences, aiming to deliver a curriculum that resonates with and adapts to learners' unique backgrounds, identities, and the country's available resources (MoPSE, 2024). Through this approach, HBC cultivates an educational experience that is more inclusive, representative, and meaningful for learners from diverse backgrounds, thereby yielding increased engagement, enhanced academic attainment, strengthened symbiosis between education institutions and their surrounding communities. In the same line, MoHTEISTD (2019) defines an HBC as a philosophy or doctrine geared towards harnessing local human, material and epistemological resources towards innovation and industrialisation of Zimbabwe.

Heritage-Based Curriculum is “any form of education that is based on traces in the present from the past and which embed these in a context that is based on knowledge and/or can bring about an experience that refers to the past, in other words, a heritage experience” (Auwera et al., 2007:27). Heritage education can be viewed as a pedagogical process enabling individuals to acquire knowledge about heritage skills. Local heritage is also regarded as a pivotal cornerstone in cultivating historical cognition. In this study, HBC represents a novel curriculum recently adopted by the Government of Zimbabwe in February 2024.

Triple I Theory (Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalisation): The Triple I Theory developed by Fullan (1982, 2007, & 2015), is a model of educational change that explains the phases through which curriculum reforms and innovations move. It emphasises that successful reform is a process rather than an event and unfolds across three interrelated stages:

1. **Initiation:** This is the stage where a reform idea is conceived, introduced, and legitimised (Fullan, 2007; Miles, 1987). It involves policy formulation, stakeholder consultation, and the setting of goals. Factors influencing initiation include political will, availability of resources, stakeholder involvement, and the perceived relevance of the innovation.
2. **Implementation:** This stage refers to the actual practice of putting the reform into action in schools and classrooms (Fullan, 2007; Miles, 1987). Implementation is complex, shaped by teachers’ understanding of the reform, professional development, resource availability, school leadership, and contextual conditions. Often, reforms experience resistance, adaptation, or partial uptake at this stage due to structural and pedagogical challenges.
3. **Institutionalisation:** This is the stage where the reform becomes embedded in the education system and school culture (Fullan, 2007; Miles, 1987). At this point, the change is no longer seen as a temporary innovation but as part of the routine functioning of schools. Institutionalisation requires sustained support, policy alignment, on-going monitoring, and cultural acceptance among teachers and learners.

The Triple I Theory highlights that curriculum change is non-linear and contested,

with each stage influenced by political, social, and institutional dynamics. In this study, it provides a framework for understanding how the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in Zimbabwe was introduced (initiation), translated into practice by teachers (implementation), and the extent to which it has become embedded or resisted in schools (institutionalisation).

Teacher experiences: Teacher experiences refer to the perceptions, practices, challenges, and reflections of teachers as they engage with their professional roles in specific educational contexts (Bhulut, 2020). They encompass both the lived realities of teachers (what they actually go through in schools and classrooms) and their subjective meanings (how they interpret and make sense of those realities). In curriculum reform studies, teacher experiences as noted by Bhulut (2020) include:

- Understanding and interpretation of new policies or curriculum frameworks.
- Classroom practices adopted to translate curriculum intentions into teaching and learning activities. Constraints and challenges faced, such as resource shortages, class sizes, examination pressures, or lack of professional development.
- Professional agencies — how teachers negotiate, adapt, resist, or innovate within reform processes.
- Emotional and identity dimensions — how reforms affect teachers' sense of professionalism, workload, confidence, and role in society.

Scholars (Fullan, 2007, 2015; Murphy, 2020; OECD, 2019a; Prendergast, 2018) argue that teacher experiences are central to curriculum change because teachers are the primary implementers of reforms. Policy intentions cannot succeed unless teachers understand, accept, and integrate them into their classroom practices. At the same time, teachers' experiences are deeply shaped by their contexts: school resources, leadership, training opportunities, and community expectations. In this study, history teachers' experiences with the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) revealed both opportunities (such as promoting heritage consciousness and identity formation) and challenges (such as limited resources, inadequate training, and exam pressures). Their experiences reflect the tensions between policy aspirations and classroom realities, demonstrating that successful reform requires more than policy design; it demands structural support and recognition of teachers' professional

voices.

History education: History education refers to the systematic teaching and learning of the past, typically as a school subject, with the purpose of developing learners' understanding of historical events, processes, and perspectives (Carr, 1987; Moyo & Modiba, 2013). While research indicates that History education often emphasises rote memorisation and factual recall (Gorbudhun, 2022; Harris & Graham, 2019; Mapetere, 2011; Ogah 2023), emerging evidence suggests that some History classrooms are shifting towards fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Therefore, History education goes beyond the memorisation of facts and dates to include the cultivation of critical thinking, interpretation of evidence, appreciation of multiple viewpoints, and the ability to connect the past with present realities (Chimbunde et al., 2023; Dombo & Mujere, 2022; Godsell, 2022; Maria et al., 2019; Wineburg, 2001). These scholars emphasise that History education serves two key purposes: knowledge and understanding – equipping learners with substantive content knowledge about local, national, and global histories, skills development, fostering analytical, interpretive, and research skills, including the ability to evaluate sources, construct historical arguments, and recognise bias and civic and identity formation, promoting historical consciousness, cultural identity, and informed citizenship by helping learners understand their heritage and their place in the world.

As part of the broader curriculum, History education is not simply about transmitting information but is also about shaping how learners perceive their society and engage with issues of democracy, nationhood, and global citizenship. In contexts like Zimbabwe, History education under reforms such as the Heritage-Based Curriculum is also seen as a tool for decolonisation and cultural reclamation, aimed at embedding indigenous knowledge systems and fostering pride in national heritage.

1.12 CHAPTER LAYOUT

This study comprises five chapters, as outlined below:

Chapter 1: Background and Orientation to the Study

This opening chapter outlines the study's background, articulates the problem

statement, defines the research objectives, and highlights its significance, scope, limitations, and the key terms used throughout the research.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter examines the theoretical framework guiding the study and conducts a comprehensive review of existing literature on teachers' experiences in curriculum implementation. It identifies gaps in current research, informing the direction of this study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research paradigm and provides a rationale for selecting a qualitative approach. It details the multiple case study design, the target population, the sampling methods and the sampling procedure, describes the data generation methods and analysis procedures, and discusses strategies to ensure trustworthiness as well as the ethical principles upheld throughout the study.

Chapter 4: Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of Findings

This chapter presents the findings, focusing on document analysis, lesson observations and in-depth interviews which were carried out to answer the research questions. It discusses the key themes and sub-themes emerging from the research findings.

Chapter 5: Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This final chapter summarises the key findings and their implications. It provides recommendations for practical interventions and future research directions, concluding with final thoughts and reflections.

1.13 SUMMARY

The issue of curriculum reform and teachers' experiences which gained traction across the world for the past two decades has opened this chapter. Chapter 1 provided a foundational overview of the study, encompassing essential elements such as the introduction, background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance, delimitations, limitations, and definitions of key terms. The

next chapter (Chapter 2) will delve into a comprehensive literature review, exploring the theoretical framework that underpins this study. A detailed analysis of existing literature will examine the experiences of teachers in curriculum implementation, providing a rich context for understanding the complexities of this phenomenon.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a review of existing literature on teachers' experiences in curriculum implementation across the globe. Guided by Fullan's Triple I Theory, this literature review addresses the research questions posed in Chapter 1 to explore the complexities, challenges and opportunities surrounding curriculum implementation from history teachers' perspective. The four sub-research questions raised in Chapter 1 were used to generate sub-headings for this literature review chapter. This chapter is organised around six sub-headings: Theoretical framework; Overview of history education across the globe; The concept Heritage Based Education; Curriculum implementation in the developed countries; Curriculum implementation in the developing countries; and, Curriculum implementation in Zimbabwe.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Fullan's Triple I Theory (2007), focuses on Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalisation of a curriculum reform initiative. It serves as the illuminating lens for this study. Triple I Theory offers a framework for comprehending the elements that affect how well or poorly curriculum modifications are implemented. The first phase in Fullan's Triple I Model is initiation. This stage involves organising and setting up the necessary personnel, resources, tools, and strategies to begin the process of change. The second phase in Fullan's Triple I Model is implementation. It is the phase of attempted use of the innovation. Institutionalisation (referring to whether the change is incorporated into the school's system or is discarded) is the final step, after implementation (Fullan, 2007).

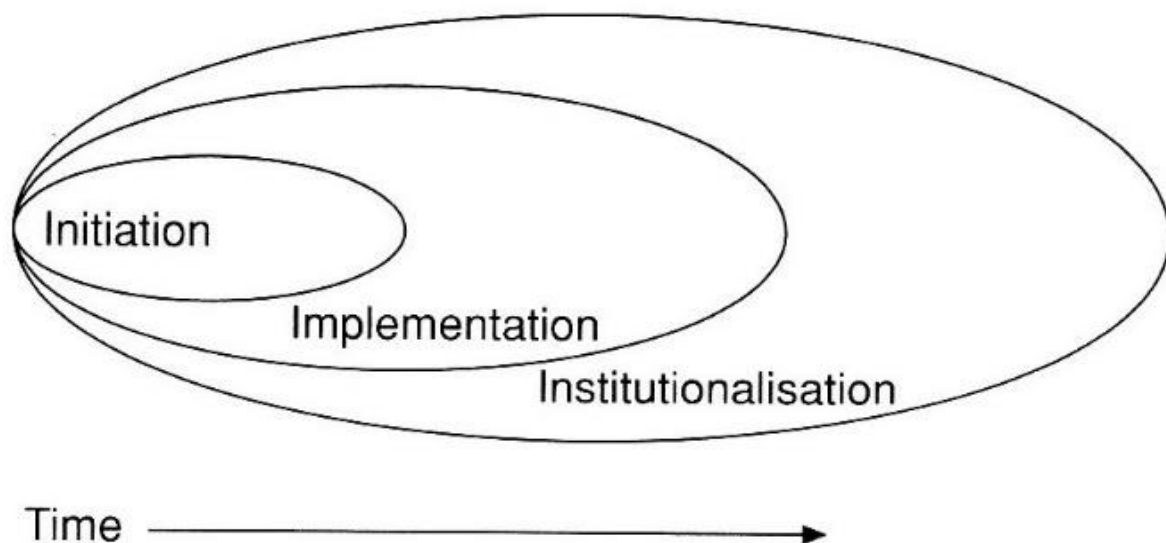


Figure 1: The three overlapping phases of the change process

Source: (Miles, 1987)

Choosing to pursue innovation and establishing a commitment to the process are the goals of the Initiation phase. An assessment of the current state of affairs at the school and the decision to start making preparations to implement a particular change are the main responsibilities of the starting phase (Fullan, 2015). Another name for this stage is adoption and mobilisation. Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991) argue that initiation comprises bringing about change by informing implementers of its necessity, setting goals for tracking advancement, and allocating the resources required for a successful roll-out. In the same vein, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) and Allan et al. (2018) opine that the initiation stage includes local school officials conceiving and formulating plans, seeking resources, and deciding which projects to move forward with. The decision to initiate or adopt can come from a single authority or a broader mandate.

Miles (1987) points out that the Initiation stage of innovation involves several key activities. These include finding an advocate or champion to promote the innovation, creating a clear and organised approach to change, making sure that the innovation is initiated actively, and ensuring that it is of good quality. This emphasises the importance of tailoring the curriculum to the local environment and societal demands. While a top-down approach can be effective under certain conditions, it is essential

to recognise that adopting a programme does not necessarily guarantee its implementation (Fullan, 2016). In fact, research suggests that schools often adopt innovations without fully implementing them, particularly when the innovations are complex, vague, or costly (Fullan, 2016). Moreover, schools tend to focus on superficial changes, such as modifying objectives, structures, standards, and content, rather than making deeper changes to teaching and learning conceptions, culture, and role behaviour (Cuban, 2013, 2023; Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2016; Plunket, 2024).

The Implementation phase has received most attention from reform implementation scholars (Abidin et al., 2020; Addai-Mununkum & Setordzi, 2023; Chimbunde, 2019; Gouëdard et al., 2020; Haque & David, 2022; Plunket, 2024). Implementation encompasses a “process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change” (Fullan, 2007:84). The question that change-agents must consider for implementation is, “What will have to change if the innovation were to be fully implemented?” (Plunket, 2024:16). Curriculum resources, pedagogical procedures, and concepts or perspectives on curriculum, teaching, and learning are all expected to change. Implementation is the process of achieving goals and objectives. Also, at this stage, the implementers must assess the “fit” of the new programme to be executed and whether, with sufficient work and funds, the possibility of success is pretty good.

The successes of large-scale educational reforms have been evident in Singapore, Canada, Hong Kong, and South Korea (Fullan, 2009). Some common factors contributing to their success include government support, strong education systems emphasising STEM and collaboration between industry, academia and government. Ornstein and Hunkins (2017:257) argue that “successful curriculum implementation results from careful planning which focuses on three factors: people, programs and processes.” Teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of educational reforms. Since reforms often require significant changes in teaching practices and behaviours, it is essential to consider teachers' needs and perspectives during the reform process to ensure alignment with the reform's objectives (Fullan, 1991; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017). Fullan (2016:68) wrote, “In a word, implementation is a variable, and if the change is a potentially good one,

success (such as improved student learning or increased skills on the part of teachers) will depend on the degree and quality of change in actual practice.” The implementation process is influenced by nine interconnected factors, which can be grouped into three main categories. These are attributes of the change or reform itself, factors specific to the local context, such as school culture and community, and external influences that can impact implementation, such as government policies and resource availability.

The third phase of the Triple I Model is Institutionalisation. As described by Fullan (2016), this phase is characterised as continuation, incorporation, or routinisation. It determines whether the implemented change becomes an integral part of the school's system or is abandoned. Institutionalisation occurs when the change is successfully implemented and becomes a permanent aspect of the school culture, losing its novelty and becoming the standard practice (Fullan, 2007). In this situation, Institutionalisation refers to the new pedagogical practices becoming commonplace for the History teachers in charge of implementing them, as well as the practices producing the desired results. Until then, the change will not be completely implemented. The ultimate goal of every change endeavour is to achieve institutionalisation, which can only be realised if the change is effectively begun and implemented. Research on curriculum reform has consistently shown that poorly implemented reform policies are often discontinued (Chimbi & Jita, 2022; Fullan, 2016; Murphy, 2020; Plunket, 2024).

Usually without initial funding, scaling up a pilot reform project to a school-wide initiative is often very difficult making the shift from implementing to institutionalising an uphill struggle. Miles (1987) lists the following as important tasks for institutionalising change: integrating the change into the school's organisation, structures, and resources; getting rid of conflicting practices; creating strong links to other change initiatives, curriculum, and classroom instruction; encouraging broad use in the school and community; and creating a network of local facilitators. Due to stakeholders' frequent disregard for the unique requirements and characteristics of each phase, which calls for customised strategies for success, many change projects fall short of the Institutionalization stage. For Miles (1987), measures that

promote institutionalisation include: fostering constancy of purpose through consistent dedication to implementation over time; establishing a secure environment for questioning and exploring presumptions to prevent implementation and success from being derailed by dissonance, disruption, or dissatisfaction; and being honest about the situation to encourage efforts toward ongoing improvement. By examining the experiences of the history teachers through the lens of Fullan's Tripple I Theory, this study can provide insights into complexities of curriculum implementation and factors that influences its success.

2.2.1 RELEVANCE OF TRIPLE I THEORY TO THE STUDY

2.2.1.1 Initiation phase

The Triple I Theory was relevant for this study because during Initiation phase History teachers would be made aware of the policies of a Heritage-Based Curriculum. They would be conscientised on what the new policy expects them to do in terms of the content teaching and the pedagogical methods use. This study explored if the initiation process was successful or not. During the Initiation phase, History teachers needed to be informed of the required resources to kick-start the envisaged changes at school and classroom levels. Fullan (2016:58) reminds curriculum reformers, that "change is a process, not an event." So, the Initiation stage was valuable for this study in the sense that History teachers needed to be initiated into the expectations and dynamics of the Heritage-Based Curriculum. Furthermore, the Initiation phase was useful for this study because it advocated for the engagement of school heads and other stake holders like parents to address how the innovation would affect both History teachers and learners. This study explored how History teachers received and responded to the introduction of the HBC including their initial perceptions and attitudes.

2.2.1.2 Implementation phase

The Implementation phase was important for this study because during this phase, the History teachers would comprehend that change is non-linear as asserted by Fullan (1993). This stage was loaded with uncertainty and excitement and sometimes frustrations. Curriculum implementation is complex with a lot of processes and dilemmas which needed to be conceptualised by the History teachers

during the implementation of the Heritage Based Curriculum. Fullan (1993) further argues that during the Implementation phase, the problems are inevitable and one cannot learn without them. This phase would help the History teachers to know that there would be challenges during implementation process and they would have to cope with them. The Implementation phase would help the researcher to make sense of how change occurred in schools from the viewpoint of the History teachers who would be implementing the Heritage Based Curriculum. This phase would also help the researcher to identify factors that influenced or hindered the successful implementation of the new curriculum such as the HBC in rural secondary schools.

Fullan's Triple I Theory, through the Implementation stage, was also appropriate for this study because it provided a comprehensive framework for analysing the curriculum implementation process and identifying key factors that influence its success or failure. Fullan's Implementation phase was particularly useful for understanding History teachers' experiences in implementing Zimbabwe's Heritage-based curriculum because Fullan (2015:107) articulates that: "change is what teachers do and think. It is as simple and as complex as that." The Implementation phase was also deemed relevant to this study, because it offered a supportive framework for History teachers. This phase provided opportunities for constructive feedback, continuous professional learning, and refinement of teaching practices, ultimately leading to improved outcomes (Fullan, 2007). This thesis examined how History teachers put the HBC curriculum into practice, navigating challenges and opportunities in their classrooms

2.2.1.3 Institutionalisation phase

The Institutionalisation stage offers a thorough framework for examining the process of implementing curricula and identifying important elements that affect their success or failure. The Institutionalisation phase was essential for History teachers implementing the HBC as it ensures the curriculum's long-term sustainability and integration into schools' culture and practices as noted by Miles (1987). The Institutionalisation phase fosters support systems, such as professional development opportunities, resources and mentorship to sustain History teacher's implementation efforts. By understanding the Institutionalisation stage's relevance, History teachers

and school administrators can work together to ensure the HBC's long-term success and positive impact on students. Through the Institutionalisation phase, this study explored how History teachers would embed the HBC into schools' culture and practices, ensuring sustainability and long-term impact.

Therefore, the Triple I Theory highlights the importance of creating a shared perception of the curriculum among History teachers and learners, from initiation, implementation up to institutionalisation. This theoretical lens was particularly relevant to the Global South where curriculum reforms encounter resource constraints, uneven teacher agency and persistent policy-practice gaps. By applying the Triple I Theory, this study not only deepens the analysis of how History teachers navigate the reform process but also advanced the originality of the research. Specifically, it represents one of the first systematic attempts to employ Triple I Theory in examining the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwean secondary schools. In doing so it bridges theoretical perspectives from the Global North with lived experiences of teachers in the Global South, thereby contributing fresh knowledge insights to both theory and practice reform scholarship.

2:3 AN OVERVIEW OF HISTORY EDUCATION

History is a dynamic dialogue between the present and the past, as noted by Carr (1987) and Moyo and Modiba (2013). History is a vital academic subject that transcends national, regional, and cultural barriers and imparts priceless insights from the past. History education involves the systematic teaching and learning of past events, historical processes, and cultural heritage, with the dual aim of fostering critical thinking and analytical skills among learners. The effective implementation of History curricula remains a challenge worldwide, reflecting tension between national ideological priorities and pedagogical objectives. In some contexts, governments emphasise a national History curriculum that reinforces specific ideological narratives, whereas in others, the curriculum is implemented more neutrally to promote historical understanding without engendering social or political divisions. For example, Nadew et al. (2023) argue that History education in secondary schools is intended to advance nation-building while simultaneously cultivating critical thinking and analytical competencies in young people. It plays a crucial role in constructing

national identity, transmitting collective memory, and shaping imagined communities (Awgichew & Ademe, 2022; Bertram, 2019; Hillis, 2010; Paulson, 2015). A study in Ukraine, by Korostelina (2011), similarly found that school History can be used to create new national identities and dissolve previous ones. However, History can also be used to convey government intentions, explain past and future events, and instil patriotic values and manipulating the citizens. The political instrumentalisation of History teaching in schools has been part of these practices around the world (Ahonen, 2017; Apple, 2004; Bentreovato, 2017, 2018; Bentreovato et al., 2016; Tupper, 2005; Wilschut, 2010). This shows that History as a subject does not offer a single story that is certain and complete.

Two epistemological perspectives can be applied to History, according to Chitate (2005): as a body of knowledge (substantive knowledge) and as a type of knowledge (procedural knowledge). This distinction gives rise to two approaches to History education: traditional 'old' History, focusing on substantive knowledge, and 'new' History, emphasising procedural knowledge. When implementing a History curriculum, teachers draw on both substantive and procedural knowledge (Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020). However, History education has often been criticised for its dry, fact-heavy approach and dominant teacher-oriented instructional methods. Despite several reform projects aiming at improving the teaching of History, History teachers worldwide are recognised for their unimaginative and monotonous teaching practices (Abrahams & Arendse, 2022; Boadu et al., 2020; Fufa et al., 2024; Harris & Graham, 2019; Ogah, 2023; Schul, 2015). In this regard, Warren (2007:249-250) argues that "the literature is full of a myriad of complaints about the traditionally poor pedagogy of secondary school history teachers..." Most History teachers often begin their sessions by asking students what they learned in previous classes. Aside from that, they begin to deliver notes and lectures to pupils during each lesson.

Traditional instructional approaches, including note-taking, dictation, and difficult language, have resulted in learner boredom and disengagement. Research has revealed that traditional practices, such as dictating notes, taking notes, and employing complicated jargon, have frequently confused learners and confined them to passive recipients of teachers' knowledge (Mapetere, 2013; Murenjekwa, 2024). Rote learning, shallow interpretations and memorisation of facts can make History

boring and unengaging. Furthermore, History's emphasis on memorising numerous historical facts can be daunting for students (Fufa, et al., 2024; Talin, 2014). In such classes, some students will be taking notes instead of paying attention when the History teachers are lecturing the material. Some pupils will be looking elsewhere, not paying attention, and not taking notes. Didactic instruction, like lecturing, can make History seem static and unrelatable, neglecting learners' needs for interactive and immersive experiences.

To address these concerns, the History curriculum recommends employing diverse teaching methods, including discussions, question-and-answer sessions, project-based learning, dramatisation, brainstorming, field trips, discovery, role-playing, and debates (Barjeen, 2024; Bertram, 2019; Fufa et al., 2024; Mapetere, 2013). This approach is supported by the Chinese proverb, "What I hear, I forget; what I see, I remember." Hands-on learning experiences can foster students' enthusiasm for history and encourage them to pursue it at the tertiary level. As Chimbunde et al. (2023), Douch notes in Steele (1976) and Godsell (2022), children should not view history as a spectator sport, but rather as an interactive experience in which they are active participants.

2.3.1 History Education in Europe

Long before Christ's birth, History as an academic topic began in ancient Greece. Herodotus' Histories, published in the 5th century BC, were one of the core texts of the Western historical tradition, emphasising rational and evidence-based investigation above the legends of Homer and other poets (Woolf, 2019). Early historians, such as Herodotus and Thucydides, had already criticised Homer and other poets' narratives as fanciful and erroneous (Lefkowitz, 2008; Woolf 2019). Historical writing underwent a transformation in the nineteenth century, becoming more professional and scientific. During this time, the spread of European historiographical methods was a significant development, since it emerged as the most popular method for studying the past academically worldwide (Woolf, 2019). Traditional historical beliefs and methods were questioned in the 20th century, and historical research's purview expanded.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, History education in England and Spain has grown significantly. Specialists working in this field of knowledge are concerned with topics such as why teach History, how it should be taught, and the processes involved in its learning. In Europe, certain regions of France, Germany, Netherlands, Australia, and England have disciplinary conceptions and perceptions of school History curriculum that emphasise history as an investigation (Bertram, 2019; Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020). These curricula tend to focus on factual knowledge, national histories, and prioritise political and military events. History education in Europe mainly emphasises on European integration, cultural heritage and historical empires. For instance, The French History curriculum prioritises French national identity and republican values. Similarly, the UK national curriculum emphasises British history, with a focus on chronology and factual knowledge. Studies from diverse European countries, for example in Lithuania (Penkauskiene, 2010), Spain (Gomez et al., 2020) and Turkey (Aktekin, 2013; Polat, 2020) concur that many countries started teaching History in a way that prioritises critical thinking abilities over memorisation of dates and names of people and locations. That development was an acknowledgement that with rote learning, students become overloaded with historical facts that they find meaningless or unimportant.

Policy documents and associated resources reveal that the History curriculum has, for the most part, failed to engage critically with the negative dimensions of the British Empire (Smith et al., 2024). In debates concerning the school History curriculum, it is often overlooked that national curriculum frameworks across the UK's four jurisdictions delegate decisions regarding the selection of historical topics to individual schools. A further factor shaping curriculum practice is what Ball (2003) terms a performative educational culture. Harris (2021) postulates that this culture generates a risk-averse climate in which teachers are reluctant to explore alternative curricular possibilities. While Harris' analysis specifically addressed the influence of new examination requirements on teachers' choices, earlier work by Harris and Reynolds (2018) underscored the persistence of curricular inertia in England. This was particularly evident in the lower secondary years, where teachers consistently taught similar subject matter within the prescribed chronological frameworks, a pattern that has remained largely unchanged since the 1991 introduction of the National Curriculum, despite subsequent revisions.

2.3.2 History Education in America

In North and South America, there are diverse approaches of teaching History, including emphasis on national identity, cultural diversity and historical events like colonisation and civil rights movements. For example, History is used for national cohesion and identity in Canadian history curricula, regardless of their disciplinary focus (Clark, 2008, 2009; Parkes, 2007). Some nations like the US and Canada have "history wars" when it comes to teaching school History (Berg & Christou, 2020; Clark 2009; Parkes 2007). This indicates that there are disputes and arguments about the way historical material is. However, traditional school History curricula often present a limited narrative, prioritising the experiences of one group over others (Sheldon, 2012). Furthermore, History education aimed at promoting national cohesion and identity can inadvertently constrain students' critical reflection and engagement with the past (Clark, 2008). Effective History teaching, therefore, requires a multifaceted approach, incorporating rigorous planning, engaging instructional strategies, and a nuanced understanding of historical context.

Berg (2019) provides an account of how History is conceptualised and taught in American settings. A survey of 12 secondary history instructors found widespread dissatisfaction with educational resources, particularly textbooks. Teachers questioned the content's direction and presentation, erroneous and romanticised stories, and authorial authority, all of which give readers the notion that history should be accepted without critical study or analysis. Textbooks were deemed problematic because they denied students the opportunity to engage in historical thinking, while also encouraging national and patriotic narratives, which may prevent more inclusive narratives (Berg & Christou, 2017). This shows that History education in America is full of old practices which promote rote learning and memorisation of facts. The classrooms are textbook- and teacher-dominated. However, drawing from Aceves and Alcaraz (2021) Mexican experience over the past two decades, new curricula for teaching History have been developed for both basic education and teacher training programs. The main question is whether Heritage-Based History lessons are comparable to those taught in the United States.

2.3.3 History Education in Australia

It is worth noting that while Australia adopted Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in the 1990s, this was not the first instance of revising the history curriculum. Efforts to influence History education date back to the 1980s, and since 2000, the Australian History curriculum have been a site of ongoing conflict between conservative right-wing groups and progressive left-wing reformers (Chimbi, 2018; Hoepper, 2004). The conservatives, explains Burley (2012:56), “were suspicious of what they saw as a radicalised teaching profession led by revolutionary officials who were keen to influence an intellectually passive and credulous student population”, while the progressive left wing “saw school history as a way of righting past and present wrongs...”

In the late twentieth century, there was a shift from a traditional, uniform curriculum to a constructivist approach to teaching. The term "Old History" emerged to describe outdated teaching practices in primary and secondary schools across Britain, Australia, and other former colonies (Clark, 2009; Hoepper, 2004; Parkes, 2009). Central to the so-called "history wars" is the debate over how history should be taught in schools. In the case of Australian history, the controversy lies in whether to portray the nation's past through a critical lens—often referred to as the "black armband" view—or to highlight the accomplishments of white society, known as the "three cheers" perspective (Clark, 2008). This was to be seen in the academic study of history in schools, which relied on "reproduction of accepted and unquestioned grand narratives or stories about the past to uphold social control" (Harris & Bateman, 2007:7). These history battles in Australia highlight the intricacies and challenges associated with establishing a History curriculum in the classroom.

Conversely, conservative groups advocated for a national historical narrative that celebrated Australia as a unified nation-state and prioritised the transmission of historical content over the development of analytical skills. Their aim was to prevent students from questioning the 'facts' presented to them. In this approach, the History teacher was seen as the authoritative figure and guardian of historical knowledge (Chimbi, 2018; Khethwa, 2020). In contrast, the recently-adopted Australian History curriculum promotes an inquiry-based approach that encourages students to

critically engage with and question historical narratives rather than passively accept a singular, national storyline. The overarching goals of history education in Australia now focus on nurturing well-rounded learners—developing their individual talents and capacities, fostering high achievement, encouraging lifelong learning, promoting self-worth, and instilling respect for others and for cultural heritage.

2.3.4 History Education in Asia

In Malaysia and China, History education is regarded as an essential means of fostering national identity and cohesion. Since 2010, History has been taught as a core subject in Malaysian schools. It became a core subject after first being offered as an elective (Talin, 2014). This was done as a result of the government's strong commitment to raising a younger generation that understands national growth and is proud and thankful of the country's struggles. Malaysia's History education is strongly influenced by its multicultural context, with an emphasis on national identity and civic education, often integrating more diverse teaching methods that cater to its pluralistic society (Lee, 2025). Research by Talin (2014), shows that History teachers employ a teacher-centred approach in their classes, combining traditional teaching methods with an over-abundance of textbook usage. Time constraints are cited as the primary justification for this type of instruction.

Nonetheless, there is mounting evidence in favour of using ETs in the teaching of History in Asian nations. In Malaysia, despite the enduring prevalence of conventional teaching approaches, there is a notable movement toward integrating digital tools and interactive learning technologies into History classes (Lee, 2025). In contrast to the memorisation and recitation of historical facts that are recalled in Malaysian History classrooms, researchers like Aying et al. (2019), Banerjee (2024) Huang (2020) and Syaripuddin et al. (2019) found that the Digital Game-Based Learning (videos, video games, and computer games) model promotes History learning with an enjoyable experience. These approaches are viewed as essential for fostering a more profound comprehension of historical events and assisting students in critically analysing history and its significance in modern society.

China has implemented a number of curriculum revisions over the previous four decades, including changes to the History curriculum. The goal was to establish

quality education throughout the country. To achieve this purpose, Chinese authorities established a comprehensive new curriculum framework in 1992, with contemporary Chinese history being a core course in high school (Li, 2022; Mala, 2018). History education in Chinese secondary schools is a compulsory subject and an important component of the curriculum, with the goal of developing students' understanding of China's past, cultural heritage, and national identity. In communist China, history is used as a weapon for official propaganda to rally support for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), hence reciting takes precedence over comprehension (Li, 2022; Liu, 2017; Mala, 2018; Xiang 2023; Zhu, 2025). Students are encouraged to understand how history has led to the current socialist system and the role of the Communist Party. History textbooks in Chinese secondary schools gloss over or remove controversial histories (Li, 2022). The materials are carefully chosen and presented based on ideological concerns, and students are taught to believe that history is about answering questions.

Despite the fact that History has gained popularity as a subject because it is now required for the Chinese language exam, there are still many problems and obstacles in the actual teaching process (Li, 2022; Xiang, 2023). The goal of History classes is the same: to instil in students the CCP's philosophy. Xiang (2023) argues that pupils in Beijing's junior high schools are uninterested in learning History because they believe it has no application, and instead concentrate on other topics in history lessons. Traditional History education in China is at a crossroads: remembering established facts, names, statistics, and dates, while lacking critical thinking. One of the possible reasons why History lessons are boring is that teachers rely heavily on traditional lecture forms, in which they go into great detail about historical events while students listen passively and rarely participate in debates or ask questions. This strategy makes it difficult for pupils to concentrate in class, resulting in a decrease in their interest in History (Zhou, 2023). Xiang (2023) further opines that the lack of effective engagement and interaction may lead to students becoming disengaged and unmotivated, reducing their comprehension and recall of historical material. However, it should be noted that in China, traditional methods of rote memorisation are gradually being replaced by critical thinking and inquiry-based learning, reflecting broader educational reforms aimed at fostering more active and analytical student engagement (Lee, 2025). Therefore, History teachers should use

teacher centred pedagogies so that the learners will actively participate in History classrooms.

2.3.5 History Education in Africa

The study of History in Africa is or was dominated by the colonial narrative in which students learn more about the history of Europeans in Africa, overshadowing indigenous African history. Political, economic, cultural and ideological pressures have defined history education as a discipline in Africa and how it is taught as a subject taught in schools. The teaching of history in Africa has largely remained complex and intricate, because the material of history is limited to the curriculum and teachers encounter numerous difficulties when instructing some topics. For instance, Zambian History curriculum has not been decolonised as it contains few topics relating to the country's history (Mulenga & Mwanza, 2019). The social, political, and economic history of Europe is the main topic of the Grade 11 History course. This history discusses global concerns from a European point of view and the students are only taught about Europe during World War 1, not Zambia (Mbeba, 2022).

The History curriculum is a battlefield, especially in post-colonial states in Africa. History content and pedagogy are heavily contested territories. Citizenship, nation-building, and creating a shared collective memory are all heavily emphasised in some African History curricula (Clark, 2008; Nordgren, 2017; Parkes, 2007). However, Bentrovato and Moyo (2025), Ndlovu (2009) and Ncube and Moyo (2024) argue that the History curriculum is usually manipulated and monitored by politicians so that it follows the ideology of those in power. One of the best examples of how school History may be used for socialisation and political reasons is Rwanda (Bertram, 2019). Instilling "universal values of peace, respect for personal rights, gender equality, justice, solidarity, and develop a patriotic spirit and sense of civic pride" (Bertram, 2019:136) in children is the goal of Rwanda's school History curriculum. It offers narratives that performatively frame discourse as unquestionable reality. This emphasises how crucial it is that educators comprehend the national model of school History curricula. For example, after examining curriculum papers for Grades 7-9 and Grades 10-12, Bertram (2019:132) observes that the South African school History curriculum adopts a disciplinary approach, emphasising

national viewpoints, such as South African history.

As universities emerged in various African countries, including Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana, and Ethiopia, the scope of African educational history expanded to encompass diverse research topics. In Tanzania, for example, teachers recognised the significance of History education in secondary schools, employing both teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches, with a preference for the former (Namamba & Rao, 2017; Ndomondo et al., 2022). Despite internal and external challenges, History teaching has continued to evolve over time (Ogah, 2023; Zewde, 2000). It should be noted that several studies (Barbosa, 2018; Bentrovato & Wassermann, 2018; Boadu et al., 2020; Kgari-Masondo, 2019; Chimbi & Jita, 2020; Khumalo, 2024; Rifin et al., 2019; Sebbowa & Muyinda, 2018; Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020) argue that traditional methods of instruction are still widely used in History education, especially in Africa. History education is constantly in danger because it does not always connect to students in the twenty-first century, who frequently view studying History as meaningless and irrelevant to the skills and needs of the modern workplace. As advice, Godsell (2022) claims that teaching History that is devoid of critical thinking abilities might turn it into an unthinking political instrument.

Despite significant reforms in Africa's education sector, the effective implementation of History curricular remains a challenge in many African countries (Chimbi 2018; Chimbunde et al., 2023; Dube & Moyo, 2022; Dombo & Mujere, 2023; Godsell, 2022; Kabombwe et al., 2020). Several factors contribute to this implementation gap, including prevalence of teacher-centred pedagogies, policy formulation without stakeholder consultation, concerns about curriculum implementation stages, inadequate funding, and teacher knowledge deficits. Research suggests that African History education aims to incorporate learner-centred approaches, but traditional teacher-centred methods persist (Boadu, 2015; Boadu et al., 2020; Kabombwe et al., 2020; Mazibuko, 2008). Most students, from an African perspective, view History as a mere memorisation of names, dates, and events, leading them to perceive the subject as dull and irrelevant. This perception is often reinforced by traditional teaching methods where lectures, note-taking and tests dominate History classrooms worldwide, contributing to the notion that History is boring. This dichotomy is further complicated by differing perspectives on the purpose of school

History.

History teachers emphasise developing critical thinking and nuanced understanding, whereas politicians and laypeople often prioritise creating a unified national narrative to foster solidarity and unity. As Bertram (2019) questions, is it possible to bridge the differing views between politicians and educators regarding the purpose of History education? While political agendas often shape History curricula to promote national identity or particular narratives, the core aim of teaching History is to cultivate students' critical thinking skills. This involves evaluating historical evidence and drawing meaningful connections between past events and contemporary issues.

2.3.6 History Education in Zimbabwe

History curriculum in some circumstances are deployed to coerce students into an assumed common nationhood. In Zimbabwe, the History curriculum, as discussed by Bentreovato and Moyo (2025), Matereke (2011) and Moyo and Modiba (2013) whips into line the recalcitrant citizens. Research conducted in Zimbabwe in recent decades has demonstrated the long-standing state-sponsored abuse of History and its teaching as technologies of power (Foucault, 1980; Bentreovato & Moyo, 2025), as well as channels of dominant. History teachers came under severe scrutiny, particularly in high schools located in rural areas, where, especially in advance of elections, veterans of the liberation war operated as a paramilitary force weeding out perceived opposition supporters (Barnes et al., 2016; Dombo & Mujere 2021). Chitukutuku (2017:146) describes it as a "period of violence and witch-hunt [during which] primary and secondary school teachers were targeted without being asked to plead or state their loyalty." The implication here is that of a blanket assumption, at this time, that teachers in general sympathised with the opposition, especially those who taught History. So, in short, the school History curriculum in Zimbabwe, as in many other countries, appears intended to inculcate in students' particular narratives about national histories and identities, with the aim of raising a loyal and patriotic citizenry.

Since 1980, Zimbabwe, like South Africa, has seen waves of curricular reform, particularly in History syllabuses (Sibanda, 2019). Syllabus 2160, for instance, was a shoddy attempt at "countering colonial historiography" (Sibanda, 2019:13),

enmeshed in the repeating of facts and the disintegration of African identity. The teaching strategies were teacher-centred, and the curriculum was content-driven. It is impossible to abandon History curricula for the sake of critical thinking and involvement in the classroom. 'Zimbabwe' was not a nation-state until 1980, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011:9), but rather, a politically-constructed reality. The nation inherited the Rhodesian History Syllabus 2160, which was modelled after the Ordinary Level Examinations system in the United Kingdom. The University of Cambridge Examinations Syndicate scheduled and assessed the exams. "This syllabus emphasised both European and Central African history, which became untenable after independence" (Barnes, 2007:638). As was common in conventional classical British education, it prioritised fact recall above critical thinking. As previously said, the choice of material perpetuates methods that prevent students from critically engaging with their past and present (Bentrovato & Moyo, 2025; Moyana, 1989; Moyo & Modiba, 2013; Ncube & Moyo, 2024). Moyo (2020:306) bemoans the fact that this kind of History instruction "resulted in the alienation of the learners as history was presented as disembodied reality with no connections to their lived realities". This can result in boring History classrooms for the learners.

Recent studies by Dombo and Mujere (2023) show that there were four phases in the transformation of the Zimbabwean History education, of which the Rhodesian Syllabus 2160 was the first curriculum to be implemented in the then recently-independent nation and was taken over from the colonial government. This was superseded by Syllabus 2166, which was quickly followed by Syllabus 2167. The four national policy documents on the teaching of History in Zimbabwe place emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills to enable learners to fit in the competitive world of the 21st century (Chimbunde et al., 2024). The 2167 History syllabus in Zimbabwe amply illustrates the necessity to create a supportive learning environment for the enhancement of critical thinking skills in History teaching.

Moyo (2014:16) recognises that History pedagogy in Zimbabwe was characterised by "rote learning and memorisation of facts, and uncritical reading of text by teachers and students." Sengai and Mokhele (2021) assert that the Form 1-4 History syllabus, which superseded History 2167, eliminated the elements of content recitation, hence facilitating a critical and comprehensive analysis of historical data. The justification

for the replacement of these History syllabi in Zimbabwe probably lies in Dube and Moyo's (2022) claim that rather than following the traditional History approach that emphasised the simple recall of facts, criticality was a goal of History teaching and undeniably, that has characterised progressive History curriculum. Thus, the new historical approach demanded a shift towards a more learner centred approach that placed an emphasis on the skills-based approach for the improvement of critical thinking skills

Although the new historical approach advocates for a shift toward more learner-centred teaching, studies in Zimbabwe consistently reveal that teacher-centred methods remain dominant in history classrooms. This has resulted in passive learning and declining student interest in the subject (Chimbi & Jita, 2020, 2021; Moyo & Modiba, 2013; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021). Despite repeated curriculum reform efforts intended to transform teaching practices, many History teachers in Zimbabwe have shown little change in their instructional methods. This reflects Fullan's (1991:127) observation that the "implementation problem" is essentially a "problem of meaning", as educators often fail to fully understand or internalise the core principles of the reforms. As a result, the continued reliance on outdated pedagogies in secondary school History may deprive learners of the chance to engage deeply with the complex historical forces that have shaped Zimbabwean society.

Nonetheless, the secondary school History curriculum has recently been revised to align with the nation's evolving goals for history education. The Heritage-Based History curriculum in Zimbabwean schools is intended to be delivered in a manner that promotes innovative thinking and encourages imaginative problem-solving (MoPSE, 2024). It adopts a Heritage-Based approach that emphasises practical, hands-on learning experiences. In essence, Zimbabwe's national History curriculum has shifted from being predominantly content-driven and examination-focused to one that is outcomes-oriented and grounded in heritage education.

The Heritage-Based history curriculum places strong emphasis on experiential learning, aiming to make education more engaging and interactive for learners. By integrating innovative teaching strategies such as role-playing, simulations, and drama, it seeks to reinvigorate the teaching of history and reduce learner

disengagement. Central to this approach is the promotion of learner-centred pedagogy, as highlighted in the Competence-Based Curriculum, which marked a significant shift from a content-heavy, teacher-dominated model. This transformation was intended to encourage active learner participation and deeper understanding. However, in practice, History teachers often reverted to teacher-centred methods due to examinations that continue to assess rote memorisation of facts. This misalignment between curriculum goals and assessment practices undermined the intended pedagogical reforms of the CBC (Bentovrato & Moyo, 2025; Chimbi, 2018; Chimbi & Jita, 2020, 2021, 2022; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021).

The new Heritage-Based History curriculum promotes the integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) into teaching and learning. However, studies by Chimbunde et al. (2023), Chimbi and Jita (2019, 2022), and Taruvinga and Moyo (2000) reveal that this vision has had limited impact on actual classroom practice, primarily due to a lack of resources. For instance, consistent power outages across the country have rendered the use of ICT by History students largely impractical. As a result, the effective implementation of the updated History curriculum has been severely constrained by infrastructural limitations.

Moreover, the introduction of Heritage Studies has inadvertently undermined the role of History in the curriculum (Mashayamombe & Berg, 2024; Murenjekwa, 2024). By absorbing significant historical content into Heritage Studies, the unique identity of History as a standalone subject has been blurred. In the lower grades, Heritage Studies has effectively replaced History, following the new curriculum directives. Consequently, History's prominence within the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) has been significantly reduced, with the subject now facing stiff competition for space and relevance.

2.4 THE CONCEPT HERITAGE-BASED EDUCATION

2.4.1 Heritage-Based Education: A Historical Overview

Heritage education has emerged as a holistic educational model that integrates spiritual, cultural, and moral values. The concept of heritage education is recognised to be complex (Felices-De la Fuente et al., 2020; Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2020; Ocal,

2016; Pakombwele & Mapolisa, 2023; Perez et al., 2010; Van Doorsselaere, 2021). It can be treated and conceptualised differently in formal educational settings depending on the focus that policymakers want to create. The concept of heritage education has its roots in the 1960s, when the significance of the built environment in providing a sense of history and place became apparent (Hunter, 1988, cited in Zazu, 2013). By the 1970s, heritage education programmes had gained popularity globally, including in Southern Africa (Hunter, 1988; Shava & Zazu, 2012; Van Doorsselaere, 2021). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) formally launched the concept of heritage education in 1994 through the "Young People's Participation in World Heritage Preservation and Promotion" project (Grever et al., 2012; Pakombwele & Mapolisa, 2023; Soininen, 2017; UNESCO, 2013). This initiative aimed to engage young people in heritage conservation and promote awareness about world heritage sites, cultural traditions, ecology, and biodiversity conservation

Thus, Heritage primarily includes connections to ideas such as citizenship, cultural awareness, intercultural communication, sustainability, or historical thinking in the range of educational opportunities. In countries with similar colonial histories, such as Australia, heritage education programmes in museums have focused on supplementing school curricula (Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2020; González-Valencia, 2020; Griffin & Paroissien, 2011). In Slovenia, efforts were made to investigate the curriculum links between fine art and heritage education, and then they were tested in primary school classrooms. According to the Council of Europe's suggestion, heritage education should be promoted into various educational disciplines at all levels and in all teaching modalities since it is, by its very nature, cross-curricular (Van Doorsselaere, 2021). Heritage education and the scientific study of it have changed dramatically over the past 20 years, and they have progressively been able to establish themselves as a field. However, as noted by Van Bortel et al. (2016), little is known about the practices of legacy education in European nations.

The history of heritage education in Southern Africa is not well-documented, with limited research available (Shava & Zazu, 2012; González-Valencia, 2020). Heritage and history are closely intertwined, with historians focusing on past events and heritage practitioners working to preserve and educate the public about these

historical aspects (Felices-De la Fuente, 2020; Saunders, 2007; Van Doorselaere, 2021). HBC can be regarded as an effort to reform and decolonise the curriculum in post-colonial Southern African states. This decolonisation process entails dismantling educational frameworks dominated by foreign practices and Eurocentric viewpoints to make room for indigenous knowledge and the perspectives of formerly colonised populations. Chimbi and Jita (2023), Chimbunde and Moreeng (2024) and Olivier (2021) opine that this process involves revising and restructuring content and practices to challenge and eliminate colonial biases and perspectives.

HBC also emphasises the preservation and transmission of cultural, historical, and traditional knowledge. Initially, conservation efforts focused on historic-built environments, but have since expanded to include other aspects of heritage, such as archaeology, natural history, and personal artifacts (UNESCO, 2002, 2006). Educational programmes that integrate heritage studies into subjects like scientific literacy, citizenship education, and environmental education have surfaced in recent years. In contrast, there is a growing trend of using heritage environments as teaching resources, including museums, archaeological sites, and festivals (Calaf, 2008; Felices-De la Fuente, 2020; Gómez-Carrasco, 2020; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Rennie & Johnston, 2004; Xanthoudaki et al., 2003).

2.4.2 Characteristics of Heritage-Based Education

The intersection of education and heritage is undergoing a significant transformation. Heritage encompasses both tangible and intangible natural and cultural endowments, including historical legacy, social values, languages, and environmental resources, which are transmitted from one generation to the next (MoPSE, 2024; Rodriguez & Merillas, 2021). The underlying principle of heritage-based education is to develop an education system that produces knowledgeable and skilled individuals who contribute to the economy while being mindful of environmental sustainability and cultural heritage. The heritagisation process fosters a positive and enduring appreciation for cultural diversity, facilitating a dialogue between heritage and cultural rights (Matthews et al., 2019) Heritage-based teaching and learning involves rooting the curriculum in the cultural, historical, and environmental contexts of the learners.

From an educational perspective, the curriculum at all levels of formal education should be infused with content that reflects African heritage and values. Tabulawa (2013) emphasises the importance of considering the local context, culture and history when implementing curriculum reforms. However, traditional approaches to heritage education in schools often adopt a monumental and academic approach, which can be limiting. In contrast, effective heritage education involves integrating new materials and perspectives into the existing curriculum, with the aim of producing knowledgeable and culturally-aware individuals who can contribute to their communities (Buckley & Graves, 2016; Castro-Calviño et al., 2020). Contextual learning is essential to this study because it helps students relate academic ideas to their real-world experiences in Zimbabwe. In essence, heritage-based education is instruction that emphasises or makes use of the finest information available about one's surroundings or a nation's natural resources. Additionally, integrating indigenous knowledge and customs into the curriculum can support sustainability and cultural relevance.

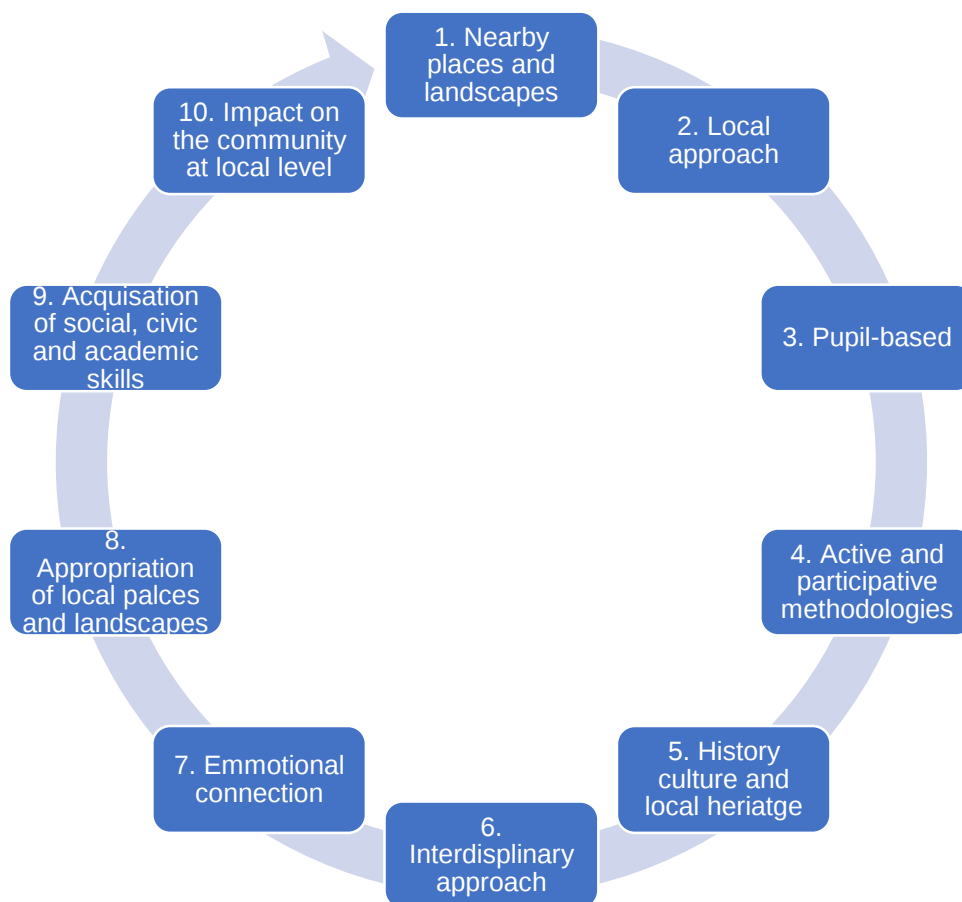


Figure 2: Ten aspects of Heritage-Based Education

Source: (Rodriquez et al., 2021)

The Spanish model for Heritage-Based Education emphasises an emotional connection between students and their local environment, achieved through interdisciplinary and guided research (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000; Liceras, 2003, 2016). Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Heritage-Based Education will incorporate local sites, such as national shrines and cultural heritage sites, throughout the curriculum, with a focus on the National Pledge to promote patriotism, loyalty, and respect (Moyo, 2024). This approach combines emotion and reason, enabling students to develop essential skills, a deeper connection with their environment, and a sense of responsibility for preserving it. By adopting a socio-critical perspective, heritage elements are examined as living, publicly recognised, and valued documents.

This framework advocates for a "new localism" approach, emphasising environmental stewardship as a means of promoting social improvement (Chinnery, 2013; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008; Van Doorselaere, 2021). By adopting an

indigenous perspective, learners can develop a deeper understanding of their local environment and its complex relationships with global systems. This approach encourages students to think critically about the intersections of globalisation, capitalism, and cultural oppression (Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Castro-Calviño et al., 2020; López-Facal, 2019; McInerney et al., 2011; Pakombwele & Mapolisa, 2023), and to become active agents of change in environmental decision-making (Morgan, 2012; Peti et al., 2021; Trabajo-Rite, 2020). By integrating rational and emotional learning, students can cultivate a sense of responsibility for preserving the natural world. Additionally, working together with locals and cultural specialists strengthens the bonds between the community and the school and promotes a common dedication to environmental care and education.

2.4.3 Rationale for Introducing Heritage-Based Education in Zimbabwe

On 7 May 2024, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education officially launched the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC). The reform was designed to cultivate learners who are not only academically-proficient, but also grounded in a national outlook aligned with Zimbabwe's Vision 2030, which seeks to transform the country into an upper-middle-income economy by 2030, as articulated in National Development Strategies 1 and 2 (2021–2030) (Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025). Unlike conventional approaches that emphasised abstract and decontextualised content, Heritage-Based education advances an environmental, social, and critically-oriented perspective, thereby re-situating learning within culturally- and contextually-relevant frameworks. The primary objective of heritage education extends beyond mere knowledge acquisition of historic sites and objects; it aims to foster a sense of ownership, responsibility, and stewardship among students towards their cultural heritage (Magwa, 2019; Pakombwele & Maphosa, 2023; Rodriguez et al., 2021; MoPSE, 2024). The primary goal of Heritage-Based Education is to develop an African child who is prepared for the demands of the 21st century, emphasising the cultivation of critical thinking skills. This approach incorporates new content that encourages learners to reflect on issues such as socio-environmental justice and the well-being of their communities.

Heritage-Based Education actively engages local communities in the learning

process and emphasises in-service teacher training and coaching, making use of resources that are readily available within the local context. The HBC is implemented with consideration of the environmental context it aims to enhance, focusing on equipping students with the skills, values, and attitudes necessary for life and professional success (Chahwanda, 2024; Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Ndongwe, 2025). A critical analysis of heritage education suggests that it has the potential to facilitate cultural reclamation and appreciation, enabling individuals to reconnect with their cultural heritage (Bhurekeni, 2020; Manyeruke, 2024). By integrating heritage education, schools can foster a more inclusive, empathetic, and tolerant society, where learners from diverse cultural backgrounds co-exist and flourish. This is especially important in today's globalised world, where people from various backgrounds interact and collaborate regularly. Katshuna and Shikalepo (2023) support this view, arguing that national curricula should reflect the country's ideology and core values. The heritage-based philosophy also highlights the need to apply locally-acquired knowledge to create relevant goods and services (Muzira & Bandai, 2020). This approach holds particular importance in Zimbabwe, as it focuses on teaching local history, culture, and values in secondary schools, thereby nurturing learners' sense of responsibility to preserve and protect their cultural heritage from deterioration, destruction, or loss.

As Udophia (2021) observes, the curriculum functions as a tool for preserving societal identity and preparing youth to contribute for a better future. Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) embodies this philosophy by prioritising cultural heritage education (Manyeruke, 2024). Heritage education helps learners connect with their cultural origins and guides their future paths. According to Article 4 of the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention, State Parties are responsible for identifying, protecting, conserving, presenting, and passing on cultural and natural heritage to future generations (UNESCO, 1972). This transmission is supported through outreach and educational programmes. By embedding heritage into the curriculum, cultural heritage is preserved and handed down, ensuring its continuity and sustainability amid changing times.

2.5 HBC IMPLEMENTATION: INSIGHTS FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Numerous studies on curriculum implementation have endeavoured to address a fundamental yet profound question that persists over time, posed by McLaughlin (1998:70) thus: “Why are classroom practices so hard to change?” The majority of research concurs that comprehensive, national-scale curriculum reforms aimed at transforming teachers' instructional beliefs, methodologies, classroom organisation, and assessment approaches often face significant challenges and are difficult to implement successfully (Chapman, 2019; Cuban, 2023; Harris & Graham, 2019; Harris, 2021; Labaree, 2024; Fullan, 2015; Rahman et al., 2018). Despite the persistent efforts, the majority of school reforms across the developed world have failed to take the root, while those that showed promise were often neglected or supplanted by novel, scientifically grounded approaches, resulting in scant lasting impact (Cuban 1990, 2012, 2023; Gibbs, 2022; Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019; Murphy, 2020).

Educational reform initiatives frequently fail to thrive due to inadequate consideration of local dynamics context, organisational dynamics and internal and external factors. Literature reveals that reform initiatives frequently overlook the lessons of history, instead opting for idealised narratives, resulting in repeated mistakes and ultimately failure (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019; Murphy, 2020). Although this section of the literature review is focusing on HBC implementation in developed countries, special attention will be paid to Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum reform implementation.

2.5.1 Top-Down Approach to Curriculum Reforms

In the top-down approach model, Ministries of Education, Curriculum development units and policymakers determine the content, pedagogical expectations and assessment standards, while school leaders and teachers are responsible for implementing these directives in classrooms. Research suggests that educational change often occurs through a top-down process, where policymakers design curricula without adequate input from teachers, who are ultimately responsible for

implementation (Fullan, 2015). This approach can create a disconnection between the idealised curriculum and the realities of classroom practice. The implementation of a new curriculum can be a complex process, particularly when it involves a top-down approach where policymakers dictate the changes without considering teacher perspectives. Studies have consistently shown that teachers are often excluded from policy formulation, despite being crucial to the implementation process (Fullan, 2015; Murphy, 2020; OECD, 2019; Prendergast, 2018). As a consequence, educational reforms often overlook the interests, beliefs, and values of History teachers, resulting in the imposition of large-scale, nationally-mandated initiatives that may not be effective in practice. Tan-Sisman (2021) examined curriculum development processes in Singapore and Turkey, finding that in both countries, these processes were managed centrally by ministries of education, reflecting a top-down approach. Fullan (2016) emphasises that understanding the characteristics of an innovation and the roles of all stakeholders is essential during implementation. Without clear guidance, teachers may feel uncertain about how to incorporate new initiatives into their teaching or mistakenly believe they are already applying them.

Research conducted in England by Harris and Graham (2019) and Harris (2021) indicates that History teachers frequently demonstrated reluctance to engage with curriculum reforms, particularly in adopting new content areas. Harris (2021) further underscores the constraining role of revised examination specifications in shaping teachers' pedagogical choices. Complementary studies by Harris and Reynolds (2018) and Harris and Burn (2016) similarly identified a persistent resistance to curricular innovation within the English education system, most notably in the early years of secondary schooling. Despite multiple revisions to the National Curriculum since its introduction in 1991, History instruction has remained largely unchanged, with teachers continuing to focus on familiar topics. As Plunket (2024) observes, the inherent complexity of curricular change often compounds these challenges, making it difficult both to articulate the rationale for reform and to gain meaningful support from key stakeholders.

International curriculum experts agree that large-scale innovations like the new Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum are driven by implementation, which, in turn depends, heavily on the users. As Hunkins and Ornstein (2016:223) highlight,

“Teachers as frontline users of the new curriculum are vital to its successful implementation, as teaching is a critical part of implementing a curriculum.” The rollout of the new Heritage-Based History curriculum can be hampered by the gap between the official policy rhetoric and the “subjective reality” educators face in their daily classrooms, a challenge noted by Fullan (2015). This top-down approach often results in discrepancies between the intended curriculum (as set out in policy documents), the implemented curriculum (what actually happens in schools and classrooms), and the attained curriculum (students’ actual learning experiences).

Top-down approaches often lead to a lack of shared understanding and commitment among History teachers, primarily because they do not fully comprehend the purpose or role of the changes. A study by Rautiainen et al. (2019) in Finnish secondary schools similarly found that History teachers remained confused about the new teaching objectives, despite these having been in place since 1994. Top-down approaches often lead to a lack of shared understanding and commitment among History teachers, primarily because they do not fully comprehend the purpose or role of the changes. Implementing a new Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum without the necessary conditions for change and simultaneously undermining teachers’ skills is unlikely to succeed. Supporting this perspective, Silberman (1970) and Murphy (2020) argue that teachers and school administrators frequently view solution strategies devised by others as disconnected and unhelpful, making their failure almost inevitable. Even when compelled to adopt these strategies, teachers often give them minimal genuine attention.

Although curriculum reform was initially thought of from a “top-down” standpoint, it has gradually moved toward a more “bottom-up” strategy that emphasises the crucial role that teachers play in the process (Almeida & Viana, 2023; Gouédard et al., 2020; Priestley et al., 2021). Researchers such as Hall and Hord (2006) and Skedmo and Huber (2019) argue that the effectiveness of top-down management depends on the concurrent use of strict monitoring, ongoing teacher development programmes, constant communication, and reasonable deadlines. However, rather than being only passive implementers of aims and philosophies that are enforced from outside sources, it is critical to acknowledge teachers as important participants in the curriculum building process. Smith et al. (2024) demonstrate the value of teacher

participation in curriculum design, development, and implementation using quantitative insights from England and Scotland on History teachers. This participatory approach was used to empower instructors, instill a feeling of agency and ownership, and ensure that their pedagogical practices are consistent with the curriculum's overall goals.

Skedsmo and Huber (2019) also highlight that developed countries such as Singapore, Finland, and Australia employ a bottom-up approach, also referred to as grassroots curriculum development. They explain that in this model, decisions are made by teachers who are responsible for implementing the curriculum. This process fosters a sense of ownership among teachers and enhances their awareness of the necessary changes. However, it should be noted that a series of reforms across the world have adhered to the top-down approach. This study explores the potential effects of a top-down approach on the implementation of the newly introduced Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum in Zimbabwe.

2.5.2 Attitudes of the Implementers

Traditionally, educational institutions are perceived as conservative entities that exhibit resistance to change, with teachers often viewed as inherently opposed to reform. This resistance stems from the inherent risks associated with change, particularly the potential for failure. Research indicates that many teachers exhibit reluctance to embrace change during the implementation of new curricula, favouring the existing state of affairs, which can adversely affect the success of curriculum initiatives (Bryne & Prendergast, 2019; Cohen, 1990; Cuban, 2013; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Fullan, 2015; Harris & Graham, 2019; OECD, 2019; Smith et al., 2024; Xiang, 2023). In research conducted in North American classrooms, McLaughlin (1987:173) discovered that when teachers are presented with a reform policy for classroom implementation, their initial response is to interpret and make sense of the policy (sense-making) before taking any action. Teachers interpret and implement curriculum reforms based on their own experiences, beliefs, and the local context. Even when new methods are introduced, how teachers make sense of them (sense-making) determines whether and how they are enacted in practice.

Attitude of the implementers in a curriculum reform process is a critical determinant of how effectively policy intentions are shaped in to classroom practice. A study conducted by Harris and Graham (2019) on English History teachers engaging with curriculum reform revealed that their willingness to engage with changes was also related to their sense of subject identity. Consequently, the challenges in executing reforms at both school and classroom levels are frequently attributed to the History teachers' aversion to curriculum changes and the conservative nature of educational institutions. It is essential for those involved in implementing reforms to acknowledge the complexity of these processes, recognising that there is no straightforward solution to ensure effective implementation.

Despite ongoing curriculum reforms, classroom practices have remained relatively unchanged, with observations of teaching methods of today showing the methods bearing a striking resemblance to those of 30 years ago (Berg & Christou; 2020; Cunningham, 2018). This persistence of traditional teaching methods suggests that curriculum reform has not led to the desired changes in classroom practice, nor has it resulted in improved learning outcomes (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Cuban, 2013, 2023; Cunningham, 2018). Research demonstrates that History teachers would choose what to teach and what to leave out of the new curriculum according to their perceptions of what is crucial for the students. Fullan (1991:17) supports the above view by asserting that: "Educational change depends on what teachers do and think, it's as simple and complex as that." History curriculum reforms frequently falter due to resistance at the local level, where teachers may delay or reject state-imposed programmatic models in favour of preserving collective memory or traditional interpretations of history.

History teachers are often perceived as conservative in their pedagogical orientation and maybe reluctant to abandon traditional chalk-and-talk methods of instruction. Cuban (2023) describes a high school History lesson he observed in California, USA, which was dominated by a teacher-centred approach. He notes that teacher talk consistently outweighed student participation, the teacher controlled most of the class time, and heavily relied on the textbook to guide curriculum and instructional decisions. This example highlights that History teachers rarely abandon their long-established practices. Instead, they tend to rely on familiar methods and prior

knowledge when delivering new content. Even with reforms emphasising progressive or student-centred learning, most classrooms still revolve around teacher-centred instruction, lectures, textbooks and seatwork. Teachers often interpret, modify, ignore, or selectively implement centralised curricula based on their professional judgment and the specific context of their classrooms (Ball & Bowe, 1992; Cohen & Ball, 1990; Murphy, 2020). As a result, many History curriculum reform efforts aiming to change classroom practices have been impeded by resistance during the implementation phase, effectively stopping reforms at the classroom door.

The persistence of chalk-and-talk methods can be understood as a complex interaction between teacher beliefs, institutional expectations and systemic conditions rather than unwillingness to innovate. Teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and values significantly influence how history is taught and which materials, like textbooks, are given priority (Berg & Christou, 2020). History teachers' conservative perspectives and traditional teaching methods can significantly shape their classroom practices and interactions with students during curriculum implementation. Research has shown that many History teachers tend to prioritise examination results over broader educational objectives (Cuban, 2016; Harris & Graham, 2019; Kellaghan & Greaney, 2020; Ormond, 2017). This trend was further confirmed by Smith (2019), who studied Scottish History classrooms, and Ormond (2017) in New Zealand, both of whom found that teachers often focus on content they believe will ensure examination success or remain within their comfort zones regarding their subject knowledge and available resources. Consequently, History teachers frequently emphasise what they think will improve students' examination performance rather than strictly follow curriculum requirements. Similarly, Rautiainen et al. (2019) argue that in Finland, the matriculation examination heavily influences the teaching and learning of History in general upper secondary schools. This results in a compromise where History instruction balances between rote memorisation of content and developing historical skills, such as interpreting individual short written sources, films, or images related to examination questions.

There is a prevailing tendency in education to resist changes and maintain the status quo across various countries. A study by the OECD (2019b), on curriculum reform in European schools, found that most History teachers felt uncomfortable integrating

traditional pedagogies with modern teaching requirements. Teachers often prefer to adhere to traditional teaching approaches, such as teacher-centred methods, as they perceive that adopting child-centred approaches may compromise their authority (Dewey, 1965; Rautiainen et al., 2019). Education is often characterised by sudden shifts in approaches, with teachers enthusiastically adopting new methods only to abandon them shortly after. This phenomenon is attributed to teachers relying heavily on trends rather than critical thinking and professional judgment. Teachers struggle with adapting to new teaching strategies and classroom organisation, often reverting to traditional methods or modifying the curriculum to suit local contexts (Fullan, 2015; Harris, 2021; Nevenglosky et al., 2018). There is still disagreement among History teachers, scholars, and politicians over the best ways to engage all kids intellectually: Should curricula be child-centred or subject-centred? Should there be student-centred or teacher-centred pedagogies? The focus of this study is to explore how secondary school History teachers are engaging with the newly-introduced Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum. Specifically, it seeks to examine whether the implementation of the Heritage-Based History policy aligns with its practical application in Form Three classrooms.

2.5.3 Training of Teachers

Effective teacher training is essential for equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence to implement new curriculum reforms. The failure of policymakers to provide adequate support and training for teachers can be a significant barrier to successful reform implementation. Several studies have emphasised the significance of adequate teacher training in the successful implementation of new curriculum reforms (Ball et al., 2009; Harris & Graham, 2019; Nevenglosky, 2018; OECD, 2019c, 2020; Rahman et al., 2018). Inadequate training can lead to a lack of understanding and clarity among teachers, resulting in resistance to change and a reliance on familiar practices. As Cohen and Ball (1990) astutely observe, teachers cannot be expected to teach concepts and methods they themselves have not learned. To overcome this challenge, teachers' professional development must be prioritised.

The lack of professional development significantly hampers the effective

implementation of curriculum reforms. Vinnervik's (2020) study in Swedish schools found that professional development opportunities differed greatly between and within schools, with some schools having no access to them at all. The implementation of the curriculum suffered greatly as a result of this discrepancy. An analysis of the literature emphasises how crucial it is to give teachers sufficient training both before and during the introduction of a new curriculum, as this is essential to the initiative's success (Fullan, 2015). In Australian schools, Bradfield and Exley (2020) note that without familiarity with the curriculum, the teachers' fidelity of implementation and the degree to which they adhered to guidelines and content was placed at risk. The relationship between curriculum implementation and History teachers' preparation emphasises how crucial in-service professional development, which includes acquainting teachers with the new HB History curriculum, is to promote effective implementation and supporting particular innovations.

Effective professional development necessitates a long-term, embedded approach, integrated into the school's daily operations. This entails experiential, inquiry-based, reflective, and collaborative learning experiences that foster knowledge acquisition, networking, and innovation. To facilitate transformative growth, professional development should enable educators to reflect on current practices, adopt and adapt new methodologies, and cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, both within and beyond the school community (Hill & Desimone, 2018). Fullan (1991:84) points out that "staff development is a central theme related to change in practice and argues that an intensive programme of training can improve the quality of the implementation process." Some scholars further argue that the presence of a robust support structure throughout the implementation process, characterised by contextualised professional development programmes, is more likely to enhance the efficacy and quality of the implementation process (Cobbold 2017; Fullan, 1991; Kgosei, 2015; Rahman et al., 2018). This approach eschews the limitations of isolated, "one-shot" workshops, instead fostering a culture of on-going professional growth and development that acknowledges the complexities of the educational context.

In contrast to the above literature, countries such as Finland, Australia, Canada, and

Singapore have implemented comprehensive policies that support teachers' professionalism (Haque & David, 2022). These nations prioritise teachers' development, providing on-going training and support from the initial stages of their careers to lifelong learning. Notwithstanding the provision of professional development training for teachers, curriculum reforms have often failed to achieve their intended outcomes. This section of the study concludes that for history teachers to implement a curriculum effectively, they must be knowledgeable. This lends support to the notion that HBC implementation may be hindered by teachers' inadequate knowledge and skills regarding the curriculum. Therefore, lessons learned from developed countries on the importance of professional development on teachers implementing a new curriculum can also be experienced by the History teachers in Zimbabwe.

2.5.4 Curriculum Overload

Curriculum overload, also referred to as curriculum overcrowding, is a widespread challenge affecting education systems globally. Developed countries like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia have all reported experiencing this challenge (Erstad & Voogt, 2018; OECD, 2020; Voogt et al., 2017). Fullan (2000) insightfully notes that overload and fragmentation are major barriers to large-scale educational reform. Often, reform initiatives introduce multiple changes at once, overwhelming teachers, timetables, and school systems. This excessive content can hinder History teachers from implementing learner-centred teaching methods, as they face intense pressure to prepare students for upcoming examinations.

Overloaded curricula can lead to several challenges for implementation: teachers may rush through content and skip certain topics in order to cover syllabus. "The presence of too many reforms, which take teachers in different directions, can also be a problem" (Desimone, 2002:444). Teachers may end up sticking to their old methods and accomplishing nothing new when they are overburdened with too many new tasks. Because they find it challenging to finish teaching the designated curriculum information in the allotted time, teachers are negatively impacted by content overload. In support of this, Geoff (2014) explains that teachers typically

steer clear of learner-centred techniques and favour memory learning strategies like note-taking, dictation, and lecturing when classes are too big. Due to their detrimental effects on time management, teachers are unable to provide each student with individualised attention in large class sizes; as a result, they continue to employ traditional pedagogical approaches. Shareefa et al.'s (2019) investigation in Maldivian elementary schools identified high teacher workload, stemming from inadequate administrative support, as a critical barrier to effective curriculum implementation. Research indicates that large class sizes pose significant challenges for History teachers, hindering effective curriculum implementation.

2.5.5 Explanations for Unsuccessful Reform Implementation

For more than a century, discourses surrounding the perceived failure of curriculum reforms in schools have become deeply entrenched within society. By 2020, conditions in education have remained strikingly similar to those observed in 1970 and 1950, and, in some respects, were considered less effective than in 1930, a period often regarded as a peak of significant school reforms in America (Cuban & Usdan, 2003; Labaree, 2024; Murphy, 2020; Silberman, 1970). Over the past five decades, however, many well-intentioned reforms in developed nations have been poorly-executed, with the majority characterised by weak implementation. Murphy (2020) identifies five key reasons underlying the consistent failure of educational reforms. The foremost among these, as Cuban (1990) earlier observed, is that most initiatives collapse due to flawed implementation. Specifically, school reforms have routinely been undercut by the “assumption of implementation.” Indeed, “most large-scale school change efforts reach only initial or partial implementation and then petrify, eventually becoming targets of future reform” (Evans, 1996:129) and platforms for more suggestions from “well-intentioned policy makers, practitioners, and researchers” (Cuban, 1990:71).

Cohen (1990) argues that most reforms collapse at the level of implementation, not because the policies themselves are inherently flawed, but because they underestimate the complexity of school environments. He highlights that policymakers often assume a linear transfer of reform from policy to practice, overlooking the mediating role of teachers, school culture, and classroom dynamics.

Similarly, Fullan (2015) underscores that reform failure is frequently linked to neglect of the human and organisational dimensions of change. Without adequate professional development, resource provision, and long-term support structures, reforms risk remaining symbolic rather than transformative. Collectively, these scholars demonstrate that reform implementation fails when it is treated as a technical exercise of policy delivery rather than as a dynamic, interactive, and contextually situated process requiring teacher agency, leadership engagement, and institutional alignment.

A second critical reason for reform failure is the lack of attention to both internal and external school contexts and the dynamics of the change process. Much of the reform literature has historically treated schools as homogenous entities, implying that any policy or reform initiative should be implemented uniformly across contexts (Burch, 2007). This perspective neglects the considerable variation that exists between schools in terms of student enrolment, levels of schooling, organisational culture, resource availability, and existing networks or partnerships (Christianson & Angus, 2015; Murphy, 2020). Consequently, reforms are often designed as one-size-fits-all solutions, failing to account for the differentiated needs and capacities of individual schools, which undermine their effectiveness.

Implementing uniform curriculum approaches without accounting for diverse and type of schools often undermines the success curriculum reforms. Fullan's (2015) Triple I Theory provides a useful lens for understanding this challenge. The theory emphasises the interconnection between Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalisation, highlighting that successful reform is not merely about policy directives, but also about how initiatives are adapted and integrated into the specific contexts of schools. According to Triple I Theory, the initiation stage must consider the internal characteristics of schools and the external systemic conditions that can facilitate or hinder reform. Implementation requires active engagement with the local context, including teacher agency, resource availability, and school culture, while Institutionalisation ensures that the reform becomes embedded in practice rather than remaining superficial. By foregrounding context-sensitive change processes, Triple I Theory offers a framework for understanding why uniform approaches often

fail and underscores the necessity of tailoring reforms to the realities of individual schools.

The recurring claim that research-based evidence provides a reliable pathway to school improvement has proven only marginally valid. Efforts to translate scientific findings directly into practice have often been unproductive, and in some cases, detrimental (Fullan, 1982; Cuban, 2010; Murphy, 2020). Much of this evidence has been grounded in the misguided assumption that new reforms will succeed, even though history repeatedly confirms cycles of disappointment and, at best, minimal or statistically insignificant positive effects. As Boser and McDaniels (2018) and Cuban (2013) argue, five decades of change efforts have shown that simply placing research-driven reforms in the hands of educators does little to enhance their understanding of how such knowledge can be meaningfully applied to improve practice. Somewhat paradoxically, reform failure also stems from reformers' ahistorical orientation: they tend to look forward rather than backward, and when history is invoked, it is often selectively constructed to legitimise reform rather than to acknowledge past shortcomings. Reformers frequently overlook that many of the "new" ideas they promote have been proposed before, partially implemented, and ultimately unsuccessful (Murphy & Bleiberg, 2019; Murphy, 2020).

A habitual concern raised in the literature is that several of the so-called "critical partners" in educational reform, namely researchers, policymakers, educators in managerial roles, corporate executives, and philanthropic leaders often possess only limited or superficial knowledge of the realities of schooling (Fullan, 1982). These actors, despite their influence, generally lack a deep understanding of the day-to-day operations, challenges, and cultural dynamics within schools. Cuban (2010) and Fullan (2010) both emphasise that such stakeholders frequently operate with only a vague or abstract conception of education. Sarason (1990:13) describes this as "a superficial conception of the education system", pointing out that many of these individuals have "no experiential basis for the tasks they were asked to accept" (Sarason, 1990:24). In other words, because they have little or no hands-on experience inside classrooms, they are ill-prepared to design reforms that resonate with the lived realities of teachers and learners. Most, in fact, have never even visited schools in any meaningful way to observe learning in practice. Consequently, the

policies and interventions they propose are frequently perceived by teachers and administrators as misaligned with educational needs, impractical in design, and ultimately “doomed to failure” (Silberman, 1970:18). Even when such solutions are formally implemented, they often attract minimal attention or commitment at the school level.

Lastly, an equally damaging pattern in the History of educational reform lays in the systematic exclusion of the two groups whose voices matter most in the learning process: teachers and students. Research consistently shows that their insights are marginalised or dismissed in the reform discourse (Biesta, 2007). Students in particular are rarely acknowledged as legitimate contributors of knowledge. As Fullan (1982:154) observes, “students in school are not treated as people whose opinions matter.” This disregard comes at a high cost. Fullan (1993:147) cautions that without meaningful participation by students, “most educational change will fail.” Similarly, Maehr and Midgley (1996:87) remind us that “it is what the student sees that counts”, pointing to the centrality of learners’ perspectives in shaping genuine improvement. Reform efforts that fail to recognise students as active participants, rather than passive recipients, are fundamentally limited in scope and sustainability.

Therefore, any serious attempt at educational change must not only account for the experiential gap among external stakeholders but also elevate the voices of teachers and learners. Teachers bring practical classroom wisdom and deep contextual knowledge, while students offer insights into what makes learning meaningful, engaging, or alienating. Ignoring these perspectives perpetuates reforms that are disconnected from reality, reinforcing cycles of failure and frustration. The path forward requires a shift from top-down, expert-driven reforms to inclusive, dialogical models of change where those at the centre of the educational encounter teachers and learners are positioned as co-constructors of reform.

2.6 IMPLEMENTING HBC IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Literature has shown that History curricula have faced challenges and failed across the developing nations in History classrooms due to various reasons (Chimbi & Jita, 2019, 2021, 2022; Dlamini, 2019; Mafela, 2021; Mashayamombe & Berg, 2024;

Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020; Sibanda & Young, 2021; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021, 2022). These include History teachers' resistance to change, limited content knowledge, shortage of resources and continued use of teacher centred pedagogies. The cyclical nature of school reforms implies that previous initiatives have not adequately addressed the issues they aimed to resolve. This phenomenon prompts critical questions from Cuban (1990): Are policymakers accurately identifying and addressing the root causes of the problems? Are the adopted policies effectively aligned with the identified problems? Have teachers and practitioners successfully implemented the policies as intended, or have there been gaps in translation? This literature review section explores HBC implementation in developing countries, focusing specifically on HB History reform implementation.

2.6.1 Teachers' Responses to Curriculum Reforms

Traditionally, teachers have favoured instructional methods emphasising rote memorisation, where students are encouraged to provide correct answers rather than pose inquisitive questions. The traditional classroom has long been characterised by a teacher-dominated pedagogical paradigm, which can limit learner autonomy (Chimbi, 2023; Du Plessis, 2020; Hoadley, 2018; Muller & Hoadley, 2022; Tabulawa 2013). Research demonstrates that History lessons in developing countries are 'chalk and talk' teacher dominated lessons, with the learners positioned in a passive reactive role. Curriculum reform initiatives in developing nations advocate for a shift towards learner-centred pedagogy, emphasising the importance of student autonomy and agency in the learning process. However, achieving learner-centred education remains a significant challenge, as noted by Du Plessis (2020), who highlights the global difficulty of implementing learner-centred teaching practices. This discomfort stemmed from modifying their existing practices and adapting to one-to-one teaching environments. This resistance to change ultimately limits learners' potential during curriculum implementation. Research has consistently shown that teachers' epistemological beliefs can act as a barrier to successful implementation (Spillane et al., 2002; Dhlamini, 2019). The sense-making processes of History teachers significantly influence their understanding and implementation of reform policies.

Some History teachers' prioritise-lecture based approaches over learner-centred or

inquiry-based strategies, particularly when curriculum reforms demands pedagogical shifts. Chinese scholars such as Zhou (2023) and Xiang (2023) highlight that many History teachers rely heavily on traditional teaching methods, which are often conservative and out-dated. This overdependence on textbook-based instruction tends to make History lessons rigid and unengaging, despite the new history approach advocating for experiential learning that emphasizes learners' experiences and autonomy. Supporting this, Bertram's studies (2008, 2012) on the implementation of the new Further Education and Training (FET) History curriculum in South Africa revealed that curriculum reform is far from a straightforward technical process, contrary to policymakers' expectations. Most History teachers struggled to incorporate the 'inquiry' approach central to the new curriculum and ultimately reverted to their familiar teaching methods, resisting change. For History education to be truly effective, traditional methods must be reformed to make the subject more accessible and engaging for students.

Research indicates that experienced teachers with long service often resist change, believing that traditional methods are more effective than new approaches. For example, in Eswatini, Dlamini (2019) found that History teachers maintained negative attitudes toward the History curriculum implementation despite receiving prior training. Traditional teaching methods remain dominant in History classrooms well into the twenty-first century. Similarly, Ogah (2023) discovered that Nigerian high school History teachers did not fully adhere to the prescribed teaching methods, undermining curriculum fidelity. In Zambian secondary schools, Kabombwe and Mulenga (2023) observed a lack of uniformity in implementing the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) for History, with many teachers still using outdated syllabi. Supporting these findings, Abrahams and Arendse (2022) note that in South African schools, History lessons had changed little since their own student days, with teachers predominantly using conventional, teacher-centred methods despite the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) promoting learner-centred pedagogy. History teachers often adapt reforms to fit their existing routines rather than completely transform their methods. When a curriculum is implemented with fidelity, researchers can more accurately assess whether its goals are achieved, leading to a clearer understanding of student performance.

History teachers often classify policies as familiar or unfamiliar, relevant or irrelevant, and implement them accordingly in their teaching practices. For instance, Boadu et al. (2020:187) found in Ghanaian History classrooms a “mismatch between what was planned and what was implemented”, indicating that teachers did not strictly follow their lesson plans but adapted their methods as classroom situations evolved. Although some teachers intended to use group activities, many reverted to lectures and textbook readings. This demonstrates that despite calls for learner-centred pedagogies in Ghana’s new curriculum, traditional teaching methods remain prevalent. Research supports that learner-centred teaching is an effective way to enhance students’ academic achievement. Madar and Baban (2015) and Fufa et al. (2024) found that participatory teaching strategies help develop students’ skills and boost academic performance. These strategies place students at the heart of the learning process, promoting active engagement. However, many History teachers believe that participatory, student-centred approaches are less effective in large classrooms and more time-consuming than lecture-based methods. Such views often reflect resistance to adopting innovative teaching practices.

It is important to note that the actual teaching practices used by teachers in classrooms remain largely unclear (Chimbi & Jita, 2021; Cuban, 2013; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021). There appears to be a significant gap between curriculum expectations and what teachers actually do. In Zimbabwe, studies consistently show that teacher-centred approaches continue to dominate History classrooms, even when resources and training on learner-centred methods are available (Chimbi & Jita, 2019, 2021; Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Sibanda & Young, 2021; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021). The disconnection between teachers’ beliefs and their classroom practices highlights a misalignment between reform policies and teacher culture, which contributes to resistance to change among History teachers.

While it is commonly believed that teachers naturally resist change, some scholars challenge this view. Recent literature suggests that teachers are becoming more open to new ideas compared to past assumptions, and that implementation challenges often stem from factors other than resistance (Chimbi & Jita, 2019, 2021; Gudyanga & Jita, 2018). In a Zimbabwean study, Chimbi and Jita (2019:66) argue that “it is an overstatement to assume that teachers by nature dislike change and are

not willing to acquire new knowledge and skills.” They contend that teachers’ apparent resistance is often due to a lack of knowledge and skills, and that empowering them in these areas is crucial for embracing curriculum changes and pedagogical reforms.

Although recent research indicates that History teachers’ commitment to new initiatives is no longer in question, their hesitation to adopt innovative teaching methods remains a significant obstacle. This raises critical questions: Why do History teachers, when faced with new curriculum innovations or instructional policies, often remain unfaithful to these initiatives by continuing old practices or adapting reforms in ways that contradict their original intentions? Why has this pattern endured for so long? This study investigates how History teachers in Zimbabwe understand and implement the Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum, particularly their shift towards learner-centred pedagogy as advocated by the 2024 HBC curriculum. It seeks to determine whether the new Heritage-Based History policy is being applied as intended in practice.

2.6.2 Professional Development

Some reform efforts fail due to the lack of adequate in-service or staff development of teachers to prepare them to fully address the expectations of the reform plans. This often leads to the deskilling of teachers and subsequent tissue-rejection, ultimately leading to the failure of the reform efforts such as what happened during the History 2166 Syllabus reform agenda in Zimbabwe (Chitate, 2005; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020).

A review of pertinent literature reveals that inadequate knowledge about a new curriculum constitutes a significant barrier to its effective implementation (Chimbunde, 2019; Fullan, 2015; Gasva et al., 2019; Gasva & Phiri, 2020; Matimba & Matimba, 2025; Nyikadzino, 2024; Rahman et al., 2018; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021). A significant concern is the disconnection between the bureaucratically-driven educational systems and the realities of classroom practices, particularly in developing countries. Studies conducted in Kenya, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe found that teachers who received inadequate training felt overwhelmed by the curriculum changes, leading to diminished teacher confidence and commitment

(Dhlomo & Mawere, 2020; Furiwai & Singh-Pillay, 2020; Katshuna & Shikalipo, 2023; Madondo, 2020; Molapo & Pillay's, 2018; Mogale & Modipane, 2021; Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Ndeshimona, 2024; Phaiphai, 2020). Collectively, these findings underscore the imperative of teachers' preparedness, involvement, and ongoing support in ensuring the effective implementation of educational curricula. This knowledge gap has resulted in difficulties for History teachers in implementing the new curriculum, highlighting the need for targeted professional development and support for educators.

History teachers play a pivotal role in curriculum change, as they are responsible for implementing the curriculum in their classrooms. However, numerous innovations have failed due to underestimation or misunderstanding of the implementation process (Adeodun, 2024; Fullan, 1982; Kabombwe, 2019; Spillane et al., 2002; Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020; Tikkanen et al., 2017; Zindi, 2018). History teachers' understanding of their students is vital in addressing the challenges of implementing nuanced learning in History. This knowledge enables teachers to prioritise critical pedagogy in their classrooms, particularly in rural contexts being conducted by this study. Conversely, a lack of pedagogical expertise can lead to History teachers' resistance, neglect, or misapplication of effective teaching methods (Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020). To successfully implement curriculum changes, teachers must develop skills in student-centred, problem-solving, and inquiry-oriented teaching strategies. Historically, teachers have faced difficulties in implementing innovative, progressive curriculum changes that emphasise learner-centred approaches.

Without proper orientation, teachers may feel ill-prepared to manage new learning materials, assessment methods, or new technology. A review of the literature reveals that a major barrier to effective curriculum implementation by History teachers is their limited knowledge of learner-centred approaches, traditional teaching methods, and technology integration (Rafiepour & Farsan, 2021). Research conducted in Eswatini's secondary schools showed that History teachers lacked a clear understanding of the new SGCSE curriculum (Dhlamini, 2019; Ndinelao & Bhebhe, 2021). Insufficient teacher preparation and training often impede successful curriculum reforms, resulting in unsatisfactory outcomes. Similarly, Kabombwe and Mulenga (2019), drawing on experiences from Zambian secondary schools, found

that 67% of History teachers were unfamiliar with the new CBC History curriculum, largely due to inadequate orientation. When teachers are poorly prepared, they tend to revert to traditional teaching methods marked by rote learning and lecturing (Chimbi & Jita, 2019; Kabombwe & Mulenga, 2019). For curriculum implementation to be effective, a mutual adaptation process is needed. History teachers must actively engage with reform policies and tailor them to their specific classroom contexts, taking into account available resources and learner needs. These findings highlight the critical importance of ensuring History teachers possess a thorough understanding of new curricula.

Hoadley and Jansen (2009:226) emphasise that “curriculum policy and the teacher’s practice are changed when the two (policy and practice) encounter each other in the classroom.” In this dynamic process, History teachers actively strive to align their teaching practices with reform policy directives, while simultaneously adapting and refining these policies to better address the specific challenges and realities of their unique classroom contexts. In Tanzania, Ndomondo et al. (2022) and Ndomondo (2024) identified several obstacles to the effective implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) by History teachers, chief among them being a lack of understanding of the new curriculum. Their studies suggest that the adoption of CBC and its associated paradigm shift remain unclear or poorly communicated to History teachers. Policymakers often assume that issuing directives and circulars suffices for successful implementation, yet this approach frequently results in History teachers delivering curricula for which they lack adequate expertise. Similarly, Bertram (2008, 2012) notes that in South Africa the introduction of the FET History curriculum sparked concerns among teachers due to the use of complex curriculum jargon, creating a disconnect between policy intentions and classroom realities.

Nevertheless, research also highlights that even when training is provided, significant challenges in teacher development persist in various countries. For example, Chirwa et al. (2023) found that although teachers in Malawi received training, its duration and effectiveness were insufficient. Similarly, Govender (2018) reports that foundation stage teachers in South Africa attended numerous workshops on new curricula that were irrelevant to their actual teaching needs, leaving them

inadequately prepared. In Ghana, the government organised a five-day training workshop for 152,000 primary school teachers to support the implementation of the Standards-Based Curriculum (Apau, 2021). While generally successful, Kpedator (2019) observes that the government's failure to address teachers' concerns during these trainings resulted in several negative outcomes. Often, teachers struggle to implement reforms due to gaps in necessary knowledge, skills and issues that policymakers frequently overlook by not providing on-going professional development (Gudyanga & Jita, 2018). This neglect leaves teachers without a clear understanding of the intended curriculum reforms.

2.6.3 Extensive Class Sizes

Extensive class sizes pose a significant challenge to effective curriculum implementation, particularly in subjects like History that require critical thinking, discussion and learner engagement. Developing countries, including Iran, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Angola, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, have also grappled with curriculum overcrowding and large class sizes (Abdullahi, 2019; Amofah, 2019; Awuonda et al., 2023; Chimbi, 2024; Chimbunde, 2019; Kurata, 2023; Majoni, 2017; Naz et al., 2020; Ndeshimona, 2024; Shareefa et al., 2019). The success of any History curriculum reform is contingent upon the judicious organisation of teacher workloads. Naz et al.'s (2020) study in Indian elementary schools revealed that oversized classes, coupled with excessive teaching loads and co-curricular activities, negatively impacted curriculum implementation. Similarly, Ogah's (2023) study in Ghanaian high schools highlighted the challenges posed by large class sizes in implementing learner-centred approaches in history classrooms. Excessive teaching loads, large class sizes, and numerous co-curricular activities can collectively undermine the effective implementation of the curriculum. These factors can lead to teacher burnout, decreased morale, and diminished capacity to deliver high-quality instruction.

Large classes make it difficult for teachers to provide individual attention, facilitate interactive or participatory learning and assess students' understanding comprehensively. Drawing from the Kenya experience, Awuonda et al. (2023) demonstrates that the government's 100% transition policy and free education

initiative led to oversized classes, which impeded the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. The flow of teaching and learning History is likely disrupted by overcrowded classrooms, which make it impossible to provide adequate support. These findings align with Ndinelao and Bhebhe (2021) and Ndeshimona's, (2024) studies in Namibian History classrooms, which established that the implementation of updated History curriculum was significantly hindered by large class sizes. Recent studies in Zimbabwe have identified several challenges that hinder history teachers' ability to effectively implement any curriculum (Chimbi, 2024; Mashayamombe, 2024; Mashayamombe & Berg, 2024; Sengai & Mokhele 2020, 2021). Prominent among these challenges are heavy teaching loads and large class sizes. The successful implementation of History curriculum reforms is often labour-intensive, and its effectiveness can be heavily influenced by the organisation of teachers' workloads and the allocation of staff responsibilities in schools. The History teaching profession in developing nations is increasingly grappling with the issue of workload, which has become a pressing concern for governments. This study also investigates the impact of teacher workload and class sizes on the implementation of a Heritage-Based History curriculum in Zimbabwean rural secondary schools.

2.6.4 Resources and Curriculum Implementation

2.6.4.1 Availability of teaching and learning materials

The availability of teaching and learning materials is a critical determinant of successful implementation of the Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum. A review of recent literature in developing countries consistently highlights the lack of adequate teaching resources as a major barrier to effective curriculum implementation (Fullan, 2015; Manzi & Moreeng, 2023; Muchira et al., 2023; Muzvondiwa & Gudyana, 2024; Ngwenya, 2020; Nyikadzino, 2023; OECD, 2019; Phaiphai, 2020; Sengai & Mokhele, 2022). These studies emphasise that sufficient resources are essential for supporting both teachers and learners in the delivery of the Heritage-Based History curriculum. Policy implementation, as several scholars metaphorically describe, is much like a love affair beginning with passionate ideas, grand promises, and heightened expectations (Chimbi, 2019; Chimbunde, 2019; Cohen & Ball, 2006; Cuban, 2013; Fullan, 2015; Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020). The

early stages are often marked by optimism and a sense of boundless potential. However, despite good intentions and initial efforts, the actual outcomes frequently fall short of expectations. The disconnection between vision and reality often leaves stakeholders contending with unfulfilled promises and the challenges of navigating unintended consequences. The resulting gap between the anticipated outcomes and what is practically achieved can lead to disappointment, disillusionment, and the difficult process of reconciling idealistic goals with real-world constraints (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2023; McLaughlin & Ruby, 2021; Fullan, 1982).

When teaching and learning materials are insufficient, teachers may struggle to translate policy intentions into meaningful classroom practice. Research in Eswatini highlights the importance of taking classroom realities into account during policy development (Dhlamini, 2019). Ignoring these realities has led to inadequate resource allocation, insufficient support for teachers, and ineffective implementation of reforms in History classrooms. To achieve successful History education reform, policymakers must prioritise understanding and addressing classroom conditions. Fullan (2015) postulates that effective educational reform implementation requires a multifaceted approach that aligns the curriculum vision with the teaching materials, strategies, and resources used in practice. Felisa et al. (2017) argue that despite the thoughtful and visionary nature of South Africa's history curriculum reform, teacher support was insufficient to equip educators for new pedagogical methods and their roles in the transitional justice project.

Although Malawi explicitly designated History as a core subject within the New Malawi Secondary School Curriculum, a significant challenge for History teachers in adopting innovative pedagogical approaches has been the persistent shortage of learning resources (Mwale, 2018). Similarly, research in Zimbabwean secondary schools by Sibanda and Blignaut (2020) and Mashayamombe and Berg (2024) indicates that teachers encounter substantial obstacles in implementing the curriculum. Some educators reported not using the recommended textbooks due to financial limitations, insufficient time, or a lack of skills necessary to utilise the materials effectively. Textbooks serve as crucial mediators in students' engagement with learning content (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Sengai & Mokhele, 2022), and their absence can significantly hinder instructional quality. Sengai and Mokhele (2022)

further contend that inadequate access to resources may disrupt the timely completion of the curriculum. Their study concluded that the availability of essential instructional materials, including key textbooks, substantially supports teachers in delivering the 2167 History syllabus efficiently.

In contrast to the issues discussed above, the relationship between a policy and its implementation is a complex and challenging puzzle that merits further investigation because "different schools and teachers did different things with the same resources, with different effects on learning" (Cohen et al., 2007:517). This is because teachers may not alter their classroom practices even if resources to support a reform policy are made available. In support, Chimbi (2018:35) opines that,

If policy makers and school 36 principals believe that the success of reform implementation depends on resource and material availability while ignoring or underestimating the local social conditions that influence performance, it may be difficult for change to take root in the classroom, even if resource books and learning media are availed to the teachers.

It should also be noted that, even when they are available, textbooks have been criticised for limiting students' engagement with historical thinking and perpetuating nationalistic narratives at the expense of more inclusive perspectives. This research partly seeks to explore whether the availability of teaching and learning materials is a determining factor in the successful implementation of the Heritage-Based History curriculum, or other whether factors contribute to reforms' effectiveness.

2.6.1.2 Availability of IT materials in classrooms

Research has consistently highlighted the limitations faced by history teachers in developing nations, where teaching and learning are often hindered by inadequate ICT resources, such as insufficient computers and unreliable power supplies to implement the History curricular. The rapid pace of technological innovation has necessitated the integration of digital tools, such as smartphones and computers, into pedagogical practices, thereby expanding learning experiences and enhancing instructional methods (Banerjee, 2024; Bernacki et al., 2020). Consequently, computer laboratories have become indispensable for effective curriculum implementation in the 21st century. Therefore, the use of technology in History

learning requires adequate infrastructure, such as internet access and technological devices. However, it should be noted that schools in remote areas still lack these facilities, so the goal of technology integration has not been fully achieved (Kurniawan, 2023; Marisa, 2020). This gap causes the quality of History education to be uneven in various schools.

The availability of IT materials and conversely the lack thereof, plays a critical role in shaping the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. The integration of 21st-century teaching and learning strategies is essential for fostering critical abilities, including historical thinking, teamwork, and digital literacy, in history education (Banerjee, 2024; Rifin et al., 2019). Access to ICT materials has been consistently highlighted as a crucial factor influencing the successful implementation of a new curricular in history education. Notably, a growing body of research suggests that Emerging Technologies (ETs) are increasingly being employed in History education in developing countries (Aying et al., 2019; Banerjee, 2024; Sebbowa & Nabushawo, 2019; Sebbowa & Ng'ambi, 2020; Syaripuddin et al., 2019). Examples of ETs being utilised include blogs, wikis, social media platforms, and mobile applications. These can bring historical events and concepts to life, fostering deeper understanding and retention. Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of ETs in enhancing history pedagogy. For instance, Digital Game-Based Learning has been found to facilitate engaging and entertaining history learning experiences in Uganda, surpassing traditional rote memorisation approaches (Sebbowa & Muyinda, 2018; Sebbowa & Ng'ambi, 2020).

The presence of IT facilities significantly not only influences pedagogical practices but also the overall success and equity of curriculum reforms in History education. In line with the current trends, the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the teaching and learning of History is now popular (Sengai & Mokhele, 2021). The incorporation of technology has revolutionised curriculum delivery in schools, rendering it imperative for teachers to have access to adequate technological infrastructure. Integrating ICT tools into History lessons can make learning more engaging and interactive for students. Matowo and Tenha (2023) highlight that the revised Zimbabwean curriculum necessitates the utilisation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools, which poses a significant

challenge for rural schools, given their limited financial resources and lack of computer laboratories. This can lead to increased stress and decreased morale among teachers, ultimately compromising the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. These findings align with the broader literature on curriculum change, which emphasises that without logistical and infrastructural support, even the most decorated curricular risk failure at classroom level. Overall, the literature points to the necessity of ensuring that history teachers are equipped with the necessary tools and support to enact the curricular effectively.

Although technological resources are increasingly available in classrooms and personal computer usage has become widespread, research indicates that many teachers across educational levels continue to struggle with integrating technology in ways that genuinely enrich student learning (Cuban & Jandrić, 2015; Makuru & Jita, 2022; Mustapha et al., 2020; Reich, 2020; Xiang, 2023). The successful adoption and utilisation of technology in education are mediated by a constellation of historical and personal factors, particularly teachers' knowledge, dispositions, and beliefs about its pedagogical value. For History teachers, in particular, the effective incorporation of computers into classroom practice depends not only on technical proficiency but also on cultivating a favourable attitude toward digital tools and demonstrating the pedagogical flexibility to adapt instructional strategies in order to harness technology's potential for deepening student engagement and learning.

Reich (2020) demonstrates, in his new book *Failure to Disrupt*, that many new technologies that were supposed to fundamentally alter education have instead been applied in ways that maintain the status quo and the disparities that go along with it. It should be noted that even in the best-case scenario, with teachers well-prepared and plenty of resources available, that admirable curriculum and instructional goals clash (Cuban, 2012; Xiang, 2023). Specifically, History teachers' decisions are shaped by their unique institutional contexts and individual experiences, influencing their willingness to integrate technology into their teaching practices. For instance, Xiang (2023) unearthed that in Chinese rural schools, History teachers persist in using a traditional blackboard and chalk despite access to electronic whiteboards and online teaching resources. The widespread possession of high-tech devices among History teachers' contrasts with the persistence of the phenomenon raising

critical question: Will these be effectively integrated into Heritage-Based History teaching in Zimbabwean rural secondary schools?

2.6.5 Imprint of Curriculum Reforms via the Top-Down Approach

Many developing countries, especially those emerging from colonial rule, retain education systems that reflect the structures and values of their former colonial powers. This historical legacy often results in the continued use of top-down or administratively-driven models of curriculum development, particularly across Africa (Mbeba, 2022; Muller & Hoadley, 2022; Tabulawa, 1998, 2003, 2013). For instance, South Africa's History curriculum is shaped by both its British colonial heritage and the Germanic influences that underpinned apartheid ideology. Major educational reforms typically originate from external sources, driven by societal pressures (Tabulawa, 2013). The top-down approach to History curriculum reforms in developed nations typically reflects the centralised control of educational policy by governments. These reforms carry distinct ideological, political or cultural imprints. Jansen (1990, 2003) and Adeodun (2024) note that curriculum development is often viewed as a political phenomenon, legitimising state control and excluding agents of implementation. This entails those decisions being made at higher levels, resulting in limited teacher consultation and engagement. Furthermore, these externally driven reforms stem from political, social, and economic problems that policymakers believe schools can alleviate.

Reform literature often portrays schools as uniform environments where any policy initiative can be seamlessly implemented and expected to yield the intended results (Burch, 2007). However, this overlooks a critical issue: the disconnection between bureaucratically-designed education systems and the complex realities of classroom practice, especially in developing countries. Research in Tanzania and Zambia highlights that the success of curriculum reforms is closely tied to the involvement of teachers in meaningful discussions and decision-making processes (Chale, 2018; Mbeba, 2022). Teacher participation in curriculum development, such as serving on syllabus committees at school, district, and national levels is a key factor that have been neglected in the developing nations. Research has shown that the involvement of teacher curriculum development fosters a stronger sense of ownership and

commitment to the implementation process. In the context of History education, teachers' perspectives are vital for refining pedagogical practices, and their active engagement is essential for the successful realisation of curriculum reforms.

A similar trend is evident in Zimbabwe, where the national curriculum for schools is planned and developed by the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) (Chinyani, 2013: 128; Madondo et al., 2024). As noted by Sengai and Mokhele (2020, 2021), History teachers in Zimbabwe were not consulted prior to the introduction of the Competence-Based Curriculum. This suggests that the new History curriculum was imposed by the government, rather than developed in collaboration with educators. Dube and Jita (2018:907) and Chimbi (2018:62), in their studies on Zimbabwean secondary schools, highlight teachers' frustration with such processes, noting that teachers often get a curriculum which they wonder what its purpose is because the curriculum is formulated by politicians. This lack of consultation makes the curriculum more difficult to implement effectively. Dube and Moyo (2022) further argue that the Zimbabwean history curriculum is challenging to apply because it emphasises Western perspectives while marginalizing African cultural narratives. Research has shown that it is vital to refrain from making unrealistic assumptions about normative, one-size-fits-all approaches to History education that fail to take into account realities on the ground. This underscores how curriculum development during reform processes in Zimbabwe often follows a top-down approach. As a result, standardised educational reforms frequently fail to account for local contextual realities this is one of the key factors contributing to the persistent failure of curriculum reforms in schools.

This prompts a critical examination of the effectiveness of a one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum reform, particularly in the context of the Heritage-Based (HB) history curriculum in Zimbabwean secondary schools. A central question that this study aims to address is: Why have history curriculum outcomes in developing countries remained persistently low, despite successive waves of curriculum reforms in developed nations and recent modest gains in some regions? More specifically: What role if any is the curriculum or curriculum reform itself, playing in either perpetuating or addressing these shortcomings? What insights can be drawn from the implementation of the Heritage-Based History curriculum in Zimbabwe's rural

secondary schools about the broader challenges of curriculum reform in developing contexts? This inquiry seeks to explore whether the design and implementation of the Heritage Based history curriculum are sufficiently responsive to the diverse educational realities, especially in under-resourced, rural schools and how such contextual factors influence the effectiveness of reform. By analysing Zimbabwe's experience, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how curriculum reform can better serve the needs of learners and educators in historically-marginalised and structurally-disadvantaged settings.

2.7 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN ZIMBABWE

2.7.1 History of Curriculum Reform and Implementation in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's journey to reform its curriculum began in 1980, after gaining independence. Like many postcolonial nations, Zimbabwe aimed to overhaul its education system, which had been shaped by its colonial past (Sengai & Mokhele, 2021). The initial reforms focused on decolonising the curriculum, but their implementation was only partial. Despite this, policymakers continued to introduce new measures to address the shortcomings and improve the education system (Chimbi & Jita, 2020). Research indicates that despite on-going history curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe, pedagogical improvements remain elusive, and History teachers continue to express discontent with the innovations implemented since 1980.

2.7.1.1 Post independence wave of reforms

When Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, it inherited a colonial curriculum that did not align with the government's vision for the nation-state and its ideology. The goal of the first reform wave following independence was to make the educational system more relevant and accessible. Nevertheless, this time was characterised by difficulties including a lack of funding and insufficient training for teachers. Zimbabwe's curriculum reform journey has included several important elements, such as teacher training, inclusive education, and decolonisation. All things considered, Zimbabwe's colonial past and the desire to develop a more

inclusive and current educational system have influenced the country's curriculum reform path. The government “adopted a broadly defined socialist policy for the reconstruction of the inherited colonial education system” (Jansen, 1991:77). Zvobgo (1999:115) explains that, “The political mood in the early days of independence did not give policy formulators and implementers much room to rationally examine and debate the policies of the ruling party that were imposed on national government.”

Zimbabwe's educational system underwent a significant transformation following independence in 1980. The government's radical educational reforms aimed to universalise education, leading to a substantial increase in participation rates among marginalised communities. As part of its post-independence reforms, Zimbabwe embarked on a series of curriculum revisions to redress the colonial legacy (Dhlomo & Mawere, 2020). Radical forms of curriculum theorising that drew from Marxist and neo-Marxist philosophy were established in Zimbabwe in response to calls for an emancipatory education focused on praxis as a pedagogical and political tool to challenge the colonial system's ingrained traditions (Moyo, 2013).

Notably, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education introduced the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2015, which was later superseded by the Heritage-Based Curriculum in 2024. Despite these efforts, Zimbabwe's education sector continues to grapple with numerous challenges. The government's failure to allocate the recommended 26% of the national budget to education between 2009 and 2019 has exacerbated these challenges (Munikwa, 2016). The education sector is plagued by inadequate instructional materials, facilities, and qualified teachers, as well as poor funding and lack of motivation. To ensure the successful implementation of the new secondary school curriculum, it is imperative that these challenges are addressed.

2.7.2 Heritage-Based History Curriculum

2.7.2.1 Main curriculum framework

The Zimbabwean Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) Framework is the main reference document informing the development and revision of the syllabi, designing and use of learning resources and the assessment of learning from year 2024 to

2030. The Heritage-Based Curriculum for Primary and Secondary Education 2024-2030 emphasises the teaching of both theory and practice, balancing the acquisition of knowledge and skill (HBC Framework, 2024). The Secretary's Circular Number P10 of 2024 requires that all Zimbabwe secondary schools adopt the two-pathway education curriculum (MoPSE, 2024). According to Policy Circular Number P10 of 2024, a student can pursue one of the following options: Option 1: Academic pathway whereby a learner progresses to A-Level and then to the university. Option 2: comprises learners who aim to gain vocational skills and prepare for the workforce. Upon entering secondary school, these students are grouped based on their specific areas of proficiency (Chahwanda, 2023). To ensure effective and high-quality learning, it is essential to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge, as the heritage-based curriculum demands a unique and specialised instructional approach.

The Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) for 2024–2030 in Zimbabwe seeks to blend the nation's historical foundations with contemporary technological advancements, with the dual objective of nurturing a strong sense of national identity and equipping learners for participation in an innovation-driven economy. It is further designed to promote lifelong learning and active citizenship (Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Gumbodete, 2024; MoPSE, 2024). The HBC resonates with broader continental imperatives such as the Africanisation of education and is consistent with Zimbabwe's indigenisation policy, placing emphasis on the valorisation of cultural heritage and the cultivation of national pride. Scholarship by Pakombwele and Maphosa (2023) highlights the value of heritage education in fostering awareness of cultural site preservation and in mobilising communities to participate in conservation initiatives. At the same time, the incorporation of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) within the HBC is intended to strengthen learners' capacities for critical thinking, creativity, innovation, problem-solving, and programming, thereby equipping them with the competencies required to contribute to Zimbabwe's socio-economic transformation (Chahwanda, 2024).

School curricula should be designed to cater to individual differences, economic requirements, societal needs, and future national aspirations. In Zimbabwe, significant efforts have been made to align the curriculum with these goals.

Significant efforts have been made to adapt the curriculum to the local context, including partial localisation of content, introduction of new teaching methods, and adaptation of examinations (Sibanda & Young, 2019). The subject curriculum documents prioritise student-centred learning, promoting active participation through interactive methodologies such as debates, role-plays, and inquiry-based learning. The Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) advocates for a flexible and facilitative teaching approach, where teachers guide and support student learning rather than simply transmitting knowledge (MoPSE, 2024). Additionally, the curriculum encourages diverse assessment practices, including oral tests, fieldwork, portfolios, and observational assessments.



Figure 3: Pupil-centred learning in HBC Framework

Source: MoPSE HBC Framework (2024:8)

The figure above holds significant relevance for history teachers, as it elucidates the pedagogical principles and values of the Heritage-Based History curriculum and its practical underpinnings in Form 3 classrooms. The Curriculum framework emphasises learner-centred methodologies, positioning History teachers as facilitators as the “pupils engage in the search and discovery of new knowledge”

(MoPSE, 2024:7). The HBC underscores the active engagement of pupils in the learning.

As shown in Figure 3 above, the HBC teaching approaches and methods pillar, according to Moyo (2024), seeks to replace traditional lecture, drill, and rote learning with more learner-centred approaches that give students the opportunity to exercise their creativity, develop and express their ideas, work together, learn by doing, and experience holistic development. The objective of this method is to foster a more inclusive and efficient educational system while offering a more thorough knowledge of student learning. The Heritage-Based History curriculum places a strong emphasis on cultivating skills derived from Zimbabwe's cultural history. One important aspect of the curriculum is the development of these competencies, which place the students at the centre of their education and emphasise both learning the required methods, and assessment (MoPSE, 2024). The Heritage-Based History curriculum expects teachers to be facilitators, collaborators, co-learners and co-explorers than knowledge transmitters.

While Figure 3 positions the learner at the centre of the learning process, reflecting the primary focus of MoPSE and scholars such as Moyo (2024), this research concentrates on the lived experiences of History teachers implementing the HBC at Form 3 level in rural secondary schools. History teachers may encounter potential obstacles, including limited conceptual understanding of HBC content and pedagogical approaches, inadequate access to relevant instructional resources and variable motivation to teach the curriculum (OECD, 2020). Beyond these challenges identified in existing literature, this study aims to uncover additional context-specific hurdles and opportunities associated with HBC implementation in Zimbabwean rural secondary schools. In addition, my study will also explore the extent to which History teachers will adhere to the guidelines of the new Heritage Based history curriculum.

2.7.2.2 School-based projects

School-Based Projects (SBPs) provide immersive learning opportunities that allow students to translate theoretical knowledge into real-world applications. Through this hands-on approach, learners develop key competencies such as creativity, innovation, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving. Through these

projects, students develop problem-solving skills to address challenges within and beyond the classroom environment (MoPSE, 2024c). The benefits of SBPs include promoting critical and creative thinking, fostering practical solutions to real-world problems, and enhancing teamwork and communication skills among learners. The curriculum aims to equip students with the skills to produce goods and services that benefit themselves, their families, communities, and nations, leveraging both tangible and intangible heritage (MoPSE, 2024c). These SBPs will be implemented across various educational levels, from Infant Level (ECD A) to Advanced Level (Form 6). The projects will utilise diverse learning platforms, including hands-on learning experiences, interactive learning tools, dedicated spaces for exploration, open communication and feedback, and real-world applications and observations. This method is comparable to Project-Based Learning (PBL), in which students create, develop, and build practical solutions to problems.

Project-based learning is a teaching methodology that emphasises task delegation, particularly for projects that let students participate in an inquiry process (Hamidah et al., 2020). Project-based learning has a medium to considerable positive influence on students' academic achievement when compared to traditional education (Chen & Yang, 2019). PBL fosters lifelong curiosity and a love of learning, enhances long-term information retention, fosters critical thinking, and links education to the real world. School-Based Projects encourage students to express themselves, pursue their interests, and become creative problem solvers by combining these components. Enhancing academic performance, fostering critical thinking abilities, raising motivation and engagement, and providing real-world experiences for learning, are all advantages of project-based learning (Hamidah et al., 2020).

Additionally, by providing students with more control over their learning process, PBL promotes autonomy and self-regulated learning. Nonetheless, certain obstacles were also noted, including the requirement for increased administrative and curriculum flexibility, training for teachers in PBL facilitation and assessment techniques, and proper time and resource management for project development (Misni et al., 2020). SBP is a completely new concept in the teaching and learning of history in Zimbabwean secondary schools. It was brought as a new concept to replace the research projects known as Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAs).

This qualitative study explores the experiences of history teachers in Hurungwe concerning the implementation of the SBP as informed by the HBC framework's 2024-2030 guidelines.

2.8 RESEARCH GAPS

A comparative reading of global and African curriculum reform studies reveals important epistemic, methodological and contextual tensions. Global reform frameworks prioritise scalability, standardisation and performance metrics, often underestimating the cultural and contextual nuances central to African curriculum reforms. African studies, while contextually sensitive, are sometimes marginalised within global discourse and rarely interrogate the methodological theoretical assumptions underpinning international reform models. The result is a fragmented literature that treats global and African reforms sequentially, without critically synthesising lessons across context or reflecting on how global reform logic intersects, complements, or conflicts with locally grounded decolonial approaches.

By focusing on rural History teachers in rural secondary schools in Hurungwe District, this study addresses multiple dimensions of this comparative gap. Although there is a growing body of literature on the implementation of history curriculum reforms in Zimbabwean schools, a notable gap remains in relation to rural secondary school contexts. Existing research has largely concentrated on primary schools (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2024; Dhlomo & Mawere, 2020; Gasva et al., 2019; Matowo & Tenha, 2023; Ndamba & Chavarika, 2023; Ngwenya, 2020; Nyikadzino, 2023), while studies focusing on secondary schools have predominantly examined urban settings (Chimbi, 2018; Chimbi & Jita, 2019, 2021; Chikuvadze et al., 2024; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021; Sithole et al., 2024). By concentrating on rural secondary schools, this study seeks to fill this gap and contribute to a more balanced and nuanced understanding of how curriculum reforms are enacted in underrepresented educational contexts.

Despite the importance of History, the challenges teachers face when implementing the history curriculum remains understudied. Hence History teachers have been chosen to close this widening disparity. This research sought to address this knowledge gap by offering valuable insights into the experiences of history teachers

implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum. Research on History teachers' involvement in extensive curriculum reform is scant, if it exists at all. They have, therefore, mostly played the role of implementers. Although several studies have investigated the experiences of History teachers in previous curriculum implementations in Zimbabwe (Chimbi, 2018; Chimbi & Jita, 2019; Chimbunde et al., 2023; Mashayamombe, 2024; Mashayamombe & Berg, 2024; Moyo, 2014; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021), a significant knowledge gap exists regarding the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum by History teachers. The primary reason for this knowledge gap is the recent introduction of the Heritage-Based Curriculum, which has resulted in a lack of documented experiences from teachers implementing it. Additionally, research on History curriculum reform implementation in Zimbabwe is still emerging, largely due to the initiative's novelty.

The absence of research on History teachers' experiences in implementing curriculum reforms in Hurungwe District, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe, underscores the need for empirical investigation. From my own vantage point of view, this study might be the first one to focus on history teachers implementing curriculum reform in this specific district. Therefore, this study fills a geographical gap in the literature by focusing on the implementation of the Heritage-Based History Curriculum in Hurungwe's rural secondary schools, an area that, while represented in general education studies, has not been the explicit focus of prior history-curriculum research.

A comprehensive review of existing studies on History teachers' implementation of curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe reveals that this research is one of the few studies, if not the first one, to apply Fullan's Triple I Theory as its theoretical framework. This innovative approach provides a unique perspective for examining the complex dynamics of curriculum reform in the Zimbabwean context. Therefore, this empirical study aims to provide in-depth insights into teachers' experiences during the initial stages of implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum, addressing a significant knowledge gap in the existing literature.

2.8 SUMMARY

Research indicates that many educational reform initiatives often fail to align curriculum changes with necessary support systems in schools. Specifically, contextual factors such as resource allocation, teacher professional development, class sizes, and administrative support frequently remain unchanged, hindering the effectiveness of reform effort (Bertram, 2019; Chirwa et al., 2023; Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Cohen & Ball, 1990; Cuban, 2013, 2023; Dhlamini, 2019; Fullan, 1977, 2015; Labaree, 2024; Ngwenya, 2020; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021; Spillane et al., 2002; Sibanda & Young, 2019). Despite the fanfare surrounding education reforms, History classrooms often remain largely unchanged. The rhetoric and activity surrounding reform efforts can create a perception of transformation, but in reality, the underlying structures and practices remain intact. Scholars who subscribe to this perspective argue that genuine, fundamental school reform is either an impossible goal or, worse still, a deliberate deception (Chimbi & Jita, 2022, 2023; Cohen & Ball, 1990; Cuban, 1990, 2023; Fullan, 2015; Murphy, 2020; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021; Rahman et al., 2018; Tabulawa 1998, 2013).

In contrast to the aforementioned, Cohen and Mehta (2017) clarify that while reforms frequently failed to address the underlying issues in education, it would be inaccurate to claim that reforms never worked. Many great reforms have been implemented; nevertheless, some have become so commonplace that they are no longer considered reforms. However, it is also true that the changes have left some difficulties and practices unaltered. These challenges will likely remain while new challenges are slowly revealed. History curriculum reforms often exhibit cyclical patterns, with educational trends and approaches undergoing significant shifts over time. This phenomenon can be likened to a complex stream with multiple currents, each with its own distinct characteristics and influences.

Despite having the necessary resources, research has shown that history curriculum reforms have failed to change classrooms. Some education reforms are merely symbolic or superficial, intended to create the appearance of change rather than driving meaningful, fundamental transformation (Cuban, 1990, 2013; Cuban & Mehta, 2017; Murphy 2020; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021). This critique suggests that the

capitalist system, driven by ideological imperatives, influences all institutions within the culture, including education. As a result, schools may be used to perpetuate existing power dynamics and social structures, rather than challenging them. According to this perspective, schools are often utilised as a means to address societal problems, rather than being truly empowered to drive systemic change. The implementation of History curriculum reforms, both globally and specifically in Zimbabwe continues to face numerous unresolved challenges and complexities. This study seeks to contribute to the relatively limited body of knowledge on the implementation of history curriculum reforms, with a specific focus on secondary schools in Hurungwe District, Zimbabwe. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology adopted for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to explore the experiences of History teachers in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. The methodology comprises a comprehensive framework that includes the research paradigm, study design, population and sampling techniques, data generation and analysis methods, ethical considerations, and strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the data.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study employed the interpretivist research paradigm to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of history teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in secondary schools in Zimbabwe. A paradigm is a way of viewing and understanding reality, constructing knowledge, and gathering knowledge about the world, which may be defined by its own ontology and epistemology (Tracy, 2013). Kivunja and Kuvini (2017:27) aver that the “major research paradigms that are applied in educational research are: positivism, interpretivism, critical paradigm, and pragmatic paradigm.” In addition, interpretivism is a qualitative research paradigm that prioritises the elucidation of individuals' subjective experiences, motivations, and cognitive processes over quantitative data analysis, with the ultimate goal of gaining a nuanced understanding of complex social interactions (Myers, 2008).

My study adopted the interpretivist paradigm to capture the diverse experiences of history teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum. This paradigm acknowledges that individuals construct reality uniquely, driven by personal motivations and experiences (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Aligning with Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Kothari and Garg (2014), this research assumed that reality is subjective, constructed from individuals' life experiences and interactions. By embracing this paradigm, this study aimed to provide nuanced, contextualised descriptions of History teachers' experiences, focusing on interpreting and understanding the rich, detailed accounts of phenomena that emerge from this research.

The interpretivist paradigm was chosen for this study due to its acknowledgment that research is inherently influenced by the researcher's pre-existing theories and worldview (McLeod, 2023). This perspective diverges from the positivist paradigm, which strives for objectivity and neutrality. A notable advantage of the interpretivist paradigm is its flexibility in employing a wide range of qualitative methods to explore the experiences of history teachers implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in rural secondary schools. This approach values reflective discussions and personal narratives of researchers as essential sources of knowledge and understanding (McLeod, 2023). The interpretive paradigm offers a fertile ground for garnering rich, contextualised data, providing researchers with profound insights that can inform future interventions. By adopting this paradigm, this research aimed to document the multifaceted experiences of History teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in rural secondary schools, acknowledging the diverse perspectives and interpretations of stakeholders.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

My study employed the qualitative research approach to explore the experiences of History teachers in implementing Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in rural secondary schools. Creswell (2014:4) defines the qualitative approach “as an approach for exploring and comprehending the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human challenge.” Qualitative research delves into qualitative phenomena related to, or involving, quality, such as exploring the rationale behind human behaviour, specifically how individuals think or engage in particular actions (Kothari, 2019). In my case, I examined the History teachers' conceptualisation of the Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum. Given that this study aimed to delve into the experiences of History teachers in executing the Heritage-Based Curriculum secondary schools, the qualitative approach was deemed the most suitable option.

One of the main reasons for using this approach is the understanding that qualitative approaches enable people to express their ideas, feelings, and beliefs (Rakotsoane, 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study aimed to explore History teachers' perspectives on the introduction of the Heritage-Based Curriculum. The qualitative research approach was deemed most appropriate, as it allows for the in-depth

exploration of complex attitudes and experiences that may be overlooked by quantitative methods (Kothari, 2019).

The target population comprised 37 Form 3 history teachers across four rural secondary schools in Hurungwe District. As Babbie and Mouton (2012) note, qualitative research focuses on studying individuals or small groups in their natural settings rather than large populations. In this study, four secondary school history teachers were purposively selected as participants. This approach facilitated the generation of rich, detailed data through in-depth interviews, lesson observations, and document analysis.

This study employed the qualitative research approach, as it is particularly suited for exploring the complexities of human behaviour and experiences (Kothari, 2019). Qualitative research enables an in-depth examination of emotions, organisational dynamics, and social phenomena (Queirós et al., 2017; Rahman, 2017). The flexibility of this approach allows for prompt adjustments to methodology, refinement of questions, and modification of settings to optimise data generation. The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to present rich, narrative findings, replete with descriptive data, emergent themes, and compelling storylines (Kumar, 2011). Additionally, this approach facilitates in-depth exploration of the research problem (Merriam, 2014). In this study, probing techniques were employed to gather detailed information about form three history teachers' experiences with implementing a heritage-based curriculum in rural secondary schools, acknowledging the sensitivity and complexity of this issue.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed the multiple case study design to conduct an in-depth exploration of history teachers' experiences with the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum. As noted by Yin (2014), a multiple case study involves a rigorous and systematic examination of multiple carefully selected cases, allowing for a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The case study research design has gained popularity in various social science disciplines due to its ability to provide rich, contextualised insights (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2013; Lune & Berg, 2017; Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Starman, 2013; Yin, 2014; Van Wyk & Taole, 2015). This multiple case study design replicated similar case

studies within a single research endeavour, encompassing multiple cases such as organisations, individuals, or events. Each case functions as a distinct entity, sharing common characteristics with other cases. The primary objective of this design was to ensure a robust and relevant exploration by preventing the occurrence of evidence that fails to address the initial research questions (Yin, 2014).

Creswell (2013:189) suggests that “a typical sample size for case studies ranges from four to five cases.” In alignment with this recommendation, my study purposively selected four History teachers from the selected four different secondary schools, making the sample size consistent with Creswell’s framework. The multiple case study design was employed, and the participants were chosen as “information-rich cases” (Patton, 2002:230), capable of generating deep insights comparable to those from a larger sample. These four History teachers served as individual cases within the broader multiple case design. As Yin (2014:292) notes, “the subtler the issue under investigation, the more cases might be required” was supporting the rationale for selecting multiple cases to explore the nuanced experiences of teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum.

This multiple case study design conceptualised each of the selected History teachers as a distinct case, acknowledging their professional autonomy and expertise in shaping classroom practices, including the pedagogical approaches employed in teaching history within the Heritage-Based Curriculum. By conducting an in-depth examination of each teacher's unique experiences and perspectives, this study enhanced the contextual rationality, trustworthiness, and overall robustness of the research findings. This methodological choice aligns with Cotton's (2006:71) assertion that “the case-study approach is chosen on the basis of its strong grounding in reality, accessibility to people, and the ability to generate a rich, detailed account.” Cross-case analysis was done at the end because analytic conclusions from independent multiple-cases are more powerful than from a single case alone, as observed by Yin (2014).

Contending in support of the multiple case studies, Yin (2014:94) opines that it is useful “when studying school innovations such as the use of new curricula, rearranged school schedules, or a new educational technology, in which individual

schools adopt some innovation.” This study employed the multiple-case study design, where each of the 4 selected History teachers served as a distinct cases as they were teaching a new innovation (HBC) in their form three classrooms. This approach allowed for an in-depth examination of each teacher's experiences with the Heritage-Based Curriculum, while also facilitating a comparative analysis across cases (Cohen et al., 2011). The case study design enables a nuanced understanding of the "fine grain detail" of each teacher's experiences, providing a holistic, real-world perspective (Cohen et al., 2011). This study employed the multiple-case study design to explore the contextual factors that shape History teachers' behaviour patterns and experiences with the newly introduced Heritage-Based Curriculum.

As Yazan (2015) emphasised, multiple-case studies facilitate an in-depth examination of a particular context, yielding a more nuanced understanding of the intricate issues surrounding the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum. The case study design was particularly suitable for this inquiry because it enabled a detailed exploration of the complex interactions between history teachers, the curriculum, and the educational context. Meyer (2001:3) argues that a multiple case study fits for this qualitative study because “it is very useful in responding to ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about a contemporary set of events” In my case, this was relevant to these research sub questions: How are History teachers implementing the Zimbabwe’s Heritage-Based Curriculum in form three classrooms? How can History teachers’ implementation of Zimbabwe’s Heritage-Based Curriculum be understood and explained?

A key limitation of the case study design is its focus on a single phenomenon, which can make it challenging to generalise the findings (Yin, 2014). The mitigation is that case studies compensate with their emphasis on depth and detail, in line with a new issue under investigation. Multiple case studies facilitate the use of diverse data generation methods (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Seabi, 2012; Creswell, 2013; Lune & Berg, 2017), which I leveraged to gather rich and detailed information. This comprehensive approach enabled a multi-faceted exploration of History teachers’ experiences during the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in secondary schools. Consequently, the study illuminated various aspects of both the curriculum

implementation process and its effects on History teachers in Zimbabwe's secondary education context.

3.5 RESEARCH SITES

This study was carried out in four selected rural secondary schools in Hurungwe District. Hurungwe is a District located in Mashonaland West Province of Zimbabwe. It is situated in the north-western part of the country, bordering the following districts: Kariba, Mhondoro-Ngezi, Makonde and Zvimba. Hurungwe is the second largest district in Zimbabwe, is approximately 59,000 square kilometres in size. Its town is Karoi. It has diverse geographical features entailing woodland savannas, grasslands, hills and mountains. Rivers include the gigantic Zambezi River. The district is well known for tobacco farming and mining activities. The district has a rich cultural heritage with several ethnic groups, including the Korekore and the Rozvi people. The district has the most satellite secondary schools in Zimbabwe which emerged due to the Land Reform Programme, which the Government of Zimbabwe carried out in 2000. The last census of 2022 shows that Hurungwe District has about 390 000 inhabitants.

For this multiple case study, four rural secondary schools (three-day schools and one boarding school) were conveniently sampled based on their proximity to the researcher's location. I selected schools (research sites) due to their relevance regarding the study's objectives based on the following criteria: location in a rural area, a registered school, and high schools that offered History at Form 3 level. This sampling strategy ensured ease of access, reduced travel time and costs, and facilitated potential follow-up research. The selected schools were also more likely to be receptive to participation requests due to their proximity. The chosen schools boasted a significant number of qualified History teachers, providing an opportunity for purposive sampling of four History teachers with adequate qualifications and consideration for gender representation. Established schools with better resources were deliberately selected for this study, as they are more likely to respond effectively to curriculum reform initiatives, unlike satellite schools. To maintain confidentiality and ensure the privacy of participating schools and History teachers, pseudonyms were assigned to the four schools: Violet High School, Mean High

School, Clarkson High School, and Magan High School. This measure guaranteed the anonymity of the research participants and settings.

Located in Hurungwe District, Violet High School is a venerable boarding institution, boasting a rich legacy as one of the district's pioneering secondary schools. Established in the post-independence era in 1983, this esteemed school is one of the oldest schools in Hurungwe District. It has nurtured generations of learners. Currently, it has an enrolment of 686 learners with 303 boys and 383 girls. The school currently has 31 qualified teachers. The History Department at Violet High School comprises three accomplished teachers, 2 females and 1 male teacher. Given its long history as a leading educational, low-cost boarding school, social services and training centre, the school attracts students from all parts of Zimbabwe, with most coming from Karoi, Chinhoyi and Kariba.

Clarkson High School, established in 1985, stands as a testament to the district's commitment to education. As a mission school, it has consistently served the local community and surrounding rural areas, providing accessible education to the students from farming backgrounds. The school was established to assist the disadvantaged learners from the local community who had no access to secondary schools during that period. The school was built near a growth point, so half of the learners come from the growth point and some from the rural communities surrounding the school. The school enrolment totals 400 learners across forms 1 to 6. Clarkson High School comprises of 24 dedicated teachers, with 10 males and 14 females. Notably, the History Department has 2 highly-qualified teachers who are adept at imparting historical knowledge to students. The Form 3 class doing History at this school has 27 learners.

Mean High School, founded in 1984, operates under the auspices of the Hurungwe Rural District Council. With approximately four primary schools as feeders, the high school mostly serves the surrounding communities which live on the farmland surrounding Karoi. After nearly forty-five years of independence, the farms are now primarily manned by Black farmers, having formerly been occupied by Europeans. The school is no longer growing due to the low income earned by the local farmers, who now grow tobacco on a modest scale. The school has 450 students in Forms 1–

6, and is staffed by 28 teachers, 10 females and 18 males. The average class size at the institution is 55 students. From Forms 1 to Form 4, Mean High School offers two classes at each level. The head of the school is a man in his late 30s. Notably, there is one female teacher and three male teachers in the History Department. The male teacher who teaches the two Form 3 history classes under HBC was the most significant teacher at the school for this research. The Form 3 class at Mean High I observed had 54 learners.

Magan High School was established in 1985. The school has an enrolment of about 465 learners from Forms 1 to 6. The school has a teaching staff complement of 27 teachers, 17 males and 10 females. The school has five teachers in the History department, 3 females and 2 males. The school is sited at a local growth point which has a small population density. The local growth point has stronger ties to agricultural resources and almost half of the enrolment of the learners comes from the nearby communities and they reside in the growth point when they come to school. Magan High School is fairly resourced with recent books, materials and internet facilities. The History Department at Magan High has 3 teachers who are all qualified to teach History. The most significant person for my study was a Form 3 male History teacher in his early 40s.

3.6 TARGET POPULATION

The target population for this study comprised all Form Three History teachers employed in rural secondary schools within Hurungwe District, Mashonaland West Province. Neuman (2014:252) defines a target population as “the concretely specified large group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results from the sample are generalized.” Similarly, Aspers and Corte (2019:149) describe it as “a category of people with some common defining features that the researcher can identify and study.” Both definitions emphasise that the target population represents the entire set of individuals or entities from which data can be collected. Specifically, this study's target population was 37 Form Three History teachers across 17 rural secondary schools in Hurungwe District, Zimbabwe, from which the sample was drawn.

3.7 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Since generating data from the entire population was not feasible, a sample was selected for the study. I selected 4 rural secondary schools out of the targeted 17 secondary schools in Hurungwe District using the convenience sampling method and 4 Form Three History teachers from a target of population of 37 teachers using purposive sampling. A sample is a carefully selected subset of individuals or cases, drawn from a larger population, intended to be representative of the entire group (Cohen et al., 2018). In short, a subset of the population of interest is called a sample. Convenience sampling is “a non-random sampling method in which the researcher selects anyone he or she happens to come across” (Neuman, 2014:248). The primary criterion for selecting these schools was because of their proximity to the researcher. This is in line with Neuman (2014), who contends that in a convenience sample, cases will be easy to reach, convenient, or readily available. In the same vein Cohen et al. (2007:114) argue that “researchers simply choose the sample from those to whom they have easy access.”

The purposive sampling technique was employed to select key participants for this study. The selection of four History teachers from a pool of 37 in Hurungwe's secondary schools was intentional and planned. This strategic sampling sought to provide a thorough and contextualised understanding of what History teachers think about, and implement, Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum. This approach involves deliberately choosing cases that meet specific criteria relevant to the research focus (Flick, 2009; Cohen et al., 2018). Purposive sampling enabled me to construct a sample tailored to the specific needs of the study. In qualitative research, purposive sampling emphasises selecting participants for their potential to provide rich, insightful information rather than aiming for statistical generalization to the broader population (Patton, 2002:40). Participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research questions and their ability to offer valuable perspectives. For De Vos et al. (2014:222), qualitative samples often consist of a limited number of individuals capable of providing a meaningful glimpse into the wider population. Therefore, each selected participant was intended to provide a valid and representative depiction of the phenomenon under study.

The final sample comprised four History teachers, one from each school, purposively

selected on the basis of having at least three years of experience teaching History, holding a minimum of an undergraduate degree in History teaching, and currently teaching the new Heritage-Based History syllabus at Form 3 level. The selection process also considered gender balance to ensure diverse and inclusive representation. Three were males and one was a female. While efforts were made to ensure inclusivity, the final composition reflects the available and willing participants within the study context.

3.8 RESEARCHER'S ROLE

The role I played in this qualitative multiple case studies were multifaceted since I was not a passive researcher. I generated data through document analysis, in-depth interviews, and observations to better comprehend History teachers' experiences and perceptions of Heritage-Based Curriculum implementation in Zimbabwean secondary schools. Following Stoffels' (2005) recommendation regarding the subject of research, I limited this research to the teaching and learning of History, an area in which I am professionally and pedagogically familiar, having taught History for the previous 11 years. In addition, as a History trained teacher and a school head, I oversaw the implementation of various postcolonial or post-1980 historical advances. At the same time, my role as school head afforded a broader institutional perspective on policy implementation, resource allocation and administrative expectations. Furthermore, I selected History teachers for this study because I believed that, as a certified History teacher, it would be simple to establish a connection with them and develop a sophisticated grasp of the implementation of curricular innovation in this subject area.

I used document analysis protocol (**Appendix D**) to unearth History teachers' experiences in implementing HBC in the selected four rural schools. The following documents were analysed: Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2024-2030); Circular 10 of 2024; History Syllabus; Schemes of work; History departmental meetings minutes; School-based projects implementation Circular Number 9 (2024); and Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment (2024). Through document analysis, this study aimed to identify parallel themes that emerge from history teachers' interactions with the curriculum, including their planning, instructional delivery, and assessment practices.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with four History teachers to gather their perspectives on the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum, using interview guides provided in **Appendices A, B, and C**. These interviews aimed to explore, clarify, and evaluate the extent of the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Given the qualitative nature of this study, interviews were chosen as an appropriate data generation method, as they facilitate the generation of detailed and nuanced descriptions of participants' experiences. The semi-structured format provided flexibility, enabling me to probe further and ask follow-up questions tailored to each respondent's answers, thus broadening the scope while maintaining relevance.

In addition, lesson observations were also employed to examine how History teachers implement the Heritage-Based Curriculum in their classrooms, guided by the observation protocol in **Appendix E**. These observations generated data on the classroom practices, teaching approaches, and instructional strategies utilized by the four history teachers. Through lesson observations, the study sought to obtain rich, contextualised insights into the practical application of the Heritage-Based Curriculum in History lessons. Throughout the study, I remained critically aware of how my professional background could shape data generation and analysis, and I employed reflexive strategies to ensure credibility and analytical rigour.

3.9 DATA GENERATION TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

Data generation for this study occurred in the naturalistic setting of four rural secondary schools in Hurungwe District. A multi-method approach was employed, comprising document analysis or review of relevant documents, in-depth interviews, and lesson observations. This approach aligns with the principles of qualitative research, which emphasises naturalistic inquiry (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

Table 1: Data generation techniques in this study

Sub-Research Question	Data generation Strategies	Data Source	Analysis Procedure

What are the prominent features and interpretation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum?	-Document analysis -Policy analysis -In-depth interviews -Lesson observations -Fieldwork	-HBC curriculum framework -Circular number 4 of 2024 -History lessons -History teachers	-Thematic analysis -Interpretive analysis
What are History teachers' conceptualisation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum?	-Document analysis -Policy analysis -In-depth interviews -Lesson observations -Fieldwork	-History lessons -History teachers -Schemes of work -National syllabus	-Thematic analysis -Interpretive analysis
How are History teachers implementing the Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum in Ordinary level classrooms?	-Document analysis -Policy analysis -In-depth interviews -Lesson observations -Fieldwork	-National syllabus -Schemes of work -History lessons -History teachers	-Interpretation -Thematic analysis -Interpretive analysis -Data triangulation
How can History teachers' implementation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum be understood and explained?	-Document analysis -Policy analysis -In-depth interviews -Lesson observations -Fieldwork	-National syllabus -Schemes of work -History lessons -History teachers	-Interpretation -Thematic analysis -Interpretive analysis -Data triangulation

3.9.1 Document Analysis

The following documents were analysed: Heritage based Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2024-2030); Circular Number 10 of 2024; History Syllabus; Schemes of work; History departmental meetings minutes; School-based projects implementation Circular Number 9 (2024); and Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment. The Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2024-2030 and Circular Number 10 of 2024 were analysed from the start of this study when I was formulating my research proposal. Document analysis can be defined as "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic" (Bowen, 2007: 27). The aim is to gather data by examining relevant documents, selected based on (Flicks, 2009) criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and comprehensiveness. The examination of these documents revealed data that verified and corroborated the

primary themes that had emerged from the other datasets collected during the project. The study's research questions guided the analysis of each document.

Examining the History syllabus reveals that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC), and the Curriculum Development and Technical Service Unit recommend learner-centred and multi-sensory approaches to teaching history. The document analysis procedure included skimming through documents, choosing and analysing relevant data. For example, by analysing schemes of work, I identified the teaching approaches history teachers planned to use and assessed their alignment with the history syllabus. Each document was examined in relation to the study's research questions using thematic analysis, which involved reading, coding, and categorizing data to uncover patterns and themes (Bowen, 2009). Relevant excerpts and notes were extracted, and themes were developed through systematic coding. The analysis of these documents provided data that validated and corroborated the key themes emerging from other sources.

Document analysis was selected for this study because it effectively supports the objective of exploring history teachers' experiences with the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC). This method helped determine the extent to which teachers had embraced curricular changes and provided deeper insight into their prevailing practices and values, reflecting what actually occurred in classrooms during the implementation process. This approach provides empirical data in a non-intrusive and non-reactive manner, allowing for an unbiased examination of the curriculum's implementation. Document analysis was also selected for this study because it "is less costly than other research methods and is often the method of choice when the generation of new data is not feasible" (Bowen, 2009:31). This approach is consistent with Denscombe's (2014) assertion that documents can reveal information inaccessible through other methods, including interviews and observations. Documents can serve as a valuable supplement to and corroboration of data from other sources. This thesis adopted a multi-method research design, integrating document analysis, in-depth interviews, and observations to gather comprehensive, contextualised data. This triangulated approach provides a nuanced understanding of History teachers' experiences with the History of Zimbabwe (HBC) curriculum,

while enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.9 2 Semi-Structured Interviews

To generate rich, contextualised insights from the four purposively selected History teachers, semi-structured interviews were conducted at their respective schools. As noted by Gray (2011), an interview is a focused conversation between the researcher and participant, designed to explore specific topics in depth. Interviews can be broadly classified into three categories: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Crowe et al., 2011). This study employed semi-structured interviews, as advocated by Cohen et al. (2018), who contend that structured interviews are often limited by closed-ended questions, thereby restricting in-depth exploration and probing. Cohen et al. (2018) further argue that internal states such as feelings, thoughts, intentions, and individuals' interpretations of the world cannot be directly observed. As a result, conducting semi-structured interviews offers a valuable method for gathering in-depth insights through direct interaction with participants. This approach enabled me to explore participants' experiences in implementing the Heritage-Based History curriculum in Form 3 classrooms more comprehensively. I selected semi-structured interviews because they provide rich, detailed narratives of participants' beliefs and perceptions, making them particularly effective for examining topics that are complex, personal, or potentially sensitive (Greeff, 2005).

The semi-structured interview instrument was deemed suitable for this study, as it allows for tailored language to accommodate the educational level and ability of the interviewee, thereby mitigating potential misunderstandings (Kothari, 2019). This tool fosters a conducive environment for teachers to express their views freely, ensuring that questions are contextualized to their educational level to avoid misinterpretations. The open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews facilitates the generation of rich, detailed, and contextualised data (Denscombe, 2015). This technique enabled an in-depth examination of History teachers' conceptualisation of, and experiences with, Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum.

Participants were given a draft schedule with the visit dates prior to the interviews. Each of the four secondary school History teachers that were the subject of this

multiple case study participated in three semi-structured interviews that were audio recorded. Before lesson observations started, each history teacher had a pre-observation interview **(Appendix A)**. After three weeks of observations, I conducted an intermittent interview, which is included in **(Appendix B)**. At the conclusion of the eight-week fieldwork period, the third and last interview was the exit interview **(Appendix C)**. These face-to-face interviews were conducted over a two-month period, lasting approximately 15-25 minutes each. To establish trust and rapport, each interview session began with reiterating the interview's purpose, ensuring confidentiality and assuring accurate representation of responses. The participants were afforded the opportunity to ask questions where they did not understand and to elaborate on any issues. The researcher ensured that participants knew, before the inception of the interviews, their right to withdraw if they did not feel comfortable. Audio recordings were made with participants' consent, and transcripts were provided for verification, ensuring data accuracy (Gray, 2014). Data from interviews were captured on audiotape and notes were generated to capture any additional observations.

Like all research methods, interviews have inherent limitations. Babbie (2012) suggests that participants may sometimes offer responses they believe the interviewer wants to hear, potentially compromising authenticity. Additionally, the mere presence of the interviewer can intimidate respondents, influencing their openness. To mitigate these effects, I took time to build rapport by visiting participants beforehand to arrange interview appointments and establish familiarity prior to the actual sessions. Each participant was also assured of their anonymity and was allocated a pseudonym. Polkinghorne (2005) further highlights that individuals may unintentionally alter their accounts when recounting experiences, which presents a challenge since researchers must rely heavily on these narratives. To address this limitation, I employed triangulation by integrating data from observations and document analysis to complement and verify the interview findings. During interviews, I also used probing questions to clarify points and assess the accuracy of the information provided, cross-checking any doubts through direct observation.

3.9.3 Lesson Observations

To gain a nuanced conceptualisation of history teachers' classroom practices and strategies, this study employed lesson observations in natural settings, supplemented by taking notes of teaching and learning processes. I employed non-participant observation to gather information in its most authentic and unaltered form. Magwa and Magwa (2015:83) view an observation as “observing behaviour and interactions as they occur but seen through the eyes of the researcher. It is the systematic description of events, behaviours, artefacts in the social setting chosen for the study.” A structured observation protocol was utilised to examine History teachers' classroom practices and strategies. This tool offers flexibility, allowing the observer to capture subtle aspects of events and behaviours as they occur (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The structured observation protocol ensures consistency in data generation. The decision to employ observation was informed by the recommendations of Creswell (2012), Yin (2014), and Cotton (2006), who suggest that relying solely on methods like interviewing may not be sufficient for capturing teachers' habitual in-class behaviours. Lesson observations provided me with a more direct and detailed insight into history teachers' classroom practices, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences with the Heritage-Based Curriculum.

The researcher also conducted lesson observations to get first-hand and real information and data regarding the major issues impacting HB History in Hurungwe rural secondary schools. “This is because many people do not want to discuss all topics during an interview” (Merriam, 2012:117). Kothari (2019) postulates that one primary advantage of this method is its potential to minimise subjective bias when executed rigorously. For O'Sullivan (2006), observing lessons offers valuable insights into the teaching-learning process, revealing the intricacies of instructional practices and teachers' working conditions. This instrument facilitates the identification of potential areas for improvement in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, O'Sullivan (2006) notes that lesson observations can provide answers to research questions related to the “how”, “why”, and “what” aspects of educational phenomena, yielding rich, contextualised data related to my research-sub questions.

In this study, lesson observations were conducted to generate data on teachers' classroom practices, instructional approaches, and implementation strategies. This provided a nuanced understanding of how History teachers implement the History HBC in their teaching practices.

The first procedure was to identify classes or lessons to observe. I observed Form 3 History classes which were doing the Heritage-Based History syllabus. I also developed an observation protocol to guide data generation and obtain permission from teachers and schools. When conducting lessons observations, I took Cooper and Schindler's (2014) advice that it is important to observe for prolonged periods. Following Copper and Schindler's (2014) advice, prolonged observation minimised initial observer effect, enhance the transferability of findings to similar contexts and allow for nuanced understanding of History teacher practices. I took over 8 weeks in the selected 4 rural secondary schools conducting lesson observations, taking detailed notes on teacher-student interactions, teaching methods and materials used in history lessons. After that, I recorded the observations systematically and analysed findings in relation to research questions, using coding and thematic analysis. Detailed writing and analysis were done to ensure data accuracy.

Over an eight-week period, from the end of May 2025 to the end of July 2025, the study aimed to observe each teacher at least twice weekly, targeting a total of eight lesson observations per teacher. However, due to varying circumstances at the schools, the number of lessons observed per teacher differed during the fieldwork. Unforeseen events, such as teacher unavailability and the commencement of mid-year examinations in mid-July, led to fewer observations than planned. Consequently, a total of 26 lessons were observed across the multiple case studies, instead of the anticipated 32. Despite this shortfall, these 26 observations provided valuable insights into how History teachers were implementing Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum in their Form Three classrooms.

I utilised the non-participant observation method, also known as the total observer approach, which allowed me to observe teaching practices without interfering with the natural flow of classroom activities (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:350). This method enabled me to identify discrepancies and consistencies between teachers'

reported beliefs and actual classroom practices, as highlighted by Pandey and Pandey (2015:21). During observations, I promptly recorded my notes to capture all relevant details and organised them thematically in relation to the research questions immediately after leaving each site to minimise memory lapse.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis, a systematic qualitative method, was utilised in this multiple case study to identify and interpret patterns and themes within the collected data. As defined by Maguire and Delahunt (2017), thematic analysis involves uncovering and deciphering patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012) guided the thematic analysis. These are familiarisation with the data, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and refining themes and writing up the findings. This rigorous approach ensured a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the data, providing a rich understanding of the research phenomena. These steps provide a flexible guideline for classifying, scrutinising, and interpreting qualitative data, ultimately enhancing the rigor and depth of research findings (Naeem, 2023). By utilising thematic analysis, this study aimed to uncover nuanced insights into History teachers' experiences with the Heritage-Based Curriculum.

3.9.1 Familiarisation

This phase is first stage in any qualitative analysis which include reading and re-reading the transcripts. “Common to all forms of qualitative analysis, this phase involves immersing yourself in the data by reading and rereading textual data for example transcripts of interviews, responses to qualitative surveys and listening to audio recordings or watching video data” (Braun & Clarke, 2012:60). It involves the transcription of data and familiarising oneself with it. I acquainted with the entire generation of data, which includes all interviews, lesson observations, and document analysis. It's a good idea to take notes and jot down your early thoughts at this stage.

3.9.2 Initial Coding Phase

This thesis utilised a deductive thematic analysis approach, involving meticulous coding of data segments relevant to the research questions. This phase entails a

thorough examination of the data corpus, comprising interview transcripts, focus group discussions, and visual content (Naeem et al., 2023). Through systematic coding, the generated data were organised into meaningful, manageable units, facilitating the distillation of voluminous data into discrete, intelligible fragments (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The coding methodology was informed by the research questions and the theoretical framework underlying this study.

3.9.3 Searching for Themes

A substantial amount of qualitative data was generated from various sources, including lesson observations, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and field notes. These data were systematically coded and categorised according to the emergent themes, enabling a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the research findings. “A theme is a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data or research question” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3356). Theme development was guided by the significance and coherence of the codes. Codes that clearly aligned were categorised into a theme. The coding process enables researchers to systematically identify, categorise, and analyse specific data elements pertinent to their research question. The data were thus coded, categorised and thematised case by case and then cross-case to reveal major findings of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Yin, 2018). This meticulous process facilitates a deeper understanding of the underlying concepts, themes, and ideas, ultimately contributing to a richer and more comprehensive interpretation of the data. (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

3.9.4 Review of Themes

During this phase, I generated all relevant data for each theme and assess whether the themes remain coherent and meaningful within the context of the entire dataset. The theme review phase encompasses a recursive and iterative process, wherein emerging themes are continually reviewed and refined in relation to the coded data and the broader dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This critical phase serves as a quality control checkpoint, allowing for the systematic review, refinement, and further development of preliminary themes identified in the preceding stage. This iterative

process ensured that the themes accurately reflected the data and provided a robust foundation for subsequent analysis and interpretation.

3.9.5 Defining Themes

This phase entails the meticulous refinement of themes, distilling the analysis into fine-grained detail. As Braun and Clarke (2006:92) emphasise, the objective is to "identify the essence of what each theme is about." During this phase, I refined the final themes, ensuring clarity and coherence, identify the primary theme and any related subthemes and select relevant extracts to present and analyse, using these to narrate the story of each theme. Through this rigorous process, I crystallised the core insights and meanings embedded within the data, providing a nuanced understanding of the research phenomenon. Table 1 below shows the themes that emerged from this study.

Table 2: Refined themes

Sub Research Question	Refined Theme	Focus of Analysis
I. What are the prominent features and interpretation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?	Understanding and interpretation of the HBC.	Teachers' awareness, understanding of the HBC principles, and interpretation of its core features.
II. What are History teachers' conceptualisations of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?	Conceptualisation and perceived changes in the History curriculum.	Teachers' views on the shift from the old curriculum to HBC, including perceived goals and rationale.
III. How are History teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Form three classrooms?	Classroom implementation and pedagogical practices.	Practical application of HBC in teaching including teaching methods, learner engagement and resource use in form three History classrooms.

IV.	How can History teachers' implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum be understood and explained?	Explaining implementation challenges	Barriers to implementation and their influence to practice.
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3.9.6 Writing up

The final phase of analysis culminates in the production of a comprehensive report, typically presented in the form of a journal article, dissertation, or thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Notably, in qualitative research, the processes of writing and analysis are deeply intertwined, evolving from informal note-taking and memo-writing to the more formalized stages of analysis and report composition. When articulating the emergent themes in this study, I carefully considered their chronological sequence to ensure a coherent narrative. This approach is consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2012) guidance, which emphasizes the importance of presenting themes in a logical and meaningful order. By doing so, the themes collectively conveyed a cohesive story about the data, facilitating a deeper understanding of the research findings.

3.9.7 Why Thematic Analysis?

This study utilised thematic analysis due to its adaptability and applicability across diverse epistemological frameworks (Boyatzis, 2012). Thematic analysis provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to examining complex datasets, facilitating an in-depth exploration of history teachers' experiences with the Heritage-Based Curriculum. Grounded in grounded theory principles, thematic analysis emphasizes the importance of empirically supporting theoretical claims (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This approach enables the construction of data-driven theories, providing a robust framework for interpretation. Thematic analysis offers a flexible and effective research tool, capable of yielding rich, detailed, and complex insights into history teachers' experiences implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in rural secondary schools.

The theoretical freedom inherent in thematic analysis allows for a nuanced exploration of the research phenomenon, yielding a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved. This analysis is applicable to even those researches which are beyond an individual's experience (Boyatzis, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2006:78) suggest that it is the first qualitative method that should be learned, as "...it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis." Thematic analysis offers a significant advantage in learning and teaching research: it is a flexible method, not bound to a specific epistemological or theoretical perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This adaptability makes it an attractive approach for investigating complex issues in learning and teaching.

3.10 ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS

As a qualitative research study, this investigation prioritises trustworthiness, a key aspect of qualitative research integrity. Trustworthiness, as conceptualised by Lincoln and Guba (1985), encompasses four essential components: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

3.10.1 Credibility

To enhance credibility, this study employed a range of strategies. These include accurate recording of phenomena, adoption of established qualitative methods, cultural familiarisation, and examination of prior research, purposive sampling, iterative questioning, prolonged field experience (10 weeks), and triangulation. For Trochim and Donnelly (2007:149) "credibility involves establishing the believability of qualitative research findings from the participant's perspective." Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasise the significance of credibility in establishing trustworthiness. To increase the credibility of this study, I spent long time participants (8 to 10 weeks), I did member checks, and use triangulation techniques. In terms of long-term participation, I conducted three rounds of interviews with each history teacher in the selected four rural secondary schools.

Mertens (2013) recommends that researchers spend enough time in the field to

prevent premature closure. In the same line, Creswell (2013) believes that longer fieldwork promotes the development of trust and rapport with participants, allowing them to share their experiences and viewpoints more openly. This improves the accuracy and authenticity of the collected data. To ensure credibility, study participants were asked to review and authenticate the assembled findings using member checking. Member checks are the most important strategy for establishing credibility in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They entail regularly returning data and interpretations to research participants for confirmation, corrections, and further information (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This recurrent procedure allows participants to validate or contradict research findings, ensuring the authenticity and reliability of the results.

3.10.2 Dependability

To address dependability, this study employed a multi-method approach, incorporating document analysis, in-depth interviews, and lesson observations. This triangulation of methods will enhance the reliability of the findings. “Dependability is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice” (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007:149). Dependability was strengthened through detailed reporting and member checking, enabling future researchers to replicate the study, even if the results may differ. To increase dependability in data generation, I ensured that identical questions are posed to participants in the same sequence, thereby facilitating comparable findings (Taylor et al., 2016). By corroborating findings across multiple data sources, triangulation increases the validity and reliability of the results.

Triangulation has proven effective in reviewing and corroborating findings in various research contexts, including surveys, assessments, and evaluations. To enhance the validity and reliability of this multiple case study, I employed methodological triangulation, combining document analysis, lesson observations, and in-depth interviews to investigate the implementation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in four rural secondary schools. By triangulating these methods, I increased the confidence in the observed findings (Denzin, 1970) and reduced the risks of errors or biases, thereby enhancing the reliability of the results.

3.10.3 Confirmability

To ensure the accuracy and objectivity of this study's findings, several measures were implemented to mitigate researcher bias and enhance confirmability. Triangulation was employed to promote confirmability, allowing for the corroboration of findings through multiple data sources and methods (Patton, 1990, as cited in Shenton, 2004). Confirmability, akin to objectivity in quantitative research, emphasises the importance of replicability and comparability (Patton, 1990, as cited in Shenton, 2004). Shenton, (2004:72) posits that "in enhancing conformability, steps should be taken to ensure that as far as possible the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher." To achieve this, I prioritised reflexivity and explicitly stated their underlying beliefs and values, and providing clear rationales for methodological decisions (Miles & Huberman, 2000). Furthermore, the limitations and potential weaknesses of the research design and methods were openly acknowledged, thereby enhancing the confirmability and credibility of the findings.

3.10.4 Transferability

To enhance transferability, this study offers a rich, detailed description of the research methodology and context, enabling readers to evaluate the applicability of the findings to their own settings. Transferability is defined as "the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings" (Trochim & Donnelly, 2007:149). It is the researcher's responsibility to provide sufficient contextual information about the field sites, participants, and research procedures, allowing readers to determine the relevance of the findings to their own situations (Shenton, 2004). Accordingly, this study presents an in-depth account of the phenomenon under investigation, history teachers' experiences implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in four rural secondary schools. By providing this thorough description, readers are empowered to compare the findings with their own experiences, thereby enhancing the study's transferability and practical significance.

3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations in this study included obtaining permission to conduct the study, providing informed consent, maintaining privacy and confidentiality, and avoiding deceit. Humans deserve to be valued and respected; hence these actions are regarded as ethical in any field. “Ethics are the principles of right and wrong that the researcher must respect and adhere to when carrying out research which involves teachers and students” (Neuman, 2014: 469). Punch (2004:281) is of the opinion that “all social research involves ethical issues since it involves collecting data from people about people.”

3.13.1 Permission to Conduct Research

I sought permission to carry out this study from University of the Free State and after being granted the ethical clearance (UFS-HSD2024/2374), I proceeded to seek permission to conduct this study from MOPSE to carry out the study in the selected 4 rural secondary schools in Hurungwe District. Oliver (2010:214), opines that “seeking permission before gathering data is not only a component of the informed consent process but also a fundamental ethical exercise”, which aligns with my approach in this study. Permission was also sought from the Provincial Education Director and the District Schools Inspector of Mashonaland West Province and Hurungwe District, respectively where the study was done. Heads of the four selected schools were consulted before this study was done to seek permission to collect data. By obtaining proper authorisation, I aimed to uphold the principles of research ethics and demonstrate respect for the participants and the educational institutions involved.

3.13.2 Informed Consent

Prior to the interviews, the participants were given a consent form, which was read to them, reviewed for clarity and understanding, and signed. The foundation of any moral study is informed consent. Kumar (2011:215) states that, “informed consent implies that subjects are made adequately aware of the type of information the researcher wants from them, why the information is being sought, what purpose it will be put to, how they are expected to participate in the study, and how it will directly and indirectly affect them.” The study participants made their voluntary

involvement in this thesis contingent on a thorough grasp of the potential dangers. Any objections, for any cause, was appreciated. By providing this information, I aimed to ensure that the participants felt empowered and in control of their involvement in the study, fostering an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect throughout the research journey. Before they signed the consent forms, I explained in detail the research's aims, the research method, why they were engaged, and how the study data will be used, among other finer details, as stated by Cohen et al. (2017).

3.13.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

To maintain privacy and confidentiality and adhere to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's (MoPSE) policy restrictions, all History teacher participants remained anonymous throughout this study. Although Piper and Simons (2005) emphasise the importance of acknowledging individual contributions to knowledge generation, anonymity is necessary due to the sensitive nature of policy discussions in Zimbabwe. This is in line with Singleton and Straits (2010:61) who advise that “anonymity can be ensured by removing names and other identifying information from the data as soon as possible, by not disclosing individuals’ identities in any reports of the study.” Pseudonyms were utilised to protect the History teachers’ personal identities even in situations where information could be used by third parties. Merriam and Tisdell (2016:87) emphasise that “the assurance of respondents’ anonymity encourages them to share information more openly and readily.” All the History teachers participating were told that the information generated for this study will be used only for research purposes.

3.13.4 Honesty, Respect, Transparency, and Integrity

I honestly revealed all the necessary information to the participants thereby avoiding deception. In support, Hamilton and Finley (2020) postulate that researchers should execute research with transparency, honesty, integrity, and respect. To the best of my ability, I accurately reported on the research methodology, data, and findings. I avoided inventing, distorting, and misconstruing information. In my study, I did not lie or purposely mislead participants because “to report the findings in a way that

changes or slants them to serve your own or someone else's interest is unethical" (Kumar, 2011:2017). I explained the goal of the study and highlighted that it is for educational purposes only, so participants should not expect any material reward.

3.14 SUMMARY

This qualitative multiple case study used the interpretivist research paradigm, which assumes that people experience reality through social constructs such as language, consciousness, common meanings, and instruments. The qualitative study explored History teachers' experiences in implementing the HBC in Zimbabwean secondary schools using thick descriptions and narratives to capture detailed, nuanced and contextualised understandings of the social phenomena. This chapter presented the study's population and explained the employment of convenience sampling methods. To bolster the study's credibility, an in-depth examination of four History teachers was conducted for over two months. This prolonged engagement, complemented by iterative member checking and data triangulation, ensures the mitigation of bias and subjectivity. The subsequent chapter (Chapter 4) will present a rich, chronological narrative illuminating how each teacher interprets and implements the Heritage-Based Curriculum 2024-2030.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents, interprets, and analyses the data collected from the four participating History teachers, providing a within-case account of the findings. The study was guided by the central research question: What are the experiences of History teachers in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in rural secondary schools? In order to respond to this overarching question, the data are organised and analysed in relation to the following sub-questions:

- I. What are the prominent features and interpretation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?
- II. What are History teachers' conceptualisations of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?
- III. How are History teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in form three classrooms?
- IV. How can History teachers' implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum be understood and explained?

To address each sub-research question, data presentation and analysis drew on evidence generated through multiple instruments, including interviews, document analysis, and lesson observations. For ethical purposes, all participating schools and teachers are identified using pseudonyms. The organisation, analysis and interpretation of the research findings were aligned with the stated sub-research questions, with Fullan's (2015) Triple I Theory serving as the principal analytical framework guiding this process.

Furthermore, the analysis and interpretation were enriched through an extensive discussion of literature on curriculum reform and its implications for the teaching and learning of history. Insights from the literature review provided a foundation for addressing sub-research questions one to four. Key concepts that emerged were categorised into themes, which were then compared and contrasted with the empirical data obtained from interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations. The empirical study is presented by clustering participants' specific

views and opinions, first in their raw form (verbatim) and then through interpretation. These perspectives are further analysed in relation to the findings from the document analysis. Before the detailed presentation and discussion, a brief background of the participants is outlined.

4.1 AN OVERVIEW OF TEACHER BIOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

To establish a foundation for cross-case analysis, Table 4.1 presents the biographic characteristics of the four history teachers who served as the primary participants and informants in this multiple case study. The table summarises key aspects of each teacher's profile, including school pseudonym, gender, age, academic qualifications, teaching experience, and participation in ongoing professional development. Table 4.1, therefore, provides a comparative framework that supports a deeper understanding of the selected teachers' experiences in implementing the Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum within their Form 3 classrooms. Data were collected over an eight-week period, during which the teachers provided rich and detailed insights that facilitated an in-depth exploration of classroom practices. Collectively, these four cases, along with their respective school contexts, constitute a purposive sample of information-rich sources, enabling a nuanced examination of curriculum implementation experiences.

Table 3: Characteristics of participants

School	Name	Age & Gender	Qualifications	Experience in years	Class size	Professional development
Magan	Mr Peters	36 Male	BA Economic History. PGDE History & English	12	24	No training
Clarkson	Mr Jones	28 Male	B Ed History & English	6	26	Trained 3 times

Violet	Ms Tecla	29 Female	B Ed History & FRS	3	87	No training
Mean	Mr Katton	41 Male	BA Geography & History PGDE history	18	54	Trained 3 times

An examination of the four History teachers' biographic characteristics reveals important variations shaping their experiences of implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC). Gender imbalance was evident, with only one female participant, reflecting the broader underrepresentation of women in History teaching in Zimbabwe. Class size also mattered: large enrolments constrained learner-centred pedagogy for some, while smaller classes created space for innovation. Teaching experience ranged from three to eighteen years, with veteran teachers relying on established repertoires and novices showing greater openness but less confidence. Access to professional development was uneven, with only two participants having attended HBC workshops. These divergences underscore how gender, class size, experience, and training collectively mediate the fidelity and uniformity of curriculum implementation.

4.2 CASE STUDY 1: MR. PETERS: THE ENTHUSIASTIC HBC ADVOCATE

In this case study, a male History teacher at a rural day secondary school in Zimbabwe's Hurungwe District shares his experiences in implementing the HB History curriculum. In Zimbabwe, day secondary schools are the most prevalent kind of educational institutions. The researcher used information from document analysis, five lesson observations as well as pre-lesson observation interviews, intermittent, and post-lesson observation interviews with Mr. Peters to describe and explain his experiences teaching the HB History curriculum.

4.2.1 A portrait of Magan High School

Magan High School was established in 1985. The school has an enrolment of about

465 learners from Forms 1 to 6. The school has a teaching staff complement of 27 teachers, 17 males and 10 females. The school has three teachers in the history department, 1 female and 2 males. The school is located near a local growth point which has a smaller population density. The local growth point has stronger ties to agricultural resources and almost half of the enrolment of the learners come from the nearby communities and some of them reside in the growth point when they come to school. Magan High School is a government school and it is fairly resourced with materials such as adequate classrooms, human resources and internet facilities installed in the computer laboratory. The History Department at Magan High has 3 teachers who are all qualified to teach History. The research participant for my study was a Form 3A male History teacher in his late 30s. Form 3A was the smallest class in my study, with only 24 students, 10 and 14 girls.

4.2.2 Biographic Sketch of Mr. Peters

Mr. Peters, who is 36 years old, has been a teacher for eleven years. Mr. Peters was the only teacher teaching a Form 3 History class at Magan High School at the time of the study. It was challenging to plan some of the observations sessions, even though at first, he had agreed to my observing him. He implied that several of the subjects he was teaching were not even covered in his plans of work, and that some of his work in them was of poor quality. Given the short preparation time, he believed he would perform poorly in the teaching-learning events in the classroom. I persuaded him not to plan to add the subjects he was teaching because I only wanted to do research on actual, authentic classroom situations rather than made-up ones.

4.2.3 Understanding and Interpretation of the HBC

4.2.3.1 Knowledge on the HBC principles and values

In a pre-observation interview conducted with Mr. Peters, he demonstrated a relatively strong understanding of the curriculum's principles and values. When asked about the key principles and values that underpin Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum, he identified the following as the key values and principles of the HBC: "Ubuntu, business enterprises, gender equality, respect for children's rights, self-management, and good decision-making". Although Mr Peters did not mention all the principles outlined in the HBC Framework (2024:15), his responses reflected

substantial awareness of its core aspects. The framework specifies that curriculum development and implementation in Zimbabwe are guided by the following principles: inclusivity, balance, heritage preservation and promotion, continuity, coherence, active learning, integration, transparency, gender sensitivity, lifelong learning, respect, relevance, equity, and fairness.

When comparing Mr. Peters' responses with the official list the HBC principles listed above, it is evident that while his articulation was not exhaustive, it captured several core values of the HBC. His awareness of values such as Ubuntu, respect for children's rights, and gender equality aligns closely with the framework's emphasis on inclusivity, equity, and social justice. Mr Peters further explained:

The HBC is there to create a student who is patriotic, responsible, and a problem solver. It develops skills in learners so that they will live independently. The HB History syllabus develops skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

This perspective shows that Mr. Peters views the HBC not only as a content delivery framework but also as a vehicle for holistic learner development. His emphasis on patriotism, responsibility, and problem-solving reflects an understanding that the HBC seeks to prepare learners for both civic participation and independent living. In conclusion, Mr. Peters demonstrated a solid grasp of the underlying philosophy of the HBC, even though his list of principles was not fully aligned with the official framework. His insights reveal an appreciation of the curriculum's transformative goals, particularly its focus on fostering independent, socially responsible, and critically-minded citizens.

4.2.3.2 Alignment versus misalignment with the HBC

I conducted a comparative analysis of Mr. Peters' teaching methods and schemes of work against the instructional approaches and strategies recommended in the new Heritage-Based History Curriculum. The new Heritage-Based History Syllabus (2024:6) clearly states that,

The teaching of Heritage-based History syllabus will be accomplished through the use of the following learner-centred and multi-sensory approaches: problem solving, games and quizzes, imitation or simulation, video and film

shows, educational tours, arts-based learning, experiential learning, design-based learning, case study, group discussions, discovery method, research, project-based learning and e-learning.

The only teaching methods which were being repeated by Mr. Peters in a scheme of work I analysed were: Teacher exposition, class discussion, group work and feedback from group work. Apparently, the schemes of work for Mr. Peters clearly showed that he had planned to use teacher centred pedagogies in his Form 3 class. A sample of Peters' scheme of work in Figure 4 below concretises this observation.

Wk ending	Topic/content	objectives	Methods/activities	SOM	Ass know	competence
04/07/25	ZIMBABWE AS A MEMBER OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION. SADC failures	Identify the failures credited to SADC	Tr introduces the lesson by asking learners TO RECALL THE SUCCESSES of SADC previously discussed Class discuss the failures of SADC Tr concludes by summarizing the main points	History form 1-4 syll pg ICT tools	Lners are aware of regional problems such as the crisis in Mozambique	Identifying Discussing Critical analysis
	ZIMBABWE AS A MEMBER OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION. African Union	State at least six aims of AU	Recap of the prev lessn Class discussion of the aims of AU Lners examine the likelihood of achieving the aims	History form 1-4 syll pg ICT tools Map of Africa	Lners are familiar of the names of many African countries	Stating discussing
	ZIMBABWE AS A MEMBER OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION. AU SUCCESSES	Identify the successes of the AU	Tr exposition Groups discuss the successes of AU Feedback from groups Tr concludes the lesson by summarizing main points	History form 1-4 syll pg ICT tools	LEANERS know the aims of the AU	Identifying Problem solving
	ZIMBABWE AS A MEMBER OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION.	Respond appropriately to the given	Tr exposition Lners are given instructions Individual exercise Tr gives concluding remarks from	History form 1-4 syll pg Tr resourc		Revising describing

Figure 4: An image of Mr. Peters' schemes of work

The figure above shows that Mr. Peters' schemes of work did not have the methods or activities as recommended by the HB History which I analysed in the Figure 5 below.

SUB TOPIC	LEARNING OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT: (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes)	SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND NOTES	SUGGESTED LEARNING RESOURCES
Zimbabwe as a member of regional and international organisations	- list members of regional and international organisations - outline the aims of regional and international organisations - describe the role played by regional and international organisations in the socio- economic development of the region and global development - explain the successes and failures of the regional and international organisations	- SADC - AU - UN -Member States -Aims -Duties -Successes -Failures	- Identifying SADC, AU and UN member states and their duties. - Discussing the aims of SADC, AU and UN - Debating the successes and failures of SADC, AU and UN - Collecting newspaper cuttings on the works of SADC, AU and UN	- Textbooks - ICT tools - Brailed material - Resource person - Talking book - Sign language interpreter - Maps

Figure 5: Image extracted from the Heritage-Based History Syllabus

The Heritage-Based History Syllabus prescribes a range of learner-centred activities such as the use of ICT tools, maps, resource persons, and talking books to teach topics like the roles of international organisations in regional and global development. None of these strategies appeared in Mr. Peters' work plans, suggesting unfamiliarity with the instructional techniques mandated by the curriculum. Instead, his plans reflected a disregard for the multisensory and participatory approaches central to the HBC. When asked about the new teaching methods, Mr. Peters demonstrated that he was partially knowledgeable of the pedagogical shifts envisioned by the reform. His explanation of this was: "This new Heritage Based curriculum is more of a learner centred approach and more a practical approach whereby students are given an opportunity use local available materials in learning history."

From the pre observation interview, Mr. Peters' sense-making of instructional policy was in congruence with the policy signals as he emphasised learner-centred methods. However, he did not specify any learner centred approaches as written in the new History Syllabus 4044, as shown above. Mr. Peters' case reveals a misalignment in practice due to overreliance on traditional methods and limited conceptual grasp of wider HBC philosophy.

4.2.4 Conceptions and perceived shifts in the curriculum

4.2.4.1 Transformations in History teaching under HBC

Document analysis of Circular 10 (2024) shows that the introduction of the HBC has brought several notable changes to the teaching and learning of History. One major shift is the introduction of School-Based Projects (SBPs) and the removal of Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAs) for all History learners. Another significant change relates to content restructuring in the syllabus. For example, under the previous Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (CBC) History syllabus, the Developments in Zimbabwe Form Three history topics began in 1980 after independence. In the HBC, however, the starting point has shifted to Developments in Zimbabwe since 1990. This shift reflects a reorientation towards more recent national historical developments. The extract on figure 6 below shows an image taken from the HB history syllabus which shows some changes brought by the HBC in History classrooms.

History Syllabus Forms 1 – 4 MoPSE 2024

SUB TOPIC	LEARNING OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:	CONTENT: (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes)	SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND NOTES	SUGGESTED LEARNING RESOURCES
Social, Political and Economic Policies since 1990	- outline the economic, political and social developments since 1990. - describe the economic, political and social developments since 1990. - examine economic, political and social challenges post-independence since 1990	- Economic, Political and social developments since 1990 - the land issue. - gender equity, equality and human rights issues - foreign policy: - look East Policy - peace making and peace keeping missions - engagement and re-engagement policies • Challenges of post-independence since 1990 such as climate change and sanctions	- Evaluating the social, economic and political developments since 1990 • Watching documentaries of post-independence developments • Assessing the land reform program • Researching on measures taken since independence to promote gender equity, equality and indigenisation of the economy. • Discussing challenges of post-independence • Dramatising the anti-sanctions march • Participating in clean up campaigns	- Textbooks - ICT tools - Brailed material - Resource person - Map - Placards - Documentaries

Figure 6: Image taken from the Heritage-Based History syllabus

Source: History Syllabus (2024:26)

From the interviews conducted with Mr. Peters, additional changes were highlighted.

He noted that:

The HBC places greater emphasis on the integration and use of ICT tools in history classrooms. However, the differences from the previous curriculum are not drastically large in practice. Furthermore, certain thematic emphases have shifted: whereas the previous syllabus covered Developments in Zimbabwe after 1980, the new HBC History syllabus narrows this focus to Developments in Zimbabwe since 1990. Another change is that the Constitution of Zimbabwe now holds greater prominence in the syllabus compared to its treatment under the earlier curriculum.

The changes outlined above are consistent with data from the document analysis of the HBC History Syllabus (2024) and corroborated by teacher interviews. The increased focus on recent historical periods suggests an attempt to make history more relevant to learners by connecting it to their lived realities and contemporary socio-political contexts. The inclusion of School-Based Projects is also indicative of a shift towards more practical, learner-centred approaches that encourage research, critical thinking, and application of historical knowledge to community issues. Additionally, the heightened emphasis on ICT integration reflects the curriculum's alignment with 21st-century learning demands, promoting digital literacy as a complementary skill in History education.

4.2.4.3 Skills development expectations

When asked about the new skills development expectations being brought into Form 3 History classrooms, Mr. Peters said there is a connection between new HB history to culture and heritage. He clarified that:

The Heritage-Based History curriculum seeks to develop well-rounded learners who are culturally grounded, patriotic, and conscious of both their historical roots and future trajectory. It promotes cultural identity and a sense of belonging by instilling pride in learners for their country and environment. Central to this approach is the emphasis on Ubuntu and multiculturalism, which not only affirms learners' heritage but also encourages inclusivity and

mutual respect. Through these values, the Heritage Based history curriculum fosters identity formation and strengthens learners' connection to local culture and heritage.

As evidenced above, there is a clear and deliberate connection between the Heritage-Based (HB) history curriculum, culture, and local heritage. Mr. Peters elaborated that by embedding themes of Ubuntu, patriotism, and multiculturalism, the curriculum does not only transmit historical knowledge but also nurtures a sense of identity and belonging among learners. This allows students to see themselves as active participants in their society's past, present, and future, thereby cultivating pride in their heritage and environment. In this way, the HB History curriculum positions education as a tool for cultural continuity, identity-formation, and national cohesion.

4.2.5 Classroom implementation and pedagogical practices

4.2.5.1 Teaching of Form 3A by Mr. Peters

Mr. Peters began teaching the new Heritage-Based History Syllabus 4044 at the Form 3 level upon its introduction in January 2025. At Magan High, teaching periods are scheduled for 35 minutes each. Although the Heritage-Based History syllabus recommends five periods per week, with a minimum duration of 40 minutes per lesson, the school continued to allocate only four periods for History instruction. Mr. Peters identified this discrepancy as a constraint on the effective implementation of the new syllabus, which he assessed as follows:

Our schemes usually reflect what is in the syllabus, but the syllabus requires us to have 5 periods yet because of the overloaded timetable at our school we were allocated only 4 lessons per week. That area needs to be addressed because the lessons are supposed to be 40 minutes long but we were only allocated 35 minutes per lesson which is inadequate and we end up using learner centred pedagogies.

All the lessons I observed him teaching were teachers-centred. In two of the 5 lessons I observed him, he only used group work twice in his Form 3 class, despite the fact that in his schemes of work it was written a learning activity for most of the

lessons I observed him. The following is an excerpt from the lesson on the Constitution of Zimbabwe:

Lesson segment 1

Mr. Peters entered in the class and he introduced the new topic, the constitution of Zimbabwe. He wrote 2 the following questions on the whiteboard: Define a constitution and why is it important to have a constitution in a country? He then read the questions to the class and they were answered as follows by the learners who were picked:

Teacher: Define a constitution

Learner 1: A constitution is a legal document that we have in a country (Teacher accepted the answer but he further explained it to the learners)

Teacher: Why is important to have a constitution in a country?

Learner 2: It is a document in which everyone in the country is subjected to (The teacher accepted the answer again and further explained to the class).

*The teacher wrote another sub-title on the whiteboard which read, **Features of a Constitution**. He instructed the learners that they should not write the sub-title or notes in the notebooks. He voiced, “Do not write notes, I will give you.” He allocated the learners in groups of 3 or 4 learners and in his authoritative voice he said, “You only have 2 to 3 minutes to discuss the features of a constitution in your groups and give feedback”. After about 3 minutes the learners were stopped and they were told to come up front and present their feedback. The learners did not present orally they were only given a marker which they used to write the answers they got on the chalkboard. After the feedback by 4 group representatives the teachers started to explain the features of a constitution wrote by the learners. He accepted some of the answers and rejected some of the answers written by learners on the whiteboard without any discussion with them. He took about 20 minutes explaining the features of a constitution which include rights to education, right to life, and children’s rights amongst others. He ended the lesson by asking two learners to describe any two features of a constitution.*

The following is an excerpt from the lesson on the aims of the African Union:

Lesson segment 4

As per his norm, the teacher entered the class and introduced the lesson with a recap of the previous lesson. He asked the following question: What are roles of SADC in socio-economic development of the region?

Learner 1: To promote peace and stability (teacher further explained)

Learner 2: Promote democracy (teacher further explained)

The teacher wrote a new topic on the whiteboard on the aims of the African Union. He explained what AU is and the differences between AU and SADC. He asked learners to name any 5 countries which are outside SADC but within Africa.

L1: Egypt

L2: DRC

L3: Nigeria

L4: Ghana

L5: Madagascar

After this session, the teacher wrote 5 aims of the AU on the whiteboard and he started to explain these aims to the learners who were listening to him for about 25 minutes. During this period the teacher did not ask any questions to the teacher and learners did not ask him any question. The learners were passively listening to the teacher explaining. He concluded the lesson by asking learners to come up with other 5 aims of AU for the next lesson. He urged his learners to research using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to come up with other 5 aims he has asked them. All the other 3 lessons taught by Mr. Peters were taught using this method like in lesson segment 4.

4.2.5.2 Persistence of traditional teacher-centred methods

All the 5 lessons I observed Mr. Peters teaching proved that he used teacher-centred approaches in his form three History class. There was a gap between policy and practice in his Form 3A class he was teaching. Despite using group work twice in his Form 3 class, he controlled the flow: he introduced all the topics, wrote the questions, and dominated the explanations. Learners had three to four minutes only for independent exploration. Even after group work, learners did not get time to present orally; they only wrote answers on the whiteboard, limiting active participation. The teacher explained all the answers himself, rather than guiding

learners. Notes were centrally controlled by the teacher; he ordered them not to write notes and promised to give them. This shows that the teacher was in full control of the lesson. When I asked him if he was using learner-centred pedagogies in his Form 3A history class, he boldly said that:

I have changed my teaching methodologies; I am now using group works and learners are actively engaged in my lessons especially when I ask them what they have learnt in the previous lesson. Whenever I introduced a new lesson, I used the lecture method to explain because I would want my learners to understand the new concepts I am teaching. I am no longer giving them notes as we have been doing before so I am thinking I am using learner centred pedagogy because after explanation in my lessons I ask learners to discuss what they have heard in the lessons. I will need to further search in the syllabus on the teaching methods required by the HB history curriculum so that I will use learner centred pedagogies.

The above sentiments show what has been depicted in the lessons taught by Mr. Peters. He proved in the exit interview that he enters the class and uses a recap of the previous lesson and starts to explain to his learners and sometimes uses group work in the teaching and learning of History in form 3 class. In 3 of the 5 lessons taught by Mr. Peters where he did not use group work, he used the lecture method. Even when he used group work, he controlled all the content and after the initial questions, the teacher did not engage learners in a discussion. The teacher showed that he was the main source of information and the learners were passive recipients. Interaction was minimal and mostly in the form of questions and answers controlled by teacher. Therefore, Mr. Peters is a disciple of teacher-centred approach, where the teacher is the primary authority and plays a key role in delivering instruction and guiding students.

4.2.6 Explaining Implementation – Challenges to Effective Implementation in Mr. Peters' Class

4.2.6.1 Resources constraints

In all the 5 lessons I observed, Mr. Peters did not make use of any films, videos or computers as recommended by the new HB History Syllabus 4044. He explained why:

It comes backs to funding...right now we don't have HB history textbooks. There should be ICT tool in our classes but right now we only have a whiteboard and we do not have access to internet, we do not have a projector or a television. We do not have anything called the talking books at our schools and these are some of the issues which are making the implementation of HB history difficulty for us.

When asked about the three educational tours per year recommended by the new Heritage-Based History curriculum, Mr Peters responded: "Nothing has been done so far due to the lack of funding faced by the school. The requirements and expectations of the HB History curriculum are difficult for us to implement." He further explained that the school's limited financial resources compelled him to rely on traditional teaching methods, which require minimal materials and incur lower costs, thereby constraining the full enactment of the new curriculum.

Mr. Peters bemoaned the limited use of ICT and the failure to conduct field trips, both key requirements of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC). He attributed these challenges to severe resource constraints, including the absence of computers, projectors, and internet connectivity, which hinder integration of technology and limit learners' exposure to digital tools. Likewise, inadequate funding and logistics have made educational tours, which are central to the HBC's experiential approach, almost impossible. He stressed that without investment in ICT infrastructure and field trips, effective implementation of the HBC remains compromised.

4.2.6.2 Limited training

Lack of adequate professional development emerged as a major obstacle for Mr. Peters in implementing the Heritage Based History curriculum. He complained about the selective nature of capacity-building initiatives, which left him excluded from critical training opportunities. The image below illustrates an official invitation for teachers to an HBC workshop, but he was not chosen to attend the workshop.

*All communications should be
addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director"
Telephone: 067-23083/4/5
Fax: 067-23320*



Ministry of Primary and Secondary
Education
Mashonaland West Provincial Office
P.O Box 328
CHINHOYI

13 March 2025

To All DSIs

**INVITATION OF TEACHERS TO A HBC SCHOOL BASED PROJECT WORKSHOP AT
CHINHOYI HIGH SCHOOL: 17 MARCH 2025**

You are kindly requested to release teachers from your schools to attend the HBC Workshop targeting School Based Projects. Each participant will pay \$6us into the following Provincial Account Numbers: 456500193092405 (Nostro) Bank: ZB Branch Chinhoyi / 456500193092080 (Zig) Bank: ZB Branch: Chinhoyi. Due date for payment is Friday 14/03/25 or on the day of the workshop (17/03/25). Those who need accommodation prior to the date will contact Makonde DSI (Mr Katoma) on the following number: 0775770762.

To attend:

- DSI
- 2 Inspectors per district: one Primary and 1 Secondary
- 10 teachers per cluster: Secondary 2 per learning area
- 8 teachers per cluster: Primary 4 Infant and 4 Junior
- 7 NASH District Chair
- 7 NAPH District Chair
- NAPH and NASH Provincial Chairpersons.

Figure 7: An official invitation for teachers to an HBC workshop

In interviews, Mr. Peters decried that lack of training is one of the major challenges he is facing in implementing the new HB History curriculum. He argued that he had limited knowledge of the curriculum because he had not been adequately trained. He noted:

Workshops were done, but the information was never cascaded down to the teachers in the classrooms. Only a few individuals, such as Heads of Departments and Senior Teachers, were selected to attend. Unfortunately,

they did not return and share the knowledge with their colleagues. As for me and other history teachers, we never attended any workshop. We are simply implementing the curriculum as it is. Our role as teachers, therefore, has just become to apply whatever we have been given without much guidance. If training was done for us on the use of methodologies such as the use of video, films, quizzes and games maybe we could have been using them in our classes.

Despite being expected to implement the new Heritage-Based History curriculum, Mr. Peters' exclusion from professional development leaves him underprepared. This lack of training risks passive, mechanical delivery of the curriculum, limiting his ability to adopt learner-centred and heritage-based approaches. His case underscores the need for inclusive, well-structured professional development to equip all teachers to implement and sustain curriculum reforms effectively.

4.2.6.3 Policy-driven approach

In Mr. Peters' case, the lack of consultation during the design of the Heritage-Based History curriculum has left him unprepared for its implementation. Despite not receiving training or input into the curriculum's development, he is expected to teach it, highlighting the challenges he faces in aligning his practice with the new policy. Mr. Peters highlighted this challenge, arguing that:

History teachers need to be involved in shaping the curriculum, because they have better knowledge of some of the practices that are found in the local community. They have been studying history, teaching it, and therefore understand it better than other teachers. For this reason, they should be included in curriculum design. As for me, I was not involved in the process, and I am not sure if any other history teachers were consulted.

In the exit interview, Mr. Peters reiterated his concerns, stating:

I have not seen or heard about workshops where history teachers were consulted during the curriculum design. We were not consulted, and we are

still wondering why some topics were removed from the syllabus. For instance, the coverage of post-independence developments in Zimbabwe begins in 1990, yet it is silent on the period between 1980 and 1989. This omission excludes critical events such as Gukurahundi and the Unity Accord, which are historically important. Such gaps could have been rectified if history teachers had been meaningfully consulted.

In Mr. Peters' case, the Heritage-Based History curriculum reflects a top-down, policy-driven approach that excluded his input as a classroom teacher. He reported that significant historical content was omitted and expressed limited ownership of the reform, illustrating how lack of participation can weaken teacher commitment. His experience suggests that reforms designed without teacher involvement risk superficial compliance and ineffective implementation, highlighting the need for more inclusive, participatory curriculum development that values teacher expertise and aligns policy with classroom realities.

4.3 CASE 2: MS. TECLA: STUDENT-DRIVEN LEARNING

This section presents the experiences of Ms. Tecla, beginning with an overview of the institutional context in which she taught. Consistent with the methodology applied to other cases in this study, the researcher drew upon multiple sources of data to describe and interpret Ms. Tecla's experiences in teaching the Heritage-Based History curriculum to Form 3B. These sources included seven lesson observations, document analysis, a pre-observation interview, intermittent interviews, and post-lesson observation interviews with Ms. Tecla.

4.3.1 Violet High: Portrait of the School

Located in Hurungwe District, Violet High School is a longstanding boarding institution established in 1983. It is recognised as one of the district's pioneering secondary schools. It currently enrolls 686 learners (303 boys and 383 girls) and employs 31 qualified teachers. The History Department comprises 3 teachers, 2 females and 1 male. As a leading low-cost boarding school and training centre,

Violet High attracts students from across Zimbabwe, particularly from Karoi, Chinhoyi, and Kariba.

4.3.2 Biographic Sketch of Ms. Tecla

Most of the biographic information on Ms. Tecla was derived from the pre-observation interview and other submitted documents. Ms. Tecla, aged 29, was in her 3rd year of teaching. She holds a B.Ed. Honours in secondary level specialising in History and Family Religious Studies. When I met Ms. Tecla while I was collecting data at the school, she was a relatively new addition to the staff, having started in January 2025. Ms. Tecla was a novice teacher with no post of special responsibility. The Form 3B class doing History at this school had 87 learners comprising 40 girls and 47 boys. In this research, her class was the largest with few learners being divided to do sciences and commercials. Of all the cases, Ms. Tecla appeared to be the only learner-centred teacher. Despite the large class size, in 6 out of the 7 observed lessons, I noted that her teaching remained consistently learner-centred.

4.3.3. Sense-Making and Interpretation of the HBC

4.3.3.1 Awareness of HBC principles and values

One of the central issues investigated by this study was how Form 3 History teachers understood the new Heritage-Based Curriculum and its requirements. In the three interviews conducted, Ms. Tecla showed that she struggled to identify the values and principles of the HBC. When asked to identify these principles during the pre-observation interview, she struggled to do so, responding:

I do not know the principles of HBC, but I will have to give it a try. Maybe the principles of HBC aim to promote problem-solving skills and to foster lifelong learning skills. I do not know if I am correct, but that is what I think.

During the pre-observation interviews, it became evident that Ms. Tecla had limited knowledge of the Heritage-Based History Curriculum (HBC). This limitation can arguably be attributed to a lack of formal training, which she openly acknowledged. According to the *Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary*

Education in Zimbabwe (2024:5), the principles guiding curriculum development and implementation include:

- Inclusivity.
- Heritage preservation and promotion.
- Active learning.
- Integration.
- Transparency.
- Gender sensitivity.
- Life-long learning.
- Equity and fairness.

A comparison between her response and the official HBC principles shows a significant knowledge gap. While she mentioned *problem-solving* and *lifelong learning*, which loosely relate to “Active learning” and “Life-long learning” from the framework, she failed to identify the broader and more comprehensive set of principles such as inclusivity, heritage preservation, and gender sensitivity. This indicates a limited conceptual grasp of the HBC’s philosophical underpinnings.

Furthermore, during the exit interview, she admitted that her knowledge had been minimal at the start of the research period:

I was not knowledgeable about this curriculum at first, but I now have limited knowledge because we got feedback from those who were trained at a workshop conducted. I also got some information from social media groups on my phone and this where we got the syllabuses and the curriculum framework handbook.

Her statement indicates that her understanding of the HBC was shaped indirectly through colleagues and social media rather than formal training. This reveals a professional development gap, as Ms. Tecla struggled to articulate key principles of the curriculum. The lack of direct training risks misalignment between the curriculum’s intended goals and classroom practice, thereby undermining its effective implementation and transformative vision.

4.3.3.1 Congruence versus incongruence with the HBC

<i>Week Ending</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:</i>	<i>Methods and Activities</i>	<i>Homework</i>	<i>Assumed Knowledge</i>	<i>Competencies</i>	<i>Source of materials</i>
23	Decisive events	Describe decisive events in the armed struggle	Presentation on the decisive phase	Research on the decisive phase	Learners know the armed struggle	Critical thinking	Internet source
05	Bombing of fuel tanks	Describe the bombing of the fuel tanks in Salisbury	Class discussion on the bombing of fuel tanks	Research on the decisive phase	Learners know the Second Chimurenga	Problem solving	The African Heritage page 82
25	Challenges of the decisive stage	Describe the challenges of the decisive phase in the armed struggle	Class discussion on the challenges	Research on the armed struggle	Learners can define the decisive phase	Critical thinking	The African Heritage page 84
	Test	Describe decisive events in the armed struggle Describe the bombing of the fuel tanks in Salisbury	Teacher gives questions and learners respond to the questions	Revision on the questions given	Learners have covered the concepts	Problem Solving	The African Heritage page 85

Figure 8: Ms. Tecla's choice of teaching methods in her schemes of work

An analysis of Ms. Tecla's schemes of work revealed an understanding of the recent curriculum reforms. A comparison between her schemes and the new HB History 4044 syllabus showed that she had incorporated class discussions, group discussions, and presentations as her teaching methods. Her pedagogical approaches were consistent with the recommendations of the Heritage-Based History syllabus, demonstrating her commitment to learner centred instruction.

Ms. Tecla's schemes of work aligned with her stated teaching methods, consistently mentioned across three interviews. When asked about the approaches to teaching the new HB history curriculum, she replied, "I use presentations, class discussions, group discussions and rarely the lecture method. Generally, we have adopted learner centred approaches in our HB history classrooms."

Ms. Tecla's responses indicate that, despite not being formally trained in the principles and values of Heritage-Based History curriculum, she had effectively implemented learner-centred approaches in her teaching practices. Through interviews and analysis of her schemes of work, it was evident that she had grasped the core tenets of HBC, likely through informal knowledge sharing with trained colleagues.

4.3.4 Understandings and perceived changes within the curriculum

4.3.4.1 Perceived curricular shifts

Document analysis done on relevant circulars showed that some of the changes brought by the new Heritage-Based History syllabus 4044 include the changes of the removal of the CALAS and they were replaced by the School-Based Projects. When asked about the new changes brought in her Form 3 classrooms, Ms. Tecla articulated that:

Learners are now expected to develop technical and analytical skills, as the new curriculum encourages them to engage in research activities and make classroom presentations. At the Form 3 level, significant content changes have also been introduced. Under the previous syllabus, learners began their studies with the topic on sources of history; however, in the new HB History syllabus, the sequence has been revised so that they now start with the armed struggle. Furthermore, adjustments have been made to the structure of the summative assessment. Unlike the old examination papers, the new question papers will be organised into different sections, as stipulated in the syllabus, even though the exact format is yet to be fully clarified. These shifts demonstrate the broader transition from the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) to the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC), reflecting both pedagogical and assessment reforms.

When juxtaposed with the Heritage-Based History syllabus, Ms. Tecla's reflections reveal a strong alignment between policy intentions and classroom realities. The syllabus foregrounds School-Based Projects (SBPs) as a core innovation, requiring learners to conduct independent research, identify problems, and propose solutions. Similarly, Ms. Tecla underscored that her learners are now more engaged in research-based activities, a shift that mirrors the SBP framework. Although she did not explicitly state that SBPs had replaced the Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAs), her observations encapsulated the essence of this transformation. Her testimony, thus, demonstrates how curriculum reforms are not confined to policy rhetoric but are actively reshaping pedagogical practice, with teachers like her mediating these shifts within the classroom

4.3.4.3 Capacity-building demands

In the interviews, Ms. Tecla noted that the Heritage-Based History curriculum emphasises heritage consciousness, practical skills, and contextual learning, marking a shift from the more content-heavy, examination-driven approach of the past. She explained that:

The curriculum adopts a learner-centred approach in which students take an active role in their learning. Learners are expected to conduct research, deliver presentations, and complete School-Based Projects (SBPs). For example, in working on SBPs, students must identify a problem within their community, investigate its causes, and propose practical solutions. This process ensures that the teaching of History extends beyond factual recall to fostering creativity, independent inquiry, and the ability to address real-life challenges.

Ms. Tecla's reflections align closely with the goals of the HBC as outlined in the 2024 Framework, Circular Number 10, and the Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment. These documents emphasise that SBPs promote intellectual independence by engaging learners in source interrogation, evidence analysis, and argument construction. Her example of learners tackling community problems illustrates how historical inquiry connects to contemporary issues, fostering analytical skills, decision-making, and civic responsibility. Analytically, her case highlights how the learner-centred orientation of the HBC shifts knowledge construction from teacher to learner, transforming History education into a platform for developing transferable skills relevant to a rapidly changing society.

4.3.5 Teaching Implementation and Classroom Practices

4.3.5.1 Classroom vignette: Ms. Tecla's Form 3B history lessons

Over an eight-week period, data on Ms. Tecla's teaching of the HBC History curriculum were generated through 7 lesson observations, 3 interviews, and document analysis. Her Form 3B class, the largest in my study, had 87 learners and

was often noisy and difficult to control. She expressed concern that the large size made learner-centred methods challenging, noting, “It is difficult to put such learners in groups; I end up with groups of 10 to 15. If I use class discussions, they make noise and lose focus. The class is just too big.” Despite these concerns, I observed her using group work and discussions in six of the seven lessons she taught in her Form 3. Below is an excerpt of a lesson observation where she used group work in the teaching of the topic: **Sources of history.**

Lesson segment 2

Ms. Tecla entered the Form 3 West classroom smartly dressed and greeted her learners warmly, as was her routine. She proceeded to write three discussion questions on the chalkboard:

- a) Identify five examples of written records*
- b) Describe three advantages and three disadvantages of written records*
- c) How reliable are written records in reconstructing Zimbabwean precolonial history?*

She then instructed the class to form three large groups based on their seating rows. The learners were given approximately 10 minutes to discuss the questions in their groups. After the discussion, each group was asked to send two representatives (one boy and one girl) to the front to present their findings.

Group A presented first.

For Question (a), they listed the following examples of written records:

- I. Newspapers*
- II. Journals*
- III. Notes*
- IV. Emails*
- V. Textbooks*
- VI. Magazines*

The teacher prompted the rest of the class to contribute additional examples.

Learner 1 added: Reports

Learner 2 added: Meeting minutes

The teacher acknowledged and accepted all the responses. Group B presented next.

For Question (b), they provided the following:

Advantages of written records:

- I. Provide reliable evidence*
- II. Serve as valuable reference material*
- III. Reduce reliance on memory*

Disadvantages of written records:

- I. Susceptible to damage*
- II. Require space and proper storage*
- III. May contain bias or exaggerations*

The teacher asked the rest of the class to evaluate the responses. Learners actively agreed and asked relevant questions, with the teacher providing additional clarification and feedback. Group C then took the stage. For Question (c) on the reliability of written records, they presented:

Reliability:

- I. Often accurate due to thorough research*
- II. Usually peer-reviewed*
- III. Sometimes serve as primary sources*

Limitations:

- I. Cultural and linguistic barriers may affect interpretation*
- II. Written records may not fully represent all perspectives*
- III. Potential for bias depending on the author's point of view*

After Group C's presentation, the bell rang. Ms. Tecla asked the class two follow-up questions to assess understanding, and then concluded the lesson by introducing the topic for the next class.

The above lesson taught by Ms. Tecla clearly reflected a learner-centred approach. She employed class discussion supported by group work and collaboration, where learners worked in groups, shared ideas, and presented their findings. This shifted the focus from teacher to learner, fostering peer interaction, responsibility, and active participation. Learners not only presented, but also evaluated one another's responses, demonstrating engagement and critical thinking. Ms. Tecla's role was primarily facilitative, posing guiding questions, validating contributions, and providing feedback rather than lecturing, which reinforced an environment of cooperative and inquiry-based learning.

Classroom observation revealed that in her Form 3 class, Ms. Tecla was still teaching **Sources of History**, a topic officially removed from that level and confined to Form 1. When asked why, she justified:

Yes, the sources of history are not in the Form 3 HB History curriculum, but I cannot proceed to teach my Form 3 class some topics when they have not done sources of history. I have checked their notebooks from Form 1, and they did not cover such topics. So, I cannot continue to strictly follow the new HB History syllabus 4044 and start teaching the Armed Struggle when my learners do not know the Sources of History and Great Zimbabwe topics. These topics will come in the exams.

Ms. Tecla's resistance was less opposition than a pragmatic response to learners' gaps in prior knowledge. She considered **Sources of History** and **Great Zimbabwe** essential for understanding later themes like the **Armed Struggle** and feared their omission would disadvantage students in exams. Her selective acceptance illustrates how resistance can function as professional agency, balancing learner preparedness with policy demands. This highlights tensions between reform ideals and classroom realities, showing that acceptance of reform is gradual, shaped by negotiation between policy and teachers' lived experiences. Below is an excerpt of a lesson which was done on 8 July 2025 and the time as was 9:30 am to 10:15 am taught by Ms Tecla. She used class discussion as a teaching methodology.

Lesson segment 6.

Ms. Tecla entered the classroom smartly dressed and greeted the learners warmly. She began the lesson by conducting a recap of the previous session. She posed the following question to the class:

Teacher: Can someone give us the political developments introduced since 1990?

Learner 1: Look East Policy.

Teacher: Can somebody explain what the Look East Policy means?

Learner 2: It is a policy which gained momentum in the 2000s, particularly after 2003, as a strategic shift in Zimbabwe's foreign policy.

The teacher acknowledged the answer positively and commented that the response indicated learners had understood the previous lesson. She then introduced the topic

of the day:

Economic, Political, and Social Challenges Faced in Zimbabwe since 1990.

She explained that the class would explore these challenges through whole-class discussion. She invited two learners, a boy and a girl, to come to the front and facilitate the discussion.

Discussion Segment 1: Economic Challenges

The student facilitators posed the question:

What are the economic challenges faced by Zimbabwe since 1990?

Learners responded as follows:

Learner 1: Climate change

Learner 2: High inflation

Learner 3: Unemployment

Learner 4: Poverty

The rest of the class accepted the responses as valid. The teacher then stepped in and tasked four volunteer learners to research these economic challenges in more detail and prepare presentations for the next lesson.

Discussion Segment 2: Political Challenges

Two new learners came forward to lead the second segment of the discussion. They asked:

What are the political challenges faced by Zimbabwe since 1990?

Learners responded:

Learner 1: Governance challenges

Learner 2: Limited political space

Learner 3: Sanctions

The teacher intervened to add one more point and confirmed that the answers were relevant. Learners agreed with the additions.

Discussion Segment 3: Social Challenges

In the final segment, another pair of learners led the discussion and posed the question:

What are the social challenges faced by Zimbabwe since 1990?

Learners responded:

Learner 1: HIV and AIDS

Learner 2: Social inequality and human rights issues

Learner 3: Emigration

Learner 4: Limited access to education

The teacher asked whether the responses were accurate. A class debate followed, and the learners reached a consensus that the responses were indeed correct. To conclude the lesson, Ms Tecla introduced the next topic to be covered in the following lesson and dismissed the class.

This lesson clearly reflects a learner-centred approach, because Ms. Tecla used class discussion and collaboration. There was active participation because the learners were encouraged to add more information and evaluate responses from leading learners. This shows that the learners were not passive recipients but active contributors. The teacher's role was mostly guiding, asking prompting questions, accepting learner contributions, and providing feedback rather than lecturing or dictating content. The class was asked to assess whether answers were correct, and learners asked questions, showing an environment of critical thinking and engagement. The following is an excerpt from the last lesson she taught using the lecture method in the last lesson and the only one I observed her using this teaching approach or methodology.

Lesson segment 7

On the morning of 18 July 2025, Ms. Tecla entered the classroom and greeted the learners, maintaining her usual classroom routine. She introduced the day's topic:

Provisions of the New Constitution

To begin, she posed the following question to the class:

Teacher: What is a constitution?

Learner 1: It is the supreme law.

Learner 2: It is the framework for governance between the government and citizens.

Ms Tecla accepted both responses as correct. She then retrieved a formal definition from her phone and wrote it on the chalkboard: "A constitution is a foundational document that outlines the fundamental principles, structures, and powers of government or organization."

She proceeded to explain the definition in detail while learners listened attentively.

Next, she wrote another sub-topic on the chalkboard: **The Importance of a Constitution**, under which she listed the following points:

1. Establishes the rule of law
2. Protects individual rights
3. Limits government power
4. Supports democracy
5. Ensures accountability

Ms Tecla spent approximately 20 minutes elaborating on each point while learners remained largely passive, listening quietly as she read from her notebook and explained the content. Toward the end of the session, she entertained a few questions from the learners before concluding the lesson.

Out of the 7 lessons observed, lesson 7 was the only one in which Ms. Tecla employed the lecture method. In all other six lessons, she predominantly used learner-centred approaches, including class discussions, group tasks, and student-led activities. When asked about her choice to use the lecture method in this lesson, Ms. Tecla explained:

I sometimes resort to the lecture method due to a lack of resources such as internet access and up-to-date textbooks. For instance, I am currently using a Form 2 textbook to teach my Form 3 classes. When introducing new topics like the provisions of the new constitution, I often rely on information downloaded from my mobile phone to guide the lesson. This constraint limits my ability to fully engage learners in interactive activities; hence I use the lecture method in such cases.

Overall, Ms. Tecla showed that she is a progressive teacher and most of her lessons were learner-centred. The students were actively involved in the learning process through discussions and peer-led activities. Learners took turns leading the discussions, and there were, debates showing a shift in control from the teacher to the students. In 6 of the lessons, I observed in her teaching of the Form Three class, ideas were shared openly, and learners built on each other's responses. Debate and consensus were encouraged. The teacher facilitated learning by asking questions and encouraging further exploration (for example, assigning research tasks). The

teacher's role was mainly to guide, clarify, and validate responses rather than to dominate the session.

4.3.6 Barriers Faced by Ms. Tecla in Her Classroom

4.3.6.1 Large class sizes

I observed Ms. Tecla teaching Form 3 West, a class comprising 87 students, over an eight-week period. The official teacher–pupil ratio in Zimbabwean secondary schools is set at 1:30 (MoPSE, 2025:1). My interest was in determining whether her teaching load had an impact on her instructional methods. In response, Ms. Tecla explained that it was not the overall teaching load but rather the large class size that sometimes influenced her History pedagogy. As she noted:

This class I am teaching has more than 80 students, and this sometimes affects my teaching methods. The class is too big, and that is one major challenge which makes it difficult to understand and control each and every learner. I have to mark more than 80 essays for my Form 3 class, and this makes it difficult to give them frequent written tasks as required by the Heritage-Based History Syllabus (4044).

She also lamented that her large class size was not conducive due to noise and disruptions when she is teaching. The Form Three class at Violet High School was characterised by high levels of noise and constant chatter among learners. From the onset of the lessons I observed, it was evident that the teacher was having difficulties in maintaining discipline and sustaining learner attention. During group work or class discussions, I saw several students engaged in side conversations, while others were distracted by non-class activities. Commenting on this, Ms. Tecla explained:

This class is difficult to control in terms of discipline because the learners make a lot of noise. At the start of almost every lesson, I spent approximately five minutes trying to get them to settle down and be quiet before teaching could begin. Such disruptions significantly reduce actual instructional time and

affect lesson momentum.

Despite the exceptionally large class size, Ms. Tecla consistently employed learner-centred approaches. During my observations, she frequently used group work, whole-class discussions, and individual presentations, demonstrating her commitment to interactive pedagogy even in a class of 87 students. However, the learning environment was not conducive. In Ms. Tecla's case, managing a class of 87 learners proved particularly difficult, as was evident during my observations. The large class size not only made it harder to maintain discipline, but also limited opportunities for individual learner engagement and interactive discussions. In such contexts, the gap between curriculum design and classroom reality becomes more pronounced, compromising the quality and depth of teaching and learning.

4.3.6.2 Unavailability of resources

Despite being a boarding school, Violet High lacked the resources needed to effectively implement the Heritage-Based History curriculum. Ms. Tecla highlighted shortages of key materials such as internet access, textbooks, computers, projectors, and laptops, largely due to financial constraints. She explained:

We do not have computers. For instance, in the Humanities Department we only have one computer, and it is rarely available because there are many teachers who need to use it. We also do not have textbooks at our school. I am currently using an old curriculum textbook to teach my Form 3 class. Sometimes, I rely on my personal cell phone and buy my own data to conduct research for my Form 3 History lessons, since the school does not provide internet facilities. We also do not have projectors or other ICT gadgets due to lack of funds.

Such limitations demonstrate how inadequate resources, particularly ICT tools, have hindered the implementation of the Heritage-Based History curriculum. For example, during my classroom observations, the teacher did not integrate any ICT tools into her lessons, largely because they were unavailable. As a result, teaching was confined to group work and class discussions only, making it difficult to provide the

interactive, research-based, and multimedia-rich learning experiences envisioned in the curriculum.

4.3.6.3 Limited professional development



Figure 9: Invitation of teachers for a training in Mashonaland West Province

The image shows that although the HBC was launched in May 2024, teacher training only began in January 2025, targeting mainly Heads, Deputy Heads, TICs, Senior Masters, and Senior Women through workshops organised by Mashonaland West MoPSE. Thus, since the launch, only a small number of school managers, not classroom teachers have been trained. In all three interviews, Ms. Tecla lamented this lack of professional development for History teachers, identifying it as a key factor hindering effective implementation of the Heritage-Based History curriculum. She explained:

We were not trained, we just got feedback from those who went to the workshops. As for myself, I was not trained since the launch of the Heritage Based history curriculum and I do not know why. Maybe it is the issues of the resources (lack of funds). Only a few representatives were chosen to attend the HBC workshops and they came and gave us feedback.

Ms. Tecla also complained that she is facing some challenges due to training deficit in terms of supervising the School-Based Projects in her history classes. She explained that,

We are facing the challenges of supervising and explaining how the SBP should be implemented especially the 6 stages structure. We get confused sometimes given that we were not trained and when we ask other fellow teacher you will get necessary conflicting information. Things get worse when we consult our heads and senior masters who attended the training and they always tell us that we are not history teachers, they know nothing related to history and they just have the general information. At our school no history teacher has been trained on how the HB history syllabus should be implemented as well as the SBP and this where our problem is emanating from.

The implementation of the Heritage-Based History curriculum requires ongoing professional development for teachers. In Ms. Tecla's case, feedback came from teachers did not teach History, who had received limited training, raising two concerns: lack of subject-specific expertise and inadequate preparation to provide meaningful support. Such gaps risk undermining effective curriculum delivery. Prioritising continuous, subject-focused professional development is therefore essential to equip teachers like Ms. Tecla with the necessary skills to effectively implement the Heritage Based history curriculum, enhancing student outcomes.

4.4 CASE STUDY 3: MR. JONES: THE CHAMPION OF TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGY

Case 3 focuses on Mr. Jones, who teaches at Clarkson High School. The section begins with a description of the school context, followed by a biographical overview of Mr. Jones. The findings, drawn from multiple data sources, including document analysis, lesson observations, and pre-observation, intermittent, and post-lesson interviews, are integrated to illustrate how Mr. Jones understood and implemented the Heritage-Based Curriculum (2024–2030) mandate to employ learner-centred pedagogical approaches in Form 3 History classes at a rural secondary school.

4.4.1 A Portrait of Clarkson High School

Clarkson High School, established in 1985, stands as a testament to the district's commitment to expanding educational access. As a mission school, it has consistently served both the local community and surrounding rural areas, providing opportunities, particularly for learners from farming backgrounds. Currently, Clarkson High has an enrolment of 400 learners across Forms 1 to 6. Their teaching staff comprises 24 dedicated teachers, 10 males and 14 females. The History Department is staffed by four highly-qualified teachers, evenly split between male and female, who are responsible for imparting historical knowledge to the learners. At Form 3 level, 26 students were enrolled in History. These learners were divided into three groups, with some opting for Biology and Family Religious Studies (FRS). Among the four schools investigated in this multiple case study, Clarkson High was the only one that had allocated double periods for the Form 3C History class, reflecting a distinctive commitment to the subject

4.4.2 Biographic Sketch of Mr. Jones

Mr. Jones is a 28-year teacher with 6 years teaching experience. He is the head of department for Humanities at Clarkson High school where he also teaches history in Form 3C. He is a holder of a Bachelor of Education Degree in History and English. As I was interacting with Mr. Jones, he openly told me that he is no longer willing to further his studies for the reasons best known to himself. Through interacting with him, I also observed that he really enjoyed teaching History, ahead of teaching English Language.

4.4.3 The Teacher's Comprehension and Interpretation of the HBC

4.4.3.1 Familiarity with the principles and values of the HBC

Mr. Jones demonstrated limited knowledge of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC), despite having attended at least three workshops. When asked about his understanding of the HBC and its principles, he described it as "a curriculum that focuses on what we have as a nation, which will be used by the learners." However, he admitted to being unfamiliar with the key principles and values. In a follow-up interview, Mr. Jones openly acknowledged that he does not know any principles or values of the Heritage-Based History curriculum, stating, "The key principles and values of the new Heritage Based Curriculum ... mmm I do not know them."

Mr. Jones openly acknowledged that he had limited knowledge of the new Heritage Based History curriculum. This admission highlights that a broader problem in the reform process: the gap between policy formulation and teacher preparedness. His lack of familiarity with the key principles and values underpinning the curriculum suggests that professional development and orientation workshops were insufficient ineffective.

4.4.3.2 Convergence versus divergence with the HBC

WEEK	TOPIC/ CONTENT	OBJECTIVES- By the end of week learners should be able to;	S.O.M	MEDIA	ACTIVITIES	EVALUATION GENERAL
		Versailles towards the defeated Germany				<i>covered</i>
5 <i>13</i> <i>66</i> <i>25</i>	b. St Germain treaty (Sept 1919) c. Treaty of Neuilly (Nov 1919) d. Treaty of Trianon (June 1920)	-outline the signatory of the treaty -outline general terms of the treaty -justify the fairness and vindictiveness of the treaty outline the signatory of the treaty -outline general terms of the treaty -justify the fairness and vindictiveness of the treaty -outline the signatory of the treaty -outline general terms of the treaty -justify the fairness and vindictiveness of the treaty	Dynamics of history bk 4 page 36	Work cards ICT tools Chalkboard with notes Flash cards Realia Map of Europe Work cards ICT tools Chalkboard with notes Flash cards Realia Map of Europe Work cards ICT tools Chalkboard with notes Flash cards Realia Map of Europe	Group work Pair work Individual work Class discussion Note taking Group work Pair work Individual work Class discussion Note taking Group work Pair work Individual work Class discussion Note taking	<i>The work planned as successful covered however the teacher failed to include learn with challenge who failed to grasp the c</i>
6	d. The treaty of Sevres (August 1920)	outline the signatory of the treaty -outline general terms of the treaty		Work cards ICT tools Chalkboard with notes Flash cards Realia	Group work Pair work Individual work Class discussion Note taking	

Figure 10: Mr. Jones' teaching methods

A comparison between the learner-centred, multi-sensory approaches recommended in the Heritage-Based History Syllabus (2024:6) syllabus such as “problem-solving, games, simulations, videos, educational tours, arts-based and experiential learning, case studies, group discussions, research, project-based learning, and e-learning” and Mr. Jones’ practices reveals notable gaps. He mentioned note-taking, which the syllabus does not recommend, as a learning activity. Moreover, although he claimed to plan group work and class discussions, he admitted, in the exit interview, that these learner-centred approaches were never implemented. Instead, Mr. Jones confessed to using teacher-centred pedagogy, specifically the lecture method, stating: “The way I tackled the syllabus is different. I used teacher-centred pedagogy (lecture method) so that I will pave the way for the revisions at the end for the preparations of the exams.”

Mr. Jones’ experience illustrates a clear tension between traditional teaching practices and the learner-centred principles advocated by the HBC curriculum. His limited understanding of the reforms and recommended teaching methods resulted

in a gap between his planned and actual classroom practices. He prioritised examination preparation over learner-centred approaches, relying on conventional methods rather than the active, multi-sensory strategies promoted by the curriculum. This case underscores the need for targeted support and professional development to enhance his knowledge and encourage the adoption of learner-centred practices, thereby facilitating more effective HBC implementation.

4.4.4 Views and Noted Transformations in the Curriculum

4.4.4.1 Shifts in classroom practice resulting from the HBC

FORM 3

TOPIC 9: THE ARMED STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE (1966-1979)

SUB TOPIC	LEARNING OBJECTIVES Learners should be able to:-	CONTENT: (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes)	SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND NOTES	SUGGESTED LEARNING RESOURCES
Causes of the Second Chimurenga/Umvukela in Zimbabwe (1966-1979)	- list the causes of the Second Chimurenga/Umvukela - explain the causes of the Second Chimurenga/Umvukela - evaluate the causes of the Second Chimurenga/Umvukela	- Causes of the Second Chimurenga/Umvukela -political -economic -social	- Researching the causes of the Second Chimurenga/Umvukela - Simulating the causes of the Second Chimurenga/Umvukela - Compiling documentaries on causes of Second Chimurenga/Umvukela	- Resource person - Brailed material - Textbooks - ICT tools - MP 4 recorders - Songs of the liberation struggle

Figure 11: New topics which should be taught in HB History at Form 3

Extracted from HB History syllabus (2024:23)

The picture above shows an extract from the HB History syllabus which highlights some notable changes, particularly the introduction of new topics such as **The Armed Struggle**. This stands in contrast to the previous syllabus which began with topics on the **Sources of History** and the **Precolonial States**. These adjustments were also acknowledged by Mr. Jones during the interviews conducted with him. Mr. Jones explained that,

The History syllabus is derived from the broader Curriculum Framework. Although the teaching methods remain largely the same, the new syllabus places greater emphasis on learner-centred pedagogy. So, some topics have been removed or condensed, such as the removal of Precolonial States in Form Three.

He further noted that, “The summative assessment paper's format has undergone a revision, featuring two distinct sections in both Paper 1 and Paper 2. Candidates are now required to select questions from both Section A and Section B, demonstrating a shift in the assessment structure.”

Paper Description

Paper 1 (100 marks)

This component comprises 14 questions (Section A and B)

Section A consists of 7 questions each carrying 25 marks. Candidates must answer 2 questions. The total for the section is 50 marks.

Section B consists of 7 questions each carrying 25 marks. Candidates must choose and answer 2 questions. The total for this section is 50 marks.

Paper 2 (100 marks)

This component comprises 12 questions (Section A and B)

Section A consists of 6 questions each carrying 25 marks. Candidates must answer 2 questions. The total for the section is 50 marks.

Section B consists of 6 questions each carrying 25 marks. Candidates must choose and answer 2 questions. The total for this section is 50 marks.

Figure 12: Changes in terms of paper structure which were brought by the new HB History syllabus 4044

Extracted from Heritage-Based History syllabus (2024:23)

A comparison of the Heritage-Based syllabus (4044) with Mr. Jones’ interview insights shows that the reforms introduced both structural and pedagogical shifts. Content changes, such as the inclusion of themes like the **Armed Struggle**, foreground national heritage and connect history to Zimbabweans’ lived experiences. At the same time, the restructuring of assessment papers promotes flexibility and deeper learner engagement. Together, these reforms mark a shift from rote factual recall and linear chronology towards an approach that values heritage, critical thinking, and independent inquiry.

4.4.4.2 Curricular competency benchmarks

When asked whether the Heritage-Based History curriculum fosters critical thinking and problems solving skills, Mr. Jones responded:

The Heritage-Based History curriculum is designed as a transformative

approach to education, aimed at addressing challenges within local communities and the wider global context. It emphasizes the development of critical thinking by requiring learners to actively engage in identifying and proposing solutions to the social, economic, and political problems affecting their nation and beyond.

An analysis of the documents reveals that the HBC,

... is informed by the NDS 1 (2021- 2025) and other provisions such as Vision 2030, Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), Africa Agenda 2063 and SDGs that call for the development of an HBC which equips pupils with skills to fully participate in innovation and competence driven economy using locally available resources (HBC Framework, 2024:14).

Mr. Jones' response highlights that the Heritage-Based History curriculum is a learner centred reform designed to improve skills using local resources, as well addressing the challenges faced in communities using the same resources. His views show that the curriculum is not only an educational reform, but also a strategic tool for national development. By emphasising skills acquisition and problem-solving, the HBC reflects the principles of Vision 2030, which prioritises human capital development as a pathway to economic transformation. This illustrates that the HBC is designed to produce well-rounded graduates who can contribute meaningfully to Zimbabwe's socio-economic goals while fostering a balance between tradition and modernity.

4.4.5 Classroom Enactment and Instructional Strategies

4.4.5.1 Teaching approaches and strategies

In all the 6 lessons I observed, Mr. Jones consistently employed traditional, teacher-centred methods, particularly the lecture method, despite the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) and accompanying Teachers' Guide advocating for learner-centred pedagogies. Both the Final Assessment and Teachers' Guide (2024) and the HBC Curriculum Framework (2024–2030) explicitly emphasise the need to engage

learners actively in the construction of historical knowledge through participatory methods. However, Mr. Jones instructional approach remained largely didactic and dominated by teacher talk. Below is one of Mr. Jones' lessons that I observed. The lesson was on the **League Council of the League of Nations** (11 June 2025)

Lesson Vignette – Segment 1

Mr. Jones entered the classroom, greeted the learners, and introduced me as a guest who would be observing their lessons over the next two to three months. He then introduced the topic of the day: The League Council of the League of Nations. He initiated the lesson by posing the following question:

Teacher: Who were the permanent members of the League of Nations?

Learners responded:

Learner 1: Britain

Learner 2: France

Learner 3: Italy

Learner 4: Japan

Learner 5: Germany

Learner 6: Russia

Mr. Jones accepted all the responses, including some inaccuracies (e.g., Germany and Russia were not original permanent members), and proceeded to explain that these countries had veto powers. For the next twenty minutes, he lectured on the functions of the League Council and several disputes it attempted to resolve, with learners remaining mostly passive. Occasionally, he asked low-order recall questions, which were answered by a few learners. He further elaborated that the League of Nations was often referred to as a "toothless bulldog" due to its lack of a standing army. Towards the end of the lesson, he asked:

Teacher: What were the main duties of the League of Nations?

Learners responded:

Learner 1: Peacekeeping force

Learner 2: Sanctions against aggressors

(Mr. Jones intervened briefly to explain the term "aggression")

Learner 3: Enforced the decisions made by the General Assembly

When Mr. Jones asked if there were any other duties, the class remained silent. He then concluded the lesson.

Based on the lesson observation, Mr. Jones demonstrated a teacher-centred pedagogy. His dominant use of the lecture method, minimal learner engagement, and reliance on low-order questioning are hallmarks of traditional, transmission-based teaching. The learners were largely passive recipients of knowledge, with limited opportunities for discussion, inquiry, or group work, elements that are central to learner-centred approaches promoted by the HBC. Despite initial questioning to activate prior knowledge, Mr. Jones did not build on learner responses through deeper questioning, collaborative tasks, or critical thinking activities. The instructional design did not reflect the participatory, heritage-based, and inquiry-oriented methodologies outlined in the HBC Curriculum Framework.

Lesson Vignette: segment 6

Mr. Jones entered the classroom and introduced the day's topic: The Weimar Republic. Without further engagement or motivational activity, he immediately instructed learners to turn to page 53 of their notebooks. He began explaining the background of the Weimar Republic and its emergence as Germany's government following World War I. The image below shows the notes which were being used in the class which were found on page 53 of Mr Jones Form 3C notebook.

DICTATORSHIP IN GERMANY [1919-1939]

The Weimar Republic [1919-1933]

Germany after the First World War was called the Weimar Republic. It was also known as the Second German Reich. A republic is a state completely governed by elected representatives. It is also a nation ruled by a president and not by a king. The German Empire which was created by Bismarck in 1871 and destroyed during the First World War in 1918 was known as the First German Reich. Hitler's Germany from 1933 to 1945 was known as the Third German Reich or the Nazi Reich. A Reich is a German state.

Problems faced by the Weimar Republic [Germany] from 1919 to 1933

The Weimar Republic had serious problems from the beginning. These problems helped in destroying it hence leading to the rise of Adolf Hitler to power.

Economic Problems faced by the Weimar Republic [Germany]

- Payment of reparations
- Hyper inflation. For instance, 1 billion marks bought a loaf of bread. In November 1923, US \$1 was equivalent to 4200000000000 marks.
- Unemployment. This was largely due to the Great Depression [1929-1939]. The population of the unemployed rose from 2258000 in 1928 to 6000000 in 1932.

Source: (Mr. Jones' teaching notebook, page 53).

He proceeded to discuss the economic challenges faced by the Weimar Republic between 1919 and 1933. His delivery took the form of a continuous lecture that lasted approximately 30 to 35 minutes. During this period, he did not pose any questions or check for understanding. Most learners listened passively, while some, especially those seated at the back appeared disengaged and distracted. There were no interactive elements, group tasks, or learner-driven activities observed during the entire session. Mr. Jones concluded the lesson by asking a single question:

Teacher: What were the economic problems faced by the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1933?

Learner responses:

Learner 1: High inflation

Learner 2: Unemployment

Learner 3: Food shortages

Learner 4: War reparations

The teacher accepted these answers, although the learners appeared to be reading directly from their notebooks. He ended the session by reminding them to revise for the upcoming mid-year examinations, noting that this was their final lesson. No questions from learners were invited or addressed.

I observed Mr. Jones teaching European History in his Form 3C class as shown in lesson segment 6, even though the syllabus clearly stipulates that learners at that stage should be focusing on African History. The extract below shows a picture taken from Mr. Jones' schemes of work, where he listed the topics which he was teaching in Form 3.

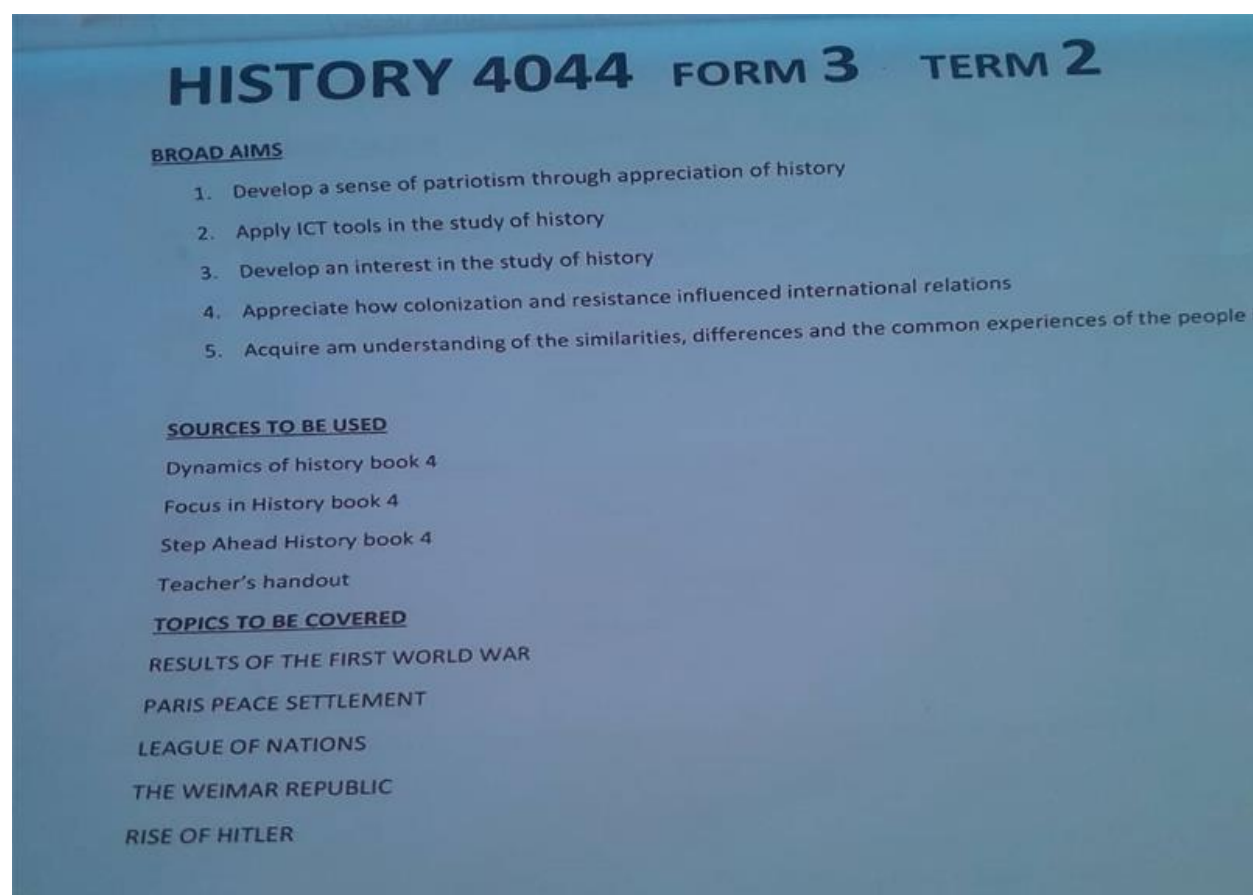


Figure 12: Topics Mr Jones was teaching in Form 3C

When questioned, he openly acknowledged that his learners were supposed to be doing African History but he insisted on following his own teaching path rather than adhering to the prescribed curriculum. In justifying his approach, he explained:

I did not adhere to the new Heritage-Based History syllabus and I am teaching European History in my Form 3 class because I am done with African History. I am almost done with the syllabus and soon I will start revisions. That's my own way of teaching for the past years, and I get good results through that.

Mr. Jones reflections and practices reveal teacher resistance and weak fidelity to the curriculum. By disregarding recommended pedagogy and content, he prioritises personal traditions and examination results over policy goals. Though justified as a means to secure “good results”, this stance undermines the HBC’s aims of heritage consciousness, learner agency, and problem-solving. His case shows how entrenched teacher-centred practices persist despite reforms, creating a gap between policy and classroom reality. Teachers may endorse reforms on paper but revert to familiar methods in practice, resulting in uneven learner experiences. This raises critical questions about the adequacy of professional development, monitoring, and support in ensuring faithful implementation of the Heritage-Based History curriculum.

4.4.6 Obstacles Faced by Mr. Jones in Teaching Form 3C

4.4.6.1 Scarcity of resources

Mr. Jones’ responses in this case study reveal that at Clarkson High School, the implementation of the Heritage-Based History curriculum has been significantly hindered by shortages of resources, particularly ICT gadgets, textbooks, and other relevant teaching materials. During pre-observation and follow-up interviews, Mr. Jones confirmed these challenges, noting: “No materials, including textbooks, were availed by MoPSE that are related to the new HBC. The syllabuses and the final teachers’ guide for learning and assessment were only accessed informally through social media groups.”

When further probed on why he had not incorporated films and videos in his lessons despite their recommendation in the HBC History Syllabus (4044), Mr. Jones lamented:

The school environment is not conducive for ICT gadgets, and I only possess my personal cell phone as an ICT tool for teaching. We do not have ICT gadgets such as whiteboards, internet facilities, laptops, or projectors, which are essential for using films and videos during history lessons. Sometimes we resort to the lecture method because of the lack of resources.

One of the major challenges faced by Mr. Jones in implementing the Heritage-Based history curriculum is the scarcity of resources. Clarkson High, a rural secondary school, lacks essential resources as textbooks, ICT gadgets, internet connectivity, and access to local heritage sites. This made it difficult for Mr. Jones to organise field trips, integrate digital technologies, or facilitate project-based learning as envisioned in the curriculum framework. As a result, he often relies on traditional lecture methods, which undermines the experiential and learner-centred approach promoted by the heritage-based curriculum. The shortage of resources not only constrains the quality of teaching, but also affects learner engagement and the development of critical skills, thereby limiting the full realisation of the curriculum's objectives.

4.4.6.2 Inadequate support from instructional leadership

Another critical barrier to the effective implementation of the Heritage-Based history curriculum faced by Mr. Jones is the lack of adequate support from school management. This challenge manifests itself particularly in the way school timetables are designed and subjects are prioritised. Mr. Jones confirmed this by noting that the timetable allocation by school authorities tends to disadvantage History, resulting in a decline in learner interest and participation. He explained that,

The way the timetable is drafted by the school management is leading to the decline of History, and that is affecting us when it comes to the implementation of the new Heritage-Based History curriculum. The school-based curriculum structure does not favour the humanities, with History being especially marginalized. Instead, administrative decisions appear to prioritise science-oriented subjects, which are often regarded as more prestigious or economically valuable. Time allocation and the number of periods

recommended by the HBC is affecting the timetable. The timetable is now overloaded and it is not being drafted well at school level.

A further challenge that emerged in this case is the lack of institutional support from school management for humanities subjects such as History. In Mr. Jones' case, management tends to prioritise science-oriented subjects, which are often viewed as more directly linked to employment opportunities and economic development. Consequently, History and other humanities subjects are marginalized in terms of resource allocation, scheduling, and administrative attention. This lack of support negatively impacts Mr. Jones' motivation and the effective implementation of the HBC. The neglect of History undermines the broader goals of Heritage-Based education, which seeks to foster critical thinking, cultural identity, and national consciousness among learners.

4.4.6.3 Inadequate professional development

Mr. Jones said that he is facing challenges in effectively implementing the Heritage-Based history curriculum and the School-Based Projects. The lack of adequate preparation has left him struggling to translate the curriculum's intentions into practice, highlighting a critical gap in teacher professional development for the HBC. In an interview with Mr. Jones, he highlighted that,

Despite that, I attended three training workshops on the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC), the sessions did not fully meet the practical needs of us as history teachers. Some of the workshops were repetitive, merely covering the same content that had already been addressed in previous sessions. This limited the usefulness of the training, as it did not provide new insights or skills to strengthen our capacity in implementing the new Heritage Based history curriculum.

He further emphasised: "No proper or targeted training was conducted on the execution of school-based projects, which are a key component of the HBC. As a result, we continue to face challenges in effectively implementing these School-Based Projects."

Mr. Jones was not adequately trained to implement the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC), and this significantly hindered effective curriculum delivery. While some workshops were conducted, they were often repetitive and failed to provide practical, hands-on guidance on key aspects of the curriculum, such as executing school-based projects. As a result, he lacked the necessary skills and confidence to translate the HBC's objectives into classroom practice. The absence of focused and comprehensive training created a gap between curriculum expectations and actual teaching, ultimately affecting the quality of history education and the successful implementation of the reform.

4.5 CASE STUDY 4: THE STORY OF MR. KATTON

The data on Mr. Katton's implementation of the Heritage-Based history curriculum at Mean High School are presented in this section. The data are based on an analysis of relevant documents, lesson observations, and in-depth interviews.

4.5.1 A Description of Mean High School

Mean High School, established in 1984 under the Hurungwe Rural District Council, primarily serves the local community around Karoi, with 4 feeder primary schools. The school has 450 students in Forms 1 to 6, taught by 28 teachers (10 females, 18 males), with an average class size of 55. Growth is limited due to the modest incomes of local black farmers, who mainly cultivate tobacco. The History Department has 1 female and 3 male teachers. The male teacher handling the two Form 3 classes under the new HBC, Mr. Katton, is the focus of this case study. Classes were streamed by ability, and I observed Form 3D, one of the 2 classes at the school.

4.5.2 Mr. Katton: The Hard Worker and the Rhetorician

Mr. Katton is a 41 years old man who teaches history in Form 3D at Mean High school. He has been a teacher for 18 years. Mr Katton holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in History and Geography, as well as a Post-Graduate Diploma in

Education, with History and Geography as teaching subjects. Mr. Katton is one of 4 teachers at Mean High's History Department. In addition to teaching forms 1, 2, 3, and 6, Mr. Katton is the Head of the Department (HoD) for Humanities. According to my interactions with him, Mr. Katton works hard since, even though he is the Head of the Humanities Department, he teaches the aforementioned subjects for 32 periods a week rather than the maximum of 24. He said he is no longer willing to learn or to advance his qualifications unless it is only related to professional development workshops which can develop his History teaching skills in HBC classrooms.

4.5.3 Classroom Context

In January 2025, Mr. Katton commenced teaching the new Heritage-Based History Curriculum 4044 at the Form 3 level. Despite the Heritage-Based History syllabus recommending 5 history lessons per week, the school continued to allocate only 4 periods, in line with the previous curriculum. Mr. Katton identified a significant constraint in implementing the new syllabus, citing the limited availability of timetable slots and the overall overcrowding of the school schedule. During the eight-week fieldwork period, Form 3D had 54 enrolled students — 30 girls and 24 boys — but class attendance during observations ranged from 44 to 47 students, with no lesson attended by all pupils. This enrolment far exceeded the official teacher-student ratio of 1:30 stipulated by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE, 2017; MoPSE, 2025:2), resulting in a notably overcrowded learning environment. Observations further indicated that the majority of learners were passive during most lessons.

4.5.4 Understanding and Conceptualisation of the HBC

4.5.4.1 Understanding guiding principles and values of the HBC

In the pre-observation interview, discussed with Mr Katton on his understanding of the new Heritage-Based History Curriculum meant to him. He explained that:

The main thrust of this new curriculum is to focus on improving the skills of the learners and make learners understand their heritage and their history. The major value of HBC is Ubuntu, and the other one is team work. Those are the

only ones I know.

During the pre-observation interview, Mr. Katton showed that he had heard about the HBC, but he did not fully understand the principles underpinning the new HBC curriculum. He argued that the new Heritage-Based Curriculum is a novel reform policy which focuses on promoting local history of Zimbabwe. Mr. Katton's understanding reflects a partial but meaningful grasp of the HBC's philosophy. His emphasis on Ubuntu demonstrates an alignment with the decolonial orientation of the reform, which seeks to promote African values and collective identity. However, it should be noted that Mr. Katton had limited knowledge on the principles underpinning the HBC curriculum, as he failed to name any one of them in the interviews done with him. His limited mention of other values suggests a narrow interpretation, possibly influenced by insufficient training and lack of exposure to policy texts.

4.5.4.2 Coherence versus incoherence with the HBC

Despite knowledge gaps, especially regarding the new topics and methodologies, Mr. Katton was tasked with effectively delivering the curriculum to their form three classes. An analysis of Circular 10 of (2024:10) revealed that,

Each teacher shall have ownership of the curriculum, develop an in-depth knowledge of content and the appropriate teaching methodologies and approaches. The responsibility for the quality of educational provision in individual schools at the local level rests with the teachers.

This highlights the crucial role Mr. Katton should play in interpreting and implementing reforms, making him a key agent in shaping the actual impact of curriculum changes in the classrooms. In a pre-observation meeting, Mr. Katton demonstrated his understanding of the Heritage-Based History curriculum reforms, accurately highlighting that, "The main focus of the Heritage-Based History is to promote the understanding of local history or the Zimbabwean history."

His responses aligned with the Heritage-Based History syllabus, which aims to foster interest in Zimbabwean history and patriotism it postulates that,

The syllabus enables learners to: develop an interest in the study of Zimbabwean, African and World history, develop appropriate skills and tools of analysing historical transformation of Zimbabwean societies and to inculcate a sense of patriotism through appreciating Zimbabwean history (Heritage Based Syllabus, 2024:5).

Mr. Katton's familiarity with the reforms can be attributed to his participation in three HBC workshops, which provided him with comprehensive training. This training enabled him to articulate the curriculum's objectives clearly. When asked about challenges related to training, Mr. Katton reported that, "I have benefited from attending training sessions, gaining valuable insights into implementing the Heritage Based History curriculum. Notably, I have attended three workshops on Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC)".

Week Ending	Topic	Objectives: By the end of the lesson learners should be able to:	Competencies: Skills and knowledge	Media /Resources	Teaching notes and activities	Evaluation
23	Early phase of the armed struggle	-identify the battles of the early phase of the armed struggle -describe the early battles of the armed struggle -explaining the failure of the early phase of the armed struggle	• Identifying • Describing • Explaining	• Chalkboard • History Syllabus page 24 • Step Ahead Textbook bk 3	-Recap of the previous lesson -Class presentations -Class discussions -Lesson conclusion	
05	The Chinhoyi Battle (Sinoia Battle 1966)	-name the 7 heroes of the Chinhoyi battle -describe the events of the Chinhoyi battle -explain why the Africans failed to win the battle	• Naming • Describing • Explaining	• Chalkboard • Step Ahead Textbook bk 3 • Chart of names	-Recap of the previous lesson -Class presentations -Class discussions -Lesson conclusion by giving homework	
25	The Wankie Battle	-identify on the map where the battle was fought -outline the events leading to the Wankie Battle -assess why the Africans failed to win the battle	• Identifying • Outlining • Assessing	• Chalkboard • Step Ahead Textbook bk 3 • Work cards	-Recap of the previous lesson -Teacher exposition -Class presentations -Class discussions -Lesson conclusion by giving homework	
	Test	-answer all given questions correctly -finish answering given questions withing given time	•Teacher gives questions and learners respond to the questions	• Chalkboard • Teacher's marking guide	• Teacher writes questions on the chalkboard • Answering questions	

Figure 14: Choice of media and resources by Mr. Katton

As shown in the figure above, the media or resources documented in Mr. Katton's schemes of work for week ending 16 May 2025 were: chalkboard, *Step Ahead* textbooks, and teachers marking guide. Most of the media and resources in Mr. Katton's scheme of work for Week 2 were chalk-and talk related and they were not

recommended in the new syllabus document (Heritage-Based History syllabus 4044, 2024:23), except for textbooks. It should also be noted that the consistent use of textbooks by Katton as the method to impart knowledge, is not congruent with the nature of History Syllabus 4044. The definition and nature of History necessitate for inquiry-based and discovery methods and practices. In his interpretation in the documents I analysed, he showed partial alignment with policy rhetoric but lacked depth in conceptual understanding. When asked about his adherence to the new HB History syllabus in his Form 3 class, Mr. Katton reported:

I am attempting to follow the syllabus by teaching topics in the prescribed order unlike before where I could pick the topics I liked and teach them without following the syllabus. However, despite the new Heritage Based history syllabus having many outlined teaching methodologies; I choose only those that are relevant to my learners.

This approach suggests that Mr. Katton, despite gradually accepting the curriculum, exercises autonomy in implementing the syllabus. Mr. Katton's approach highlights the crucial role of teacher sense-making in curriculum implementation. As he was interpreting and making sense of reforms, he selectively adopted or resisted certain aspects. This passive resistance can manifest in various ways, such as choosing preferred methodologies or omitting specific topics. Ultimately, his implementation of the curriculum was shaped by this understanding and interpretation of the reforms. By exercising autonomy in their teaching practices, teachers like Mr. Katton can either facilitate or hinder the successful implementation of curriculum reforms.

4.5.5 Understanding and Experienced Transformations in History

4.5.5.1 Changes brought by the HBC in Form 3D

Mr. Katton identified significant changes introduced by the new Heritage-Based (HB) History syllabus. When asked about the changes brought by the HBC in Form Three classrooms, he expressed that,

Key alterations include the replacement of Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAS) with School Based Projects and modifications to the

examination paper structure. Furthermore, the curriculum has undergone revisions in its topic structure, with previously repeated topics, such as oral sources and precolonial states, now being taught in Form 1. Conversely, topics that were previously omitted, including the armed struggle and the Constitution of Zimbabwe, are now being introduced in Form 3.

In Mr. Katton's Form 3D class, the new HB History Syllabus 4044 has introduced noticeable changes. The realignment of topics and assessment methods has transformed his teaching, particularly with the inclusion of the armed struggle and Constitution of Zimbabwe, aimed at deepening students' understanding of national history. These shifts require him to adapt his instructional strategies, reflecting the broader intent of the curriculum to enhance relevance and foster appreciation of Zimbabwe's heritage. Mr. Katton's experience illustrates how the syllabus reforms are directly shaping classroom practice and student learning in the context of Form 3.

4.5.5.2 Expectations-critical thinking and heritage consciousness

One of the perceived changes made by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) is to introduce a "curriculum which is aligned to the Heritage Based Education MODEL 5.0 and vision 2030 which seeks to cultivate innovative learners, who are prepared to drive national development and excel in the modern economy" (Circular number 4 & 10, 2024; HBC Framework, 2024). Mr. Katton conceptualised the HBC as equipping learners with higher-order skills, such as problem-solving, innovation, and critical engagement with the past. When asked whether the HB History curriculum promotes critical thinking, Mr. Katton explained:

I see a relationship between the HBC and broader educational agendas such as Vision 2030 because the HBC calls for a learner-centred approach and inclusive education. It allows all learners to acquire skills that are useful in society in the future, and no one is left behind by this curriculum, just as Vision 2030 advocates.

In Mr. Katton's teaching, there is a clear alignment with the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) framework and Circulars 4 and 10 of 2024. His instructional focus reflects the HBC's emphasis on inclusivity, heritage-based learning, and the

development of problem-solving skills, principles that are also central to Vision 2030. Through fostering critical thinking, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning in his Form 3 classes, Mr. Katton is positioning his students as active participants in national development, demonstrating how the curriculum serves not only to teach history but also to prepare learners to contribute meaningfully to Zimbabwe's long-term development goals.

4.5.6 Practical Application and Pedagogical Methods

4.5.6.1 Learner-centred versus teacher-centred pedagogies

In unlocking the sub research question: 'How are History teachers are implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in Form 3 classrooms?', several MoPSE flagship documents on the new HBC, for example, the HBC Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2024- 2030, Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment 2024 and the HB History syllabus were analysed. Thus, among other new curricular policy-related publications, the HBC Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2024–2030, the Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment 2024, and the HB History syllabus clearly state the necessity of implementing a learner-centred pedagogy. In these lines, the HBC 2024–2030 whitepaper emphasises the constructivist foundation of learner-centred pedagogy:

The curriculum framework stresses pupil-centred approaches. The focus on learning revolves around pupils as they engage in the search and discovery of new knowledge... The focus of teaching and learning is targeted on engaging pupils in addressing life problems. Within the context of networked learning, schools will be transformed from mere buildings to nerve centre spaces that connect teachers and pupils in a learning community. The role of the teacher changes from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator (HBC curriculum Framework 2024-2030, 2024:7-9).

Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment 2024, and the Heritage-Based History syllabus echo the same thrust on learner-centred pedagogy and constructivist learning by highlighting the need to use pro-learner-centred active learning. The recommended methods encompass learner- centred and hands-on

approaches, covering experiential learning, e-learning, problem solving methods, discovery methods, educational tours, arts-based learning, video and film shows, case studies, project-based learning and games and quizzes (Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment 2024:3-5; History Syllabus Form 1-4 Syllabus: 6; Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework 2024-2030, 2024:10).

4.5.6.2 Classroom vignette of Mr. Katton teaching History in Form 3D

I observed Mr. Katton teaching a Form Three History classroom during the 8 weeks I was in the field. The three interviews I held with him, and an analysis of relevant circulars, Heritage-Based History syllabus and his scheme amongst others helped me to explore further the actual teaching methods he is expected to use, and those he actually used, in implementing the new HB history curriculum in his Form 3 classrooms.

Lesson Segment 2

*On 3 June 2025, shortly after break at 10:20 a.m., I entered Mr Katton's Form 3 North History class. The topic of the day was **The Role of the Nationalists in the Armed Struggle**. As was his usual practice, he wrote the topic on the chalkboard. The teacher initiated the lesson with a question:*

Teacher: Can you define a nationalist?

Learner 1: Someone who is patriotic to his country.

Learner 2: Someone who loves his country.

Learner 3: Someone who is willing to die for a national cause.

Mr Katton then wrote a definition on the chalkboard, taken from an old, yellow-paged notebook he was using: Nationalists were the people who were leaders during the war. As he wrote, learners quietly copied the definition into their notebooks. He proceeded to instruct learners to work in pairs or small groups to identify some of the nationalists. While they worked, he moved around the classroom to monitor the activity. He then asked for feedback:

Teacher: Can you give us the names of the nationalists you discussed?

Learner 1: R. G. Mugabe.

Learner 2: Tongogara.

Learner 3: Chitepo.

Only three names were provided by learners. At this point, Mr Katton took over, writing a list of nationalists on the chalkboard. His list repeated the names already given by the learners, but he nonetheless dictated them for the class to copy into their notebooks. To conclude, he posed one final question:

Teacher: What were the roles of the nationalists?

Learner 1: To provide fighting tactics.

The teacher added another role: To gather ideas from other nations. The lesson ended with learners recording these points in their notebooks.

This lesson displayed strong teacher-centred characteristics despite the brief attempt at group work. Although learners were given a short collaborative task (identifying nationalists), the follow-up was limited, with only a few responses solicited before the teacher resumed control of the content delivery. The teacher was the primary source of knowledge, with learners largely copying information from the chalkboard. Learner participation was minimal and not fully built upon; after the initial responses, the teacher took over rather than encouraging broader class engagement. The group work task was underutilized, as the reporting phase was brief and dominated by the teacher. While the activity structure had the potential for a more learner-centred approach, the execution ultimately reverted to a teacher-led format, with limited opportunities for active learner contribution beyond note-taking.

Lesson Segment 3 – Group Presentations on Pungwes and the Geneva Conference

Mr. Katton entered the classroom smartly dressed and greeted the learners, who responded in unison. Without delay, he instructed the three groups scheduled to present to prepare, announcing that Group 1 would present first. Their presentation focused on the topic: The Importance of Pungwes in the Armed Struggle. The teacher began by authoritatively posing a question to the presenters:

Teacher: Can you give us the importance of pungwes?

Presenter: To encourage people to join the guerrillas.

Teacher: Why is it important to encourage people to join the guerrillas?

Presenter: To increase the numbers. The presenter then continued:

Presenter: To intimidate people.

A learner from the audience posed a clarifying question:

Learner1: What is to intimidate?

Presenter: It is to encourage.

The teacher rejected this answer and clarified:

Teacher: In this context, to intimidate means to put fear into sell-outs. The pungwes were meant to intimidate sell-outs, and sometimes they could be beaten.

*The teacher then asked Group 1 to sit down, instructing one member to compile comprehensive notes from the presentation and share them with the rest of the group so they could write them in their books. Unexpectedly, the teacher skipped Group 2 without providing a tangible reason, stating only that they would present in the next lesson. Group 3 was then called to the front to present on **The Geneva Conference**.*

As with Group 1, the teacher immediately questioned them:

Teacher: When was the Geneva Conference held?

Presenter: April 1954.

Teacher: It was held in April 1976.

Teacher: Where was it held?

Presenter: It was held in Switzerland.

Teacher: Why was the conference held?

Presenter: To protect civilians.

Teacher: Who are civilians?

Presenter: Civil servants, for example soldiers. (The teacher ignored this incorrect response before explaining that soldiers are not civilians).

Despite the interruptions, the presenters added two more points on why the conference was held. The teacher maintained authoritative control over the lesson, guiding responses and correcting answers. He concluded by repeating the earlier questions that is when the conference was held? And why it was held? Before ending the session.

This lesson was strongly teacher-centred with, a clear “right-answerism” approach as pronounced by Tabulawa (1998). While learners participated through presentations, the teacher retained firm control over content and pace. There was limited learner agency in this from three history classroom. Groups presented but were frequently interrupted and corrected by the teacher, reducing opportunities for peer-led

learning. Questions were posed in a test-like manner, focusing on factual recall rather than discussion or deeper analysis. There is also evidence of unequal participation which is a value of HBC which guarantees all learners equal opportunities to learn. Group 2 was skipped without explanation, undermining consistency and fairness. The learners were very passive in the lesson and most learners participated only as note-takers, with interaction restricted to answering the teacher's direct questions. Although the lesson included group work, the teacher's dominant role meant the approach did not fully capitalise on learner-centred pedagogy.

Observations of Mr. Katton's lessons across 8 lesson segments revealed a consistent pattern of teacher-centred instruction despite the frequent use of learner presentations and group activities. While lesson formats varied slightly ranging from individual presentations to group work and lectures, the underlying pedagogy remained rooted in teacher authority, factual recall, and controlled participation. In all observed lessons, Mr. Katton exercised strong control over classroom discourse. He decided who spoke, when they spoke, and whether their contributions were accepted as correct. Even during learner presentations, he frequently interrupted to correct factual inaccuracies, supply additional information, or reframe learner responses. This practice was particularly evident in Lessons 1 and 3, where the teacher guided the presentation's content and determined its direction, often shifting the focus away from learners' input. The teacher's approach reflected a "right-answerism" mindset, where the goal was to produce specific, predetermined responses rather than encourage exploratory or divergent thinking. Overall, Mr. Katton's lessons reflected a consistent teacher-centred pedagogy characterised by high teacher control, limited learner autonomy, and minimal collaborative learning.

4.5.7 Challenges Encountered in Curriculum Implementation

4.5.7.1 Teacher agency

Mr. Katton reported that his involvement in curriculum reforms was largely limited to classroom-level activities. He did not participate in decision-making processes regarding educational changes and was merely informed of the new reforms, as he

explained:

I personally did not attend any workshop, nor did I hear of history teachers who attended a workshop specifically related to the design of the new Heritage-Based History Curriculum (HBC). We were not consulted during its formulation, yet I often see statements on social media from the Ministry claiming that teachers were engaged through workshops during the design stage of the HBC. This contradiction raises questions about the extent to which teachers were genuinely involved in the curriculum development process.

When asked whether he was forced to adopt the new HBC, Mr Katton responded as follows:

Normally the system forces us to adopt the curriculum and we do not have an option but to implement what we have been given by the policymakers. Even if you do not agree with the curriculum or you were not consulted in the design, you still have to implement it. We follow the policies and when it comes to policies, you do not object to anything.

In Mr. Katton's case, his lack of consultation during the design of the HBC reflects a top-down approach to curriculum reform. As a frontline history teacher, his exclusion left him without a sense of ownership or full understanding of the curriculum's goals, which may contribute to mechanical compliance or misinterpretation of the syllabus. His experience highlights the need for collaboration, dialogue, and targeted professional development to enable him to engage meaningfully with the HBC and translate its transformative intentions into classroom practice.

4.5.7.2 Classroom overcrowding

The official teacher-pupil ratio in Zimbabwean secondary schools is supposed to be 1:30 (MoPSE, 2025), but Form 3D taught by Mr. Katton had 54 students. Mr Katton explained how the abnormal class size militated against the implementation of the new HB History curriculum:

My class is too large, and this makes it difficult to implement some of the recommended teaching strategies such as group work. With so many learners, it becomes challenging to monitor all the groups effectively within the limited lesson time. As a result, we are often forced to rotate groups so that only a few present and provide feedback each day, instead of completing the activity within a single session as would be the case with smaller classes. This approach stretches the activity over several days, leading to time wastage and disrupting the overall pace of teaching.

Large class sizes hindered Mr. Katton's ability to implement the Heritage-Based Curriculum effectively. He struggled to apply learner-centred methods such as discussions, group projects, and presentations due to overcrowded classrooms. While the HBC aims to foster active participation, critical thinking, and collaboration, these goals were compromised, forcing him to adopt surface-level strategies to manage the large numbers. Consequently, the intended benefits of inclusivity, creativity, and meaningful engagement were not fully realised in his classes.

4.5.7.3 Curriculum overload

From the responses given by Mr. Katton, it was evident that the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) has significantly increased the workload of teachers, making it difficult for them to deliver the curriculum efficiently. He explained:

My school load is too big because it reduces my time to do research as well as to interact with the learners, as advocated by the HB history curriculum...the curriculum is too broad and has got many learning areas so we were not allocated the required 5 lessons per week by the HB History syllabus 4044 because they will be trying to accommodate all learning areas on the timetable.

Mr. Katton's dual role as classroom teacher and Head of Department, with 32 periods per week, created an exceptionally heavy workload. This limited his time for lesson preparation, research, and facilitation of learner-centred activities like projects and discussions. The combination of teaching and administrative duties constrained

his ability to implement the HBC fully, undermining the curriculum’s intended focus on innovation, continuous assessment, and learner-centred approaches.

4.5.7.4 Insufficient resources

Mr. Katton faced challenges in accessing high-quality resources and textbooks, hindering effective curriculum implementation. In a pre-observation interview done with Mr. Katton, he argued that government so has not yet availed any resource materials as their promise since May 2024. Mr. Katton explained that,

There are no resources which have availed so far; we only received materials or circular pertaining to the execution of the Schools Based Projects (SBP) and nothing else. We also only received HB history syllabuses since the start of the new curriculum.

From this conversation, it is evident that there is often a disconnection between policy and promises and actual curriculum delivery by the policymakers. The government of Zimbabwe, as shown in the figure below, extracted from the Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework document, promised to mobilise all resources for the schools from May 2024 to December 3031 but so far nothing has been availed in schools, except syllabuses. There are identifiable systematic differences between policy intend and policy implementation with regard to human and material resources such that introduction of the HBC has created a gap in this regard.

FINANCING INFRASTRUCTURE			
20.	Resource Mobilisation	20.1 Mobilising adequate resources for the implementation of the Heritage Based Curriculum. 20.2 Strengthening stakeholder participation in education resource provision including the business sector and developing partners. 20.3 Making a deliberate effort to lobby parliamentarians and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion to treat spending on education as a strategic investment rather than as pure consumption.	Ongoing to 31 December 2030
RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE			

Figure 15: Promises made by MoPSE in terms of resource mobilisation towards the new HBC

Source: HBC Curriculum Framework (2024:23)

In all the 8 lessons I observed, Mr. Katton did not make use of any talking books, cartoons, films, videos or computers as recommended by the new Heritage-Based History syllabus 4044 and the Heritage-Based Curriculum Framework. In interviews conducted, Mr. Katton complained about the shortage of resources, noting:

We have a shortage of resources. We do not have any HBC history textbooks. Despite the fact that the Heritage Based history curriculum advocates for the use of ICT in teaching history classes, we do not have computers. For instance, we have only one computer for the whole department, which comprises many learning areas, and it is difficult for us to wait for that one computer. The administration is supportive when it comes to resource allocation, but as a whole school, they are also facing challenges of resource constraints in implementing the HBC.

In Mr. Katton's case, resource constraints significantly hindered his implementation of the Heritage-Based History curriculum. The absence of textbooks and ICT tools, including computers and projectors, limited his ability to use digital research, multimedia presentations, and other innovative methods. As a result, he struggled to facilitate inquiry-based and learner-centred activities, creating a gap between the curriculum's expectations and classroom realities. These shortages not only frustrated his teaching efforts but also constrained the transformative potential of the HBC in fostering historical understanding and critical thinking among his students.

4.6 CROSS CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a cross-case analysis, identifying both the commonalities and differences in the study findings with respect to the scope, distribution, and reaches of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) 2024–2030 frameworks. It further examines the teachers' interpretations of the learner-centred instructional mandate and documents how they enacted or, in some cases, did not enact this requirement within their Form 3 History classrooms. This approach enables a nuanced discussion

of the findings, allowing for the confirmation, extension, or contestation of insights from existing literature.

4.6.1 Fragmented and Insufficient Grasp of HBC Principles and Values

The first sub question of the study is: *What are the prominent features and interpretation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?* The cross-case analysis reveals a pronounced disparity in history teachers' understanding of the Heritage-Based Curriculum principles and values. Mr. Peters stood out as the most knowledgeable, demonstrating an ability to link curriculum principles to holistic learner outcomes such as critical thinking, decision-making, and civic responsibility (**Section 4.2.3.1**). His understanding exemplifies how teacher preparedness can directly support the transformative goals of the HBC. Conversely, Ms. Tecla (**Section 4.3.3.1**), Mr. Jones (**Section 4.4.3.1**), and Mr. Katton (**Section 4.5.3.1**) exhibited varying levels of limited knowledge, with Ms. Tecla relying on informal peer networks and social media, Mr. Jones attending workshops but remaining largely uninformed, and Mr. Katton showing a narrow focus on a few values such as Ubuntu and teamwork. These findings suggest that formal professional development efforts, such as workshops, are insufficient on their own without ongoing engagement, reflection, and practical application.

The variation in understanding underscores a critical challenge for curriculum implementation: teacher knowledge and interpretation directly shape classroom practice and the realisation of the HBC's intended transformative outcomes. Without adequate knowledge, teachers may inadvertently narrow the curriculum's scope, neglect critical principles such as inclusivity, heritage preservation, and gender sensitivity, and limit learners' exposure to problem-solving, critical thinking, and civic skills. This highlights the need for more structured, contextually-relevant, and continuous professional development to ensure fidelity to the curriculum's philosophy.

The findings from this study indicate a significant variation in history teachers' understanding of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC), with Mr. Peters demonstrating relatively strong knowledge, while Ms. Tecla, Mr. Jones, and Mr.

Katton exhibited limited or partial understanding. This aligns with existing literature, which suggests that teacher knowledge is a critical determinant of curriculum implementation fidelity. A plethora of studies such as Fullan (2015), Harris and Graham (2019) and Nevenglosky (2018) reveal that successful curriculum reform requires that teachers possess not only procedural knowledge of content, but also a deep understanding of the underlying principles and philosophy guiding the curriculum. When teachers lack this knowledge, reforms risk being superficially adopted or misinterpreted in classroom practice. As Cohen and Ball (1990) astutely observe, teachers cannot be expected to teach concepts and methods they themselves have not learned. To overcome this challenge, teachers' professional development must be prioritised.

The cases of Ms. Tecla and Mr. Jones illustrate the limitations of professional development approaches that rely solely on workshops. As noted by Fullan (1991) and Rahman et al. (2018), one-off training sessions often fail to equip teachers with the sustained understanding and reflective capacity needed to internalise new curricula, particularly when the curriculum entails transformative or learner-centred pedagogies. Similarly, Dhlamini (2019), Ndinelao and Bhebhe (2021) and Ndomondo (2024) emphasise that teacher understanding is mediated by access to resources, ongoing mentoring, and collaborative networks, suggesting that informal learning, as seen in Ms. Tecla's reliance on peers and social media, can partially compensate for formal training gaps but may not fully align teachers' practice with curriculum intentions. Furthermore, the narrow interpretation of principles by Mr. Katton, focusing only on Ubuntu and teamwork, reflects what Rafiepour and Farsan (2021) describe as the "knowledge-of-content-in-practice" gap, where teachers know fragments of curriculum content but fail to connect them to broader educational goals. This limitation risks constraining the transformative potential of the HBC, as teachers may inadvertently prioritise familiar content or methods over the curriculum's intended development of civic responsibility, heritage consciousness, and critical thinking skills.

Overall, these findings support the argument in the literature, that teacher knowledge is a mediating factor between curriculum design and classroom enactment. Without sufficient understanding of principles, values, and underlying philosophy, teachers

may implement reforms selectively, superficially, or inconsistently, thereby undermining both the fidelity and the transformative objectives of curriculum reforms (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Dhlomo & Mawere, 2020; Fullan, 2015). This underscores the urgent need for sustained, contextually-relevant, and reflective professional development programmes that equip teachers with both the conceptual understanding and practical strategies necessary for effective HBC implementation. However, unlike many studies conducted in Zimbabwe or Southern Africa (Dhlomo & Mawere, 2020; Furiwai & Singh-Pillay, 2020; Katshuna & Shikalipo, 2023; Madondo, 2020; Mogale & Modipane, 2021; Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Ndeshimona, 2024; Phaiphai, 2020) my study has distinguished between awareness and conceptual understanding. My study has shown that teacher may understand the general philosophy for example learner-centred approach (Mr. Peters) but cannot translate it into classroom practice. This distinction between superficial awareness and deep conceptual knowledge extends existing literature, which often treats limited knowledge as a single undifferentiated problem.

4.6.1.2 Partial conformity and discrepancy

The analysis of the four cases, Mr. Peters, Ms. Tecla, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Katton, reveals considerable variation in teachers' alignment with the Heritage-Based (HB) History curriculum. Across Mr. Peters, Ms. Tecla, and Mr. Jones, there was a clear pattern of misalignment between planned and recommended instructional strategies. Mr. Peters' (**Figure 3**) schemes of work largely relied on teacher-centred pedagogies such as teacher exposition and group feedback, omitting the learner-centred, multi-sensory approaches prescribed in the HBC syllabus. Unlike all other teachers, Ms. Tecla (**Figure 4**) included class discussions, presentations, and group work in her schemes and teaching. This showed that she is a learner-centred teacher as prescribed by the Heritage-Based History 4044 syllabus.

Mr. Jones further exemplified this gap: although he claimed to plan group work and class discussions, the exit interview with him revealed that he primarily used the lecture method and note-taking, prioritising examination preparation over curriculum ideals. Mr. Jones confessed to using teacher-centred pedagogy, specifically the lecture method, stating: "The way I tackled the syllabus is different. I used teacher-

centred pedagogy (lecture method) so that I will pave the way for the revisions at the end for the preparations of the exams.” Mr. Katton (**Section 4.5.4.2**) demonstrated a strong understanding of the learner centred approaches and Zimbabwean history but his reliance on conventional resources such as chalk, textbooks and the teachers marking guide reflect partial alignment with HBC policy prescriptions.

4.6.1.3 Curriculum policy versus classroom practice

The misalignment observed in the four cases signals that teacher readiness is a key determinant of the HBC's effective enactment. This aligns with literature on curriculum implementation which emphasises that teacher agency, subject knowledge, and pedagogical skills are central to translating reform into classroom practice (Cohen & Ball, 1999; Fullan, 2015; Kabombwe, 2019; Spillane et al., 2002; Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020). Teachers' partial or symbolic adherence may inadvertently compromise the intended learning outcomes of the HBC, particularly in developing learners' problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and heritage consciousness. This pattern of partial or symbolic alignment resonates with research on curriculum reform, which emphasises that teachers' limited subject-matter and pedagogical knowledge often constrain the fidelity of implementation (Fullan, 2015; Harris & Graham, 2019; OECD, 2019; Smith et al., 2024). Teachers' over-reliance on familiar, traditional methods reflects a tendency to default to prior practices when confronted with complex reforms (Chimbi, 2023; Du Plessis, 2020; Hoadley, 2018; Muller & Hoadley, 2022; Ogah, 2023; Spillane, 2004; Tabulawa, 2013). When a curriculum is implemented with fidelity, researchers can more accurately assess whether its goals are achieved, leading to a clearer understanding of student performance.

The findings of this study suggest that alignment is influenced by a combination of teacher knowledge, familiarity with curriculum reforms, prior teaching habits and professional development. Where these factors are insufficiently addressed, misalignment becomes inevitable. Professional development emerges as a decisive factor in enhancing teachers' conceptual grasp of the curriculum, improving their classroom practices, and bridging the gap between policy and practice. There is a

prevailing trend for policymakers in both developed and developing countries to often rush curriculum reforms and roll out changes into schools without taking steps to prepare teachers with knowledge and skills on how to implement the changes at classroom level (Ball et al., 2009; Harris & Graham, 2019; Nevenglosky, 2018; OECD, 2019, 2020; Rahman et al., 2018). As observed in the cases of Mr. Peters, Mr. Jones and Mr. Katton, History teachers may generally recognise the importance of learner-centred pedagogy, knowledge gaps, and entrenched practices, but insufficient training may limit alignment with HBC prescriptions. Fullan (2016) emphasises that understanding the characteristics of an innovation and the roles of all stakeholders is essential during implementation. Without clear guidance, teachers may feel uncertain about how to incorporate new initiatives into their teaching or mistakenly believe they are already applying them.

The problem of introducing curricular reforms without adequate teacher preparation is not unique to Zimbabwe. This appears to be a common problem in most developing countries where reforms are mostly initiated by central governments which are far removed from the realities on the ground. Studies conducted in Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe found that teachers who received inadequate training felt overwhelmed by the curriculum changes, leading to diminished teacher confidence and commitment (Chimbunde 2019; Furiwai & Singh-Pillay, 2020; Mashayamombe 2024; Katshuna & Shikalepo, 2023; Madondo, 2020; Molapo & Pillay's, 2018; Mogale & Modipane, 2021; Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Ndeshimona, 2024; Phaiphai, 2020 & Sengai & Mokhele, 2021). For the HBC to achieve its intended impact, systemic support for teacher capacity-building is essential, as misalignment at the classroom level undermines curriculum goals of heritage consciousness, learner agency, and experiential learning.

Collectively, the cases illustrate a continuum of alignment showing that teacher knowledge, prior practices and professional development shape the degree to which HBC reforms are translated into classroom practice. In the context of History education, Chimbi (2021) highlights that limited understanding of curriculum reforms often results in a gap between intended and enacted curricula, leading to selective or superficial adoption of new methods. Similarly, Spillane (2004) posits that teachers make sense of policy innovations through the lens of their existing knowledge,

beliefs, and classroom realities. The cases of Mr. Peters and Mr. Jones reflect this phenomenon. Their limited knowledge of the Heritage-Based History (HBC) curriculum contributed to misalignment with prescribed learner-centred strategies. Nevertheless, my study differs from numerous previous studies on History curriculum reforms such as by Boadu et al. (2020), Berg and Christou (2020), Cuban (2023), Harris and Graham (2019) and Ndeshimona (2024), which examined misalignment broadly in terms of policy practice gaps but did not provide a detailed cross case analysis comparing multiple teachers' schemes of work, interviews and classrooms observations. My study contributes to new knowledge by integrating policy documents teachers' schemes of work and lessons observations, giving a multi-layered picture why of misalignment that strengthens claims about why it occurs and how it can be addressed.

4.6.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Curricular Change in History Education

The second sub question guiding this study focused on *how History teachers conceptualise the Heritage-Based Curriculum*. Across all cases, a common change consistently mentioned was the removal of Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAs) and their replacement with School-Based Projects (SBPs). The introduction of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) has brought multiple pedagogical, structural, and assessment-related shifts in the teaching of History, as reflected in both the syllabus and teachers' narratives. Mr. Peters (Section 4.2.2.4) highlighted SBPs as a core reform, although he noted that differences in practical implementation compared to CALAs are modest. Ms. Tecla (Section 4.3.2.4) explained that learners are now more engaged in research and presentations, aligning with SBPs' learner-centred objectives. Jones (Section 4.4.2.4) confirmed the same policy shift, linking SBPs with the broader orientation toward learner-centred pedagogy. Mr. Katton (Section 4.5.2.4) also acknowledged the replacement of CALAs with SBPs, underscoring how they reshape teaching by requiring independent inquiry and practical research. The move from CALAs to SBPs is a universal reform, signalling a paradigm shift from repetitive assessment tasks to research-oriented, project-based learning. Teachers, however, interpret the extent of transformation differently, some seeing it as significant (Ms. Tecla, Mr. Katton), while others view it as modest (Mr. Peters).

4.3.6.1 Curricular restructuring History as a strategy to promote patriotism

Another major shift across all cases is the reorganisation of topics in Form 3 History. Mr. Peters noted that “whereas the CBC began with post-1980 developments, the HBC shifts the entry point to developments since 1990, stressing more contemporary relevance.” Ms. Tecla highlighted that “learners now begin with the armed struggle, unlike before when they started with sources of history.” Mr. Jones also observed that “precolonial states have been removed from Form 3 and shifted to earlier levels, while new emphases such as the armed struggle are foregrounded.” Katton reinforced this, noting that “oral sources and precolonial states now appear in Form 1, while Form 3 introduces the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the armed struggle.” While the sequencing of topics varies across teacher accounts, there is a common recognition that the HBC realigns the syllabus to highlight national heritage themes (armed struggle, constitution, post-1990 developments). This reorganisation reflects a deliberate political and heritage-oriented orientation.

Changes to assessment emerged across all cases, though with different emphases. Ms. Tecla and Mr. Jones both discussed the restructuring of examination papers, now divided into two sections that demand broader coverage and deeper engagement from learners. Both Mr. Katton and Mr. Peters further confirmed the replacement of Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAs) with School-Based Projects (SBPs). This represents a significant innovation, promoting independent research, critical thinking, and community engagement. Mr. Peters did not emphasise examination changes as much, focusing more on ICT integration. The examination paper restructuring is widely acknowledged (except for Mr. Peters) and aligns with the broader shift towards critical thinking and analytical engagement, reducing reliance on rote memorisation.

Across the cases, ICT integration emerged as a policy priority. Mr. Peters noted its increased prominence in the syllabus, though he admitted that practical implementation remains minimal due to resource constraints. Ms. Tecla highlighted the introduction of learner-led research and classroom presentations as new expectations, while Mr. Jones recognised the shift towards learner-centred methods but remained sceptical of their practical application. For Mr. Katton, the inclusion of new themes such as **the Armed Struggle** and **Constitution of Zimbabwe**

necessitated adaptation of teaching strategies to align with the heritage-driven orientation of the syllabus. The cases collectively point to a tri-dimensional reform: restructuring of content to highlight liberation heritage and citizenship education, innovation in assessment through SBPs and revised examination formats, and pedagogical shifts towards learner-centred approaches and ICT integration. While all the teachers studied recognised these shifts, the extent of adoption varied, often mediated by contextual realities such as resource availability and teacher agency. The cross-case evidence suggests that the HBC is not merely rhetorical, but is actively reshaping classroom practices, even if unevenly.

The cases of Mr. Peters, Ms. Tecla, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Katton highlight significant curricular shifts introduced by the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in History classrooms. These include content restructuring, assessment reforms, and pedagogical reorientation. The changes reflect broader theoretical debates on curriculum reform and resonate with perspectives advanced by scholars such as Fullan (2015), Tabulawa (2013), and Freire (1970). Across the cases, teachers noted a reordering of topics to privilege heritage and liberation narratives. For example, Ms. Tecla observed that learners now begin Form Three with **the Armed Struggle** rather than **Sources of History**, while Mr. Peters highlighted the shift from post-1980 to post-1990 developments. Such adjustments illustrate the initiation stage of reform that Fullan (2015) describes, where policy shifts redefine curricular priorities. At the same time, they embody Tabulawa's (2013) argument for the Africanisation of education through the centring of indigenous historical experiences, liberation struggles, and citizenship formation. By foregrounding Zimbabwean heritage, the HBC seeks to decolonise historical knowledge and reduce over-reliance on Eurocentric narratives.

4.3.6.2 Project-based learning to counter examination-driven History

A major finding of this study is that all four History teachers acknowledged a significant change brought by the HBC in their classrooms. Specifically they identified the introduction of the School-Based Projects as a transformative component of the curriculum. The introduction of School-Based Projects (SBPs) to replace Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAs), noted by all four

teachers, aligns with Fullan's (2015) second stage of reform, implementation. SBPs demand that learners conduct independent research, engage with local heritage, and present findings, tasks that embody Freire's (1970) and Todici et al.' (2022) critical pedagogy, Hamidah's et al.'s (2020) and Yang's (2019) studies by encouraging dialogue, problem-posing, and reflection rather than passive memorisation. As argued by Todici et al. (2022), teaching must be done using critical pedagogy, which challenges the notion that children learn best by absorbing concepts from specialists and stresses education as a practice that is liberating. Similarly, the restructuring of examination papers into new sections, as explained by Mr. Jones and Ms. Tecla, reflects attempts to institutionalise assessment practices that reward critical engagement over rote recall. The four cases also revealed varying degrees of adaptation towards learner-centred and ICT-integrated pedagogy.

While Mr. Peters acknowledged ICT's prominence in policy but lamented its limited practicality, Ms. Tecla and Mr. Katton emphasised learner-led research and presentations. These experiences capture the tensions Fullan (2007) identifies at the Implementation stage, where reforms face the realities of classroom constraints. Furthermore, the move towards participatory pedagogy resonates with Crisp's (2024), Chimbunde and Moreeng's (2025), Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2020) and Maringe's (2023) vision of liberating education, where learners become active agents in constructing historical knowledge. At the same time, it reflects Tabulawa's (2013) critique that African education reforms often adopt global learner-centred discourses but struggle to translate them meaningfully into under-resourced classrooms. My study also agrees with Dombo and Mujere (2023), who opine that the emphasis of the curriculum should be on providing students with experiences that empower them to address real-world issues.

Earlier literature on the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Zimbabwe and in other African contexts often critiqued CALAs as bureaucratic, examination-driven, and teacher-centred in implementation (Chimbi, 2018; Chimbi & Jita, 2019, 2021; Ngwenya, 2020; Risiro, 2021). My study, unlike the aforementioned previous studies reveals that SBPs, though similar in intent are positioned differently under the HBC: they emphasise community research, problem-solving, and heritage consciousness. This signals a novel evolution of assessment reforms, showing how Zimbabwe's

HBC goes beyond technical “competency” to embed national identity and heritage.

4.3.6.3 History fostering critical thinking and heritage awareness

One of the perceived changes made by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) is the introduction of a curriculum aligned to the Heritage-Based Education Model 5.0 and Vision 2030, which seeks to cultivate innovative learners prepared to drive national development and excel in the modern economy (Circulars 4 & 10, 2024; HBC Framework, 2024). Within this policy context, the expectation that History classrooms promote critical thinking and heritage consciousness has become a central reform agenda. The experiences of the 4 participating teachers reveal both alignment and divergence in translating this expectation into classroom practice. Across the four cases (Mr. Peters, Ms. Tecla, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Katton), there is both convergence and divergence in how teachers interpret and implement the HBC expectation of promoting critical thinking and heritage consciousness. Mr. Katton (**Section 4.5.4.3**) views the curriculum as equipping learners with higher-order skills (problem solving, critical engagement with the past, innovation). He also makes direct links to Vision 2030, showing his capacity to locate classroom practice within wider policy frameworks.

Mr. Peters (**Section 4.2.4.3**) acknowledged the value of cultivating critical thinking and heritage awareness, but his teaching was hampered by a lack of ICT, films, and interactive resources. His implementation remained largely traditional (chalk and talk), which limited opportunities for genuine higher-order thinking. Ms. Tecla (**Section 4.3.4.3**) recognised the expectation for critical engagement but prioritised syllabus coverage and examination preparation, which constrained opportunities for deep learner inquiry into heritage issues. Mr. Jones (**Section 4.3.4.3**) explicitly resisted HBC expectations. He prioritised examination outcomes and retained conventional teacher-controlled pedagogy, undermining both critical thinking and heritage consciousness.

The findings of this study reveal a clear convergence among the four participating teachers, who agreed that the new Heritage-Based Curriculum in History promotes critical thinking and heritage consciousness among learners. These findings align

with Chimbunde et al. (2024), Gomez et al. (2020) and Nadew et al. (2023) who argue that History education should cultivate historical thinking skills, problem-solving, and the ability to critically engage with heritage. Acknowledgment of the importance of the critical thinking skills in the global economy ignited reforms in the history curriculum across the globe. As such, several works from diverse countries, for example, in Lithuania (Penkauskiene, 2010), South Africa (Godsell, 2022), Mauritius (Goburdhun, 2022), Turkey (Aktekin, 2013; Polat, 2020), Malaysia (Maria et al., 2019) and Zimbabwe (Dombo & Mujere, 2023) concur that many countries started teaching History in a way that prioritises critical thinking abilities over memorisation of dates and names of people and locations. That development was an acknowledgement that with rote learning, students become overloaded with historical facts that they find meaningless or unimportant (Wineburg, 2018). As advice, Godsell (2022) claims that History teaching that is devoid of critical thinking abilities might turn it into an unthinking political instrument. Similarly, Polat (2020) highlights that without deliberate pedagogical innovation, History classes risk becoming rote memorisation exercises rather than spaces for developing critical consciousness.

Although History teachers demonstrated awareness of the disciplinary emphasis on fostering critical thinking, their pedagogical practices did not align with this understanding, thereby showing that policy rhetoric alone does not guarantee classroom practice. Teachers' enactment of critical thinking and heritage consciousness is shaped by their interpretations, resources, and professional agency. Despite all the benefits of critical thinking skills alluded to above, the transition to the skills-based approach has not been an easy process as it has been fraught with insurmountable challenges. The failure to develop critical thinking in History teaching has been reported in several studies (Dube & Moyo, 2022; Goburdhun, 2022; Godsell, 2022). While some of these studies attributed the challenges to educational practices that still favour memorisation and rote-learning (Goburdhun, 2022), others claim that History teaching is still arguably examination-oriented (Mitana et al., 2018). Previous research in Southern Africa (Dlamini, 2019; Dube & Moyo, 2020; Kabombwe et al., 2020; Godsell, 2022; Mapetere et al., 2012) suggests that curriculum reforms often falter because teachers are either underprepared or under-resourced, leading to superficial rather than substantive

implementation. This aligns with the cases of Peters and Tecla, who understood policy goals but could not operationalise them effectively.

While prior studies have largely explained teacher resistance and uneven reform implementation through sense-making processes (Fullan, 2007; Spillane et al., 2002; Priestley et al., 2015; Ugbede & Alyegba, 2025), this study adds a new dimension by showing that structural barriers, particularly shortages of resources and the dominance of examination cultures, can also generate resistance or partial implementation. This extends the application of Fullan’s (2015) Triple I Framework by highlighting that successful institutionalisation depends not only on teacher agency and interpretation but also on the material and systemic conditions under which reforms are enacted. By situating HBC within Vision 2030 and the national developmental discourse, this study highlights how History education reforms in Zimbabwe are not merely pedagogical but also nation-building projects. This demonstrates how teachers’ classroom practices contribute (or fail to contribute) to broader state goals such as innovation, entrepreneurship, and heritage consciousness.

4.6.4 Teaching Implementation and Classroom Practices

The third question which framed this work was on *how are History teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Form Three classrooms*. This section sought to examine the challenges experienced by History teachers in implementing the HBC.

Table 4: Comparative analysis of classroom pedagogical practices

Teacher	Policy expectations (HBC)	Observed practices	Level of fidelity	Key notes
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Mr. Peters	Use of learner-centred methods (Group work, inquiry, heritage projects, use of ICT and teacher as a facilitator)	-Mostly lecture -Note explanation -Limited and teacher-controlled group -Reliance on old sources	Low fidelity	Claimed to be learner-centred but in practice it was teacher-dominated. Mismatch between policy and practice
Ms. Tecla	Use of learner-centred methods (Group work, inquiry, heritage projects, use of ICT and teacher as a facilitator)	-Predominately group discussions -Student-lead facilitation -Collaborative debate -Occasional lecture method due to resource gaps	High fidelity	Best alignment with HBC vision and learners were actively engaged Contextual challenges sometimes forced traditional methods.
Mr. Jones	Use of learner centred methods (Group work, inquiry, heritage projects, use of ICT and teacher as a facilitator)	-Exclusive reliance on lecture -Rote note taking -Low order recall questions -Ignored recommended pedagogy	Very low fidelity	Strong resistance to reform, prioritised examination results and personal and personal teaching methods
Mr. Katton	Use of learner centred methods (Group work, inquiry, heritage projects, use of ICT and teacher as a facilitator)	-Hybrid: some group presentations and pair work but heavily teacher controlled -Focused on factual recall	Medium fidelity	Adopted some learner centred approaches but he controlled everything. Focused on factual recall

The 4 cases under study as shown in **Table 4** reveal both similarities and divergences in how teachers are implementing the Heritage-Based History Curriculum (HBC) in Form 3 classrooms. The analysis is presented along the continuum of learner-centred and teacher-centred pedagogies, which is central to the HBC philosophy. Across all 4 cases, teachers demonstrated an awareness of the HBC's requirement for learner-centred pedagogy. Each teacher, at different points, attempted to incorporate group work, questioning, or learner presentations. However, the depth of implementation varied significantly. The patterns show that there is a continuum of implementation fidelity: High fidelity (Ms. Tecla, who consistently employed learner-centred practices), medium fidelity (Mr. Katton, who

used of group work but highly controlled), low fidelity (Mr. Peters, occasional group work but largely teacher-led) and very low fidelity (Mr. Jones, exclusive reliance on lecture). A common feature was the persistence of teacher authority in controlling classroom discourse, even when learner-centred methods were attempted. This reflects what Tabulawa (1998) terms the “right-answerism” culture, where teachers dominate content and learners’ responses are judged against predetermined expectations.

Despite claiming to have shifted to learner-centred practices, Mr. Peters’ teaching was largely lecture-based with limited, tightly controlled group activities **(Segment 1)**. Learners were passive recipients, and their opportunities for independent exploration were minimal. The gap between rhetoric and practice was pronounced. Ms. Tecla, among all 4, most consistently embraced learner-centred pedagogy **(Segment 2 & 6)**. 6 of her 7 lessons were characterised by group discussions, student-led facilitation, and collaborative debate. She shifted classroom control to learners, positioning herself as a facilitator. However, resource shortages sometimes pushed her towards the lecture method. Mr. Jones’ teaching remained firmly traditional and teacher-centred across all observed lessons **(Segment 1 & 6)**. Reliance on lecture, rote note-taking, and low-order recall questions dominated his pedagogy. There was little to no evidence of meaningful learner engagement, reflecting strong resistance or inertia in adopting the HBC vision. Mr. Katton’s case reflected a hybrid but predominantly teacher-centred pedagogy. Although he used group presentations and pair work, these activities were overshadowed by his authoritative control, frequent interruptions, and factual recall emphasis **(Segment 2 & 3)**. Learners’ agency was curtailed, and participation often reduced to copying notes or responding to test-like questions.

The findings from the 4 cases highlight the persistent gap between policy rhetoric and classroom practice in the implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC). While MoPSE flagship documents (HBC Curriculum Framework 2024–2030, Final Teacher’s Guide to Learning and Assessment 2024, Heritage-Based History Syllabus 2024) emphasise constructivist, learner-centred pedagogy, the classroom realities observed in this study reveal varied levels of fidelity to these expectations. 3 of the 4 teachers (Mr. Peters, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Katton) continued to rely heavily on

traditional, teacher-centred approaches. Lessons were dominated by lecture, chalk-and-talk, and tightly controlled questioning, with learners positioned as passive recipients of knowledge. This finding aligns with earlier studies across the globe (Abrahams & Arendse, 2022; Bentrovato & Moyo, 2025; Boadu et al., 2020; Fufa et al., 2024; Harris & Graham, 2019; Ogah, 2023; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021; Xiang, 2023), which note that History curriculum reforms often struggle to dislodge entrenched teacher-centred traditions. The persistence of such approaches reflects what Tabulawa (1998) terms “right-answerism,” where the teacher’s authority dictates the legitimacy of learner contributions.

4.6.4.1 Overall Uniformity with Detailed Differences

The Heritage-Based History curriculum exhibits overall uniformity through the standardized, yet its implementation reveals detailed differences shaped by contextual factors such as resource availability, school culture and teacher interpretation. The cross-case findings reveal that teacher responses to the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) are far from uniform. Rather, they range from gradual acceptance (Mr. Peters), pragmatic adaptation (Ms. Tecla), and selective adoption (Mr. Katton), to outright rejection (Mr. Jones). These responses reflect what Fullan (2015) terms the “implementation dip”, where initial uncertainty, resistance, and confusion are normal stages in adapting to reform. Teachers’ sense-making is, therefore, central in determining the extent to which policy intentions are translated into classroom realities. Mr. Jones, in particular, demonstrated resistance to pedagogical change, adhering almost exclusively to lecture methods despite policy guidelines. This mirrors findings by Chimbunde et al. (2023), Cuban (2016), Harris and Graham (2019), Kellaghan and Greaney (2020) and Smith (2019), who argue that reforms often, fail because teachers prioritise examination outcomes and personal teaching traditions over new curricular demands. Similarly, Mr. Peters’ self-perception of being “learner-centred” contrasted sharply with his observed practices, suggesting a conceptual misunderstanding of what learner-centred pedagogy entails.

In contrast, Ms. Tecla’s lessons demonstrated higher fidelity to the HBC vision. 6 of her 7 lessons featured group work, student-led discussions, and active collaboration.

Learners engaged critically with one another's responses, and the teacher's role was largely facilitative. This reflects the constructivist orientation promoted in the HBC documents, where learners co-construct knowledge through inquiry and dialogue. Using Fullan's (2015) Implementation stage, Ms. Tecla showed evidence of deep implementation by actively facilitating learner-centred pedagogy, even within the challenge of a large class of 87 learners. Her practices suggest that reform is possible when teachers exercise agency and commit to policy ideals despite contextual barriers. However, even in her case, constraints such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of updated textbooks sometimes forced a reversion to lecture. This supports O'Sullivan's (2004), Sengai and Mokele's (2020, 2021) observation that resource limitations often undermine learner-centred reforms in African classrooms.

4.6.4.2 Classroom practices remain inconsistent and unstable

The contrast among these cases shows that HBC reform has not yet reached institutionalisation, as practices remain uneven and fragile. However, the case of Ms. Tecla challenges prevailing assumptions in the literature that large classes inevitably lead to teacher-centered pedagogy. Instead, her example demonstrates that reform can advance meaningfully when teachers internalise its values and mobilise agency to enact them. Thus, when viewed through the Triple I Framework, the study highlights the uneven progression of HBC implementation: some teachers remain at the Initiation stage, others are attempting Implementation with varying degrees of fidelity, and none yet exhibit full Institutionalisation. This reinforces Fullan's (2015) argument that reform is a process rather than an event, and that teacher agency is pivotal in determining movement along the continuum.

4.6.4.2 Teacher resistance arising from the process of sense-making

My study findings show that teachers like Mr. Peters and Ms. Tecla initially resisted the HBC because of uncertainty and inadequate professional development. Prior studies (Chimbi, 2018; Fullan, 2007; Harris & Graham, 2019; OECD, 2019; Smith et al., 2024 & Spillane et al., 2002) have predominantly framed teacher resistance as a product of sense-making processes. Teachers resist reforms because they either do

not fully understand the policy intentions, lack confidence in their pedagogical skills, or interpret reforms through their prior beliefs and professional experiences. Conversely, this study goes further by unearthing an additional and underexplored dimension: Teachers may also resist curriculum reforms due to structural and material shortages, particularly inadequate resources and infrastructural support. For instance, Mr. Katton highlighted his reluctance to embrace ICT integration and research-oriented pedagogy because of the scarcity of ICT gadgets and teaching materials. Ms. Tecla selectively resisted the HBC sequence not out of ideological opposition, but because her learners had gaps in foundational knowledge, pointing to systemic weaknesses in curriculum continuity. Thus, unlike prior research that has emphasised cognitive and interpretive factors, this study shows that resource-based constraints (material shortages, infrastructural gaps, and learner preparedness deficits) can also generate forms of resistance. This expands the discourse on teacher resistance beyond sense-making to include structural-material dimensions.

Existing literature (Awuonda et al., 2023; Chimbi, 2024; Chimbunde, 2019; Kurata, 2023; Majoni, 2017; Ndeshimona, 2024; Ogah, 2023) concludes that large class sizes in African classrooms force teachers to adopt traditional, teacher-centred methods as a coping strategy. However, this study provides counter-evidence through the case of Ms Tecla, who, despite managing a class of 87 learners, consistently employed learner-centered strategies such as group discussions, collaborative debates, and student facilitation. This finding demonstrates that large classes do not inevitably determine pedagogical choices; rather, teacher commitment, creativity, and belief in the reform philosophy can mediate the impact of structural constraints. This nuance has been largely absent in prior Zimbabwean and regional studies.

4.6.5 Challenges in Implementing the HBC at Classroom Level

This section is based on the fourth question which focuses on *how History teachers' implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum can be understood and explained*. Across the 4 cases examined, several common and distinctive challenges emerged in the implementation of the Heritage-Based History Curriculum (HBHC). These can

be synthesised under four sub-themes: resource constraints, large class sizes, inadequate professional development, and policy-driven reform processes.

4.6.5.1 Material and infrastructural deficiencies

A recurring theme across all 4 cases was the severe shortage of resources. Mr. Peters (**Section 4.2.6.1**), Ms. Tecla (**Section 4.3.6.2**), Mr. Jones (**Section 4.4.6.1**), and Mr. Katton (**Section 4.5.7.4**) all reported the absence of ICT gadgets, projectors, computers, and reliable internet connectivity. None of them used films, videos, or digital tools as stipulated in the Syllabus (4044). They also reported lack of textbooks aligned with the HBC, forcing them to rely on outdated materials or personal devices. These constraints undermined the experiential and inquiry-based learning that the curriculum envisions. For instance, both Mr. Peters and Mr. Jones noted that school trips, an integral part of the HBC were impossible due to funding shortages. This trend illustrates a policy–practice gap, where curriculum expectations are not matched with the necessary material investment.

All the 4 teachers cited resource shortages as a central obstacle to HBC implementation. While some affluent schools may already have been having these resources before the introduction of the new HBC, the majority of schools, especially those situated in rural do not have these resources. A gap has, therefore, been created between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum. This mirrors findings by Chisholm (2005), Khumalo (2024), Mashayamombe and Berg (2024), Sibanda and Blignaut (2020) and Ugbede and Alyegba (2025), who argue that curriculum reforms in Africa often falter because of the failure to align policy aspirations with resource mobilisation. The expectation that teachers integrate ICTs, films, and heritage tours without parallel investment in infrastructure illustrates what Rogan and Grayson (2003) term the “capacity–support gap.” My findings reinforce this literature but also add new knowledge by showing how resource shortages not only prevent ICT integration but also foster pedagogical conservatism: Mr. Peters and Mr. Jones reverted to lecture methods, while Ms. Tecla and Mr. Katton limited group work. Thus, resource scarcity does not merely delay reform; it actively shapes the pedagogical choices teachers make.

4.6.5.2 Expanded class enrolments

Both Ms. Tecla (**Section 4.3.6.1**) and Mr. Katton (**Section 4.5.7.2**) struggled with oversized classes, teaching 87 and 54 students, respectively, against the official teacher–pupil ratio of 1:30. While Ms. Tecla remained committed to learner-centred methods such as group work and discussions, she admitted that noise, discipline, and marking workloads constrained effective pedagogy. Mr. Katton also highlighted how large classes stretched activities over several lessons, disrupting pacing. These cases demonstrate how structural realities of schools’ dilute curriculum intentions, particularly where participatory methods are advocated.

Findings drawn from Katton’s case reveal that large class sizes significantly impede the effective implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum. Similarly, prior studies (Chimbi, 2024; Chimbunde, 2019; Kurata, 2023; Majoni, 2017; Naz et al., 2020; Ndeshimona, 2024; Shareefa et al., 2019) suggest that large class sizes in developing contexts often force teachers into traditional, teacher-centred methods. From the perspective of Fullan’s (2007) Triple I theory, the Implementation stage is constrained by structural conditions like overcrowded classrooms which limit interactive pedagogies, debate, central

Surprisingly, my study provides evidence to the contrary, in Ms. Tecla’s case. Despite teaching 87 learners, she consistently employed learner-centred approaches such as group discussions and presentations. This contrasts with dominant assumptions in the literature and contributes new knowledge by demonstrating that teacher agency can subvert structural constraints. Ms. Tecla’s case shows that large class size does not inevitably lead to transmissive pedagogy; rather, teacher commitment and creativity can sustain participatory learning even in adverse contexts.

4.6.5.3 Inadequate pedagogical preparation

Professional development gaps were evident in all cases, albeit in different forms. Mr. Peters and Ms. Tecla had never attended workshops and relied on second-hand

feedback, while Mr. Jones attended some sessions but found them repetitive and superficial. Mr. Katton, too, had no targeted training in curriculum design or implementation. This exclusion left teachers underprepared to supervise School-Based Projects (SBPs), integrate ICTs, or use interactive methods. The findings underscore that piecemeal or selective training undermines teachers' capacity to translate reforms into meaningful classroom practice.

Inadequate training emerged as another systemic challenge. While literature (Ball et al., 2009; Harris & Graham, 2019; Fullan, 2007; Matimba & Matimba, 2025; Nyikadzino, 2024; Rahman et al., 2018; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021) stresses that sustained, inclusive professional development is essential for reform, my findings reveal an exclusionary model of training. Workshops were offered selectively to school leaders (**Figure 7**), not classroom practitioners, and feedback was poorly cascaded (**Figure 9**). Mr. Peters (**Section 4.2.6.2**) and Ms. Tecla (**Section 4.3.6.3**) were excluded entirely, while Mr. Jones attended repetitive sessions that failed to address practical needs. This not only left the teachers ill-prepared to supervise School-Based Projects, but also created hierarchies of knowledge in schools, where managers without subject expertise became the sole custodians of training. My study uncovered a pattern of selective, hierarchical professional development, where managers without subject expertise were trained while classroom teachers were excluded. This not only widens the policy–practice gap but creates “knowledge asymmetries” within schools.

4.6.5.4 Policy-driven and top-down reform

All the four teacher participants expressed frustration at the policy-driven, top-down nature of the HBC. Mr. Peters and Mr. Katton emphasised the lack of consultation in curriculum design, with Mr. Peters particularly lamenting the omission of critical post-independence events such as Gukurahundi. Mr. Jones and Ms. Tecla also revealed that school leadership structures often marginalised History, prioritising science subjects and offering little institutional support. This sense of exclusion reduced teacher ownership and commitment, encouraging either mechanical compliance (Mr. Katton) or selective resistance (Mr. Jones).

The HBC reflects a policy-driven, top-down reform model, echoing findings in Zimbabwe and elsewhere (Adeodun, 2024; Fullan, 2015; Murphy, 2020; OECD, 2019; Jansen, 1990, 2003). Teachers such as Mr. Peters and Mr. Katton were excluded from curriculum design and felt alienated from its aims. The analysis of Mr. Peters' case reveals a notable exclusion of historical topics between 1980 and 1989, specifically the omission of Gukurahundi and Unity Accord discussions and treaties. This exclusion highlights the top-down approach adopted in curriculum development. Research by Kriger (2003) and Bentrovato and Moyo (2025) supports this finding, demonstrating that the Zimbabwe's nation-building narrative predominantly focuses on Shona heroes, while marginalising Ndebele heroes. Furthermore, the new Heritage-Based Curriculum perpetuates this trend by emphasising the second Chimurenga, reflecting a policy-driven approach that prioritises ZANLA's role in Zimbabwe's liberation. Bentrovato and Moyo (2025) argue that policymakers employed top-down approach in History curriculum reforms, effectively sidelining ZIPRA's contributions and promoting ZANLA as the primary liberator of Zimbabwe. This approach raises concerns about the representation of the historical narratives and the need for a more inclusive curriculum development process.

In line with the Tripple, I Theory (Initiation phase) teachers were not afforded the space to interpret and interact with the curriculum meaningfully, resulting in low ownership and partial compliance. Unlike existing literature that frames resistance as conservatism (Jansen, 2001; Muller & Hoadley, 2022), my findings add new knowledge by showing that teacher resistance and selective uptake were not only ideological but also pragmatic, rooted in omissions in content (e.g., exclusion of 1980–1989 events such as Gukurahundi) and lack of consultation. This challenges the assumption that resistance is always conservative; instead, it can reflect teachers' professional judgment and historical consciousness.

4.7 SUMMARY

This chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study on the experiences of history teachers in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC). The analysis was organised thematically around teachers' knowledge of the curriculum principles,

their classroom practices, the challenges encountered, and the prospects for effective implementation. There was uniformity among the 4 History teachers in general, but diversity in detail. The findings revealed varying degrees of knowledge and understanding of the HBC among the teachers. While some demonstrated partial alignment with policy expectations, others displayed limited knowledge of the curriculum's philosophy, principles, and values. This inconsistency translated into diverse pedagogical practices that ranged from chalk-and-talk methods to selective use of heritage-based activities. The classroom observations and interviews further highlighted tensions between policy rhetoric and classroom realities, with teachers' often prioritising examination performance and resource availability over fidelity to the new curriculum.

The Triple I Theory by Fullan (2015) provided a useful lens for interpreting these findings. At the level of the intended curriculum, policy documents emphasised learner-centred, heritage-driven approaches that promote national identity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. However, at the level of the implemented curriculum, teachers' practices were constrained by inadequate resources, large class sizes, and insufficient training, leading to partial or selective adoption of the recommended approaches. Finally, at the level of the attained curriculum, learners' experiences and outcomes were shaped less by policy aspirations and more by the pragmatic choices and agency of teachers in their classrooms. This mismatch among intention, practice, and outcome explains the unevenness observed across cases. The discussion demonstrated that teachers' responses to the HBC reform were complex, oscillating between compliance, resistance, and pragmatic adaptation. Their agency was influenced by contextual realities such as limited resources, inadequate professional development, and pressures from high-stakes examinations. This aligns with broader literature on curriculum reform implementation, which cautions against assuming linear adoption of policy directives in the classroom. Instead, reforms are mediated by teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and contextual constraints. The next chapter provides a summary of the research findings, on the basis of which main conclusions and recommendations are drawn.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter presents a synthesis of the study's key findings, highlighting the most significant insights generated through the research. In Zimbabwe, curriculum and instructional reforms has been a persistent feature of post-colonial education since 1980, reflecting ongoing efforts to align schooling with national priorities and global educational trends. The Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) was introduced as part of this broader post-colonial reform agenda, with the aim of promoting learner-centred pedagogy, fostering a strong sense of national identity, and developing critical problem-solving skills among students. While the curriculum carries ambitious transformative goals, its successful implementation is heavily contingent upon teachers, whose interpretations, classroom practices, and professional decisions ultimately determine the effectiveness of the reform.

Guided by a qualitative research design, this study employed a multiple case study design, drawing on semi-structured interviews and lesson observations with practicing history teachers to explore their experiences teaching Form Three classrooms. Complementing these primary data sources, document analysis of relevant circulars and Heritage-Based Curriculum policy documents was conducted to provide additional contextual insight. The research focused on four cases, each representing an individual history teacher, whose narratives and practices offered rich and nuanced perspectives on the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing the HBC in Zimbabwean secondary schools. In this chapter, I present a summary discussion of the study's findings in relation to each research question, using relevant literature and the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 2 as analytical lenses to interpret and contextualise the results. Drawing on the insights generated from the present study, I also propose evidence-based recommendations and identify directions for future research. The chapter begins with a concise overview of the investigation, followed by a synthesis of the key findings that emphasises the new knowledge and contributions of the study. This is subsequently complemented by practical and policy-oriented recommendations, suggestions for

further research, and a concluding section that encapsulates the overall significance and implications of the study.

5.1.1 An Overview of the Research

This study explored the experiences of History teachers in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) within Zimbabwean secondary schools. Existing scholarship on teachers' engagement in large-scale curriculum reforms remains limited, with teachers often positioned primarily as implementers rather than active contributors. While several studies have examined History teachers' experiences in previous curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe (Chimbi, 2018; Chimbi & Jita, 2019, 2023; Chimbunde et al., 2023; Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2025; Mashayamombe, 2024; Mashayamombe & Berg, 2024; Moyo, 2014; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021), there remains a notable gap in understanding how teachers are navigating the implementation of the recently introduced Heritage-Based Curriculum. This gap arises largely from the curriculum's recent adoption, which has left little room for systematic documentation of teachers' lived experiences. Moreover, research on History curriculum reform in Zimbabwe continues to evolve, reflecting the novelty of the HBC initiative.

The dearth of research on History teachers' experiences with curriculum reform in Hurungwe District, Mashonaland West Province, highlights the need for empirical inquiry in this area. From the researcher's perspective, this study may represent the first systematic investigation into history teachers' engagement with curriculum reform within this specific district. Furthermore, a review of existing literature reveals that very few studies or if not none at all on history curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe have employed the Triple I Theory as an analytical lens. Instead, various theoretical frameworks have been applied, such as Critical Historical Inquiry (Bentrovato & Moyo, 2025), Sense-Making Theory (Chimbi, 2018; Chimbi & Jita, 2021), Globalisation Theory (Chimbunde & Moreeng, 2025), Curriculum Theory (Mashayamombe, 2024), Critical Theory from the Frankfurt School (Chimbunde et al., 2023; Moyo & Modiba, 2016), and Postcolonial Theory (Sibanda & Young, 2019). A comprehensive review of existing studies on history teachers implementing

curriculum reforms in Zimbabwe reveals that this research is one of the very few studies and if not the first one to apply the Fullan's Triple I Theory as its theoretical framework. This innovative approach provides a unique perspective for examining the complex dynamics of curriculum reform in the Zimbabwean context.

Thus, this study's unique contribution is that it is the first to explore history teachers' experiences in implementing the HBC in rural secondary schools in Zimbabwe using the Triple I theory. Consequently, this research bridges the gap and complements prior research by contributing new insights to understanding how secondary history teachers in rural school contexts perceive the HBC in Zimbabwe. Specifically, the study is directed by the following research questions:

- I. What are the prominent features and interpretation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?
- II. How do History teachers conceptualise the Heritage-Based Curriculum?
- III. How are History teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in form three classrooms?
- IV. How can History teachers' implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum be understood and explained?

5.2 Summary of the Study

This section summarises the study with regards to the foci and coverage of each chapter. Chapter 1 laid the background to the research with respect to the research problem on how history Form 3 teachers implemented the HBC in Zimbabwe rural secondary schools. The chapter also set out the main research question, sub-questions and briefly explained the qualitative research methodology approach and an a priori eclectic theoretical Triple I Framework which anchored and guided many aspects of the study, including providing boundaries on the interpretation of findings.

The focus in Chapter 2 was on reviewing related literature which enabled the identification of a research lacuna with respect to the paucity of curriculum reform implementation and subject-based teacher experiences at secondary school level in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the review of extant literature underscored the research's epistemological underpinnings using the Triple I Theoretical Framework as part of

policy implementation studies. The chapter limned how reviewed literature was the seedbed of the sense-making constructs and concepts of this study.

Chapter 3 described and justified use of an interpretive research paradigm to explore the main research question of how History teachers are implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwe rural secondary schools and its attendant sub-questions in this multiple case study. The chapter further described and justified, as apposite in this qualitative research, the proposed use of data generating techniques such as teaching scenario-based vignettes, a self-checking learner-centred practices gauge and non-self-checking lesson observations, teacher participant and lower-level policy custodian interviews and document study. Similarly, the selection of the four teacher research participants, associated ethical issues, data generation and data analysis strategies related to the study were also outlined and justified.

Chapter 4 presented research data broadly in line with the sub-questions that framed the research. Analysed policy documents showed the existence of clear messages on the learner-centred pedagogy on which, however, participant teachers reported inadequate induction. Data generated through self-reporting instruments had all 3 out of 4 teachers claiming a high use of learner-centred pedagogy. Nevertheless, lesson observations, the related content analysis of classroom dialogue transcripts and interview data showed that only 1 out of 4 teachers used the learner-centred teaching and learning. The cross-case analysis of research findings in line with the four sub questions that framed the study showed commonalities as well as differences. The comparison of findings was in line with the first three sub-questions. Explanations of findings in answer to the fourth cross-cutting sub-question were simultaneously integrated with relevant findings on the first three sub-questions.

Finally, Chapter 5 provides a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The summary of the findings is presented in line with the sub-questions of the research. The chapter, apart from to discussing the significance or the 'so what of the study' question, proposes an Integrated Triple I Theoretical Framework on how instructional policy can be effectively enacted in ways that maximise congruence between local actors' sense-making and the curriculum policy makers' intentions. Other pertinent issues covered relate to gaps in

and limitations of the study as pointers to possible future research and policy practice, and the researcher's final thoughts.

5.3 Summary of Key Findings

The summary of research findings is guided by the sub-questions framing this research. This study examined, through a multiple case study, how Form 3 history teachers understood and enacted the requirement to use learner-centred pedagogy as part of implementing the Zimbabwe HBC 2024-2030 reforms.

5.3.1 Sub-Research Question One

In this section, I summarise the findings related to the first research question: What are the prominent features and interpretation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?

5.3.1.1 Understanding and Interpretation of the HBC

The understanding of the HBC is important because it has implications on the implementation of a Heritage Based history curriculum. The New Heritage Based history learning involves learner-centred approaches, is about learner empowerment, interactive teaching, dialogic, employs conducive environments and raises heritage consciousness (**see Section 4.2.3.1; 4.2.3.2; 4.3.3.1; 4.4.3.1; 4.5.3.1**). Findings from empirical research show that a significant variation in history teachers' understanding of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC), with Mr. Peters demonstrating relatively strong knowledge, while Ms. Tecla showed that she understood the learner centred pedagogy as instructed by the Heritage-Based Syllabus 4044. Mr. Jones and Mr. Katton exhibited limited or partial understanding. This aligns with existing literature, which suggests that teacher knowledge is a critical determinant of curriculum implementation fidelity.

The findings reveal that participants narrowly interpreted Heritage-Based History pedagogy as limited to a few learner-centred strategies, primarily group work, presentations, and class discussions (**see Figure 4; Figure 13**). They largely overlooked other interactive and experiential approaches encouraged within the HBC

framework, including role play, drama, simulations, project-based learning, engagement with community resource persons, and arts-based activities. This constrained conceptualisation can be attributed to limited curriculum management and insufficient guidance from curriculum developers and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). In particular, inadequate dissemination of information left many teachers without a clear understanding of HBC instructional expectations, partly because a significant proportion of them did not attend orientation workshops (see **Figure 7 & 9**). Since curriculum reform depends on effective communication and professional support to ensure both awareness and understanding, MoPSE and curriculum designers needed to provide systematic exposure to the revised curriculum's principles and pedagogical requirements. Creating sufficient opportunities for professional learning would have enabled teachers, as the central implementers of reform, to develop the confidence and competence required for meaningful classroom application.

This finding corresponds with extensive scholarship indicating that professional development is vital for strengthening teachers' capacity during curriculum reform (Chimbunde, 2019; Fullan, 2015; Furiwai & Singh-Pillay, 2020; Mashayamombe, 2024; Katshuna & Shikalipo, 2023; Madondo, 2020; Molapo & Pillay, 2018; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021). These studies emphasise that teacher agency, robust subject knowledge, and pedagogical proficiency are central to narrowing the divide between policy aspirations and actual classroom practice. Nevertheless, the ongoing deficiencies in history teachers' content expertise and instructional competence continue to diminish the effectiveness of reform implementation. Evidence from multiple educational contexts further reveals a familiar pattern: policymakers often hasten reform rollouts without equipping teachers with adequate preparation or sustained support to translate policy changes into meaningful instructional application (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Ball et al., 2009; Harris & Graham, 2019; Mogale & Modipane, 2021; Momanyi & Rop, 2019; Ndeshimona, 2024; Nevenglosky, 2018; Phaiphai, 2020; OECD, 2019, 2020; Rahman et al., 2018).

A key contribution of this study lies in illuminating the distinction between teachers' general awareness of reform principles and their deeper conceptual understanding. Earlier scholarship has often framed insufficient teacher knowledge as a single,

undifferentiated challenge. In contrast, this study shows that while educators may articulate broad pedagogical ideals such as learner-centred instruction (as demonstrated by Mr. Peters), they frequently encounter difficulties when attempting to translate these principles into practice. Acknowledging this divide between surface-level familiarity and comprehensive pedagogical mastery refines existing insights, offering a more textured explanation of the knowledge-related barriers that inhibit effective curriculum enactment.

5.3.2 Sub-Research Question Two

In this section, I summarise the findings related to the second research question: How do are History teachers conceptualise the Heritage-Based Curriculum?

5.3.2.1 Conceptualisation and perceived changes in History curriculum

Considering that Zimbabwe rolled up implementation of the HBC in May 2024 implies the need for history teachers to understand the changes that are required by the new HBC framework 2024-2030. Change means alteration to its philosophy by way of adapting methods that include human interaction. The introduction of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) has brought multiple pedagogical, structural, and assessment-related shifts in the teaching of History, as reflected in both the syllabus (2024) and teachers' narratives. Across all cases, a common change consistently mentioned was the removal of Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAs) and their replacement with School-Based Projects (SBPs) (**Section 4.3.6.2**). The responses of my study collectively point to a tri-dimensional reform: restructuring of content to highlight liberation heritage and citizenship education, innovation in assessment through SBPs and revised examination formats, and pedagogical shifts towards learner-centred approaches and ICT integration. The new History teaching in Zimbabwe is now skills-based and so encourages learners to engage in social action and thus understanding and manipulation of knowledge is preferred over just merely acquiring it (**Section 4.3.6.1; 4.3.6.2; 4.3.6.3**).

Existing literature affirms that curriculum change requires teachers to engage with new beliefs, knowledge systems, skills, and practices. Reform typically aims not only

to enhance quality and align with international trends, but also to broaden conceptions of curriculum by incorporating diverse learning materials and practical components. Within this context, positioning the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in relation to Vision 2030 and national development priorities illustrates that history education reform in Zimbabwe extends beyond classroom pedagogy. It functions as a strategic nation-building tool that seeks to cultivate innovation, entrepreneurial skills, and heritage consciousness among learners. Teachers' classroom practices therefore play a pivotal role in either advancing or hindering these national aspirations.

The shift from Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALAs) to School-Based Projects (SBPs), as noted by all four participating teachers, reflects Fullan's (2015) implementation phase of reform. SBPs require learners to conduct research, interact with local heritage, and share their findings through presentations, thereby embodying the principles of critical pedagogy articulated by Freire (1970) and supported by Todici et al. (2022), Hamidah et al. (2020), and Yang (2019). These approaches challenge transmission-based teaching models, which assume that learners acquire knowledge primarily from experts. Instead, they position education as a dialogic, problem-posing, and transformative process that promotes reflection, agency, and empowerment.

5.3.3 Sub-Research Question Three

In this section, I summarise the findings related to the first research question: How are history teachers implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum in Form Three classrooms?

5.3.3.1 Classroom implementation and pedagogical practices

The 4 case studies presented in **Table 4** illustrate both convergence and variation in teachers' enactment of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in Form 3 classrooms. Overall, the findings underscore the continued disconnect between reform policy intentions and instructional practice. Although MoPSE's flagship documents (HBC Curriculum Framework 2024–2030; Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and

Assessment 2024; Heritage Based History Syllabus 2024) strongly advocate for constructivist and learner-centred pedagogy, classroom observations revealed inconsistent adherence to these principles. 3 of the 4 teachers (Mr. Peters, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Katton) predominantly employed traditional teacher-led strategies, characterised by lecture delivery, chalk-and-talk routines, and tightly managed questioning. Learners were largely positioned as passive recipients rather than active constructors of knowledge.

The findings indicate that, notwithstanding the policy emphasis on learner-centred pedagogy, some History teachers persisted in employing traditional, teacher-dominated instructional approaches. This pattern resonates with a wide body of international research (Abrahams & Arendse, 2022; Bentreovato & Moyo, 2025; Boadu et al., 2020; Fufa et al., 2024; Harris & Graham, 2019; Ogah, 2023; Sengai & Mokhele, 2021; Xiang, 2023), which highlights the difficulty of shifting long-standing pedagogical habits within history classrooms. The persistence of traditional instruction reflects what Tabulawa (1998) describes as “right-answerism,” wherein teacher authority continues to dominate, constraining learner participation and critical engagement. In contrast, Ms. Tecla’s lessons (**Segment 2 & 6**) demonstrated higher fidelity to the HBC vision. 6 of her 7 lessons featured group work, student-led discussions, and active collaboration. Learners engaged critically with one another’s responses, and the teacher’s role was largely facilitative. This reflects the constructivist orientation promoted in the HBC documents, where learners co-construct knowledge through inquiry and dialogue. Using Fullan’s (2015) Implementation stage, Ms. Tecla showed evidence of deep implementation by actively facilitating learner-centred pedagogy, even within the challenge of a large class of 87 learners. Her practices suggest that reform is possible when teachers exercise agency and commit to policy ideals despite contextual barriers.

5.3.4 Sub-Research Question Four

In this section, I summarise the findings related to the first research question: How can History teachers’ implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum be understood and explained?

5.3.4.1 Explaining implementation - Challenges faced in History teaching

A dominant challenge observed across all 4 cases was the acute shortage of teaching and learning resources. Mr. Peters (**Section 4.2.6.1**), Ms. Tecla (**Section 4.3.6.2**), Mr. Jones (**Section 4.4.6.1**), and Mr. Katton (**Section 4.5.7.4**) all highlighted the lack of ICT infrastructure, including projectors, computers, and stable internet connectivity. Consequently, none of the teachers incorporated films, videos, or other digital instructional tools recommended in the History Syllabus (4044). Resource constraints were compounded by large class sizes, particularly for Ms. Tecla and Mr. Katton, who taught classes of 87 and 54 learners, respectively, far exceeding the prescribed teacher–pupil ratio of 1:30. Although Ms Tecla demonstrated strong commitment to learner-centred strategies such as group activities and discussions, she acknowledged that excessive noise, behavioural issues, and the heavy workload associated with marking group tasks limited her ability to facilitate meaningful learner engagement.

Professional development gaps were evident in all cases, albeit in different forms. Mr. Peters and Ms. Tecla had never attended workshops and relied on second-hand feedback, while Mr. Jones attended some sessions but found them repetitive and superficial. Mr. Katton, too, had no targeted training in curriculum design or implementation. This exclusion left teachers underprepared to supervise School-Based Projects (SBPs), integrate ICTs, or use interactive methods. The findings underscore that piecemeal or selective training undermines teachers' capacity to translate reforms into meaningful classroom practice. In addition, all the 4 teachers expressed frustration at the policy-driven, top-down nature of the HBC. Mr. Peters and Mr. Katton emphasised the lack of consultation in curriculum design, with Mr. Peters particularly lamenting the omission of critical post-independence events such as Gukurahundi. Mr. Jones and Ms. Tecla also revealed that school leadership structures often marginalised History, prioritising science subjects and offering little institutional support.

This study also demonstrated that the classroom practices of History teachers can only be fully understood by considering the interplay of multiple contextual factors. Teachers' interpretations of policy and their approaches to implementation were

shaped collectively by their level of professional training, availability of resources, increasing class enrolments, and the extent of consultation during reform processes. This finding supports existing scholarship (Chisholm, 2005; Sibanda & Blignaut, 2020; Mashayamombe & Berg, 2024), which contends that curriculum reforms in African contexts frequently underperform due to the misalignment between ambitious policy goals and the limited provision of necessary resources. Additionally, prior research (Chimbi, 2024; Chimbunde, 2019; Kurata, 2023; Majoni, 2017; Naz et al., 2020; Ndeshimona, 2024; Shareefa et al., 2019) indicates that overcrowded classrooms typically push teachers toward conventional, teacher-centred instruction. However, the present study offers a noteworthy counter-example in the case of Ms. Tecla, who, despite managing a class of 87 learners, persistently utilised learner-centred strategies such as group discussions and presentations.

Inadequate training emerged as another systemic challenge. While literature (Ball et al., 2009; Harris & Graham, 2019; Fullan, 2007; Matimba & Matimba, 2025; Nyikadzino, 2024; Rahman et al., 2018; Sengai & Mokhele, 2020, 2021) stresses that sustained, inclusive professional development is essential for reform, my findings reveal an exclusionary model of training. Workshops were offered selectively to school leaders (**Figure 7 & 9**), not classroom practitioners, and feedback was poorly cascaded (**Section 4.2.6.2**). Mr. Peters (**Section 4.2.6.2**) and Ms. Tecla (**Section 4.3.6.3**) were excluded entirely, while Mr. Jones attended repetitive sessions that failed to address practical needs. The HBC reflects a policy-driven, top-down reform model, echoing findings in Zimbabwe and elsewhere (Adeodun, 2024; Chimbunde, 2019; Fullan, 2015; Murphy, 2020; OECD, 2019; Jansen, 1990, 2003). Teachers such as Mr. Peters and Mr. Katton were excluded from curriculum design and felt alienated from its aims. In line with the Triple, I Theory (Initiation phase) teachers were not afforded the space to interpret and interact with the curriculum meaningfully, resulting in low ownership and partial compliance. The following section sheds light on the new knowledge produced by this study.

5.3 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study makes several contributions to the existing body of literature on

curriculum reform, history education, and teacher agency in postcolonial African contexts. While prior scholarship has explored HBC implementation broadly in Zimbabwe and elsewhere (Chitamba & Chitamba, 2025; Ndongwe 2025), few or no studies have specifically examined the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in History classrooms through the perspectives of rural teachers. By addressing both theoretical and empirical gaps, this research advances knowledge in seven distinct ways.

5.3.1 Resistance Rooted in Resource Shortages Rather Than Sense-Making

Existing literature often attributes teacher resistance to reforms to failures in sense-making or entrenched pedagogical conservatism (Chimbi, 2018; Coburn, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Spillane, 1999). This study contributes new knowledge by showing that resistance is not always cognitive or ideological, but may emerge from systemic shortages of resources. Some History teachers in Hurungwe resisted aspects of the HBC not because they misunderstood its aims, but because they lacked ICT tools, textbooks, and professional support to enact its learner-centred aspirations. This reconceptualisation of resistance as resource-driven pragmatism expands the analytical vocabulary available to curriculum researchers.

5.3.2 Extending Triple I Theory into the Zimbabwean Context

By applying the Triple-I Theory (Initiation, Implementation and Institutionalisation) to the Zimbabwean HBC context, the study provides a novel theoretical lens for examining how curriculum policy rhetoric translates into classroom practice. In the Zimbabwean context, the available researches on History curriculum reforms have used a plethora of theories underpinning their studies but none of them have used the Triple I Theory **(See Section 5.1.1)**. This theory demonstrates that implementation is filtered through both teacher knowledge and systemic limitations, thus extending the utility of the theory in Global South contexts. This enriches curriculum implementation theory by showing the disjunctures, partial alignments, and negotiated practices that characterise reform in developing contexts.

5.3.3 Filling a Geographical Gap through a Focus on Rural Hurungwe Schools

Most Zimbabwean studies on history curriculum reform have been conducted in urban or provincial centres (**see Section 2.8**) with rural contexts remaining underrepresented. This study addresses that gap by focusing on rural secondary schools in Hurungwe District. This study, from my own vantage point of view, is the first study to exploring the experiences of History teachers in Hurungwe rural secondary schools in Zimbabwe. Therefore, this study contributes fresh insights crucial for understanding the issues that could shape the teaching of history in rural secondary schools. Therefore, study fills a geographical gap in the literature by focusing on the implementation of the Heritage-Based History Curriculum in Hurungwe's rural secondary schools, an area that, while represented in general education studies, has not been the explicit focus of prior history-curriculum research.

5.3.4 History Education as a Vehicle for National Cohesion and Heritage Consciousness

International literature often portrays history as a dry, examination-driven subject, or critiques it for privileging Eurocentric narratives (**see Section 2.3.2; 2.3.3; 2.3.4**). In contrast, this study shows how Zimbabwe's HBC reframes History education as a vehicle for heritage consciousness, patriotism, and cultural grounding. Teachers articulated the subject not as "boring," but as central to learners' identity and national development. The findings show that teachers recognised history not only as an academic discipline but also as a tool for fostering cultural identity, patriotism, and national cohesion. Unlike prior studies that often-reduced history education to content mastery or exam performance, this thesis highlights its broader role in promoting heritage consciousness and collective identity formation. This represents a significant shift in how history's purpose is conceptualised in both curriculum policy and classroom practice in Zimbabwe.

5.3.5 Highlighting Selective, Hierarchical Professional Development

While professional development is widely acknowledged as a crucial support mechanism for successful curriculum reform, this study reveals that its provision has been uneven and exclusionary. Training opportunities were predominantly offered to

school heads and senior managers, marginalising the very practitioners responsible for delivering the new History curriculum in classrooms (**Figure 7 & Figure 9**). This selective approach produced significant knowledge gaps within schools, where leaders possessed policy information yet lacked direct instructional responsibility, and teachers were expected to implement reforms they had not been adequately prepared for. The resulting imbalance reinforced a disconnection between the reform ideals promoted in official documents and the classroom realities teachers faced daily. In effect, the roll-out process perpetuated hierarchical decision-making structures, positioning teachers as passive recipients rather than empowered change agents. Such findings underscore the need for more equitable, teacher-centred professional development models that promote shared understanding, collective agency, and stronger ownership of pedagogical innovation.

5.3.6 Learner-Centred Pedagogy in Large Classes

Previous studies often discuss learner-centred pedagogy in idealised terms, assuming contexts where small classes and abundant resources make active learning feasible (Awuonda et al., 2023; Chimbi, 2024; Chimbunde, 2019; Kurata, 2023; Majoni, 2017; Naz et al., 2020; Ndeshimona, 2024; Shareefa et al., 2019). This study contributes by demonstrating how learner-centred methods are mediated, constrained, or adapted in overcrowded rural classrooms. Some history teachers in Hurungwe attempted to implement participatory approaches, but large enrolments necessitated modifications, resulting in hybrid practices that combine learner-centred strategies with traditional methods. This contribution nuances existing debates on learner-centred pedagogy by situating them within the realities of rural African classrooms.

5.3.7 Teacher Agency as Mediation between Policy Rhetoric and Learner Preparedness

Finally, this study contributes to knowledge on teacher agency by showing how teachers mediate between policy expectations and learners' actual readiness. For instance, some teachers reintroduced "Sources of History" (a topic removed from Form Three) to bridge knowledge gaps, thereby resisting policy not out of rejection

but to protect learners' comprehension and exam success. This form of pragmatic or learner-protective resistance extends current understandings of agency, illustrating how teachers adapt reforms to local realities while remaining committed to learners' progress.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to explore the experiences of History teachers in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in Zimbabwe, with particular attention to how curriculum reform is interpreted and enacted in classroom settings. Guided by the Triple I Theory (Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalisation), the research sought to illuminate the tensions, opportunities, and challenges embedded in the reform process. The findings revealed several key insights. Firstly, teachers demonstrated varied levels of understanding of the HBC philosophy. While some showed partial alignment with policy expectations, others displayed limited grasp of heritage-based principles, resulting in uneven pedagogical practices. This confirmed that professional development had been selective and insufficient, creating knowledge asymmetries between managers and classroom teachers.

Secondly, the study established a clear policy–practice gap. At the intended curriculum level, policy emphasised learner-centred, heritage-driven approaches designed to cultivate patriotism, critical thinking, and identity consciousness. However, at the implemented level, classroom practice was often constrained by large class sizes, inadequate resources, and exam pressures, leading teachers to adopt pragmatic strategies that diluted the reform. At the attained level, learners' experiences were shaped more by these contextual realities than by policy aspirations, reinforcing the persistent misalignment between reform ideals and classroom realities.

Thirdly, the study revealed that teacher “resistance” is largely shaped by contextual constraints rather than by personal reluctance or negative attitudes. Teachers' difficulties in adopting new instructional methods were primarily driven by structural challenges, including insufficient teaching resources, absence of ICT tools, and unmanageably large workloads. Far from reflecting unwillingness, such constraints

limited teachers' capacity to translate curriculum expectations into practice. This finding challenges simplistic, deficit-oriented interpretations of teacher behaviour and underscores the importance of providing structural and systemic support to facilitate meaningful reform. Addressing these barriers through resource provision, manageable class sizes, and accessible technology can empower teachers to implement heritage-based pedagogies more effectively, transforming potential resistance into proactive engagement with curriculum innovations.

Fourthly, the findings emphasise that history education under the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) possesses significant transformative potential. Both teachers and learners acknowledged that History lessons can foster heritage consciousness, strengthen national identity, and develop critical thinking skills. Despite this promise, the transformative impact of the HBC remains fragile. Weak alignment across the curriculum chain from policy design to classroom implementation coupled with the pervasive focus on examination-oriented practices, limits opportunities for meaningful engagement with historical content. As a result, the curriculum's broader goals of promoting critical, reflective, and heritage-informed citizenship are often undermined, highlighting the need for systemic support to bridge policy intentions and classroom realities.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature on curriculum reform by illustrating the explanatory power of the Triple I Theory in understanding the gaps between policy intentions, classroom practices, and learner outcomes. It highlights how the stages of Initiation, Implementation, and Institutionalisation can help trace where reforms succeed or falter within complex educational contexts. Additionally, the study identifies several underexplored knowledge gaps, including the ways in which structural constraints generate resource-driven "resistance", the practical challenges and possibilities of implementing learner-centred approaches in large classes, and the exclusionary design of professional development initiatives. By surfacing these dimensions, the study not only extends theoretical understandings of curriculum change but also provides practical insights for designing more inclusive, context-sensitive, and sustainable reform strategies in Zimbabwe and comparable settings.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is essential to recognise that each research study possesses its own set of strengths and limitations, and the current study was not exempted from this reality. For example, the present research encountered limitations regarding the constrained data generation timeframe. Data were collected during a demanding period for the teachers. During the data generation period, the 4 history teachers faced time pressures as they needed to cover the curriculum for the first term, second term and prepare learners for Mid-Year examinations. Consequently, it is plausible that the time constraints may have impacted the thoroughness of their responses to lesson observations and interviews. For instance, I was supposed to make 32 lesson observations for all the 4 teachers, but I ended up observing 26 lessons due to circumstances beyond my control. Nonetheless, I employed multiple data generation methods document analysis and also semi-structured interviews. Although each method inherently carries its limitations and potential errors, the combination of these approaches, through triangulation, bolstered confidence in the study's findings.

Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that the study may have had a relatively small sample size, limiting the generalisability of the findings to a broader population of history teachers in rural areas. The qualitative component of the study involved four history teachers from four schools in a single district where similar contextual factors existed. A more extensive and diverse sample would be beneficial to improve the representativeness of the investigation and attain a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions and experiences across various rural contexts. This recommendation stems from the view that the present study's focus on a specific rural area restricts the applicability of its findings to other rural areas. However, it is essential to recognise that Creswell (2013:189) advises that the common sample size in case studies consists of four to five cases. 4 History teachers from 4 secondary schools were purposively selected and studied as multiple cases in my study which made the sample size fit neatly into Creswell's (2013) framework.

Furthermore, this study could have been vulnerable to biases and subjectivity due to its reliance on self-reported perceptions and experiences of the participating

teachers. Creswell (2013:186) cautions that the researcher's personal history, race, gender, culture, social class and level of training all have a strong bearing on how problems are identified, investigated, analysed, and interpreted; making qualitative research inherently subjective. Participants' responses might have been influenced by their personal opinions, beliefs, or previous encounters, introducing potential biases into the collected data. This potential bias was accentuated by the study examining the perceptions and experiences of teachers who report to me as their supervisor, potentially influencing their responses. This study utilised prolonged engagement with teachers in the classroom, multiple data sources to mitigate these biases and cross-referenced the findings.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.6.1 Policy Oriented Recommendations

5.6.1.1 Inclusive and continuous development

The present research findings revealed that most teachers lack the requisite knowledge to execute the school-based projects, implying that the implementation of the new Heritage Based Syllabus 4044 could become challenging without adequate continuous professional development. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) is recommended to institutionalise continuous, subject-specific professional development that equips teachers with both the philosophy and practical methods of the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC). Professional development is expected to be not hierarchical or exclusionary, where school heads and managers receive training while classroom teachers are left behind. Instead, frontline teachers, the primary implementers of the curriculum must be the central beneficiaries. Such training should also be ongoing, not one-off workshops, and should provide teachers with opportunities to engage in hands-on practice, lesson design, and collaborative reflection.

5.6.1.2 Provision of adequate resources and infrastructural support

At the beginning of this study, I highlighted that the rural school context is fraught

with many difficulties related to the lack of textbooks, ICT gadgets, proper learning facilities and infrastructure. This study has revealed 3 critical contextual factors that significantly impact the successful adoption of Heritage-Based history syllabus: lack of ICT gadgets, limited internet access and lack of textbooks. MoPSE may need to ensure equitable distribution of essential teaching and learning resources, such as films, videos, heritage site access, ICT facilities, and libraries stocked with local history content. Where budgets are constrained, the Ministry could enter into strategic partnerships with museums, archives, universities, and cultural institutions to supply schools with heritage-rich resources and learning aids. Investment in basic infrastructure (electricity, internet connectivity, multimedia equipment) is necessary for the integration of digital resources in teaching History.

5.6.1.3. Adoption of the Triple I Theory for monitoring and evaluation

My study revealed that Fullan's (2015), Triple I highlight the importance of creating a shared understanding of the curriculum among History teachers, learners, and from initiation, implementation up to institutionalisation. Policymakers are encouraged to apply the Triple I Theory (Initiation, Implementation and Institutionalisation) as a framework for monitoring reform progress. Curriculum implementation may need to be continuously evaluated to ensure alignment between what policy documents intend, what teachers implement in classrooms, and what learners ultimately attain. Regular reviews and feedback loops must be established, enabling policymakers to adjust strategies based on classroom realities rather than assumptions.

5.6.1.4. Addressing teacher resistance contextually

Teacher "resistance" should not be simplistically construed as mere defiance or reluctance to embrace reform. In many cases, it reflects structural and contextual barriers that constrain teachers' capacity to implement new curricula effectively. Large class sizes, insufficient teaching and learning resources and unrealistic instructional expectations create environments in which even willing teachers struggle to adopt innovative methods. Within the context of Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) implementation, these conditions make it particularly challenging to employ learner-centred strategies, conduct projects, or engage students in critical

and experiential learning activities. Consequently, policy efforts that focus solely on compliance or enforcement are unlikely to achieve meaningful change. Instead, reform initiatives may need to prioritise the creation of enabling conditions that support teachers' professional practice. This includes reducing class sizes to manageable levels, providing adequate teaching aids and digital resources, and ensuring workloads are reasonable, thereby equipping teachers with the necessary tools and environment to apply heritage-based methods effectively and sustainably. Such structural support transforms potential "resistance" into active engagement and enhances fidelity to curriculum objectives.

5.6.2 Practice-Oriented Recommendations

5.6.2.1 Innovative pedagogy in large classes

My study revealed that some History teachers, such as Mr. Katton, expressed concerns over the challenges posed by large class sizes. Overcrowded classrooms often make it difficult for teachers to provide individualised attention, assess learners' understanding effectively, or facilitate meaningful learner participation. Within such contexts, implementing curriculum reforms that emphasise active engagement and critical thinking becomes particularly demanding. To address these constraints, teachers working with large classes are encouraged to adopt learner-centred pedagogical strategies that shift some of the responsibility for learning onto students themselves. Approaches such as peer teaching can empower learners to take ownership of their learning by explaining concepts to their peers, thereby reinforcing understanding for both the learner-teacher and the wider group. Similarly, group projects can be structured to promote collaboration, critical inquiry, and collective problem-solving, ensuring that large numbers of students remain actively engaged. Role-play activities, on the other hand, provide opportunities for students to enact historical scenarios, debate issues, and develop empathy and deeper historical consciousness, even in resource-constrained environments.

Furthermore, the Heritage-Based Curriculum requires that learners engage with heritage sites and local histories. However, when physical excursions to heritage sites are not feasible due to logistical, financial, or safety concerns, teachers could

adopt alternative strategies to simulate such experiences. Project-based learning allows students to investigate local histories through interviews with community elders, archival research, or the collection of oral traditions, thereby bridging the gap between school and community knowledge. Storytelling, particularly when drawing on indigenous narratives, can serve as a powerful pedagogical tool for making abstract historical concepts tangible and culturally relevant. In addition, the growing availability of digital heritage resources — including virtual museum tours, online archives, and multimedia platforms — provides teachers with innovative avenues to bring heritage into the classroom without requiring physical travel. In sum, while large class sizes present undeniable challenges to the effective implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum, these learner-centred and resource-sensitive strategies offer practical alternatives for ensuring that history education remains engaging, participatory, and aligned with the curriculum's objectives.

5.6.2.2. Contextualisation of History content

This study revealed that some teaching methods frequently used by history teachers may cause fatigue to students during memorisation and also potentially fosters aversion to history, further weakening their understanding and retention of historical knowledge. Teachers are encouraged to draw extensively on local histories, oral traditions, and community heritage to make lessons relevant to learners' lived experiences. This approach not only enriches learner engagement but also strengthens cultural identity and national cohesion.

5.6.2.3 Integration of ICT and heritage tools

The findings of this study indicate that limited access to teaching resources and internet facilities in four rural secondary schools in Hurungwe, Zimbabwe, significantly hampers the effective utilisation of the diverse instructional strategies recommended by the Heritage-Based History Syllabus 4044. In response, History teachers are encouraged to adopt creative and context-sensitive approaches to enhance lesson delivery. For example, readily available technologies such as mobile phones, open-access online archives, and community radio programmes can be leveraged to make historical content more engaging and relevant. Furthermore, even

in resource-constrained settings, low-cost, experiential activities such as student-curated heritage exhibitions or oral history projects can effectively support heritage-based pedagogy. Such strategies not only foster active learning and critical thinking but also enable teachers to circumvent infrastructural limitations while maintaining alignment with the learner-centred principles of the HBC curriculum.

5.6.2.4 Promoting History beyond examinations

My study's literature review has shown that there is a common belief among history students that history courses have little connection to their daily lives, which in turn leads to decreased interest and engagement in the subject. History as a subject is expected to instil a sense of unity, patriotism and veneration for the nation's sublime heritage. My study recommends encouraging history teachers to consciously reframe history teaching as a tool for heritage consciousness, critical thinking, and national identity formation, rather than an exam-oriented subject. Classroom practices should, therefore, balance examination demands with heritage projects, debates, and cultural explorations. History teachers are encouraged to focus on refining teaching materials and methodologies by incorporating storytelling, engaging activities, and interactivity, to stimulate students' interest and facilitate their understanding. Lastly, it is crucial for instructors to emphasise the practical application of history, which will enable students to comprehend its importance for both individuals and society.

5.7 FURTHER RESEARCH

Although this study has generated new insights into the experiences of history teachers in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC) in Zimbabwe, it has also raised important questions that future research should address. Several avenues for further inquiry are suggested below.

5.7.1 Extending the Study beyond History Classrooms

This research was confined to history teachers, which provided a focused and in-depth exploration of how the HBC is implemented within a subject that has strong

links to identity, patriotism, and heritage. However, curriculum reform is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon, and future studies could extend the investigation to other subjects such as English, Science, or Indigenous Languages. Such research would help establish whether the challenges and opportunities identified in this study are unique to history teaching or whether they represent broader systemic patterns across the curriculum. Comparative subject-based studies could also shed light on how disciplinary differences influence teachers' responses to reform.

5.7.2. Exploring Alternative Theoretical Lenses

The present study is the first in Zimbabwe to apply Fullan's (2015) Triple I Theory to history curriculum reform, offering a holistic framework that emphasises initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. Nevertheless, additional research could test the applicability of other theories, such as the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), sense-making theory, or critical pedagogy. Comparative theoretical studies would enable scholars to examine how different lenses explain teacher agency, resource constraints, and policy–practice gaps, thereby enriching the body of knowledge on curriculum reform implementation in Zimbabwe and the wider Global South.

5.7.3. Comparative Studies across Contexts

Another promising direction for further research involves comparative inquiry across regions or countries. While Zimbabwe's HBC is uniquely designed to foreground heritage and national identity, similar curriculum reforms have been attempted in other Global South contexts. A comparative analysis of different national experiences would illuminate both the universal challenges of reform implementation (e.g., resource shortages, teacher resistance) and the unique contextual dynamics that shape outcomes. Such research would also provide valuable lessons for policymakers and practitioners seeking to localize curriculum reforms while engaging with global educational discourses.

5.7.4 Incorporating Learner Perspectives

Finally, this study concentrated primarily on the perspectives of teachers. Yet learners are the ultimate beneficiaries of curriculum reform, and their voices remain under-represented in existing literature. Future research could explore how students experience, interpret, and engage with the HBC. Such studies would provide critical insights into whether the curriculum fosters the intended outcomes of heritage consciousness, critical thinking, and cultural identity. Student perspectives could also highlight unintended consequences or gaps that may not be visible from a teacher- or policy-centred lens.

5.7.5 Longitudinal Studies on Sustainability

This study captured the implementation of HBC at a particular moment in time. What remains unclear is whether reforms that reach the classroom can be sustained in the long term. Longitudinal studies that track reforms over multiple years would provide valuable evidence on whether HBC advances from initiation and implementation to full institutionalisation, as proposed by Triple I Theory. Such research could reveal whether initial enthusiasm among teachers translates into embedded practices, or whether reforms fade once external support diminishes.

5.8 DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXTENDED TRIPLE I FRAMEWORK MODEL

This study proposes the development of the extended Triple I Framework for the future studies. The proposed first stage of the extended Triple I Framework model developed from the present study is Initiation (Policy and Vision Formation) Definition: This is the stage where policy makers, curriculum planners, and government ministries introduce a new reform (e.g., Heritage-Based Curriculum). What Fullan said: Change begins with proposals and decisions that often carry assumptions about what works. My extension: Initiation is shaped by national heritage and identity politics (curriculum as a vehicle for patriotism, decolonisation, and national cohesion). There is a policy–practice gap since teachers are rarely consulted and their professional expertise side-lined. Professional development is hierarchical (managers receive training; teachers excluded → “knowledge asymmetries”).

The second stage is Implementation (Classroom Enactment and Mediation). Definition: The stage where teachers attempt to carry out reforms in real classrooms. What Fullan said: Implementation depends on local conditions, teacher buy-in, and support. My extension: Teachers act as mediators, not passive recipients. Their agency, creativity, and resistance shape outcomes. Implementation is often fragile and uneven due to: resource shortages (large classes, lack of ICT, absence of textbooks/films), selective training (teachers forced to improvise without preparation) and geographical inequalities (urban vs. rural disparities). Teacher resistance is reframed: it often stems from shortage of resources, lack of clarity, or workload, not rejection of reform.

The third stage of my extended Triple I Framework is Internalisation (Sustainability, Ownership, and Heritage Consciousness). Definition: The stage where reforms become embedded, sustained, and meaningful for teachers and learners. What Fullan said: Institutionalisation = embedding reform in school culture. My extension: Move beyond “institutionalisation” (system-level) to internalisation (teacher and learner-level ownership). Teachers adapt curriculum into their professional identity and they no longer “borrow” reforms but “own” them. Learners gain critical heritage consciousness, not just exam knowledge. Sustainability is conditional: if earlier stages (resources, support and inclusion) are weak, internalisation remains superficial.

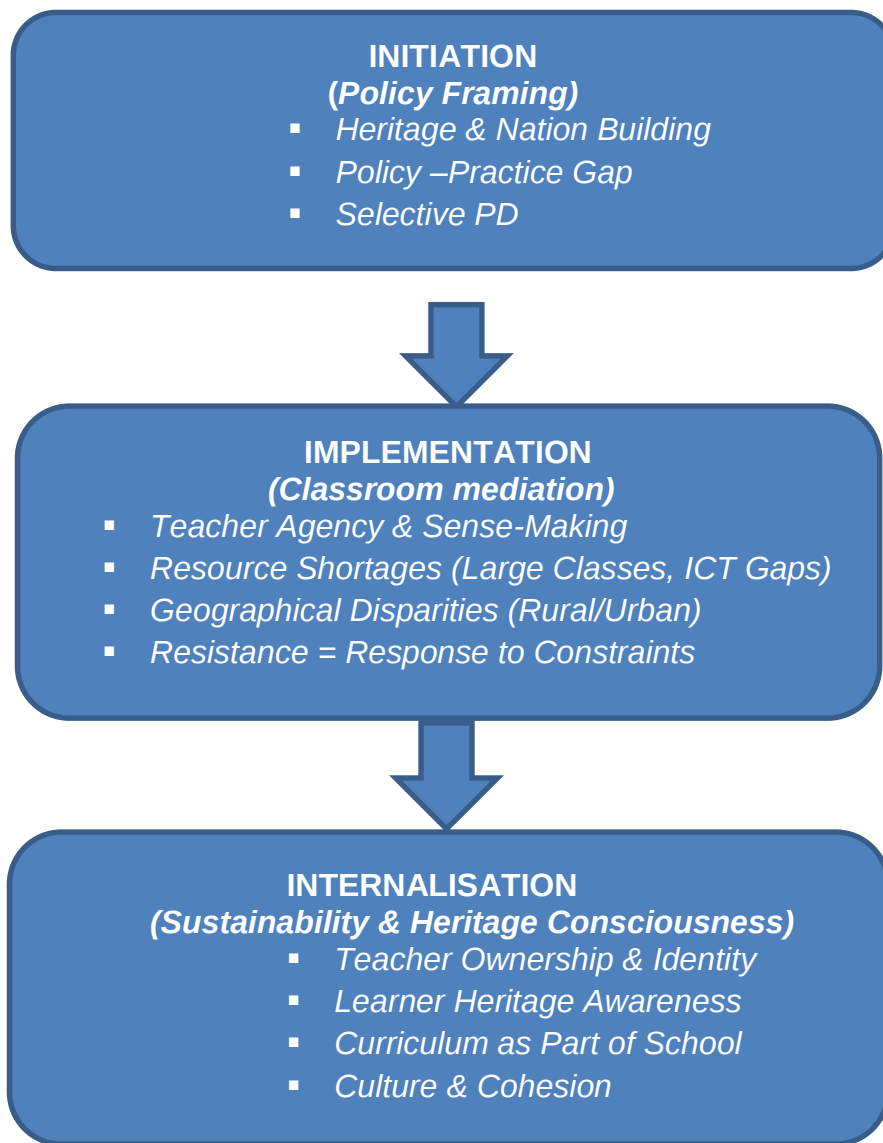


Figure 15: Proposed reframing of extended Michael Fullan’s Triple I Framework

These elements represent the key enhancements in my extended framework. The first addition, contextualisation, acknowledges the specific realities of Zimbabwean schools, including resource limitations and the rural–urban divide, which significantly influence how curriculum reforms are experienced and enacted. By incorporating contextualisation, the framework recognises that curriculum implementation does not occur in a vacuum but is shaped by the socio-economic and infrastructural conditions within which teachers and learners operate. The second addition, agency, emphasises that teachers are not merely passive implementers of prescribed reforms but active sense-makers who interpret, adapt, and negotiate curriculum demands in ways that align with their professional judgment, classroom realities, and

learners' needs. This perspective foregrounds the critical role of teacher decision-making and professional autonomy in mediating the success of curriculum implementation. A third enhancement, the heritage dimension, underscores the intrinsic link between curriculum change and issues of identity, culture, and national cohesion. By explicitly integrating heritage, the framework recognises that educational reforms in history are not solely technical exercises but are deeply connected to fostering cultural awareness, civic responsibility, and a shared sense of national belonging.

Finally, the shift from institutionalisation to internalisation represents a conceptual refinement that moves beyond system-level embedding of reforms. Internalisations highlights the importance of curriculum ownership at the individual teacher and learner levels, demonstrating that genuine adoption occurs when educators and students understand, value, and actively engage with the curriculum's objectives, rather than merely complying with institutional mandates. Collectively, these enhancements make the extended framework more context-sensitive, teacher-centred, and culturally responsive, providing a robust analytical lens for examining the implementation of heritage-based curriculum reforms in Zimbabwean secondary schools.

5.9 Final Thoughts

This study has argued that curriculum reform is not a linear process of policy transmission but a socially mediated process of interpretation, negotiation and reconstruction. By examining history teachers' experiences in implementing the Heritage-Based Curriculum (HBC), the study demonstrates that reform is enacted within specific institutional, historical and socio-political contexts. Teachers do not simply implement curriculum policy; they interpret it through their professional biographies, pedagogical identities and material conditions of practice.

Drawing on Triple I Theory (Initiation–Implementation–Institutionalisation), the findings reveal that limitations at the initiation stage—particularly insufficient epistemic reorientation, uneven professional development and inadequate resourcing—constrained the depth of implementation and slowed institutionalisation.

This study therefore extends Triple I Theory by arguing that initiation must be understood not merely as administrative preparation, but as a process of epistemic alignment. Without deep conceptual clarity and structural support, implementation becomes procedural compliance rather than transformative practice.

The findings further illuminate the tension between reform rhetoric and classroom reality. While teachers expressed conceptual support for critical thinking and heritage consciousness, classroom enactment often remained anchored in teacher-centred pedagogies. This disjuncture underscores the durability of pedagogical habitus and institutional cultures. Curriculum reform, therefore, emerges as a contested terrain where aspirational policy discourses encounter entrenched instructional traditions.

Theoretically, the study contributes to scholarship on decolonising education in contexts such as Zimbabwe by demonstrating that epistemic re-centering requires structural, pedagogical and institutional coherence. Reform that focuses primarily on content transformation without transforming the enabling conditions of practice risks remaining symbolic. Meaningful decolonial curriculum reform must therefore move beyond policy articulation to pedagogical normalisation. In direct response to the three research questions, the study has shown that: History teachers conceptualise the HBC as a transformative and heritage-centred reform grounded in critical thinking and national identity formation; Their lived experiences of implementation are characterised by negotiation, adaptation and constraint, shaped by contextual realities such as resource limitations, large class sizes and limited professional development; and The challenges and opportunities of implementing the HBC reveal that sustainable curriculum change depends on coherence across initiation processes, institutional support and pedagogical practice.

Taken together, these insights affirm the central theoretical proposition of this thesis: curriculum reform becomes transformative not at the point of policy declaration, but at the point where teachers internalise, enact and institutionalise its epistemic logic within everyday classroom practice.

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APPENDIX A: PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SECONDARY HISTORY TEACHERS.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. You are requested to respond to the following set of questions to the best of your ability.
2. You are kindly notified that the conversation will be recorded and after the research has been completed, they will be destroyed.
3. You will be expected to sign a consent form before the commencement of the interview.

Section A: Biographical Information

School code _____ Pseudonym _____

Date of Interview _____

Age _____

Which history classes do you teach

_____?

For how long have you been

teaching _____?

What are your educational qualifications _____?

Section B

Objective: What are the experiences of history teachers in implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwe rural secondary schools?

Sub-research Question 1: What are the prominent features and interpretation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum?

Interview Questions

- i. I hope you have heard about the Heritage-Based Curriculum. What is your understanding of this Curriculum?
- ii. What are the key principles and values that underpin Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum?

- iii. Do you think that HBC incorporates local history? Why do you say so?
- iv. What are the implications of prioritising culture and heritage in teaching and learning?
- v. In what ways does the Heritage-Based Curriculum facilitate connections between academic learning and real-life experiences in Zimbabwean society?
- vi. In what ways do you assess student learning and understanding of HBC content? Explain your answer.
- vii. Can you elaborate on how the Heritage-Based curriculum encourage critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving skills in students? Provide specific examples.
- viii. What strategies does the Heritage-Based Curriculum employ to foster cultural pride and national identity, and a sense of belonging among students? How effective are they?

Sub-research Question 2: What are history teachers' conceptualisation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum?

Interview Questions

- i. Can you share your interpretation of the Heritage Based Curriculum and its core principles?
- ii. How has your attitude towards and understanding of the heritage-based curriculum changed over time? What were your feelings in May 2024, and now?
- iii. What relationships do you see between the HBC and broader educational agendas?
- iv. In what ways do you integrate the HBCs principles into your teaching methods? What implications arise from this integration?
- v. What role do you think history teachers should play in shaping the curriculum policy?
- vi. What are your hopes and concerns for the future of HBC in Zimbabwe?

Sub-research Question 3: How are history teachers implementing the Zimbabwe's Heritage-based curriculum in their form 3 classrooms?

Interview Questions

- i. What teaching approaches and strategies are you using to deliver the Heritage-Based Curriculum?

- ii. What role do you see technology playing in enhancing the teaching and learning of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?
- iii. Do you feel empowered to adapt HBC materials to suit your teaching style? Explain?
- iv. What training, professional development opportunities or resources have you received to support your implementation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?
- v. Which new teaching methods have you adopted as a result of the new HBC?
- vi. What experiences, motivations and challenges have you encountered when implementing the HBC?
- vii. Which strategies have supported you in mitigating the challenges associated with the implementation of the HBC?

APPENDIX B: INTERMITTENT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SECONDARY HISTORY TEACHERS.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. You are requested to respond to the following set of questions to the best of your ability.
2. You are kindly notified that the conversation will be recorded and after the research has been completed, they will be destroyed.
3. You will be expected to sign a consent form before the commencement of the interview.

Section A: Biographical Information

School code _____ Pseudonym _____

Date of Interview _____

Age _____

Which history classes do you teach

_____?

For how long have you been

teaching _____?

What are your educational qualifications _____?

Section B

Objective: What are the experiences of history teachers in implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwe rural secondary schools?

Sub-research Question 1: What are the prominent features and interpretation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum?

Interview Questions

- I. I have observed that you do not understand some of the concepts of Heritage-Based Curriculum. What is your understanding of this Curriculum?
- II. I have observed that there are some changes which were brought by the HBC in your history classrooms. What are these changes?

- III. What are the new teaching methods required by Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum in teaching and learning of history in form 3 classrooms?
- IV. To what extent are you adhering to the requirements of the new HB history curriculum in your classroom practice?
- V. How well-versed are you in the "Continuous Assessment Implementation Guidelines for Schools" published by MoPSE in 2024?

Sub-research Question 2: What are history teachers' conceptualisations of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum?

Interview Questions

- I. Describe your initial reactions to teaching the new HB history syllabus in form 3. Why did you feel this way?
- II. What progress have you made in meeting the school-based projects for your form 3 history class?
- III. How familiar are you with the continuous assessment policy (school-based projects) and its implementation?
- IV. Have you attended workshops or seminars on implementing school-based projects and policies?
- V. Are you prepared & ready to assist students start working on their school-based projects tasks?
- VI. How easy or difficult was it to access new HB history curriculum policy documents and new-curriculum-compliant textbooks and Teachers' Guides

Sub-research Question 3: How are history teachers implementing the Zimbabwe's Heritage-based curriculum in their form 3 classrooms?

Interview Questions

- I. Since you began teaching the new HB history syllabus can you say your perception towards this innovation has changed? Explain your response.
- II. Any new teaching methods you have so far tried as a result of the coming in of the new HB history curriculum?
- III. Why I have not seen ICT gadgets in your classrooms, despite being an HBC advocate for ICT integration?
- IV. How do variations in class size and student needs impact the pedagogical approaches and delivery of the HB history curriculum in your form 3 classrooms?

- V. How does your teaching load affect the implementation of the history classes you teach?
- VI. Is the school administration supportive of the HB history curriculum? e.g. *Field work trips, provision of photocopying facilities, stationery, research/internet/library facilities*

APPENDIX C: EXIT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SECONDARY HISTORY TEACHERS.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. You are requested to respond to the following set of questions to the best of your ability.
2. You are kindly notified that the conversation will be recorded and after the research has been completed, they will be destroyed.
3. You will be expected to sign a consent form before the commencement of the interview.

Section A: Biographical Information

School code _____ Pseudonym _____

Date of Interview _____

Age _____

Which history classes do you teach

_____?

For how long have you been

teaching _____?

What are your educational qualifications _____?

Section B

Objective: What are the experiences of history teachers in implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwe rural secondary schools?

Sub-research Question 1: What are the prominent features and interpretation of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?

Interview Questions

- i. How knowledgeable are you on the Heritage Based history curriculum and its implementation?
- ii. How far did you adhere to the new Heritage Based history syllabus and your schemes of work in your actual teaching this term?

- iii. Does the new Heritage Based history curriculum encourage students to develop higher order thinking skills? Why do you say so?
- iv. I have observed that Heritage Based History syllabus recommends 5 periods per week of at least 40 minutes. Have you been allocated these periods at your school?
- v. Has the MoPSE consulted or organised review sessions with history teachers regarding the implementation of reforms? If so, share specifics.

Sub-research Question 2: What are history teachers' conceptualisations of the Heritage-Based Curriculum?

Interview Questions

- I. In your own view can you explain what HBC is all about?
- II. Are you conscious of the new changes in the new Heritage Based history curriculum? What are the changes that occurred due to the new Heritage Based history curriculum?
- III. What are your thoughts on this curriculum change?
- IV. Was there any effort made to robe in your views in deciding to adapt and adopt the new Heritage Based history curriculum?
- V. What has led to your gradual acceptance of, or continued resistance to the new Heritage Based history curriculum?
- VI. Explain the positive and negative side of the implementation of the new Heritage Based history curriculum?

Sub-research Question 3: How are history teachers implementing the Heritage-based curriculum in their form 3 classrooms?

Interview Questions

- I. What teaching approaches and strategies did you use to deliver the Heritage-Based history curriculum for the past 10 weeks?
- II. I have observed that your lessons were becoming more teacher-centred in contrast to being learner centred in of teaching the new Heritage Based history syllabus? Explain your response.
- III. What conditions or arrangements, if any, enable you to implement learner centred teaching in form 3 history classes?

- IV. What factors, conditions or arrangements, if any, prevent you from implementing learner-centred teaching in form 3 Heritage Based history classes? How have you gone about resolving or tackling these?
- V. Which resources and facilities are required in the new Heritage Based history curriculum?
- VI. Are the above resources and facilities available at your school?
- VII. Use of film and video are some of the approaches recommended in the new history curriculum. Why did you not use these this term?

Sub-research Question 4: How can history teachers' implementation of Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Curriculum be understood and explained?

Interview Questions

- I. To what extent does the nature of examination questions influence the way you teach history in your classrooms
- II. Did you receive any training before, during and after the adaption and adoption of the new Heritage Based history curriculum?
- III. Do you see any challenges of handling the new changes emanating from the training or training deficit?
- IV. How is the school management team involved in the implementation of the HBC change? And how do they assist in the HBC implementation?
- V. What challenges are "management related" that impede your history teaching? What strategies do/would you employ to lessen the challenges you have mentioned?
- VI. The new history curriculum requires that students go for history educational tours at least three times a year. What have you done for your Form 3s this year?
- VII. What is your general overview of the implementation of the new HB history curriculum?

APPENDIX D: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL



Focus is to systematically analyse and interpret documents related to teaching-learning of history in Heritage-Based Curriculum Ordinary level classrooms.

The following documents will be analysed:

- i. Heritage based Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2024-2030)
- ii. Circular Number 10 of 2024
- iii. History Syllabus
- iv. Schemes of work
- v. History departmental meetings minutes
- vi. School based projects implementation circular number 9 (2024).
- vii. Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment (2024).

DOCUMENTS ANALYSED	SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF FOCUS
Heritage based Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2024-2030)	-General information on new curriculum -Policy guidance, consistency -Pedagogical issues/vision of learner-centred teaching -Competence Based History or Heritage Based history -Teacher roles and authority -Learner roles and responsibilities -Community/stakeholder roles -Approaches to teaching and learning -Nature of assessment, learner Involvement -Resources and support
Circular Number 10 of 2024	- Layout and detail on curriculum

	dimensions -Learning teaching standards - Life skills, competences and learner exit profiles
History syllabuses	-Influence of Competence based history versus Heritage Based history approach. -Forms of learning media are encouraged by each syllabus -Teaching methods
Schemes of work	-Curriculum alignment with HBC -Adherence with the syllabus -Lesson planning and structure -Assessment strategies
History departmental meetings	-Meeting frequency and attendance -Discussion topics and decisions -Curriculum implementation challenges -Professional development opportunities
School based projects implementation circular (2024).	-Learning objectives and outcomes -Timeline and milestones -Assessment criteria -Feedback mechanisms
Final Teacher's Guide to Learning and Assessment (2024).	Learning objectives and outcomes -Timeline and milestones -Assessment criteria -Feedback mechanisms

APPENDIX E: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR HISTORY LESSONS



Purpose: To systematically observe and evaluate teaching practices, student engagement, and learning outcomes in HBC history classrooms.

Type of observation: Non participant observation

Biographical Information

School code _____

Date of lesson observation _____

Class _____

Topic _____

Teacher code _____

Educational qualifications _____

The following issues will be observed:

OBSERVATION	DESCRIPTION
Lesson preparedness Is the lesson well planned? Are the objectives clear? Learner readiness Availability of source of materials	
Lesson introduction How the lesson was introduced? Was it teacher-centred or learner-centred	
Teaching methods What teaching methods and strategies are used (e.g., lectures, discussions, group work, technology integration)? How actively do students participate in the lesson, and are they engaged in the	

learning process?	
Methodology (multi-sensory approaches) E-learning, debate, groupwork, role play, discovery learning, drama, song and poetry, games and quizzes, video and film shows and case studies	
Lesson Content How are HBC principles and concepts integrated into the lesson? Chronological organisation, thematic organisation, depth vs breadth of content coverage and relevance of content	
Learning materials used Pictures, talking books, charts, computers, maps, mp4 recorders and projectors	
Assessment and feedback How does the teacher assess student learning, and what feedback mechanisms are used?	
Lesson conclusion Teacher or learner centred pedagogies, How do students understand the HBC values during the lesson? Are they encouraged to apply these values and principles in their daily lives?	
Other observations Class sizes Availability of classrooms Classroom environment Availability of history textbooks	

Supplementary materials	
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APPENDIX F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE UFS-HSD2024/2374



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

Registration Number: REC-112922-058

13-May-2025

Dear Mr George Dangarembwa

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

EXPERIENCES OF HISTORY TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING A HERITAGE-BASED CURRICULUM IN ZIMBABWEAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2024/2374

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 via an Amendment on RIMS to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit a Final Report on RIMS for your study/research project to the ethics office once the project has concluded. Should you require more time than the allotted 12 months to complete this research, please apply for an extension by submitting a Continuation/Report on RIMS. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance. We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'TS. Marange'.

Dr Tatenda Marange

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

205 Nelson P.O. Box 339
Mandela Drive Bloemfontein 9300
Park West Tel: +27 (0)51 401
Bloemfontein 9304 3543



APPENDIX G: PERMANENT SECRETARY'S LETTER OF PERMISSION

Reference: C/426/3

14 March 2025

George Dangarembwa
House Number 8080
Budiriro 5B
Harare

**RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASHONALAND
WEST PROVINCE: HURUNGWE DISTRICT:VUTI; MAGUNJE MWAMI
AND CHARLES CLARK HIGH SCHOOLS**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research from the district mentioned above schools on the research title:

**"EXPERIENCES OF HISTORY TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING A HERITAGE-
BASED CURRICULUM IN ZIMBABWEAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS."**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you must liaise with the Provincial Education Director of Mashonaland WProvince, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the schools. Where students are involved, parental consent is required. **Please note that the final permission is granted by the Research Council of Zimbabwe**

You must also provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.


.....
Moses Mhike

SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



@MoPSEZ



<https://www.facebook.com/MoPSEducationGovtZimbabwe>



<https://www.mopse.co.zw/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/ministry-of-primary-and-secondary-education-of-zimbabwe/>

APPENDIX: PED's AND DSI's LETTER OF APPROVAL

10.6.25

The District Schools Inspector
HURUNGWE District

AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
HURUNGWE DISTRICT: **MIRAMBA** **DANGAREMWA GEORGE**
 ID NO: **S220121 T** STATION: **MWAMI HIGH**
HURUNGWE INSTITUTION: **UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE**
 ID NO: **2027023833** PROGRAMME: **PHD IN EDUCATION**

The above named student has been granted authority by the Provincial Education Officer to carry out research in **HURUNGWE** District. The student has agreed to conduct research in the following schools:

Research topic: **EXPERIENCES OF HISTORY TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING A HERITAGE BASED CURRICULUM IN ZIMBABWE SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Period of research: **10/06/25 – 10/04/26**

Enrolled school: **VUTI HIGH, MAGUNJE HIGH, MWAMI HIGH AND CHALES CLACK HIGH**

Enforced research: **QUALITATIVE**

Please ensure that the learning and teaching programmes at the targeted schools are not interrupted in any way; the student strictly adheres to the activities and reports conducted for her/his research and that the research should be conducted according to the research protocol.

The District Schools Inspector is requested to liaise with the schools where the research will be conducted and advise the Provincial Education Officer. Furthermore, the District Schools Inspector is requested to submit this authority to the Provincial Education Officer.

MIN. OF PRY & SEC. EDUCATION
 MASHONALI AND WEST PROVINCE
 HUMAN RESOURCES (DISCIPLINE)

10 JUN 2025

ACTING PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
 MASHONALI AND WEST PROVINCE
 P.O. BOX 328, CHINHOI
 ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
 HURUNGWE DISTRICT
 12 JUN 2025

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT (1)
 P.O. BOX 150, MAGUNJE

1

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE OF A WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
UNIVERSITHU YA
FREESTATA

 UFS

Consent to participate in this study

I, the undersigned,
 (Mr Katton)
 (participant's full names to be included), (the "Participant")
 confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the Experiences
of history teachers in implementing a HBC in Zimbabwean schools
a PhD (the "Study") in relation to

and which Study is being conducted by
Dangaremba George
 (insert the name of the researcher), (the "Researcher").

I, the undersigned Participant, further confirm that-

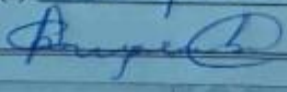
1. the Researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the Study;
2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the Study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the Study;
4. I understand that my participation in the Study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the Researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the Study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the Researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the Study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission is dependent on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above applying.

I, the Participant, agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method>.

Full Name of Participant:  (Mr Katton)

Signature of Participant:  Date: 13/05/25

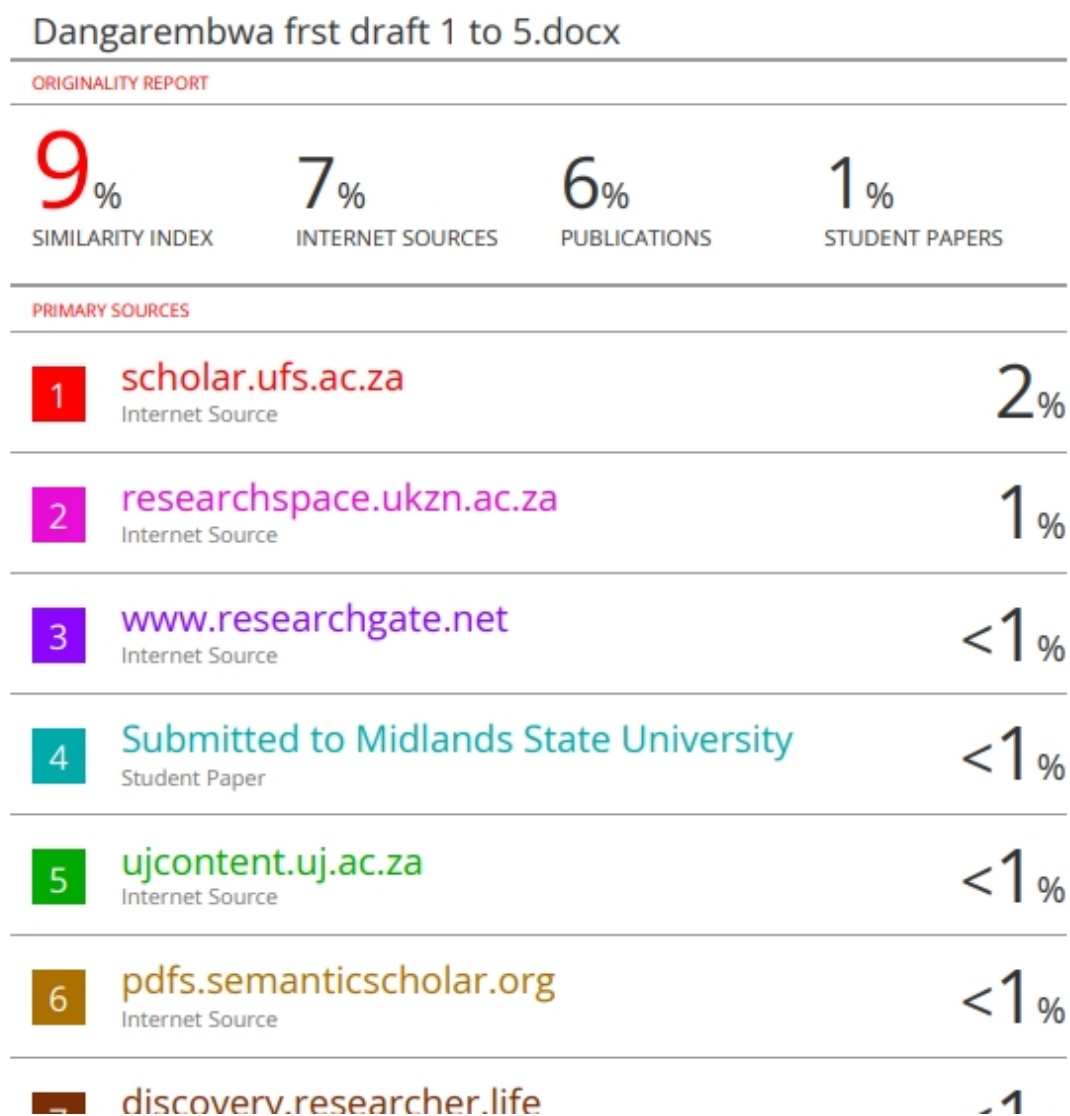
Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): Dangaremba George

Signature of Researcher:  Date: 14/05/25

205 Nelson Mandela Drive, Park West, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa 1
 P.O. Box 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa, T: +27(0)51 401 9111, www.ufs.ac.za



APPENDIX J: PLAGIARISM REPORT



APPENDIX H: LANGUAGE EDITING

Great Zimbabwe University

Department of Educational Foundations

& Curriculum Devt.

PO Box 1235

Masvingo

Zimbabwe

14 November 2025

Email: rmareva@gzu.ac.zw / marevarugare@gmail.com

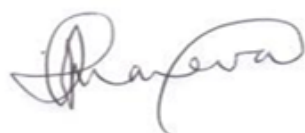
Cell: +263 772 978 970

TO: The University of the Free State

Re: Confirmation of Editing of GEORGE DANGAREMBWA'S Doctoral Thesis

This is to certify that I, **Prof. Rugare Mareva** (National Identity Number 22-101 400K 22), have, to the best of my ability, language-edited the above-mentioned student's thesis titled: **Experiences of History Teachers in Implementing a Heritage-Based Curriculum in Zimbabwean Secondary Schools**, to be submitted to the University of the Free State (UFS). Any errors and omissions are inadvertent. I am a holder of a PhD (English) (University of Venda), M.Ed (English) (University of Zimbabwe), B.Ed (English) (University of Zimbabwe), and a Certificate in Education (English Major) (University of Zimbabwe).

Thank you.



Prof. Rugare Mareva (PhD)

Prof. Rugare Mareva (PhD), Language Editor: Policy Documents, Journal Articles, Book Chapters, Books, Reports, Honours Projects, Master's Dissertations and Doctoral Theses. Research Consultant. Curriculum Development, Masvingo, Zimbabwe.