

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



**A CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION MODEL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF GRADE
4 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ENDUMENI
CIRCUIT**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nonhlanhla Gugulethu Shozi, declare that the thesis, "*A curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in Endumeni circuit*", hereby submitted for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Curriculum Studies at the University of the Zululand, is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty.

Signature: 

Date: 12 December 2021

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to the following:

To my lovely sons, Tebogo and Minenhle, for inspiring and supporting me during the period of my study.

To my late parents, Siphon and Duduzile (MaMpanza) Shoji, for motivating and instilling in me the love and value of education.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of English grade 4 learners in selected primary schools on the Endumeni Circuit. There is a transitional challenge for learners in terms of language of learning and teaching from the foundation phase to the intermediate phase. Learners are operating in different conceptualisation stages of understanding English as a language of learning and teaching (LOLT), and as a subject. Curriculum differentiation in Grade 4 gives options for individual learners to learn as thoroughly and swiftly as possible, without assuming that one learner's learning path is the same as anybody else's (Tomlinson, 2014).

The conceptual framework guiding this study was Critical Pedagogy (CP). CP framing appeals to teachers to reflect about how school practices connect to those in a macro-socio level, how classrooms are organised into communities of practice, and what kinds of participation are made accessible to all learners (Abraham, 2015). This conceptual framework was relevant because it advocates that teachers have to make it easier for learners to construct knowledge and use it in a variety of settings to foster self-motivated life interpretations with the objective of changing the status quo (Abraham, 2014).

The Transformative Paradigm was the paradigm used in this research. The transformational paradigm aligns well with the ideas of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, and his dialogical conscientisation model. The study further employed participatory action learning action research (PALAR) as its research approach. The democratic aspect of PALAR encouraged participants to engage in critical, collaborative thought, which included questioning established educational assumptions and exploring new approaches to curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes. Engagement through PALAR aimed to contribute to a better understanding of what kind of resources, curriculum differentiation knowledge and action is needed to achieve practical inclusive classrooms, improvement for social justice, transformation, and sustainable change.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Thematic analysis helped the researcher to pinpoint the links between concepts and to compare them to replicated evidence (Clarke and Braun, 2014).

KEY WORDS: Curriculum differentiation, transformative paradigm, participatory action learning action research, thematic analysis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CP	Critical Pedagogy
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DH	Departmental Head
EFAL	English First Additional Language
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
PALAR	Participatory Action Learning Action Research
PLC	Professional learning Communities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SMT	School Management Teams
SNES	Special Needs Education Services
TA	Thematic Analysis
TP	Transformative Paradigm

CHAPTER 1: AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, preliminary reviews related in the literature, informed by themes drawn from the research objectives and statement of the problem. The study's conceptual framework, namely critical pedagogy, is examined. The research questions, as well as the goal and objectives of the study, are provided. In addition, the research design and methodology, as well as the methodology taken, participatory action learning and action research, are explained, as well as how the data were gathered. Thematic analysis, which was used to analyse the data generated in this study, is elucidated. This chapter finishes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and the chapter layout.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of English grade 4 learners in selected primary schools in the Endumeni Circuit. Curriculum differentiation is defined as a practice in which teachers proactively modify curriculum, learning activities, resources, pedagogies, and learner products (Tomlinson, 2005). Curriculum differentiation ensures that the needs of individual learners are addressed to maximise the opportunity for learning for everyone in the classroom (Department of Education, 2011). The Department of Basic Education (DBE) developed the guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom, the document is to assist schools in differentiating the curriculum. It alludes to the differentiation of content, pedagogies, learning environment and assessment. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education (2014) designed a policy on screening, identification, assessment, and support (SIAS), its objective was to create a policy framework for standardising processes for identifying, assessing, and providing programmes for all learners who need extra support to improve their engagement and inclusion in classrooms. The SIAS policy also emphasises the importance of adjusting and adapting content, material, learning environment and assessment to meet the diverse needs of learners. Smets (2017) argues that different techniques must be used to provide inclusive educational opportunities for a diverse class of grade 4 English learners. Tomlinson (2014) presented the concept of a differentiated curriculum as a framework that encompasses a wide range of teaching

strategies and procedures, aimed at maximising learning gains for all learners in a classroom.

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY (CP)

According to Sułkowski, Fijałkowska and Dzimińska (2019), a conceptual framework is a written or visual product that outlines the fundamental objects to be researched, the key components, variables, concepts, and the presumed relationships among them, either graphically or in narrative form. In this study, the conceptual framework refers to the set of concepts, expectations, beliefs, assumptions, and theories that support and inform this research.

The conceptual framework guiding this study was Critical Pedagogy (CP). Critical Pedagogy is a transformation-based approach to education. It uses the principles of Critical Theory of the Frankfurt school as its foundation and the work of Paulo Freire (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). Critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, changing and negotiating the relationship between knowledge creation, teaching, the institutional framework of the school, the broader community, and the social and material ties of society (McLaren, 2015). This conceptual framework is relevant for this study because its nature facilitates learners to construct knowledge and apply it in a variety of settings to develop self-motivated life interpretations with the purpose of improving the existing reality. CP emphasises that teaching must incorporate social critique. It further alludes that teachers should teach learners in a non-threatening, and anti-discriminatory way (Ayoub Mahmoudi, Khoshnood & Babaei, 2014). Teachers should become learners to attend to the diverse classroom needs of their learners and should work towards realising self-actualisation.

CP attempts to raise people's awareness, update them of their rights and capacities as social change agents (Kincheloe, 2011). The nature of CP is that it attempts to create conditions for transformation, empowerment, and social justice. CP framing appeals to teachers to reflect about how school practices connect to those at a macro-socio level, how classrooms are organised into communities of practice, and what kinds of participation are made accessible to all learners (Abraham, 2015). In CP, a critical teacher sees the role of equipping a learner with the potential to transform their

society. A willingness to learn how to differentiate the curriculum while teaching is also expected of such a teacher (Rajesh, 2014).

Critical pedagogy inspires learners to do more than interpret the world; it also encourages them to alter it and develop critical consciousness (Rajesh, 2014). Critical pedagogy is a school of thought that sees knowledge as subjective, allows multiple interpretations that are needed in Grade 4 English diverse classrooms (Jeyaraj, 2014).

According to Darder (2015) in CP, reality is based on schools of thought that emphasise the individual self in relation to and in opposition to society, socio-cultural and ideological forces, economic causes, and social progress. All these phrases have the same goals and aspirations: to encourage language acquisition, development, and action on the part of learners, with the purpose of addressing problematic parts of their lives, as perceived through a critical lens (Crookes, 2012).

Epistemology in CP is derived from critical thinking and activities that can change repressive classrooms or social relations and facilitate accepting diverse learners in a classroom (Rangel, 2019). Critical pedagogy supports collaborative decision-making through open conversation, encouragement, and recognition of diverse points of view. Multiple and varied sources of information are incorporated into a critical pedagogical approach. The latter alludes to a greater importance on group procedures and discussion, as well as reflections on life experiences, which encourage learners to create inquiries that will ultimately guide inquiry in the search for their transformative role in society (Bradshaw, 2017).

In CP, axiology played a critical role in establishing the standards and requirements for accepted research methods and techniques for this study. Making the axiology explicit, according to Akaranga and Makau (2016), helps to create and explain the guiding tone and rigour for research action. Even if it is not always fully understood and stated, trust is a moral virtue that is prioritised and practiced in critical pedagogy (Uddin, 2019). Certain classroom conditions are required for dialogue as epistemology, or as a method of knowing. For discussion to take place, learners and teachers must understand each other's strengths and capabilities well in a way that is

uncommon in traditionally organised classrooms (Weston, 2011). Safety is a prerequisite for schools that are conducive to dialogical modes of knowing. Learners must feel safe to engage in open and honest discussion and struggle. In CP, classrooms function because of the moral value of trust being prioritised.

This conceptual framework is relevant for this study because its design makes it easier for learners to construct knowledge and use it in a variety of settings to foster self-motivated life interpretations with the objective of changing the status quo which is exclusion reality (Abraham, 2014). CP emphasises that teaching must incorporate social critique. It further alludes that teachers should teach learners in a non-threatening and anti-discriminatory way (Ayoub Mahmoudi, Khoshnood & Babaei, 2014). Teachers should become learners to attend to the diverse classroom needs of their learners by differentiating the curriculum and should work towards realising self-actualisation. As a result of critical consciousness, there is sympathising with the underprivileged in society and progressing from sympathy to compassion for their plight is inevitable.

1.4 PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1.4.1 Challenges for implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers

Challenges identified in this study are inadequate professional development, improper curriculum management, insufficient transformational initiatives, and ineffectual policy implementation. In this study, professional development refers to how individuals and schools acquire, enhance, and maintain the skills, knowledge, tools, equipment, and other resources they need to execute their tasks effectively. It enables individuals and schools to perform at a greater capacity (Soth, Socheath & Sarath, 2020). Teachers need better preparation programmes on how to effectively manage a classroom of learners with mixed skills levels (Hwang & Evans, 2011). According to Grskovic and Trzcinka (2011), teachers need additional professional development on how to handle the curriculum differentiation to assist learners with different learning needs while yet being able to meet classroom expectations.

Professional development, according to Ryan (2015), should include suitable adjustments in curriculum, pedagogical activities, and evaluation methods, material

modification, and resource acquisition, development, and utilisation. Furthermore, the programme should prepare teachers to use a variety of teaching styles, including multi-level teaching, co-operative learning, peer tutoring, and remedial assistance. West and West (2016) claim that teachers are frequently overburdened with classroom management issues, have received little or no development in the use of differentiation strategies, and hence lack confidence, efficacy, and tenacity in their implementation. Teachers frequently prepare lessons for learners in the "middle," promoting a generalised "one size fits all" approach that ignores the very different needs of a diverse classroom (Smith & Kukulska-hulme, 2012).

Transformation necessitates a person's awareness of their existing circumstance and efforts to improve it (Slavin, 2019). The South African Schools Act (1996) recognises that the past is the fundamental reference point and entails activities aimed at changing what is already in place. Transformation is initiated by encouraging forces such as the power of new developments, creativity, swift availability, and ease of communication, however it is hampered by unfavourable forces like absence of support, teacher skills, resources, and planning in Africa (Tomlinson, 2014).

Even though the differentiation framework aims to address classroom diversity and limitations, research shows that some teachers are not prepared to execute it (West & West, 2016). Teachers who resist change are not rejecting the need for change; they just do not have the education to perceive it, and they are given insufficient opportunities to give new ventures and procedures meaning (Nthulana, 2016).

Curriculum management at the KZN Department of Education uses trackers that give instructions on what should be covered in each lesson and inform teachers on what needs to be improved, as well as all the stages that must be completed throughout the delivery of a lesson. The tracker also provides pace advice and notifies the teacher when lagging. However, the tracker does not cater to all levels of learners. Crossley (2012) claims that the tracker contains too many activities to complete in a single day, making it difficult for struggling learners, who constitute the majority in this context. The variety of topics covered in a single day makes it impossible to complete in one day and one hour lesson. On the following day, there is no time to recapitulate; learners are left behind (Christie & Monyokolo, 2018).

According to Crossley (2012), most schools in districts have made progress towards implementing standards-aligned curriculum and textbooks, curriculum designers are still working to ensure that all teachers in the system understand and support a curriculum that emphasises outcomes rather than content. The use of curriculum in classrooms to generate personalised learning is a challenge. According to De Clercq, Shalem, and Nkambule (2015), there is a disconnection between the vision of offering personalised, differentiated teaching, and the curriculum available to do so. As a result, even when teachers see the need for personalised learning, the necessary resources either do not exist or are not provided to them.

To manage the English grade 4 curriculum, teachers need content-specific knowledge. They must be prepared to teach English in the intermediate phase, particularly in grade 4, which is a transition from the foundation phase. Differentiated curriculum and assessment approaches and methodologies, differentiated classroom management abilities, and the use of data to make informed decisions are all skills that can be acquired (Slavin, 2019). Teachers must be taught in curriculum management to deal with curriculum change and work with learners from various learning backgrounds, as curriculum differentiation is a novel method to teaching. Continuous professional learning and growth is required of teachers for them to be capable of dealing with these challenges.

Although the department has produced excellent policies, their execution remains a mystery since the curriculum remains one of the most significant barriers to learning. Different characteristics of the curriculum, such as language, classroom organisation, content, teaching approaches, teaching pace and time available to finish the curriculum, assessment and learning and teaching support materials all contribute to learning barriers (Department of Education, 2001). Internationally, policies are not implemented as per plans and they do not produce the intended outcomes; this calls for understanding the nature of policy and the critical nature of implementing it (Leballo, Griffiths & Bekker, 2021).

1.4.2 Probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation

Probable solutions to address the challenges encountered by teachers when teaching grade 4 English learners are enhanced professional development, strengthened curriculum management, feasible transformational initiatives, and effective policy implementation.

Effective professional development is ongoing, includes training, practice, feedback, and includes sufficient time and follow-up support (Alheit, 2018). Programmes that support the development of teachers' learning communities become a success if teachers are involved in learning and activities that are like those they would use with their learners. There is a rising interest in transforming schools into learning organisations and developing more systematic ways for teachers to share their knowledge and experience (Mbatha, 2016).

Professional development that focuses on pedagogical praxis associated with specific curriculum content encourages teacher development within teachers' classroom contexts. Professional development makes teachers better because it provides the skills needed to differentiate the curriculum (Maldoni, 2017). Teachers have high expectations of learners in terms of both their standard of learning and their behaviour, and they help their learners meet those expectations. They also have high expectations of themselves and their own learning. Professional development makes teachers effective and able to personalise the learning for their learners, they then understand that learners develop at different rates and that in every classroom, there will be a range of learners' abilities and aptitudes (Department of Education, 2014). This results in accommodating the different needs of learners in their classrooms.

According to Naka (2018), prior to the implementation of any curriculum management strategies, pedagogy plays an important role. Implementing a curriculum is more than just following a set of instructions or replacing old practice with new practice; it is a process of shaping the curriculum in such a manner that it meets the needs of learners and gets ingrained in the teacher's personality (Tomlinson, 2014). Curriculum management includes reviewing materials, solving everyday challenges related to curriculum implementation, encouraging and inspiring participants in the curriculum

change process to work toward achieving meaningful change results that will benefit everybody in a positive way (Marishane, 2013).

Professional development, according to Mendy and Madiope (2020), is all about learning, in which people participate in challenging, and purposeful consideration of their professional obligations, skills, motivations, beliefs and practices, both individually and collectively. This type of learning has essential benefits for teachers, according to Maldoni (2017), but its significant educational value is linked to the long-term sustainability of inquiry and reflection, the long-term sustainability of conversations inside and outside the school, and the long-term sustainability of continuous learning designed to improve learners' success.

The nature of the policy to be implemented and the specific circumstances that contribute to the achievement of policy objectives determine the effectiveness of curricular differentiation policy implementation (Signé, 2017). Key challenges in executing the curriculum differentiation policy include collaborative behaviour among policy stakeholders, which is defined by goal alignment, the creation of strong personal relationships, and a high willingness to exchange skills and knowledge. The operational plan that directs the policy-making process must be well articulated. The plan for implementing the policy must be clear, consistent, and well structured (Tezera, 2019). Furthermore, policies should be evaluated because doing so increases one's ability to make plans, decisions, ask for support, take charge, take a step back and reflect.

1.4.3 Plausible threats impeding implementation of curriculum differentiation

The plausible threats that impede the implementation of curriculum differentiation are large classrooms, learning and teaching support material (LTSM), time management and inclusive pedagogical approaches.

Large classrooms are a threat to the success of a curriculum differentiation implementation because teachers find it difficult to apply different teaching strategies, management skills, providing individual attention, giving feedback and evaluation (Abraham, 2015). When teaching large classes, teachers frequently face a variety of

challenges that disrupt their teaching processes and hinder them from doing what they want to do to assist learners to improve their language skills (Nthulana, 2016). Teachers may employ ineffective teaching techniques, such as depending solely on lecturing. In a huge lecture-style classroom, there is very little interaction between the teacher and the learners, making them feel anonymous and isolated. These feelings of isolation lead to poor engagement, lower motivation, lower attendance, and more distracting behaviours in lower grade learners. Thang (2016) claims that in overcrowded classes, individual learners receive less attention, and it is more difficult to motivate them.

Availability of learning and teaching support material (LTSM) improves the efficiency of curriculum differentiation in a grade 4 English class, as they are the fundamental resources that enable learners to achieve good academic results. Material resources, physical facilities such as libraries, laboratories, and classrooms are among the LTSM that should be provided for teaching and learning. Sharples (2013) emphasises the need of carefully selecting materials while keeping in mind classroom teaching objectives and the needs of the learners for whom they are meant. When choosing LTSM in English classrooms, it is crucial that everyone involved understands that the learners are more important than the curriculum (Jones, Bailey & Jacob, 2014). To determine if a resource should be included in the programme, it must be examined individually, based on the educational objectives and the needs of the learners. The process of selecting materials is extremely important, and as a result, all materials should be thoroughly examined (Alade, 2020).

Time is a valuable commodity since it determines one's ability to complete tasks. In-class time management restrictions may limit the range of feasible differentiation strategies that can be implemented practically (Albert & Beatty, 2014). Encouraging proper time management assists in meeting deadlines and staying on track with action plan targets. With only seven hours of teaching and learning, teachers and learners have a limited number of hours per day to work on curriculum differentiation issues, implement, and monitor them (Florian, 2017). Teaching in overcrowded classrooms, according to Delvin, Kift, Nelson, Smith and McKay (2012), bears a toll on the teacher's capacity to manage time.

Teachers in overcrowded classrooms, according to Imtiaz (2014), devote less time to teaching and integrated reading and writing activities because pedagogical time is typically lost on administrative tasks like planning and lesson preparation, leaving less time for actual differentiated teaching. As a result, language teachers in grade 4 are obliged to work longer hours outside of the classroom to assess more learners' work.

The concept of inclusive practice, or inclusive pedagogy, refers not only to teaching practices, but also to other teaching abilities. According to inclusive pedagogy, all decisions are influenced not just by teachers' knowledge, abilities, and actions, but also by their values and beliefs about learners and the nature of teaching and learning, as well as societal processes and influences (Alexander, 2013). To prevent excluding certain learners, inclusive pedagogy has been characterised as an approach to teaching and learning in which teachers adapt to individual differences among learners (Florian, 2017).

Treating learners equally has the potential to reduce existing inequities (Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2018). Advocating for social justice need a classroom where all learners have an equal opportunity to learn and achieve their own goals, rather than a classroom where all learners must achieve the same goals at the same time (Kirk, 2019).

1.4.4 Best practices for implementation of curriculum differentiation

The best practices that make the curriculum differentiation implementation successful are collaboration, developing a monitoring and evaluation tool, establishing a shared vision, and embracing the theory of change.

Collaboration is defined as interaction between at least two equal actors who freely share decision-making to achieve a common goal (Wium & Louw, 2015). Teachers learn how to improve their lesson delivery and differentiate curriculum when they collaborate to improve teaching and learning for their English language learners. Because teachers gain competences, practice, and take ownership of the change, collaboration among teachers has a good impact on both professional development and the implementation of curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes (Newcomer, Hatry & Wholey, 2015). Collegial interactions can help educators learn

more about curriculum design, curricular products, and how to teach in sustainable and transferable teaching practices.

Through the co-design process, teachers co-operate to build practice knowledge and achieve consistency between their professional development experiences and their own learning and curriculum implementation. Teachers' active participation in collaborative curriculum design, according to Nasta (2017), can improve the harmonisation of the formal and enacted curriculum, increase teachers' ownership of the curriculum, and foster teachers' curriculum collaboration. Active involvement can only be effective if teachers themselves recognise the need for change and are confident that their efforts will result in that change (Wium & Louw, 2015).

Value is added when teachers form collaborations with the goal of working and learning together (Godfrey, 2016). Teachers who collaborate with others discover how learners' interests and needs are related, how they relate these interests to the varieties of teaching approaches they employ, and how they differentiate their teaching (Azorín & Muijs, 2017). Local communities of practice create knowledge in conjunction with participation in broader competence networks, which are critical for dealing with the rising complexity of the teaching profession (Nasta, 2017). It is becoming more common to suggest and practice including teachers as primary actors in their own development. When teachers establish professional learning communities, they can draw on local knowledge and discover solutions to problems and practices that arise in their familiar contexts. According to Godfrey (2016), when English grade 4 teachers collaborate, they can turn issues into opportunities by rethinking and redesigning their teaching process. Goals and plans are not the only reason for changes in the classroom, but also a result of the relational ties that contribute to giving the changes direction, depth, and speed.

Monitoring is a methodical approach of overseeing planning, learning, and teaching to see if you are doing what you said you would do. This is a step in the evaluation process that ensures information is gathered to make decisions and answer questions (Darmalaksana, 2017). On the other side, evaluating is the process of determining success. This is done after the outcomes, plans, and objectives have been compared. Monitoring and evaluation determine the activity's outcome relevance, the

effectiveness of a programme, or the success of a policy, as well as its efficiency and long-term viability (Ghanizadeh, 2017). Clear roles and responsibilities, credible, trustworthy information, and accountability are necessary best practices to ensure that curriculum differentiation is implemented successfully. A well-established system of reporting on programmes and initiatives, the availability of quality and trustworthy data, and efficient co-ordination among all departments and stakeholders at all levels are required for successful curriculum differentiation in a grade 4 English class. This eventually leads to a summative assessment of present classroom practices, which affects future learning and teaching preparation.

A shared vision aims to ensure that the curriculum and teaching are consistent. Because teachers are reaffirming the same expectations and effective practices, this consistency helps learners succeed (Day & Sammons, 2016). A shared literacy vision focuses on schoolwork and helps teachers and learners create shared beliefs and a common language. It puts their core values and beliefs at the centre of teaching and learning and serves as a platform for professional development (Bockelmann, 2020). A shared vision should be developed collectively in a learning-friendly environment and founded on the premise that all learners can be successful (Gurr, 2015).

In the educational environment, the theory of change goes through several stages of initiation, implementation, and institutionalisation. People who are confronted with change go through several stages of anxiety and respond to educational change initiatives in a variety of ways, depending on where they are in their lives and careers (Vandeyar, 2017). Regardless of the system, the theory of change assists individuals in developing their efficacy as change agents and understanding how systems must be modified. It is probable that schools will learn to change if more teachers act as learners, connect with like-minded individuals, speak up, and collaborate with those who hold opposing viewpoints on what curriculum modifications should be implemented and how they should be implemented in an inclusive classroom (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020).

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There seems to be a transitional challenge for learners in terms of language of learning and teaching (LOLT) from the foundation phase to the intermediate phase. According

to Heugh (2012) learners seem to be operating at different conceptualisation stages of understanding English as a LOLT and as a subject. Because learners do not speak the LOLT, teachers are compelled to apply traditional teaching approaches such as chorus teaching, repetition, memorisation, recall, code-switching, and relatively safe discourse. Authentic teaching and learning cannot take place in this context. There seems to be a need for curriculum differentiation by teachers to accommodate all learners in the classroom.

The use of English as a LOLT in grade 4 has an impact on how various learners react and adjust, while teachers must find a way to deal with the issue that they and the learners face (Nthulana, 2016). Learners who speak one of the nine indigenous African languages at home have a twofold disadvantage: not only do they start studying in an unfamiliar language in fourth grade, usually English, but they also tend to originate from disadvantaged socio-economical homes (Department of Basic Education, 2019). According to Heugh (2012), using unfamiliar languages leads teachers to use traditional and teacher-centred teaching approaches, undermining both teachers' and learners' efforts to learn. During most classroom encounters, teachers do most of the talking, while learners remain silent or are passive participants.

Curriculum differentiation in Grade 4 gives options for individual learners to learn as thoroughly and swiftly as possible, without assuming that one learner's learning path is the same as anybody else's (Tomlinson, 2014). This study aims at designing a curriculum differentiation model that will assist in meeting the needs of grade 4 English learners.

1.6 RESEARCH AIM

The aim of the study is to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners in two selected primary schools.

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To determine the challenges experienced by grade 4 English teachers when implementing curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.

- To explore the probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.
- To investigate the plausible threats that might impede implementation of curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.
- To demonstrate the best practices for implementation of curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions for this study are:

- What are the challenges experienced by grade 4 English teachers when implementing curriculum differentiation?
- What are the probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation?
- What are the plausible threats that might impede the implementation of curriculum differentiation?
- What are the best practices for the implementation of curriculum differentiation?

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.9.1 Qualitative research design

A qualitative research design was used in this study. A research design is the framework for a researcher's selection of research methods and approaches. Researchers can use the design to fine-tune research methodologies that are appropriate for the subject area and set up their studies for success (Bell & Waters, 2018). Qualitative research, according to Tracy (2019), aims to discover how people make sense of their experiences. Qualitative researchers look at objects in their natural habitats, aiming to make sense of or interpret experiences in terms of the meanings that people assign to them (Beatty, 2013). Qualitative research is more sensitive to aspects and allows for the development of new ideas and theories. This research had deep engagements with teachers and enhanced the chances of developing new ideas and new ways of thinking that will help them when implementing curriculum differentiation in their grade 4 English classes.

1.9.2 Transformative Research Paradigm

The paradigm that was used in this study is the Transformative Paradigm (TP). The transformational paradigm is in line with the ideas of Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, and his dialogical conscientisation model, Habermas' communicative action theory, and Foucault, Lyotard, and Todorov on institutional forms of dominance and control in academic discourse are also considered (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

The epistemological assumption of the TP, according to Creswell (2014), is centred on the meaning of knowledge as determined through a prism of cultural lenses, as well as the power concerns involved in determining what is considered legitimate knowledge (Flick, 2015). This means that not only is the contact between the knower and the would-be known (i.e., the researcher and participants) interactive, but it also needs an understanding of the cultural complexities of the relationship (McNiff, 2013).

According to Flick (2015), the transformative paradigm's ontological presupposition denies the role of privilege in determining what is considered real and the repercussions of accepting one version of reality over another. This reality assumption corresponds to what happens in schools when inclusion policies are adopted and using TP in this study increases participant depowering and allows them to express themselves freely. This ontological presupposition leads to power considerations, which influence who will be more or less likely to be included in choices of what is real (Hurtado, 2015).

The transformative paradigm arose from discontent with research undertaken within existing paradigms that was deemed irrelevant to, or a misrepresentation of, the lives of oppressed people. One of the main beliefs of the transformative paradigm, according to Archibald, Neubauer, and Brookfield (2018), is that increased concern for the rights and wellbeing of research participants leads to greater participation in the research process. As a result, the transformative axiological assumption looks at how transformative researchers question and extend respect principles (Al Riyami, 2015).

This study employed TP because it motivates researchers to consider how they might continue their quest for greater understanding through self-reflection and dialogue with members of the researched community.

1.9.3 Population

According to Etikan and Bala (2017), a population is defined as the total of all objects, subjects, or individuals that match a set of criteria. The population is the set or group of all the units to which the research findings will be applied. In this study, population refers to all South African teachers teaching English to grade 4 learners who are not native English speakers and expected to implement curriculum differentiation in their classrooms. It further refers to school principals who are expected to manage implementation of curriculum differentiation in schools as well as English subject advisors who are employed to support schools in curriculum implementation. Units that represent characteristics of the population were selected. The sample of the study is made of four grade 4 English teachers, two principals and two subject advisors. The sampling of the population was informed by knowledge and experience of participants in the subject field.

1.9.4 Sampling

A sample, according to Mujere (2016), is a set of individuals, things, or items drawn from a broad population for the purpose of measurement. The sample should be representative of the population, as the findings from the sample group will be shared with the rest of the community (Mafini, 2015). According to Etikan and Bala (2017), sampling is the act, process, or technique of choosing a proper sample, or a representative part of a population, to determine population metrics or characteristics. The sample of the study is taken from two primary schools and made up of four grade 4 English teachers, two principals and two English subject advisors who support selected teachers.

1.9.5 Purposive Sampling

This study used a purposive sampling technique which is also known as judgemental, selective, or subjective sampling. It refers to a category of sampling approaches that relies on the researcher's judgement when picking the units to be investigated (e.g., individuals, events, events, or pieces of data) (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Purposive sampling, according to Taherdoost (2016), is a strategy in which specific places, people, or events are purposely chosen to offer significant information that

cannot be gained from other options. It is when a researcher decides to include cases or participants in the sample because they are interesting.

This sampling method was chosen because it focuses on specific features of a population that are of interest and will best answer the research questions. This method gives researchers the rationale they need to draw theoretical, analytic, and logical conclusions from the sample that is studied (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

This study selected teachers who are teaching English first Additional Language in Grade 4 classes. It further selected subject advisors who support English teachers in the intermediate phase and principals who lead and manage both schools. They were selected because they are in a position to provide important information that will best answer the research questions.

1.9.6 Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data in this study was collected through focus group discussions and observations. According to Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick and Mukherjee (2018), a focus group discussion is a form of in-depth interview conducted in a group setting, with meeting characteristics based on the proposal, size, makeup, and interview processes. The interaction inside the group is the focus or object of analysis. Through their responses to the ideas and contributions during the discussion, the participants have an influence on one another. During the focus group discussion, the moderator encourages debate by making comments or bringing up topics.

This data collection method was used because it works well with Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR), and it is a good strategy for bringing individuals together who have similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a particular topic. According to Mishra (2016), focus groups are used to gather information on shared opinions and the meanings that underpin such opinions. They are also helpful for gaining a deeper insight into people's experiences and ideas.

According to Kawulich (2012), observation is the systematic description of behaviours, events, and artifacts in a group setting. Bryant (2015) claims that observations assist in determining how much time is spent on different activities, confirming non-verbal expressions of feelings, and determining who interacts with whom among participants.

Furthermore, observations assist the researcher to learn about activities that participants may have difficulties mentioning in interviews.

This study used observations because they guided the researcher in becoming acquainted with participants, learning what constitutes appropriate questions, how to ask them, and which questions may best assist in answering the research questions (Kawulich & Chilisa 2015). Furthermore, observations assisted the researcher in learning how people interact in the setting and what is important to the people in the social setting under study.

Discussion reflections form part of the data generation. The data collected was stored in audio tapes and the researcher was the only one to access data. Audio recordings were transcribed to make it easy for analysing data. The initial meeting also served to level out power differentials. The researcher held focus group discussions with participants for eight consecutive months, there was a room for change to more discussion meetings, depending on the needs of the study. This study was designed in such a way that it accommodated creativity, communication spaces, and enhanced engagements among participants and the researcher in trying to design a curriculum differentiation model to assist in meeting the needs of Grade 4 English learners.

1.9.7 Research Approach

This study employed participatory action learning action research (PALAR) as its research approach. Participation, communication, collaboration, community of practice, synergy and networking are all aspects of PALAR's comprehensive, integrated approach (Morales, 2016). PALAR is positioned as one strategy to community participation that is productive, collaborative, creative, inventive, and self-developed (Zuber-Skerritt, Kearney, & Fletcher, 2015). The engagement through PALAR aims to contribute to a better understanding what kind of resources, curriculum differentiation knowledge and action is needed to achieve practical inclusive classrooms, and an improvement in social justice, transformation, and sustainable change.

The PALAR cycle is an evolving and flexible process. Each aspect of the cycle interacted with the others as the researcher and participants worked from a big picture, goal-oriented question, that was then conceptualised and detailed in a plan of action.

Due to their lived experiences relating to the research topic, participants in the study were recognised as experts, ensuring that significant issues were addressed (Meyer & Wood, 2017). As a result, PALAR provided critical information to the study, enabling it to achieve the set research objectives.

Learning through PALAR was self-empowering. Participating in the study process allowed participants to have a better understanding of the research process and to develop decisive thinking skills, allowing them to question information sources and make more informed conclusions (Datzira-Masip & Fletcher, 2021). Participants benefited from the assistance of others who were dealing with similar concerns and challenges (Wood, Seobi, Setlhare-Meltor & Waddington, 2015). Participants' concerns, paired with the research team's supportive network, enhanced the possibility of one individual's voice being heard; more public awareness can be raised with an entire team campaigning for a similar change (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

1.9.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data Analysis is a method of putting facts and figures in place to solve the research problem. Finding the answers to the research question is critical. It is an important aspect of the research during the interpretation of the data, which is derived from the data analysis and draws inferences and conclusions (Samuels, 2020).

Thematic Analysis was used to analyse the data in this study. Thematic Analysis (TA) is a method of presenting qualitative data in a qualitative manner. It is a method for discovering patterns or themes in qualitative data (Silverman, 2020). It is adaptable to a variety of epistemologies and research questions. It is a technique for finding, analysing, organising, summarising, and reporting themes in a set of data (Terry, Hayfield & Braun, 2017). A rigorous thematic analysis produces an insightful and trustworthy finding (Good & Lavigne, 2017).

Qualitative data might be obtained in the form of discussion transcripts from research participants or other texts of interest that reflect on the study's topic experientially. (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). According to Clarke and Braun (2014), the researcher can use TA to pinpoint the links between concepts and compare them to replicated data. Thematic analysis allows connecting the numerous concepts and opinions of the

participants and comparing them to the facts collected in various situations at different periods throughout the project.

Terry, Hayfield and Braun (2017) claim that TA is the best choice for any study that aims to uncover information through interpretations. It gives data analysis a logical structure. It enables the researcher to link a frequency analysis of a theme to one of the entire contents. According to Frost (2021), this confers accuracy and intricacy and enhance the research's whole meaning. TA gives an opportunity to understand the potential of any issue more widely (Good & Lavigne, 2017).

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The participants in the study were informed about the research's nature and goal, as well as the techniques that would be employed and the study's benefits.

The Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal granted the study full permission. The study's results and recommendations will benefit both the schools and the province. The study kept participants' identities confidential to maintain their anonymity. The participants were informed about the study's objectives and how these will help the community and the schools involved. The participants were informed that they had the option to terminate participating in the study if they so desired (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). This process was determined by the informed consent of the participants to be part of the research process. The research guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants (Gray, 2021), which has the potential to add value to the credibility of research. The signatures of the participants were ensured on the consent letters to enhance authenticity.

According to Gray (2021), it is the researcher's responsibility to design a project that does not compromise the interviewees' rights or safety. This is critical in terms of campaigning for, promoting, and defending their rights. While conducting the research, the risks associated with the study must be thoroughly addressed with the respondents. Guetterman (2015) agrees that to develop collaborative efforts, research requires co-ordination and co-operation among the different participants and diverse domains, institutions, and ethical standards. This includes accountability, trust, fairness, and mutual respect.

1.11 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE: This chapter provides an overview of the entire research project. It covers how the data is generated and analysed, as well as the context, objectives, theoretical framework, methodology, and research design. The importance of the research and ethical implications are also explored.

CHAPTER TWO: This chapter presents Critical Pedagogy (CP) as a conceptual framework guiding the study. It explains how CP developed, its objectives and how it views the role of the researcher. CP is discussed from various philosophical perspectives, namely epistemology, ontology, and axiology. In this chapter, CP is examined to justify its appropriateness in pursuing the objectives of this study.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 presents the related literature reviewed, as informed by the objectives of the study. Literature studied was drawn internationally, from the African continent, from the South African Development Community (SADC) region, and from South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter 4 presents the research design and methodology of this study. It clarifies the use of the Transformative Research Paradigm in the study, explains and justifies why the study used qualitative research design. It further presents Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) as an approach followed by the study. It explains how sampling was done, the data collection method used, how data collected was analysed and ethical considerations and procedures employed in the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter 5 presents, analyses and interprets the data generated towards designing a model for the implementation of curriculum differentiation to meet the needs for English grade 4 learners.

CHAPTER SIX

The study's background, aims, methods, and conceptual framework are all presented in this chapter. It includes a summary of the findings, recommendations, limitations, and the study's conclusion.

CHAPTER 7

This chapter presents the curriculum differentiation model designed to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents Critical Pedagogy (CP) as the conceptual framework underpinning this study. In the previous chapter which was a proposal of what this study intends to do, the CP conceptual framework was introduced as the lens that is used to guide the study. The study aimed to develop a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in the Endumeni Circuit. To achieve this aim, this study used Critical Pedagogy (CP). The chapter focuses on the beginnings and development of CP to offer an understanding of the framework and the concepts that underpin it. CP is examined from several angles, including epistemology, ontology, and axiology. Critical pedagogy is investigated to see if it is appropriate for achieving the study's goals. The chapter also addresses how CP influenced the researcher's role and interaction with the participants. The study's rhetoric and operational concepts are also discussed.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

The conceptual framework guiding this study is Critical Pedagogy (CP). A conceptual framework is a structure that the researcher believes best describes the natural progression of the topic under investigation (Uddin, 2019). It is linked to the researcher's conceptions, empirical study, and essential theories for advancing and systematising the researcher's expertise (Adom, Hussein, & Agyem, 2018). A conceptual framework, according to Sułkowski, Fijałkowska and Dzimińska (2019), is a visual or written product that explains the primary objects to be examined, concepts, key factors, or variables, and the presumed relationships among them, either graphically or in narrative form. The set of assumptions, concepts, beliefs, expectations, and theories that informs and supports this research is referred to as the conceptual framework in this study.

CP is a transformation-based approach to education. Its fundamental source is the Frankfurt School's Critical Theory Principles, as well as Paulo Freire's work (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). CP is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and changing the

relationship between classroom teaching, knowledge production, the school's institutional framework, and the larger community's social and material ties (McLaren, 2015). CP also promotes a trusting and respectful relationship between the researcher and the participants. The power of dialogue is also promoted by CP's multi-faceted perspective, where discourse is motivated by a love for, commitment to, and faith in people, and participants are humble and committed to the common job of learning (Giroux, 2019).

CP is a method of learning and teaching that is inspired by a specific attitude toward the classroom and society. The nature of English First Additional Language education, according to Rahimi and Sajed (2014), necessitates having a skill to improve learners' ability to think critically about their educational setting. In critical pedagogy, this mode of thinking enables learners to see connections between their individual difficulties, experiences, and the societal circumstances in which they live. Teachers of English First Additional Language learning and teaching are viewed differently as critical pedagogues who seek social justice and change in their classrooms. Critical pedagogues argue against a marginalised group's influence in policymaking and decision-making (Sarroub & Quadros, 2015).

Language, according to CP, is socially created knowledge. The initial premise of any form of critical education, according to Giroux (2019), is that knowledge claims are interested and are modes of intelligibility rooted in the struggles, conflicts, and inequities that mark history's legacy to the present. As a result, critical pedagogues must raise public awareness and enlighten people about their rights and abilities as social agents who can effect change (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014).

According to McLaren (2015), one of the foundational assumptions of critical pedagogy is that human beings can change their own nature while acting on and transforming the external world. Schools and society have been divided due to unequal power allocation. As critical pedagogues, teachers are concerned about the impact of divisions on culture and education (Kincheloe, 2011). This division happens in Grade 4 English classrooms when learners who have different capabilities are taught the same way without differentiating the curriculum. Teachers who employ critical thinking in their teaching practice can empower learners, which is a

fundamental goal of critical pedagogy. Only critical thinkers can teach others to think critically (Raddawi & Troudi, 2018). CP believes that education should empower learners, allowing them to unleash hidden information and make their voices heard around the world. Teachers should demand and defend this right to freedom of action; otherwise, they will be unable to provide their learners with agency and voice (Farrow, 2017). Teachers need to act to bring transformation to reality by accommodating learners who learn differently through the implementation of curriculum differentiation. CP promotes taking measures to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

The critical person in the classroom, according to Scorza, Mirra, and Morrell (2013), is one who is empowered to seek justice and emancipation. Not only is the critical person able to recognise injustice, but he or she is also motivated to change it, according to CP. The emphasis on change, and on collective action to achieve change, moves the central concerns of CP which is teaching teachers to think critically when planning their English lessons in a Grade 4 class which is the first grade in the intermediate phase characterised by the introduction of English as a LOLT (Macrine, 2020). As an inherent aspect of educational practice, CP is a humanising pedagogy that respects the histories, views, and realities of learners (Abraham, 2014).

The CP principles establish the possible participants in the argumentative discourse's co-responsibility to contribute to the removal of inequalities that exist in real societies and education (Ledwith, 2020). These injustices also limit the realisation of discursive answers to challenging moral dilemmas by prohibiting citizens involved in the communication contact from fully engaging in the dialogue. Injustices include using the same lesson plan for all learners with different capabilities but expecting the same results with little room for differentiating the curriculum to meet learners' needs (Darder, Mayo & Paraskeva, 2017).

According to Giroux (2020), CP is an approach to language teaching and learning that is concerned with reforming oppressive power relations in the educational system that lead to the oppression of teachers and learners. It makes an attempt to humanise and empower learners. The concept of a just society in which people have political, economic, and cultural control over their lives is central to CP. According to Philpot

(2016), CP is a dialectic method to studying the education sector that examines political economics, dominance, exploitation, and ideology. According to Shor (2014), CP is a strategy founded on the belief that dominance is a problem that requires a domination-free society. Its goal is to provide information to political efforts aimed at establishing a dominance-free society. CP is against using the curriculum to oppress learners in schools and advocates for inclusivity which gives dignity and respect to learners.

2.3 EVOLUTION AND PERIODISATION OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

2.3.1 Era of critical consciousness (1800-1890)

Kant's critical philosophy and Hegel's work, which was introduced in the book *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1881, and Karl Marx's and Fredrik Engels' *Communist Manifesto* from 1848 and *Capital* Volume 1 from 1867, are all sources for critical theory, which is a basis for critical pedagogy (McKernan, 2013).

Fabian Socialism, which began in the United Kingdom in 1884 as a reaction to direct confrontation and violent revolution, also aided the development of critical thinking (Sarroub & Quadros, 2015). Fabianism is based on Marxist socialist thinking, and it was the first practical ideological movement in British society to promote equality and community involvement in public policy and education. The work of a number of social thinkers, sociologists, and intellectuals provided a critical viewpoint on cultural and educational issues (Jeyaraj, 2014). Paulo Freire, who wrote originally for the purpose of encouraging adult literacy in Latin American peasant communities, but whose work has gained significant international interest and appeal in the last three decades, is the author who has best articulated the critical theorists' concerns (Freire, 1985; Shor, 2014; McLaren, 2015). For Critical Pedagogy, as defined by Freire, is concerned with the formation of "conscientizacao", translated as "critical consciousness." According to Freire, realising an oppressive system and one's own participation within it is the first step toward freedom. The purpose of critical pedagogy is to bring oppressed people to a critical understanding of their situation as a foundation for liberatory action. The biggest single barrier to liberation, according to Freire, the greatest single barrier to liberation is a deep-rooted, fatalistic belief in the inevitability and necessity of an unjust status quo (Freire, 1985; Bradshaw, 2017). Teachers cannot teach English to grade 4

as it was taught decades ago, they need to respond to learner diversity by implementing curriculum differentiation for classrooms to be inclusive.

In the realm of adult education, Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, popularised the concept of critical consciousness or critical awareness. Critical consciousness was defined as having a thorough grasp of the world and the freedom that comes with it from old ways of thinking (Freire, 1973). According to Shor (2014), critical consciousness is the way we comprehend ourselves in connection to knowledge and power in society, the way we use and study language, and the way we act in school and in everyday life to repeat or modify our circumstances. Critical awareness, according to Darder (2015) and Freire (1973), is an organic process of human involvement that involves critical pedagogical interactions; it does not happen by itself or naturally. As a result, critical consciousness is attained not just via intellectual work, but also through the application of critical pedagogical methods.

There are three types of consciousness, according to Freire (1973) and Gadotti (2014): semi-intransitive consciousness, transitive consciousness, and critical transitive consciousness. People's consciousness is limited in the first stage, semi-intransitive consciousness, and their concentration is almost entirely on survival. Individuals begin to enhance their knowledge of the world in the second stage of consciousness, naive transitivity, and then they can reflect on themselves and their obligations. This stage is marked using arguments rather than dialogues. Individuals evolve into critical transitive consciousness in the third and final stage, which is defined by critical awareness because of educational endeavours. Individuals improve their ability to engage critically, prevent distortion when recognising difficulties, reject preconceived notions when analysing problems, resist a passive status, and strengthen their capacity to participate critically by developing a detailed interpretation of problems and the world (Aljohani & Alajlan, 2018).

It may not be sufficient for a teacher to educate about dominant paradigms and the social construction of knowledge without also immersing learners in a project that allows them to put what they have learned into practice (McLaren, 2015). Cho (2013) believes that it is impossible to call oneself a critical or liberatory educator without

engaging in critical and liberatory teaching practices. Counter-hegemonic pedagogies must put what they preach into practice and preach what they practice (Giroux, 2020). Schools cannot claim to be serving the marginalised communities when they are not rooting out all classroom imbalances by responding to all learners' learning needs through a differentiated curriculum.

2.3.2 Era of human democracy (1900-1923)

Fabian Socialism, according to McKernan (2013), was a broad-based critique of social policies aimed at resolving economic and social problems. It formed a collaboration with the Labour Party in 1900 to forestall a Marxist revolution by propagating socialist ideals through labour unions and the intellectual elite. The Frankfurt School (Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt-am-Mein), founded in 1923, is mostly connected with critical pedagogy. The beginning of the Frankfurt school can be traced back to the founding of 'the institute of social research in Frankfurt.' Because of the Second World War and the Nazi takeover of Germany, the Frankfurt School academics emigrated to the United States and continued to develop their theory. Jürgen Habermas, who focused on communicative competency in his later writings, was one of the prominent figures among second-generation theorists when they returned to Germany after the war and established themselves (McLaren, 2015). Jürgen Habermas is a post-war German critical thinker whose work is more hopeful about human democracy in the sense that people should be free of all oppression and rule (Scorza, Mirra & Morrell, 2013). Knowledge is produced by people, for people, and is about people and their social and physical surroundings, according to Kelly, Foucault, and Habermas (1994). Habermas examines how we interact with one another and how we conduct our lives. Habermas' work has spanned ethics, law, the state, and politics. Critical theory, he argued, needed to be able to transform through praxis and deconstruction. Paulo Freire is one of those who adhered to the Frankfurt School's educational traditions.

2.3.3 Era of dialogue and critical thinking: emergence of critical pedagogy (1960-1963)

Critical Pedagogy arose as a conceptual framework and a unique field of study in the 1960s and 1970s, and its development is strongly tied to Paulo Freire's works. During

these decades, there was a lot of hope among teachers and policymakers that education would address all of society's issues (Shor, 2014). Unfortunately, this hope and expectation were not realised, causing much anxiety and dissatisfaction among educators. Through a Marxist examination of educational institutions, Freire highlighted the reasons for society's failure to reform; that is, banking education was what was on offer, and he attempted to develop a viable educational alternative based on dialogue and critical thinking to transform society (Guilherme, 2017).

"Emerging from Paulo Freire's work in poverty-stricken North-Eastern Brazil in the 1960s, critical pedagogy linked liberation theological ethics and Frankfurt School critical theory with progressive educational impulses," writes McLaren & Kincheloe, (2007: 12). Racial inequity, a lack of equitable social chances for all, gender inequality, and the erosion of identities in Europe and America in the 1960s and 1970s were all issues that arose from these circumstances. These were the critical thinkers' principal concerns. The humanities, such as political science, international relations, and education, are examined and critiqued through critical pedagogy. In Latin America, the critical pedagogy of Illich and Freire aided this perception in the realm of education (Sarroub, & Quadros, 2015). Critical pedagogy, like the Frankfurt school, aims for social reform. According to critical pedagogy, schools should be viewed as sites of social transformation and progress. Schools should not only encourage critical thinking in learners, but also teach them how to make positive changes in their communities and advocate for social inclusion (McLaren, 2015).

Freire's critical pedagogy, based on Catholic, progressive, and radical critiques of society, was a way of teaching literacy to the poor and working class. Literacy was to be taught in a way that allowed the poor and working class to comprehend reality and take action to improve their situations (Giroux, 2020). Critical pedagogy has broadened considerably. Oppression, according to Freire, is primarily experienced by the working class at the hands of the ruling class (Abraham, 2013). However, during the last decades of the twentieth century, radical social thinking and theory grew in tandem with the emergence of social movements, other important aspects or sites of oppression became more visible and organised (McLaren, 2015).

2.3.4 Era of new pedagogical paradigm (1982-1990)

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian literacy educator, is the most well-known critical thinker among composition specialists. In 1982, Maxine Hairston coined the term "revolution" in the teaching of writing to describe a new educational paradigm that emphasised learners' autonomy over their own writing processes as they created texts that were significant to them (Shor, 2014). Lunsford (2017) defined critical pedagogy as a non-hierarchical and exploratory field that is profoundly collaborative, dialogic, multi-voiced, and radically democratic in 1990 (Kincheloe, 2011). It appears to be critical to our actual sense of professionalism that there is no power oppression in the classroom.

Because professionals perceive themselves as sharing a rejection of oppressive pedagogical power with critical theorists, composition scholarship has shown an attraction for critical pedagogy (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014). Classrooms emerged as places of dialogue that fought oppression and encouraged social justice which advocates for inclusion and responding to learner diversity through how the curriculum is offered, including differentiating the curriculum.

Counter hegemony, conscious of the prevailing discourse's consequences and "taken-for-granted" assumptions, proposes a counter-discourse that includes the voices and epistemologies of those persons or groups of people who have been marginalised by the mainstream discourse (Shor, 2014).

According to McLaren (2015), critical pedagogy sees education as a democratic public philosophy based on an ethical discourse critical of issues such as personal freedom, public responsibility, and democratic tolerance, as well as the necessity of rejecting norms and practices that embody and extend dominance, human suffering, and exploitation. According to Uddin (2019), teachers can defend their curriculum choices through a discourse aiming at generating an educated, empowered, and critical citizenry based on this public philosophy.

2.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

2.4.1 Emancipation

Emancipation, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (2019), refers to the elimination of restraints imposed by superior physical force or legal duty. In a figurative sense, the word has come to denote freedom from intellectual, moral, or spiritual constraints. The goal of emancipation is to gain a better awareness and knowledge of the nature and causes of unsatisfactory circumstances so that meaningful solutions can be devised (Rodd & Sanders, 2018). It also strives to engage active individuals in informed social and political involvement in order to establish a fairer and socially just democracy (Crookes, 2012).

According to Pereira (2013), emancipation encourages the formation of knowledge, pedagogy, and educational relationships that are in solidarity with the interests of societies less powerful. Working alongside the less powerful to obtain more autonomy and independence, more control over their own lives, and to effect change in the interests of greater equality and social justice is the rationale for solidarity. Emancipation from all types of oppression, the growth of hope and happiness, and devotion to freedom are all goals of critical pedagogy, as well as the transformation of individuals and society via human activity (Ledwith, 2020). Oppression is the most widespread societal practice, manifesting in numerous ways and forms based on race, class, and gender (Abraham, 2014). When the school do not change its status quo and continues with traditional teaching methods that do not accommodate the differences in learners, it still oppresses learners who have different abilities. Classes need to transform and come with strategies that will accommodate all learners and bring emancipation to the classrooms.

According to Saki (2016), the main goal of CP is to educate and emancipate all individuals, regardless of their class, gender, colour, or other factors. According to Bohm (2013), Freire is interested in critical pedagogy because it allows him to modify the structure of a repressive society. According to Rodd and Sanders (2018), critical pedagogy is based on the concept that every citizen deserves an education, which includes teachers comprehending the educational framework so that education does not marginalise society.

According to Shor (2014), education should lead to transformative action, and it is a political praxis that is always working to liberate humans. Aiming for political transformation for the sake of fairness should be the goal of good education (Darder, 2018). According to McLaren (2015), CP is concerned with social justice and develops strategies capable of changing repressive institutions or social relations, mostly through educational practices. Freire (cited in Chor, 2013) sees education as a political act including the government's control of language and awareness as a precondition for the government's subjugation of individuals and groups.

Abraham (2013) conceived of critical pedagogy as that which is of humanising value, opening learners' minds to engender creative, critical, and imaginative thought. This liberating project of education imagined learners as problem posers rather than merely problem solvers. It is only in the act of imagining that the world might be other than it is that we demonstrate a capacity of critical thought and reflective existence. Intentionally rejecting embodied communication, problem-posing education responds to the essence of consciousness. It encapsulates the unique quality of awareness.

Critical pedagogy, according to Giroux (2020), is a movement involving teaching and learning connections for learners to develop critical self-awareness and social awareness and take effective action against oppressive forces. According to critical pedagogy, no qualitative social change, no socialism, is possible without the emergence of a new logic and sensibility in individuals themselves: no fundamental social transformation without a radical shift in the individual change agents (McKernan, 2013). Schools are part of society: therefore, radical change must also happen in the classroom by teachers transforming to inclusive methods of teaching that promote learning for all and modifying their teaching through differentiating the curriculum.

2.4.2 Transformation and social justice

To reform society through education, one must ensure that children have the freedom to examine and critique the society in which they live. According to Giroux (2020), instead of passively accepting the current social order and its institutions and processes, they become change agents and transform the social order through the transformation process. Learners who become change agents become thinking

individuals who are reflexive, attentive, and critical in every endeavour they undertake (Farrow, 2017). These characteristics are necessary for the humanisation process.

In education, social justice is described as a dedication to improving learners' learning opportunities and achievements (Shor, 2014). Furthermore, social justice in education aims to improve learners' life chances by addressing inequity in the classroom and society (Rangel, 2019). This commitment acknowledges the unequal distribution of opportunities, resources, accomplishment, and good outcomes between non-dominant community learners and their dominant counterparts. Furthermore, a social justice approach positions the teacher as those devoted to redistributing educational opportunities and teaching truth to power to reduce injustices in schools and society (Kirk, 2019).

Critical pedagogy is based on the examination of historical and current social situations to change irrationality, dominance, and oppression through collective action. It overcomes the false binary that suggests educational knowledge is either technical or practical by emphasising critical thought, action, and emancipation. According to McLaren (2015), teachers must engage in constant examination of the link between power, knowledge, and curriculum to create these liberating classroom settings. When teachers engage with the curriculum, they find ways to address diversity of their learners through curriculum differentiation.

CP promotes social justice, equity, and human dignity across cultural divides, including class, nation, colour, gender, sexual orientation, and age (Kincheloe, 2011). The prescripts of a democratic constitution in which CP seeks to improve English First Additional Language (FAL) teaching and learning encourages inclusivity and accommodation of learners' diverse needs and capabilities, while balancing power issues arising from their cultural and political environments in their social relationships (McLaren, 2015).

The goal of CP is to bring about social change. The transformation of a regular language class into one that is attentive to the difficulties and problems that plague the society in which these language learners live is at the heart of CP (Bradshaw, 2017).

It aims to make every language learning opportunity an occasion to discuss and confront socio-political issues, making language learning more purposeful (Rangel, 2019). Learners are made acutely aware of the socio-political realities that surround them because of CP's use of critical classroom discourse.

When learners are aware of socio-political issues, they are prompted to reflect on them and consider alternative solutions (Macrine, 2020). CP does not limit language learning to simply teaching learners the language's underpinnings, such as grammatical rules, literature, and so on. CP makes language learning more purposeful because, in addition to teaching the fundamentals of language, it also turns the classroom into a forum for critical discussion, with the goal of contributing to social transformation by involving language learners as active participants in the process (Magno & Piosang, 2016).

The main objective of education, according to Paulo Freire, is to create critical consciousness, which allows individuals to set the way for their own progress. Gender, age, race, and social and political constraints are not considered in this process (Darder, Mayo & Paraskeva, 2017). Freire emphasises the concept that people should not regard their surroundings as a fixed reality from which they can never escape. However, they should be aware that their circumstances may alter at any time (Kirk, 2019). The latter emphasises the significance of varying the curriculum for learners transiting from the foundation to intermediate phases and being introduced to English as a teaching and learning language. Freire attempts to define a connection based on individual interaction that can generate a critical and active environment. This contributes to education being a stimulating and progressive process (Scorza et al., 2013).

Shor (2014) defines CP as the process of revealing reality, aiming for the emergence of consciousness, and critical intervention. This awareness enables learners to take the required steps to better their living conditions. It is based on the facts of learners' lives and their circumstances (Abraham, 2014). It demonstrates that people have the right to inquire.

2.4.3 Dialogue

The Greek root for dialogue is *dia* (through) and *logos* (meaning). Dialogue is the root of our culture, the ways of doing things, artefacts, symbols, words, and language that bring us into common heritage (Rangel, 2019). Dialogue helps us bridge the increasing diversity found in our classrooms today. It is through exploration of meaning that we learn who each person is and how we can work together appropriately. Dialogue helps teachers understand their learners better and plan their lessons in an inclusive way that will address the needs of learners, including differentiating the curriculum.

The teacher's pedagogy is crucial to the success of CP. CP necessitates a highly dialogical educational style since it tries to improve learners' socio-political awareness. This means that language teachers in CP should emphasise and maximise the use of dialogue and discourse in the classroom. It is also only via discussion or classroom discourse that learners are given the opportunity to share their opinions and demonstrate critical thinking (Giroux, 2020) openly and freely. The dialogical aspect of CP is an important component in the transition of the language classroom into a democratic public forum.

Language is a practice that creates and is influenced by how language learners perceive their social environments, histories, and future possibilities (Philpot, 2016). Because a person's language is a part of his or her identity, respect for who they are and the values they represent is necessary if the goal is to empower and respect people's voices. As a result, language is a crucial sanctuary for marginalised populations (Ledwith, 2020). Language's power allows learners to broaden their horizons of understanding (Bradshaw, 2017). The first step toward empowerment and positive transformation, according to Abraham (2014), is for the teacher to establish a situation in which more of the learners' native language is used as a teaching aid in first extra language situations. Language is a practice that creates and is influenced by how language learners perceive their social environments, histories, and future possibilities (Philpot, 2016).

Dialogism is the foundation of critical education, according to Abraham (2013), because it is one way of actively involving learners in their own education. The use

and practice of dialogue reduces teacher talk while encouraging learner participation (Shor, 2014). McLaren (2015) argues that dialogue is the contact between men, mediated by the world to define the world. He further states that only discourse, which necessitates critical thinking, is also capable of fostering critical thinking. There can be no true education without discourse, and there can be no true education without dialogue. That is why it is critical to engage in community conversation. Uddin's (2019) classification considers the context of discussion and the context of reality, both are crucial and necessary for learning to occur.

Because true dialogue engages teachers and learners in a connection where one knowing subject encounters another knowing subject, Freire thinks that dialogue education becomes a pedagogy of knowing (Shor, 2014). Teachers in a dialogic classroom are required to listen to their learners and learn about their community's problems, as well as ask questions that will assist them to understand these problems from a societal viewpoint, and then to identify methods to take political action to create solutions (Zembylas, 2013).

2.4.4 Democratic Commitment

Deliberative democracy is informed by critical discussion and dialogue in people. This brand of democracy holds the following significant struggles in society: Commitment to elucidate the value behind education, finding relevance to community-based challenges, advocates fairness in practice, total quality driven and respects collective human identities in a democratic conceptualisation (Giroux, 2020).

As it occurs between people, dialogue reflects a democratic commitment to our fellow human beings. It expresses a love for our environment and the people who live in it (Abraham, 2014). CP encourages members to be humble, as no one strives to speak for everyone. The free interchange of ideas, the airing of differences, the establishing of consensus, and the reflection on action are all possible with critical teachers. The importance of teachers being attentive is emphasised by a caring ethic. It means, in part, that teachers must be active listeners who take seriously what their learners say, can read between the lines, and hear what is not expressed (Shor, 2014). Every day, critical teachers must endeavour to strike a balance between authority and humanity, and professional skill and humility. Teachers need to hear the unspoken voices of their

learners when teaching and be able to respond by adapting their pedagogy and make their teaching democratic for all learners.

In its most basic form, the public sphere is a socio-political institution in which citizens engage in a free and critical public conversation about societal issues, leading to political action and social reform. The significance of the public domain to CP can thus be deduced (Darder, 2015). CP sets out the way for language classes that turn the classroom into a democratic place where learners may engage in critical conversation. As a result, the public sphere is created when this is realised, and language classes become truly an avenue for critical conversation on socio-political topics among learners. The criteria of the public sphere are met when CP is realised in a language class. As a result, CP makes it easier to transform a regular language class into a democratic public sphere.

2.4.5 Dismantle Marginalisation

In CP, marginalisation is prevented. According to Apple (2011), the goal of CP is to restore marginalised people's voices and identities. Learners become active agents for social change when they reclaim their lost voices and oppose unjust reproduction. Freire also emphasises that marginalised learners should be able to reflect on their own circumstances to understand why things are the way they are. They should be aware of the variables that influenced their social standing. In a similar vein, Roche (2014) claims that teachers should assist marginalised learners in recognising the need to modify their circumstances that prohibit them from achieving socio-economic success.

Critical Pedagogy is a language pedagogy approach in which language teaching is used to develop learners who are critically aware of social problems arising from oppression and injustice, and who can argue and propose solutions to these problems, thus provoking critical discourse in the classroom.

While education is seen as one of the paths out of marginalisation, schools can unintentionally act as agents of marginalisation: an unsuitable curriculum that fails to consider the needs of individual learners; inappropriate and inflexible systems and

structures that fail to recognise the gap between the standards set for learner behaviour and learners' capacity to meet such standards; the adoption of mind-sets that lead to exclusion (Saki, 2016). Saki goes on to say that the drive for inclusion through the removal of learning barriers promotes deficit models of learners inside a restricted curriculum where success is equated with meeting norm-related requirements. Members of the excluded groups are welcome to play if they agree to the rules and can demonstrate that they can play at a reasonable level.

Both teachers and learners become marginalised in an exclusive school setting, feeding off each other in negative ways (Tomar, 2014). Teachers either adopt a helplessness frame (characterised by feelings of worthlessness, inevitability, guilt, and helplessness) or a false-identity frame categorised by clinging to the goals, standards, methods, and rules of more fortunate schools, disenfranchising learners who do not meet these standards (Magno & Piosang, 2016). The establishment of borders conveys a clear message to learners that they do not truly belong at school, causing them to feel marginalised, excluded, and alienated. Teachers are marginalised in the sense that their professional identity and agency are jeopardised, and learners are marginalised in the sense that they are unable to access a high-quality curriculum and feel respected and accepted as members of a diverse school community. Such marginalisation may not infect all elements of an individual's life, but it may have far-reaching consequences, affecting the individual's life chances, feeling of self-efficacy, and self-esteem (Darder, Mayo & Paraskeva, 2017).

2.4.6 Reflective Praxis

Praxis is the goal of a dialogue between equal participants between the educator and the educated, the leader and the follower (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014). It is defined as the self-creative activity that allows us to shape the environment around us. Praxis demands theory that is both relevant to the world and nurtured by activities in it, as well as an action component in its own theorising process that emerges from practical and political grounding (McLaren, 2015). Praxis integrates liberating education with social revolution (Scorza, et al., 2013).

For Freire, practice entails both reflection and action, as well as interpretation and transformation. As he puts it, “Critical consciousness is brought about not through intellectual effort alone but through praxis which is through the authentic union of action and reflection” (Freire, 1970, cited in Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011:238). Reflective praxis also asserts that learners in the classroom are equipped in a manner that they are well prepared for participating in collective actions. Praxis is critical reflection and action with the goal of using a variety of educational methods and procedures to improve, not just the learning environment, but also the world (Shor, 2012).

Shor (2014) maintains that praxis involves both action and reflection. Praxis begins with an abstract concept (theory) or an experience, then contains reflection on that concept or experience, which leads to deliberate action. Praxis in education aims to bridge the gap between theory and transformational action that effectively transforms human existence (Rodd & Sanders, 2018).

CP attempts to raise people's awareness of it and inform them of their rights and capacities as social change agents (Bradshaw, 2017). The nature of CP is that it attempts to create conditions for empowerment and social justice. Teachers should think about how school practices link to those outside of school, how schools and classrooms are organised into communities of practice, and what kinds of involvement are made available to all learners, according to CP's perspective (Abraham, 2015). A critical teacher sees the role of educating a learner with the ability to transform their society in critical pedagogy. A willingness to understand how to differentiate the curriculum while teaching to suit learners of various capacities is also expected of such a teacher (Rajesh, 2014).

The goal of critical pedagogy is to enrich the lives of learners in general. Learners are given the opportunity to question commonly held beliefs and to investigate the relationship between their society and the content of their educational environment in this manner (Raddawi & Troudi, 2018). According to Apple (2011), learners may understand their place in society through reflective praxis chances, and they can make good efforts to alter their society and, in turn, reduce difficulties, injustices, and

oppression in their future lives. Critical pedagogy enables learners to be empowered by and capable of reaching self-awareness and self-actualisation to change their unfavourable circumstances into better ones (Rangel, 2019). Traditional educational techniques are challenged for this goal, and critical thinking-based education, reflective praxis, and learning-based co-operative learning replace traditional teaching approaches (Abraham, 2014).

Praxis is activity that embodies attributes, not just behaviour based on reflection. These include a commitment of teachers to implement the curriculum that do not only theorise inclusivity but apply it in practice by creating different ways to make all learners understand the same concept. Engaging, applying, exercising, realising, and practicing concepts are all examples of reflective praxis. It necessitates a person's making a sound and smart practical decision about how to respond in each situation.

2.5 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CHOICE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AS A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This conceptual framework is important for this research because it allows learners to construct knowledge and apply it in a variety of settings in order to develop self-motivated life interpretations with the goal of changing the current exclusive reality. CP emphasises that teaching must incorporate social critique. It further alludes that teachers should teach learners in a non-threatening and anti-discriminatory way (Ayoub Mahmoudi, Khoshnood & Babaei, 2014).

Teachers should become learners in order to meet the diverse classroom needs of all learners by differentiating the curriculum and working toward self-actualisation as a result of critical consciousness. Sympathising with the poor and moving from sympathy to compassion for their plight is unavoidable (Apple, 2011). Learners who develop critical consciousness are intended to move from resisting what happens to the disadvantaged to becoming active agents who take measures in conjunction with them (Darder, 2015).

Teachers who are committed to their fields and who keep up with advances both inside and outside their subject matter are required by critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy,

according to Jeyaraj (2014), necessitates teachers who will not deliberately deceive themselves or their learners, teachers who will confront power dynamics in their classrooms, schools, and society. Critical pedagogy, on the other hand, gives teachers tools with which to work. It is not so much that critical pedagogy develops these resources and distributes them to teachers. Critical pedagogy theorists and practitioners offer suggestions for how tools might be utilised to help learners and teachers become more human (Darder, 2018).

Critical pedagogy, according to Giroux (2019), requires teachers to be confident practitioners and theorists of subject matter while remaining humble enough to recognise that they do not know everything, that learners will know things that teachers do not know, and that the path of exploration and knowledge is laid and travelled alongside learners. Applying inclusion by diversifying the curriculum evaluates what has been done so far to enable teachers and learners to learn and accommodate one another.

People with the authority to make decisions in society, as a whole, also have the power to create and implement educational institutions, and as a result, their ideas and values are accepted and encouraged, while others' values and ideas are ignored (McKernan, 2013). This trend has also led to the exclusion of many countries from decision-making, allowing societies with more strength and voice to monopolise decision-making, particularly educational decisions, which less strong civilisations must follow (Sarroub & Quadros, 2015).

Another significant educational transforming point is the belief that language is socially created knowledge. Pereira (2013) suggests that the first premise of any form of critical pedagogy is that the knowledge claims are interested and are modes of intelligibility grounded in the struggles, tensions, and inequalities that mark history's bequest to the present. As a result, critical pedagogues must raise public awareness and enlighten people about their rights and abilities as social agents who can effect change. Pereira (2013) goes on to discuss how a feeling of justice may be developed and strengthened, as well as how this can help people gain the self-confidence to demand justice.

According to Mayo (2013), Critical Pedagogy uses the mutual reinforcement relationship to explain the existence of a certain type of social norm, particularly citizens' willingness to act in a just and solidarity manner, which is committed to intervening in language classes and transforming them into accommodative and inclusive environments for learners. Critical pedagogues pursue social justice and transformation via education as practitioners of diversified language learning and teaching. Teachers who practice critical pedagogy argue against the power of a small group of people in policymaking and decision-making. In a Grade 4 classroom, the inclusiveness of language teaching invites learners to consider what other creative options they could have for expressing their own unique method of learning and comprehending.

The primary aim of critical pedagogy, which further makes it a relevant framework to guide this study is that of critical consciousness, where it advocates to teachers the importance of critical thinking in their teaching practices. Only critical thinkers teach learners to be critical. Critical teachers think that education should empower learners and so release suppressed information within society, as well as provide them with a voice in the world without rejecting them due to their unique learning style (Giroux, 2020). This right to freedom of action is demanded and defended by Critical Pedagogy teachers.

2.6 ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY AND AXIOLOGY OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Critical Pedagogy has its presumptions about the nature of knowledge (epistemology), reality (ontology) and the nature of ethics (axiology). CP argues that the agency for change is based on community members working co-operatively with the researcher to promote social transformation (Mayo, 2015).

2.6.1 Epistemological stance of critical pedagogy

In general, epistemology refers to the assumptions we make about the type and nature of knowledge (Uddin, 2019), as well as how we might learn about the world (Mertens, 2017). Epistemology, according to Bradshaw (2017), is a way of looking at the world and making sense of it. It entails knowledge, and it must imply a particular understanding of what that knowledge means. He goes on to say that epistemology is

concerned with the 'nature' of knowledge, as well as its possibility (what knowledge can be tried and what cannot), scope, and legitimacy. Epistemology is concerned with all aspects of knowledge's validity, scope, and methods of acquisition, such as what defines a knowledge claim, how knowledge may be gained or produced, and how its transferability can be judged. Epistemology is significant because it has an impact on how scholars frame their research in their quest for knowledge (Saki, 2016).

Learning in Critical Pedagogy strives to enable learners to not only interpret, but also to acquire critical consciousness and change the world (Rajesh, 2014) Critical pedagogy is a school of thinking that considers information as subjectivist, with various interpretations possible, which we need in our Grade 4 English classrooms (Ledwith, 2020). When dialogue is in connection to objects of knowledge, it is epistemological. This is an epistemological relationship, as defined by Freire. Dialogue is a method of knowing and learning that allows learners to learn more about themselves, others, the world, and the object itself by combining experiences in and with the world with the study of an object of knowledge. This is the type of learning and understanding that is mostly absent from Grade 4 English classes. The teacher-learner relationship is more important than everything else in the learning-teaching interaction. In their discussions of this relationship, several critical pedagogics emphasise the importance of compassion, mutual understanding, and shared aims (Darder, 2003; Zembylas, 2013). For a well-functioning educational practice in the classroom, Freire emphasises the significance of just, humble, and giving interactions (Giroux, 2020).

The critical teacher recognises the need of educating a learner for more than just the job he or she will pursue. The critical teacher gives learners the tools they need to change their society. A willingness to learn as he teaches is also demanded of such a teacher (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011). These organic intellectuals educate their learners not only as agents of change who fight injustice, but also as agents of change who will revolutionise society (McLaren, 2015). Increased consciousness will contribute to a better knowledge of society's flaws that must be addressed, and as Freire puts it, "critical comprehension leads to critical action." Teachers, as citizen scholars, are also expected to take critical viewpoints and connect their work to key social concerns in society in order to inspire learners to change the world for the better (Jeyaraj, 2014).

Critical pedagogy fosters critical thinking and behaviours that have the capacity to reform oppressive classrooms or social interactions, as well as facilitating the acceptance of various learners in the classroom (Rangel, 2019). Through open conversation and the encouragement and recognition of diverse points of view, critical pedagogy supports communal decision-making. Multiple and varied sources of information are incorporated into a critical pedagogical approach, as is a greater emphasis on dialogue and group processes, as well as reflections on lived experiences, which encourage learner-generated questions to guide inquiry, ultimately, in the search for their transformative role in society (Bradshaw, 2017). Learners can build their own ideas and possible solutions for many challenges they meet in their lives and in society by learning to examine issues and problems from various perspectives and identifying diverse perspectives in such a learning environment (Mayo, 2015). As a result of applying critical pedagogical perspectives to teaching English in Grade 4 classes, teachers will gain a better grasp of the difficulties and procedures they face when differentiating the curriculum.

In classroom discourse, critical pedagogy embodies the practice of including learners in the social creation of knowledge, which is based on power relations. Teachers who use critical pedagogy in the classroom challenge their own actions in the process of knowledge construction and why the prevailing culture legitimises the major knowledge. When teaching English as a foreign language, teachers must consider the role of English as a foreign language and determine if a language policy is "reactionary" or "liberatory." Due to English's hegemonic role, foreign language teaching theorists (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014) believe that the political imposition of English as a foreign language starts to interfere with the enthusiasm of local linguistic diversity (Abraham, 2014).

The emancipatory impetus in literacy studies is embodied by critical pedagogy discourse, which challenges the idea of literacy as not being politically neutral, recognising that literacy brings with it perspectives and interpretations that are ultimately political (Abraham, 2013). Classroom discourse expands on the idea of developing the ability to interpret symbols and acquire academic language to empower participants in their contexts, encouraging teachers to create spaces for marginalised learners to express themselves in political, social, and economic spheres by teaching

literacy as a skill that prepares people to "read the word" and "read the world" (in Freirean terms). Mayo (2015) argues that literacy alone does not empower those living in repressive situations; rather, it must be coupled with a critical grasp of the social.

The continual recognition of power relationships among individuals participating in education, such as power dynamics within families, classrooms, programmes, and institutions, is an important feature of critical pedagogy in literacy acquisition (Darder, 2015). This project attempts to recreate teaching English in Grade 4 classrooms as a three-branched discourse structure using critical pedagogy. These three structural characteristics include a curriculum that is based on the interests and abilities of learners, cultural needs, and community empowerment. Critical pedagogy equips teachers with qualities like problem solving, critical thinking, logical and independent thought, intellectual curiosity, effective communication, creativity, and intellectual rigour, as well as values like ethical practice, persistence, integrity, and tolerance (Raddawi & Troudi, 2018).

Teachers who take a nurturing approach, aim to establish a balance between challenging learners to do their best while also nurturing and supporting their efforts to succeed. Teachers who campaign for social reform are passionate about social issues and see themselves as advocates for the changes they want to see in society (Saki, 2016). Teachers also feel that learners learn by watching them work on realistic activities in real-world contexts of application or practice. They are passionate about their subject and believe that it is their obligation to differentiate the curriculum and present content to their learners effectively. Finally, teachers have a developmental viewpoint, which tries to bridge knowledge gaps by utilising learners' past knowledge and skills.

2.6.2 Ontological stance of critical pedagogy

Mertens (2007) defines ontology as assumptions about the nature of what exists and what reality is, emphasising the influence of privilege in defining what is real and what the consequences of adopting forms of reality are. Political, economic, ethnic, social, and cultural values, as well as values relating to gender, disability, and other aspects of the world about which people may learn, influence most realities. Ontology aids researchers in evaluating their level of certainty regarding the nature and existence of

the objects they are researching (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Ontology, according to Silverman (2020), is a concept that deals with the presence of things and their relationships.

Critical pedagogy's language is what enables people to break free from repressive and damaging ways of thinking and acting. Political pedagogy is often referred to as critical pedagogy. Political in the sense that it relates to any scale of social structure and arrangement in charge of distributing goods, services, and power resources. A school is a political entity in the sense that it has its own structure or organisation within its walls that distributes both goods (books, pencils, time for specials, notebooks, art smocks, book covers, etc.) and resources (teachers, specialists, counsellors, social workers, and paraprofessionals) (Kress & Lake, 2014).

Classrooms are thus political in that they enclose distributive forms of social structure and arrangements that frequently reflect those of the enclosing institution. Teachers who identify as critical pedagogues are acutely aware of how politically charged their schools and classrooms are (Mowat, 2015). They understand that their very existence, as well as that of the learners and objects in the classroom, is the result of a sequence of political decisions and actions. Critical pedagogy is, above all, a way of action, not only a way of thinking. It encourages learners to create a difference and to be the change they want to see in the world.

The obligations of critical pedagogues are twofold: one is to politics, and the other is to literacy. Teachers are aware that their classroom methods have political implications, and they are aware of those implications, as well as the reasons for their use. Furthermore, such educators are enthusiastic about literacy. For teachers engaged in critical pedagogics, literacy is much more than decoding and fluency, regardless of level (Saki, 2016). Literacy is the process of generating words from learners' experiences in establishing understandings in their own contexts and communicating with others about them (Jeyaraj, 2014). This is the main reason why teachers need to teach language in a way that will be understood by all learners in the classroom through a differentiated curriculum.

Human beings have two ontological possibilities, according to Freire. We can think of ourselves and our learners as finished or unfinished beings in the process of becoming. It is a choice between being and becoming ontologies. Human beings are viewed as finished products with no chance of development or alteration, according to the ontology of being. An unruly learner or learner with a learning difficulty is simply seen as a learner with learning difficulty and unruly and always will be (McLaren, 2015). There is nothing the teacher can do to change this. On the other hand, the ontology of becoming sees humans as being constantly in the process of becoming whatever they desire to be. Freire's ontology of becoming has a lot of power. It is full of hope for change, transformation, and improvement. It is not a set condition if a learner has a learning issue or is unruly. Working with the learner toward transformation is the teacher's responsibility. Regarding the process of becoming, Freire states *"I like to be human because in my unfinishedness I know that I am conditioned. Yet conscious of such conditioning, I know that I can go beyond it, which is the essential difference between conditioned and determined existence"* (Freire, 2000:54).

The framework of incompleteness proposed by Freire assists teachers in being aware of the conditioning that both teachers and learners bring to the classroom. It has been described as a change away from, or a transformation of, a mindset that accepts what happens in life as inevitable. This is a crucial charge for teachers to be able to help students comprehend that life is not predetermined or predetermined for them; that students can intervene in their own lives and create possibilities for themselves (Darder, Mayo & Paraskeva, 2017).

Critical pedagogy has its roots in schools of thought that have placed a strong emphasis on the individual and self in connection to, and in opposition to, social progress, society, economic issues, socio-cultural and ideological forces. All these phrases share the same goals and aspirations: to promote language acquisition, development, and action on the part of learners, geared toward addressing problematic parts of their life, as seen from a critical viewpoint on society (Crookes, 2012).

Freire does not idealise educational labour by arguing that it is sufficient to transform the world; nonetheless, he does believe that teachers have the power to challenge the *status quo* and dominant ideology in the classroom and make positive contributions (Shor, 2014). Learners are engaged as critical thinkers and active learners in Critical Pedagogy, and they collaborate to imagine alternative alternatives for their social reality. As a result, it is doubtful that transformation will stop in the classroom and instead, will spread throughout the community (Kincheloe, 2011).

2.6.3 Axiological stance of critical pedagogy

Axiology is a discipline of philosophy concerned with value judgements, such as ethics and aesthetics (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). It relates to one's behaviour in the real world. The branch of philosophy known as axiology studies the nature of ethical or moral behaviour (Mertens, 2017). The axiological understanding is prioritised by CP as a guiding tool for conceptualising subsequent beliefs and research decisions. The territory that incorporates social justice and human rights was first realised by CP researchers. Axiology in CP was founded in response to dissatisfaction with research undertaken within other paradigms that was deemed irrelevant or distorting the experiences of oppressed people (Uddin, 2019). In CP, axiology plays a critical role in establishing the norms and requirements for accepted research methods and methodologies for this study. Making the axiology explicit aids in establishing and clarifying the guiding tone and rigour for research activities (Ledwith, 2020).

Our decisions about what is good, true, and right are guided by our values. As a result, they are as reliant on our sentiments as they are on our thoughts. These values include the basic distinction between right and wrong, as well as the value of hard work and self-respect. Value-based education is a tool that gives us not just a career but also a sense of purpose in life. The objective of our lives is, without a doubt, to know and be above ourselves. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, value-based education is an important component in promoting peace, tolerance, social conduct, justice, and intercultural understanding (Abraham, 2014). It is critical for a country's true progress to develop values in all residents, and teachers play a critical role in accomplishing this aim. Teachers are essential for learning about and comprehending a country (Tomar, 2014).

Trust is a moral ideal that is prioritised and implemented in critical pedagogy, even if it is not always well understood and articulated. As previously said, dialogue as epistemology, or a method of knowing, necessitates specific classroom settings. For discussion to take place, learners and teachers must be in close proximity to one another in a way that is unusual in traditionally organised classrooms (Ledwith, 2020). Safety is a prerequisite for schools that are conducive to dialogical modes of knowing. Learners must feel safe to engage in open and honest discussion and struggle. Classrooms function because of the moral value of trust being prioritised. Because trust impacts how people conduct themselves regarding one another, it is considered a moral value here. According to Rangel (2019), a trusting environment creates a safe space in the classroom where children may share their experiences, where conflict can be addressed and constructively questioned, and where resolutions can be worked out collaboratively.

Trust is a must-have attribute in a vitally educational classroom. Learners actively participate in their own process of becoming as they join the ranks of the teachers through discourse, which is, once again, the battle to live in and with the world as a conditioned and not determined actor (Kress & Lake, 2014). Through discourse and trust, learners learn how to do things. If trust is questioned, it is not a reason to give up; rather, it is a reason to persevere, and learners should be active in maintaining the faith that a classroom built on conversation and trust will survive. Learners must cultivate a critical mindset. This awareness enables people to question the current social order's *status quo*. Learners are required to critically engage with the world by analysing the cultural norms and values of institutions that perpetuate unfairness and taking action to correct these disparities (Darder, Mayo & Paraskeva, 2017).

2.7 ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP OF RESEARCHER AND PARTICIPANTS

The researcher's primary role is that of a convener, whose major role is to create an environment in which people may collaborate to resolve a problem. A researcher's job is to stimulate active learning and participation in the study. Emotion and experience, as well as participatory learning and teaching, must all have a distinct and valued position in the classroom. While class involvement is an effective tactic, it loses its

pedagogic value when it is ritualised or used just to help teachers achieve their personal goals (Khumalo, 2018).

Children and teachers can learn about others who may not be a part of their social reality when they are free to discuss and reflect on their individual and collective experiences without fear of being criticised. Instead of fearing differences, they can comprehend and relate to them. The teachers' role as participants in this study is to provide a secure environment for children to express themselves while also fostering types of interactions; as a result, the researcher supports collaboration to achieve this solidarity. Teachers must relinquish their authority and learn to listen with empathy and without judgement, as well as to provide opportunity for learners to learn.

The researcher's role is to help participants realise how strong they are to overcome their difficulties on their own. Participants aid the researcher in assuming their proper roles in addressing difficulties, rather than thinking of themselves as mere study objects or subjects. The researcher's purpose is to support participants formulate problems into researchable subjects by facilitating discussions around obstacles. The researcher assembles and organises teams that can work outside of classrooms and schools to help with problem analysis and investigation (Mahlomaholo, 2015).

Critical pedagogy provides learners with an opportunity to think critically about topics from the perspectives of their political, social, economic, and moral selves. The researcher facilitates this study by allowing teachers to assist one another and embrace diverse points of view on social concerns, as well as a dedication to democratic forms of interaction. This is critical, given the various contexts in which our schools operate. Some learners have been labelled as ineducable, less educable, slow learners, and even fearful of learning in the past (Sarroub & Quadros, 2015). A critical framework assists teachers in seeing societal issues from various viewpoints, comprehending the need of customising the curriculum to match the requirements of the learners in the classroom, and comprehending how such concerns are linked to the lives of the learners.

The researcher introduces teachers to critical consciousness, which does not necessarily imply critical action but does allow participants to reflect and modify themselves (Abraham, 2014). Teachers use emancipatory knowledge (Giroux, 2020) to bring together practical and technical knowledge, allowing learners to better comprehend how power and privilege affect and distort social connections. Finally, participants in critical pedagogy classrooms are encouraged to take collective action based on the ideas of equality, social justice, and empowerment while adopting curriculum differentiation in their classrooms (McLaren 2015).

2.8 RHETORIC USED IN THE STUDY

The study and application of written, spoken, and visual language is referred to as rhetoric. It looks at how language is used to form and maintain social groupings, build meanings and identities, co-ordinate behaviour, mediate power, bring about change, and develop knowledge (Zembylas, 2013). In its eleventh edition, the Encyclopaedia Britannica defines rhetoric as "the art of employing language in such a way as to convey a desired impression upon the hearer or reader." The Oxford English Dictionary (2020) defines rhetoric as "speech or writing articulated in ways meant to convince," or "language characterised by artificial or extravagant expression" (typically in a derogatory sense). One of the key goals of analysing the rhetoric used in the study, according to Fairclough (2013), is to show how an arguer tries to persuade a specific audience to share a set of ideas and values.

Within CP, language is vital because it serves as a foundation for developing a relationship of mutual trust, humility, and caring (Mahlomaholo & Netshandama, 2012). As a result, CP believes that any research involving humans should refrain from using language that has the connotation of reducing people to objects, numbers, or sub-humans. In research, it acknowledges indigenous people and their languages. The researcher must always be humble, delegating power to the participants to make them feel equal, thereby accommodating the diversity of all participants, regardless of their background (Mayo, 2015). The goal of equal treatment stems from critical theory's human and compassionate natures toward persons, as speaking beings (Qhosola, 2016).

2.9 DEFINITIONS AND DISCUSSIONS OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

2.9.1 Curriculum

This section defines and explores the concepts that guided this research. These themes were drawn from the thesis' title and were crucial to the study's operationalisation. As a result, the purpose of identifying and explaining these operational ideas is to aid in the achievement of the study's objectives. Curriculum and curriculum differentiation are the concepts.

Before the defining of curriculum differentiation, there is a need to understand what curriculum means in this study. Curriculum is a set of standards-based organised activities in which learners practice and master the subject and applied learning abilities (Su, 2012). Curriculum serves as a central guide for all teachers in terms of what is required for effective teaching and learning, ensuring that all learners have access to rigorous academic experiences. A curriculum's structure, organisation, and concerns are all designed to improve learning and to facilitate teaching. To effectively support pedagogy and learning, the curriculum must include the essential goals, techniques, materials, and assessments (Niño,2017). According to Dubensky (2019), the curriculum is perceived negatively as a syllabus that restricts teachers' planning to a consideration of the content or body of knowledge they aim to transmit, a list of the courses to be taught, or both. This simply means that the topic knowledge required for an effective curriculum is insufficient. To be an effective curriculum, it should offer much more than a statement of the knowledge-content. However, according to Kamara (2018), the curriculum is more positive in nature and has the capacity to achieve the objective of stimulating learning, creating new knowledge, skills, and establishing positive values or attitudes.

The curriculum can be seen as a tool for reaching certain educational aims and objectives (Hasan, 2014). In this way, a curriculum can be considered as a guideline of intended goals. The objectives are stated and specified in behavioural and observable terms during the curriculum preparation phase (Tomlinson, 2014). An objective curriculum model is characterised by its emphasis on objectives. In this sense, the emphasis is on products or outcomes, and it is also teacher- or

administrative-focused (Su, 2012). Meda (2020) claims that politicians design the curriculum without consulting teachers, and that few teachers feel "ownership" of the content they are forced to teach. The curriculum can be improved. This concept focuses on course content rather than learning goals, whereas the previous definition stresses the identification and prescription of pedagogical goals. According to Meda 2020, a curriculum is defined as the collection of disciplines that make up a course of study offered by an institution or followed by teachers and learners.

The curriculum, according to Kier and Khalil (2019), is a paper document that outlines a course programme. The curriculum includes official written study programmes produced by ministries or departments of education, boards of education or municipal governments, and commercial firms or teams of educational specialists working on specially funded initiatives (Maluleka, Nkwe & Ngoepe, 2018). This perspective on the visual/ written document associated with the curriculum stems from the requirement that a written form be created, particularly during the phases of curriculum development and implementation, to include a statement of objectives, pedagogy, content, and assessment. The document's presentation aims to provide teachers with a model to follow in the curriculum development process. In this sense, the terms "curriculum" and "syllabus" are interchangeable.

Morreira, Lockett, Kumalo and Ramgotra (2020) posit the curriculum as "an interrelated set of plans and experiences which a learner completes under the guidance of the school". That is to say, the relationship between plans and experiences is entwined, with "plans" referring to pre-planned curricula and "experiences" referring to unforeseen classroom events. Although planning is necessary before acting, it is crucial to recognise that unforeseen events frequently occur in classrooms. Morreira et al. (2020) go on to say that the actual curricula used in schools are made up of a mix of plans and experiences. Learning experiences extend beyond the classroom to activities outside of it; teaching is rarely fully spontaneous or planned, but rather a combination of impulse and intention (Kier & Khalil, 2019).

Experiences, according to Dubensky (2019), refer to the potential learning experienced encounters that learners might have within or outside the classroom. In an academic setting, any interactions that learners are exposed to might be considered part of their education. The extended curriculum includes all the experiences that learners are likely to have during their schooling. Meda (2020) hints at this by describing a curriculum as all of a child's educational experiences. He goes on to say that the subject matter offered to learners, the acts of teachers in the classroom (attitudes and motivations), the actions of learners (reactions, attitudes, and motivation), and the teaching resources are all elements of the experiential curriculum.

2.9.2 Curriculum differentiation

A differentiated curriculum, according to Fraser (2018), is one that is tailored to meet different education needs of all learners in one class. If implemented appropriately, differentiation does not have to mean more work for the teacher. It will enable a teacher to spend his or her time more effectively with a larger group of learners (Albertville Schools, 2016). Curriculum differentiation is also characterised as a technique of teaching in which teachers adjust curriculum, pedagogies, resources, learning activities, and student products on a proactive basis.

Curriculum differentiation, according to Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010), is a method of teaching in which teachers proactively vary the curriculum, resources, teaching methods, learning activities, and learner products. Individual learning needs are addressed to enhance each learner's learning opportunities in the classroom. Furthermore, according to Christie and Monyokolo (201), curriculum differentiation refers to the teacher altering the pace, level, or pedagogy provided in response to individual learners needs, styles, or interests.

Curriculum differentiation refers to modifications to a regular curriculum's approach, skills, and content, as well as the learning environment, to accommodate exceptional and talented learners (Davidsen, 2018). It should contain extension and enrichment activities to widen the curriculum and help learners develop skills and abilities to a level of complexity that matches their cognitive capacity (Dack, 2019). Tomlinson (2014) defines curriculum differentiation as teaching informed by the belief that

learners learn best when their teachers allow for differences in their levels of preparedness, well-being, and learning outlines, and describes differentiated curriculum as consisting of the efforts of teachers to respond to variance among learners in the classroom.

Furthermore, Ronksley-Pavia (2010) describes curriculum differentiation as a pedagogy in which the teacher delivers multiple entries to satisfy the needs of each learner in the classroom to optimise the learners' abilities. Curriculum differentiation, according to Dalton, Mckenzie and Kahonde (2012), is a method of teaching that aims to enhance the level of all learners, not just those who are struggling academically. It is a policy that considers an individual's traits and prior experience, with the goal of increasing their abilities by providing an educational environment that is suitable for all learners. Williams (2012), on the other hand, sees curricular differentiation as a set of strategies for teaching learners of varying capacities in a same classroom. A learner-centred approach addresses individual needs and is based on defined strategies that help learners improve their performance. Lancaster (2014) defines curriculum differentiation as a set of best teaching practices, teaching theories, and practices that enhance learners' achievements, while Melesse (2015) describes it as a method of teaching that differs in accordance with the needs of learners in multi-level and multi-abilities classrooms.

In this study, curriculum differentiation means the thoughtful act of modifying teaching or an assignment to tailor the effect to a learner's or a group of learners' developmental level and skills (Shay, 2013). The idea is to provide equivalent learning activities that respond to the capabilities of the learners while still bringing them all to the same learning objective (Shawer, 2017). Curriculum differentiation allows the teacher an opportunity to reach out to individual learners' needs.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented Critical Pedagogy (CP) as a conceptual framework underpinning this study. The aim of the study was to develop a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in the Endumeni Circuit. To achieve this aim, this study used Critical

Pedagogy (CP). This chapter looked at the beginnings of CP as well as its evolution to gain a better grasp of the framework and the concepts that underpin it. Ontology, epistemology, and axiology were all discussed in relation to CP. In addition, the chapter discussed how the conceptual framework informed the role and relationship of the researcher and participants. The operational concepts were also defined.

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of the study is to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of Grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in the Endumeni circuit. This chapter reviews related literature informed by the objectives of the study. Literature is studied with reference to the challenges of implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers, probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation, plausible threats impeding the implementation of curriculum differentiation and the best practices for the implementation of curriculum differentiation. A review of related literature strives to draw some useful lessons from various countries to strengthen the South African curriculum differentiation articulations. Literature for this study is drawn internationally, from the African continent, from the South African Development Community (SADC) region, and South Africa.

3.2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section presents literature reviewed from international countries, the African continent, the SADC countries and South Africa, with the intention of learning from the countries mentioned. The literature is examined in relation to the study's objectives, which are the challenges of implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers, probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation, plausible threats impeding the implementation of curriculum differentiation and to demonstrate the best practices for the implementation of curriculum differentiation.

3.2.1 Challenges of implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers

The challenges identified by a preliminary literature review that are encountered by teachers when teaching grade 4 English learners are inadequate professional development of teachers to implement curriculum differentiation, improper curriculum management, insufficient transformational initiatives and ineffectual policy implementation.

3.2.1.1 Inadequate professional development

Professional development is the process through which individual people, society and institutions obtain, maintain, and strengthen the capabilities to set and achieve their own developmental objectives over time (Li, Shi & Xue, 2020). Professional development is defined in this study as the process by which individuals and schools acquire, enhance, and retain the skills, knowledge, tools, equipment, and other resources required to perform their professions competently. It enables individuals and schools to work at a higher level (Soth, Socheath & Sarath, 2020). Teachers require learner support professional development to feel confident in their ability to embrace and accommodate all learners in their classrooms (Ceylan & Aral 2016).

Teachers have stated that they are not equipped to teach in classrooms with mixed-ability learners because they have not received adequate training (Subban & Mahlo, 2017). Institutions of higher learning focus on subject content and do not have education programmes that focus on how to differentiate curriculum and offer learner support to learners (Costello & Boyle, 2013). Teachers acknowledge that they require additional professional development and believe that their initial teacher education programmes could have done a better job of preparing them for the variety of classrooms they would meet (Lunsford, 2017).

Veteran teachers were primarily educated in content areas rather than in special education (Westwood, 2018). A large percentage of teachers are in classrooms with learners who require assistance, but they have not received any teacher training to help them meet those learners' needs. This has an impact on their attitude toward including learners (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Learners are dependent on the quality of their teachers, and if they are unable to deal with learners who require a diversified curriculum in their classes, they will not be able to achieve their full potential (Maddox, 2015). Teachers should receive training on how to properly manage a grade 4 English classroom with learners of varying skill levels (Maringa, 2016). He further said that teachers need more training on how to handle curricular differentiation so that they can help learners with learning disabilities while still maintaining high standards.

It is also critical that principals obtain professional development on curriculum differentiation so that they may serve as curriculum managers and provide help to teachers when needed (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2014). It has been discovered that having a good attitude about teaching in an inclusive classroom is just as crucial as having content expertise (Lunsford, 2017). Teachers are frequently prepared with material knowledge but lack the ability to communicate that knowledge to a broad variety of learners with mixed skill levels (Subban & Mahlo, 2017). Principals are in charge of organising school activities so that teaching and learning are in line with the school's vision. Principals must be acquainted about the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes required for educational innovation and effective curriculum management.

According to Ceylan and Aral (2016), one important aspect is that school principals be prepared to play a role in teacher empowerment. This does not imply that they lose authority or power, but rather that teacher empowerment can be viewed as a more intensive professionalisation of the teacher's role. According to Fourie (2018), an empowered teacher is better able to maximise the potential of learners. According to Westwood (2018), there is a connection between the amount of efficacy in the change process and the competent input of the person responsible for the change. Change is a process, not an event. As a result, principals must plan, develop, and maintain change over time (Rasebotsa, 2017).

Qualified teachers report that they have the appropriate knowledge, confidence, skills, and efficacy to impart content to learners but find it challenging when they have to cater for children with learning barriers in their classrooms (Lunsford, 2017). Initial teacher training institutions detach general education teacher training from special needs education teacher training (Taber & Brock, 2018). As more and more classrooms become inclusive, these general education teacher programmes are not preparing teachers for the real-world classroom (Fourie, 2018). Many new teachers lack the requisite experience to manage an inclusive classroom, and they are unable to meet the needs of all learners due to inadequate professional development (Maddox, 2015). The sense of being unprepared can cause anxiety and have a significant impact on all of the learners in the class (Kokela, 2017).

The main reason for unfulfilled demand in differentiating the English Grade 4 curriculum, according to teachers, is a conflict with their working schedules and lack of appropriate professional development opportunities is also a major concern. This shows that policymakers and school leaders should not only increase teacher participation in professional development, but also ensure that the development options available are effective and meet the needs of teachers (Taber & Brock, 2018).

Subject advisors in South African schools also provide professional development, but if they are not properly prepared in serving learners with varying ability levels in the classroom, they will not be able to assist their teachers in serving those learners (Fourie, 2018). Because teacher effectiveness is so closely linked to learner outcomes, it is a challenge if teachers are not prepared to educate learners of varying levels of ability (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Teachers require professional knowledge on what curriculum differentiation is and how to utilise it effectively in the classroom, as well as ongoing support and planning time (Ceylan & Aral, 2016). Teachers also recognise the importance of curriculum differentiation but are unclear how to put it into practice (Lunsford, 2017).

If teachers are well developed in differentiating the grade 4 English curriculum, the issues of content gap, resource constraints and policy clarity would not be a ground for concern in terms of effective curriculum implementation. According to Fourie (2018), the more you know, the more specific you can be about what else needs to be developed. If there is a content gap, teachers may find it difficult to pinpoint an area in which they need to improve. Some teachers prefer more structure and guidance, while others are even more rigorous in their approach, requiring more support (Kokela, 2017). The role of teachers cannot be overlooked in the success of curriculum differentiation implementation. If inclusion policies are not backed by a supportive process aimed at strengthening teachers' roles, they will not have the desired effect (Subban & Mahlo, 2017). Teachers are the primary implementers of any curriculum transformation, and they must be appropriately prepared to ensure the success of the implementation plan. That is the reason why this study aims to design a strategy for a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of Grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools.

3.2.1.2 Improper curriculum management

Effective teaching and learning are at the heart of curriculum management. The procedure entails determining what learners are supposed to learn, assessing whether they have learnt it, and looking for ways to improve learning (Newton & Nation, 2020).

Curriculum coverage is endorsed as an essential contributory learning enhancement factor in South African schools by school effectiveness research because it offers learners with more time on task or a better opportunity to learn. What is controversial is the significance of learning that takes place while trying to cover the curriculum (Slavin, 2019). Teachers are paced on their teaching to ensure that they are not behind and that they meet the deadlines set for them. Fűz (2018) argues that learners' capabilities and barriers that might hinder their learning are not catered for when the deadlines are set.

There is no room for the teacher to differentiate the curriculum according to learners' needs. The individual accountability, collective prospects and corrective action becomes a challenge to the teacher. There is a challenge in English for learning and curriculum coverage, this also happens in assessing coherence in schools around expectations, values, and processes for getting the work done and curriculum covered (Westwood, 2018).

According to Karakus (2021), most South African school principals are unaware of their duties in curriculum management, and hence their performance in these tasks and responsibilities is ineffective. Because the department is still perplexed by these new curriculum management systems, school leaders lack professional development in the new education system. Some principals misinterpret the employment of curriculum managers (that is, Department Heads (DH)) as an indication of their failure to manage the curriculum, according to Ajani (2021). Because DHs lead the curriculum and guide other SMT members, they may find their decisions at odds with those made by principals and deputies.

DHs responsibilities as curriculum managers is to be team leaders, monitor teachers' work, and organisers of phase development workshops while dealing with their own heavy teaching loads. The provision of implementing curriculum differentiation is compromised as the priority of DHs is to ensure that teachers cover the curriculum, and that they cover their annual teaching plans which is the priority and checklist of

the Department of Basic Education DBE). The school management team (SMT) may have difficulty determining who is responsible for aspect of curriculum management and who is not (Stuurman, 2020). If conflicting duties are not successfully managed, the entire school may experience an unco-ordinated curricula crisis.

The competence of the teacher is also an important resource factor in curriculum coverage (Clements & Sarama 2020). The teacher's orientation and expectations are key to the amount of work that may be accomplished with the learners in any given period. All of the structures involved in curriculum implementation must work together to make it a success. Despite having a defined administration, the Department of Education cannot fully manage curriculum change without the help and support of principals. Without teachers working together to ensure that the curriculum change is implemented in their classrooms, principals and SMTs will be unable to implement the change (Mandukwini, 2016).

Teachers need content-specific knowledge to be able to manage the English Grade 4 curriculum. They need to be equipped with pedagogical skills necessary for teaching English in the intermediate phase. Differentiated teaching and assessment approaches and methodologies, differentiated classroom management abilities, and the use of data to make informed decisions are all skills that may be learned (Slavin, 2019). Teachers must be taught in curriculum management to deal with curriculum change and work with learners from different learning backgrounds, as curriculum differentiation is a new approach to teaching (West & West, 2016). Continuous professional learning and development is necessary for teachers for them to be capable of coping with these challenges.

3.2.1.3 Insufficient transformational initiatives

In any transformation effort, it is imperative to articulate the benefits or value to be achieved. The South African curriculum history has been characterised by fundamental change within a relatively short period (Wessel, Baiyere, Ologeanu-Taddei, Cha & Blegind-Jensen, 2021). As a result, there is a lot of uncertainty among teachers about what they should do in the classroom (Brown, 2020). Learners entering the intermediate phase in Grade 4 have English as a medium of instruction and are taught English as a first additional subject. The change in the LOLT alone comes very

early when a learner is still taught the foundations of his mother tongue (Johnsen, 2017).

This change calls for a teacher who has adequate knowledge on how to approach the curriculum in a manner that will include all the learners in the classroom. Any effective change strategy would have to address learners' feelings and perceptions. Change entails questioning one's views, perceptions, conventional methods of operation, and long held and established practices. Change is scary, according to Pretorius and Spaul (2016), hence fears must be dealt with efficiently if successful change is to occur.

The teachers, who can change meanings in a variety of ways, are primarily responsible for putting the curricular policy into effect. This requires that teachers possess the necessary knowledge, abilities, positive attitude, and enthusiasm for teaching. Teachers' opinions, behaviours, interests, and attitudes, according to Stuurman (2020), are typically ignored by policymakers when curriculum changes are being discussed. As a result, implementation is hindered because teachers may not understand the underpinnings of curriculum change.

According to Roux (2018), people have varied ways of adapting to new contexts because they are all unique. Some teachers may be eager to participate in the development of new innovations, while others may be resistant to change. Most of the time, this occurs when individuals are faced with changes that require them to adapt their personal values and beliefs, which are based on previous experiences and practices. Differentiating the curriculum has been addressed at the policy development level rather than at the policy implementation level. Although White Paper 6 and the screening, identification, assessment, and support (SIAS) policy clearly states what teachers must do in a Grade 4 classroom to differentiate English, appropriate implementation has yet to be achieved.

All individuals involved in implementing the change must be committed. It is critical that the principal and other school stakeholders be regarded as enthusiastic supporters of the change. If not, the modification has a limited possibility of

succeeding. Giving school administrators and teachers equal power is one way for overcoming resistance to change. Subordinates should be involved in programme discussions and choices (Brown, 2020). The strategy of power sharing will enable teachers to work together in teams in brainstorming innovative ways of implementing policies such as the White paper 6 and SIAS that can facilitate the implementation of curriculum differentiation in Grade 4 English classes.

There is a debate over quality support, specifically addressing the types of help that are most urgently needed and how to ensure that it is effective in improving what it is intended to enhance, as well as long-term sustainability. According to Roux (2018), unlike prior models of teacher change and development, which focused initially on the need to change teachers' cognitive beliefs, modifying teachers' behaviour and practices is required first to effect and change teachers' cognitive beliefs. This would entail including teachers in their work environment, providing them with activities and teaching materials that are necessary for their practice. Jackson (2019) claims that change is a cyclical process including teachers' changing practices, beliefs, and outcomes in a constant dynamic interplay.

According to the literature on teacher development, a shift from a cognitive model in which teachers learn new professional knowledge in a decontextualised form (courses or workshops) to a situated learning model, which, according to the social-cultural perspective, suggests that learning should take place in the same context in which it will be used, is required. The ability of teachers to understand the curriculum changes they experience daily is critical to the curriculum's effectiveness (Gumede & Biyase, 2016).

3.2.1.4 Ineffectual policy implementation

The Constitution assures the right to a basic education. The right to education is interpreted in conjunction with provision 9, which mandates that all people be treated equally under the law. The Department of Education, according to Education White Paper 6, has a specific obligation to ensure that all learners, with and without impairments, maximise their learning potential (Department of Education, 2001). To meet the diverse needs of learners in the Grade 4 English classroom, differentiation

in curriculum delivery is essential to guarantee that all learners have access to learning. To accommodate all learners, all schools must teach the same curriculum while also ensuring that means of delivery and assessment systems are diverse.

The Department of Basic Education developed two sets of guidelines to lay out its strategy for integrating the inclusive model into the South African education system: the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) and the Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement. Although the department has produced excellent policies, their execution remains a mystery since the curriculum remains one of the major barriers to learning. Different characteristics of the curriculum, such as teaching approaches, language, content, classroom organisation, pace of teaching and time available to finish the curriculum, learning and teaching support materials, and assessment, all contribute to learning barriers (Department of Education, 2001).

The recommendations are designed to provide administrators, teachers, principals, subject advisors, and other professionals with strategies for responding to learner diversity in the classrooms through the curriculum, but the goals have not been met (Leballo, Griffiths & Bekker, 2021). Co-ordination challenges, inadequacy of organisational resources, actors' capacity, and resistance to transformation are all barriers to policy implementation. However, as the education sector has grown more complicated, so have the problems of putting change into practice. Stakeholders in education are becoming more diverse, and they are becoming more vocal and ambitious about what education systems should look like (Maguvhe, 2015). If policymakers and stakeholders want policies that respond to learner variety to be effective and improve education, they must share the knowledge of the implementation process to collaborate on it.

Understanding the nature of policy implementation is critical since international experience demonstrates that policies are not always implemented as planned and do not always produce the desired outcomes (Walton & Ruzsnyak, 2017). Challenges to policy implementation are observed globally and are attributed to different factors, such as key stakeholder opposition, the non-existence of clarity on operating procedures or roles, a lack of human or financial resources, responsibilities for

implementation, conflicts with other policies, a lack of collaboration and co-ordination among parties responsible for implementation, or either a lack of drive or a lack of political will (Signé, 2017).

According to Ajulor (2018), policy implementation challenges in Africa are linked to reduced planning, political instability, and bureaucratic bottlenecks, as well as the deliberate imposition of policy and complete change to the plan if it is not favourable to the implementers or civil servants charged with implementing it. Organisation, interpretation, and application, according to Ajulor, can all have an impact on policy implementation.

Even while it is considered that inclusive education might contribute to the creation of a more equal society in South Africa, there appears to be a disconnection between policy and practice. There is a gap between policy and practice, according to the literature, especially when it comes to the provision and delivery of learning support to learners who are having difficulty learning in the regular classroom (Walton & Rusznyak, 2017). The absence of teachers' abilities and understanding in customising their teaching to serve a wide range of learning needs in the Grade 4 English classroom, for example, is impeding the implementation of policy objectives (Materechera, 2020). Learning support services necessitate the training of regular teachers and support staff so that policies may be implemented effectively.

Teachers have a critical role to play in ensuring that all learners, regardless of their background, feel included and validated in the classroom (Makhubele, 2015). The implementation of varied curricula is one technique to make classroom teaching and learning more inclusive. According to Mfuthwana and Dreyer (2018), in differentiated classrooms, teachers provide unique strategies for everyone to learn as deeply and fast as possible, without assuming that one learner's learning path is identical to that of another. All the above-mentioned teaching obligations are not being fulfilled due to an unsuccessful policy implementation approach.

3.2.2 Probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation

This section discusses the solutions to the challenges identified by the preliminary literature review that are encountered by teachers when teaching grade 4 English learners. These solutions are explored from the international, the African, the SADC and South African literature. This section is arranged in the following constructs: enhanced professional development of teachers to implement curriculum differentiation, strengthened curriculum management and pedagogy, feasible transformational initiatives, and effective policy implementation.

3.2.2.1 Enhanced professional development

Teachers must keep their skills, knowledge, and competences up to date in a changing world by participating in professional development. Professional development exposes teachers to content that helps them expand and contextualise their understanding of practices, as well as equips them to respond to specific learners' needs and to differentiate the curriculum for Grade 4 English learners (Govender, 2018). Preparing teachers for the teaching profession is regarded as a high priority in any country since it is regarded as a challenging and critical profession that can lead to a nation's rise and success in various sectors. As a significant agency, education plays a critical role in the development of strong and developed societies, and the teacher is one of the key agents in this process. As a result, it is always an important educational necessity for teachers to get appropriate educational and professional development to possess adequate knowledge and teaching abilities in order to devote themselves to their career (Mandukwini, 2016).

Professional development that is effective is ongoing, includes skill development, practice, and feedback, and includes enough time and follow-up support (Alheit, 2018). Teachers are involved in learning activities that are like those they would use with their learners, and programmes that encourage the development of teachers' learning communities are successful. There is a rising interest in transforming schools into learning organisations and finding more systematic ways for teachers to share their knowledge and experience (Mbatha, 2016).

State mandating highly trained teachers, as well as the need to increase learner outcomes, are driving demand for suitable professional development (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015). Many countries are undergoing major educational reforms to satisfy the demands of their economies and societies. Governments have also begun to recognise the importance of teachers in the education system if any changes are to be successful (Kempen & Steyn, 2016). Teacher professional development, according to Ainscow (2016), is essential for the successful implementation of many educational transformative projects, such as changing the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners in the class. To meet academic requirements, there is a great need for high-quality teaching and learning, which requires a priority on effective professional development for teachers and educational leaders.

Teacher knowledge naturally leads to effective teaching and learning practices in the classroom, as well as issues of teacher learning and professional development. In a similar manner, Owen (2016) claims that changes in teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and pedagogical practices characterise or mark professional growth. Both experienced and novice teachers require ongoing teaching and professional development from the school, or any other independent or collaborating agency, to help them form and improve in their respective fields of specialisation (subject matters), which will influence their classroom teaching practices (Alheit, 2018). To fulfil their mandate in the classroom of teaching grade 4 English learners inclusively, teachers must have the opportunity to receive professional development, collaborate, and learn something in common via professional development workshops.

Professional development is a mechanism used by schools and districts to ensure that teachers maintain and improve their skills throughout their careers. Professional development that is most effective involves groups of teachers focusing on the needs of their learners (Kilary, 2014). They collaborate to learn and solve problems so that all learners succeed. To enable this collaborative learning and work time for teachers, school systems provide a variety of schedules to cater for this programme. The key drivers are equity and quality in providing education to learners, this ensures inclusion of all learners in the classroom and differentiating the curriculum to give learners fair learning opportunities (Kempen & Steyn, 2016).

Teachers need professional development on how to deal with inclusive teaching. Inclusive education leads to developing an inclusive community which recognises and responds to the diverse needs of their learners, accommodating all learners regardless of their intellectual, emotional, physical, social, linguistic or other conditions (Mogashoa, 2018). Professional development enables teachers to adapt to learners who differ in significant ways from one another, some of which present challenges to the school (DoE, 2005). It is not just about keeping learners in school; it is also about getting them to participate as much as possible in class (Ainscow 2016).

In classrooms where learners struggle to understand what their peers and teachers are saying to them and to express themselves orally, a lot of thought should go into organising activities and teachers' communication styles (Govender, 2018). The learner's time in the learning environment must always be meaningful, resulting in classroom tasks that are more relevant to the learner's needs. According to Mandukwini (2016), professional development enables teachers to address difficulties that arise when there is a mismatch between what the learner is bringing to the classroom and the resources and teaching approaches which are presented in the classroom, that is why this study aims to develop a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners.

3.2.2.2 Strengthened curriculum management

Curriculum management refers to the many administrative processes and procedures involved in keeping accurate and current information regarding curriculum offerings. Curriculum management, according to Kyahurwa (2013), refers to academic leadership, pedagogical leadership, or administration of the school's principal business, the teaching and learning process. It requires making certain that the curriculum policy statement is properly interpreted and implemented. Curriculum management refers to the collaborative effort of all stakeholders involved in the implementation and achievement of established curriculum goals. Implementing a curriculum entails more than simply following a set of instructions or replacing the old practice with the new practice; it entails tailoring the curriculum to match the needs of learners and should become embedded in the teacher's personality (Gregory & Noto 2019).

According to Good and Lavigne (2017), the South African educational system is well-known for its racially divided institutions and unequal curriculum choices. South Africa did not have a National Curriculum Policy throughout the apartheid era. Taylor (2015) characterises the policy as fragmented, racially unpleasant, and sexist at the time, with an out-of-date context. Schools were divided by race under apartheid education, and education exacerbated disparities and a divided society. Because it served to reinforce the position of one race over another, many people saw the curriculum as improper and culturally discriminatory. Initiatives to change how the curriculum is managed have been challenged by inequalities that do not make it possible to benefit all schools in the same way. Education policies have since been updated to address inequalities and strategies to manage curriculum delivery have been developed (Good & Lavigne, 2017). States and individual districts are being compelled to make explicit what it means to have high standards for all learners and what it means for all learners to have equitable opportunities to learn necessary, important, and challenging content (Bantwini & Feza, 2017).

Reviewing materials, solving everyday difficulties related to curriculum implementation, encouraging and inspiring participants in the curriculum change process to work toward achieving meaningful change results that will benefit everyone in a positive way are all part of curriculum management (Tomlinson, 2014). School principals are responsible for encouraging teachers and learners to embrace curriculum change for it to be smoothly implemented. Curriculum differentiation is one of the approaches that is used to ensure that equity and social justice in the delivery of the curriculum is addressed in South African classrooms.

According to Naka (2018), prior to the implementation of any curriculum management strategies, pedagogy plays an important role. Curriculum differentiation begins with a teacher's recognition that each learner brings their own experiences and prior relationships to class, that each learner has their own weaknesses and strengths, emotions, perspectives, and opinions, and that each learner can learn. Tomlinson (2014) argues that there are three differentiation components that contribute to the successful inclusive English pedagogy in the intermediate phase, that is, differentiating content, differentiating process, and differentiating products.

Principals are in charge of the communication that fosters a positive school climate and culture that supports the implementation of curriculum modifications. Principals are required to internalise curriculum changes rather than viewing them as extra work that they must complete. For successful implementation of curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes, principals must be encouraging, passionate, and interested in teaching and learning. Principals should strive to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools through motivating teachers (Mafora & Phorabatho, 2013).

Curriculum advisors, as district officials, co-ordinate, align curriculum and assessment activities, ensure support, and ensure that the curriculum accommodates all learners in the classroom. Schools and districts must work collaboratively in ensuring that the curriculum addresses all the needs of learners and teachers have the capacity to meet all the needs of learners in their classrooms.

Differentiation comprises the teacher's teaching materials, how they can be adapted, and what the teacher wants learners to learn. The differentiating process guarantees that effective activities are designed to assist learners to grow from a current level of understanding to a more sophisticated level. Finally, differentiating products are assignments that are effective ways to assess a learner's knowledge, comprehension, and language acquisition skills. These elements are a crucial part in English language curriculum implementation management (Gregory & Noto 2019).

3.2.2.3 Feasible transformational initiatives

Education is crucial in redressing apartheid colonialism's injustices, which resulted in an inequitable and fragmented educational system. The Republic of South Africa's Constitution (Act 106 of 1996) provides a basis for educational reforms and curriculum transformation in the country's educational system (Gumede & Biyase, 2016). Curriculum transformation includes changes made to teaching and learning content. Some reasons for transforming teaching and learning include addressing the wider challenges faced by the country, the market environment and education stakeholders clamouring for change (Mendy & Madiope, 2020).

Education aims to provide teaching and learning settings that will help learners achieve their goals, whether that goal is to become more educated, skilful, or to favourably affect their attitudes and values. The goal of teaching and learning is to determine whether learners have gained the desired skills. The theory of transformation emphasises emancipatory transformation, promoting equity and inclusivity, which are important elements in making classrooms effective in addressing the needs for grade 4 English learners (Bell, 2019). Transformative initiatives in the school organisation are key contributors to an education intended to support and empower engagement in real and relevant social problems (Cook-Sather, Mathews & Bell, 2019).

The challenges of transformation are global but the educational crisis in balancing teaching and learning content and its transformation have received limited attention (Mendy, 2017). The implementation of transformation in curriculum delivery involves teaching and learning, engagement, and curriculum emancipation for all stakeholders (Makoe & McKinney, 2014). Some reasons for reforming teaching and learning include addressing the wider challenges faced by English first additional teachers when differentiating the curriculum for the purpose of inclusion in the classrooms.

According to Gumede and Biyase (2016), existing concerns about teaching and learning at all levels of education are leading to a commitment to improve quality teaching and learning. The focus on educational excellence is solely on improving teaching and learning in the classroom through school transformation and inclusion, teaching practices, and curriculum management (Maldoni, 2017). Many changes have occurred in the system as a result of educational paradigm shifts, including inclusive teaching methods, curriculum formats, learning styles, and academic policies.

For a successful implementation of curriculum change, school principals should encourage teachers and learners to embrace the change. According to Mendy and Madiope (2020), the responsibility of curriculum managers is to question, change, and adapt the specified curriculum within the school's set of values to fulfil the requirements of the learners. Curriculum management necessitates the manager's knowledge of the

curriculum to be managed, as well as teaching methods and approaches, to provide pedagogical and curriculum leadership (Mandukwini, 2016).

Transformation in learning requires the commitment of all stakeholders and society. Motivation, innovative thinking, and improvements in content and approaches can all be realised through continuous efforts. Transformative learning is defined by participatory pedagogies that encourage critical self-reflection and result in changed thinking patterns (Mendy, 2017). People's professional responsibilities, attitudes, skills, motivations, and practices in implementing curriculum differentiation in classrooms in a consistent, demanding, and deliberate manner are all elements of their capacity for change. According to Maldoni (2017), this type of learning has inherent benefits for teachers, but its significant educational value is connected to the long-term sustainability of inquiry and reflection, the long-term sustainability of conversations inside and outside the school, and the long-term sustainability of continuous learning designed to improve learners' success.

Bell (2019) proposes that the curriculum should focus on the learners' learning process rather than the focal content of a specific subject; building on the learners' experience and interest of what is valuable and needs to be learned in relation to a broader social challenge; and implementing processes to change the current educational settings, anchors, and routines and introduce new knowledge and learning. Morgan (2019) argues that transformative initiatives in education modify beliefs and assumptions regarding the knowledge learners need to participate in building a sustainable society. For example, knowledge of how to take informed decisions towards a sustainable society from a transformative quality perspective builds on a broad comprehension of a variety of values and interpretations of the world and how individuals are affected by decisions we make.

3.2.2.4 Effective policy Implementation

Policy implementation, according to Ajulor (2018), is the process of turning a formal policy into reality. It also gives the operational area of function in carrying out the public policy announced by authorities, according to the argument. The use of a combination of human, material, machine, and financial resources is critical in the implementation

of public policy. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades R-12 was introduced by the Department of Education. The current curriculum statement, among other things, emphasises the importance of celebrating diversity among our learners and encourages the formation of welcoming cultures in schools, as well as ensuring that all learners participate so that they are all respected and feel like they belong (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

Materechera (2020) states that understanding teachers' opinions and attitudes toward the transformation process as a paradigm shift appears to be critical for policymakers. Stakeholders must identify the fundamental cause of the difficulty and establish focused solutions to overcome each barrier, in partnership with other interested and empowered parties to address policy implementation barriers. Barriers should be examined and addressed throughout the policy creation, implementation, and monitoring stages. Curriculum differentiation policy implementation, according to Maguvhe (2015), is a continuous process of decision-making by important actors who engage in complicated policy and institutional environments and face pressures from both interested and opposing parties. As a result, policy implementation procedures are influenced by motivation, information flow, and the balance of power and resources among stakeholders. Overcoming policy implementation barriers will, in the end, necessitate the dedication and perseverance of a variety of stakeholders, sometimes over a lengthy period (Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2018).

Existing policies must be re-evaluated for possible flaws that could threaten curriculum differentiation implementation (Benjamin, Kigen & Ongeti, 2017). According to Hamman (2014), it is critical to connect South Africa's implementation of inclusive education policy with global discourse on inclusive education to avoid a narrow focus on inclusive education as the brainchild of the democratic government to address disparities caused by the apartheid education system. It should be recognised as an international movement that emphasises each learner's unique abilities and requirements rather than a narrow focus on inability.

The nature of the policy to be implemented and the specific circumstances that contribute to the achievement of policy objectives determine the effectiveness of

curricular differentiation policy implementation (Signé, 2017). Key challenges in executing the curriculum differentiation policy include collaborative behaviour among policy stakeholders, which is defined by goal alignment, the creation of strong personal relationships, and a high willingness to exchange skills and knowledge. The operational plan that directs the policy-making process must be well-articulated. The plan for implementing the policy must be clear, consistent, and well-structured (Tezera, 2019).

Elements for successful curriculum differentiation policy implementation depend on effective planning, a good plan, and policy design from the policy itself. Furthermore, policy objectives must be consistent and clear. In addition, Maguvhe (2015) argues for consistency and continuity in inclusive policy implementation which has realistic targets for both teachers and learners. The argument is also based on the availability of LTSM and strong implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

3.2.3 Plausible threats impeding implementation of curriculum differentiation

This section presents the plausible threats that might impede the curriculum differentiation model designed to meet the needs for Grade 4 English learners which are large classrooms, inadequate resources, time management and inclusive pedagogical approach.

3.2.3.1 Large classrooms

Large classes, often known as overcrowded classrooms, are those in which the learner–teacher ratio exceeds the recommendations of a country's educational policy. The admission policy of 1998, which is part of the National Education Act 27 of 1996, mandates that learner–teacher ratios in public primary schools should not exceed 40:1 (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Several schools around the country exceed this number. The quantity and quality of learning resources available to each learner, such as desks, schoolbooks, and other learning and teaching support materials, is one of the most pressing issues confronting large class sizes in developing countries.

The causes for large classes in emerging nations can be traced back to government initiatives that make basic education free and compulsory. This aligns with the constant drive for universal basic education, as well as population increase and the understanding that a literate population is more productive than an illiterate one (Shamim & Kuchah, 2016). Large classes or overcrowded classrooms have been found to influence the quality of education offered in the educational system. In huge courses, teachers find it challenging to manage and teach efficiently. In large classrooms, the objective of maximising each learner's progress and achievement by fulfilling individual needs and helping the learning process is hindered (Makhubele, 2015).

According to Usman (2016), learners' backgrounds, grade levels, subject areas, distinct teaching methods, attributes, and ability levels all influence the effect of class size on academic performance. Classroom management, learner control, marking, planning, and evaluation are all more difficult in large courses. When faced with large classes, teachers are put under extra stress. It may be easier for teachers to recognise difficulties and provide feedback in smaller classes, to identify specific needs and tailor training to fit them, and to set individual goals for learners (Hamman, 2014). Teachers face time constraints and failure to complete the course if they seek to provide personalised attention, which makes them appear inadequate (Gorski, 2017).

According to Nagmoti (2020), educators in smaller classes interact with learners more regularly and individually, which helps to maintain discipline, but in large classes, learners can relate to their classmates rather than to the teacher, which leads to classroom turmoil and inappropriate behaviour. The learners' and educators' relationship are strained, and no meaningful ties are emerging. Learners, particularly those with special needs, can become frustrated in large classes because they require the attention of the teacher.

Differentiation in the classroom allows teachers to give learners of all capabilities, in all conditions, the best chance of learning. In large classes, inequity is accentuated, and disadvantaged groups are more likely to experience inattention, which can lead to learning problems. Learners who have English language barrier in a large class, are frequently overlooked and given insufficient attention and can also easily be buried in the crowd (Thang, 2016). Learner engagement in participatory activities may present

a challenge due to sheer numbers and, in some cases, due to constraints of physical space in lecture-style classrooms due to many learners in a classroom (Gorski, 2017).

According to Bahanshal (2013), teaching English in large classes is a significant challenge and a real-world issue that concerns Saudi English teachers at all levels. They do not have enough time to pay attention to each learner and give each one an opportunity to speak and participate because of the class size. Thang (2016) agreed that large class size does not afford teachers an opportunity to pay attention to differentiating the English curriculum. He further argued that it is difficult to satisfy all the needs of learners who have different interests, personalities, and capabilities, to organise efficient class activities due to the constraints of time and space, to provide equal chances for the learners to participate, practice and to give timely and effective feedback and evaluation.

The negative consequences of large classrooms on teachers' contact time and classroom management necessitate proper planning in large class management (Bondie, Dahnke & Zusho, 2019). To properly manage the classroom, the teacher must design lessons to overcome the issue of teaching time, as well as the psychosocial and physical environment. Large classrooms put a strain on a teacher's capacity to manage time, necessitating more time for practical teaching (i.e., completing an exercise rather than substantive instruction), behaviour control and task management, leaving less time for actual teaching and individual attention (Bahanshal, 2013).

3.2.3.2 Inadequate Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM)

Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) refers to any material, community materials, and non-material audio-visual school environment provided in an academic environment to facilitate school administration and simplify the teaching and learning process. They also offer other basic educational materials that make teaching easier and learning more meaningful and understandable for learners. LTSM includes any non-human resources that are drawn or photographed, built physically or electronically, books, and other related materials that are used in the teaching and learning process (Tijani, 2016).

Actual things, specimens, chalks and boards, models, school buildings and layouts, the community at large, and other basic supplies such as pencils, pens, and practice books are all examples of LTSM (Usman, 2016). Without a question, LTSM is critical in the creation of a positive teaching-learning environment. The usage of these resources provides the teacher with more useful and effective direction than any personal efforts made without the materials.

The implementation of the updated physical education curriculum in Scotland failed, according to Halbert and MacPhail (2010), due to a lack of essential resources such as textbooks. Inadequate resources, according to Thai scholar, Yan (2012), are also a barrier to the implementation of the new English curriculum. A school is a place where pupils are taught, and their attitudes are changed under the supervision of teachers. It is a place or institution for teaching and learning established for the purpose of education. A school's administration is responsible for bringing together various resources and successfully assigning them to achieve the school's overall goals, which include teaching and learning objectives (Osong, 2016).

Most African schools lack sufficient textbooks, revision books, and resource materials to help learners expand their knowledge. The lack of adequate human capital will result in implementation problems even when implementation directions are precisely delivered, consistent, and explicit (Oredein & Babalola, 2020). Okendu (2012) further says that the importance of educational authorities assembling human and material resources inside the school system for effective teaching and learning cannot be over-emphasised. Curriculum implementation places additional demands and expectations on educators and schools, and the support and LTSM available to them are insufficient to meet those obligations (Sutarsih & Saud, 2019). In grade 4 English classes, educators' ability to apply curriculum differentiation is limited, leading to a shortage of resources.

According to Tijani (2016), human and material resources, such as, the authority to ensure that policies are carried out as planned, an adequate number of well-equipped staff members to carry out the implementation, relevant and sufficient data on implementation processes and facilities, such as buildings and equipment, are all

necessary for the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation in Grade 4 English class (Chia, 2013). According to Sutarsih and Saud (2019), a shortage of LTSM inhibits laws from being enforced, services from being supplied, and appropriate regulations from being enacted.

Because curriculum management is heavily reliant on resources available in schools, LTSM is recognised as the most crucial support structure (Department of Education, 2000). Implementing curriculum differentiation without the necessary resources to teach produces stress and strain, which can have serious effects and have a negative impact on teachers' motivation to make the changes (Chigona, 2018). The lack of LTSM, which is required for the execution of teaching and learning, can impede effective curriculum differentiation. Furthermore, according to Chigona, providing essential materials allows teachers to focus on educating their learners rather than looking for materials they do not have.

Textbooks and resource materials are essential tools for effective teaching and learning; their absence or insufficiency causes teachers to treat subjects' abstract concepts, depicting them as dry and uninteresting (Alade, 2020). It is also crucial to have the right people in place to arrange for enough teaching materials and physical space to support educational efforts. According to Usman (2016), a shortage of textbooks, libraries, and physical facilities will hinder the educational system from reacting more completely to curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classrooms.

3.2.3.3 Time Management

Despite the fact that inclusive education promotes non-discrimination, equity, and dignity and is founded on human rights, its implementation in South Africa has been limited and difficult (Andrews, Walton & Osman 2019). Time management includes identifying tasks to be completed, planning, and scheduling organisational activities, prioritising such activities, allocating time to tasks based on their importance in increasing productivity, minimising interruptions, and dealing with routine tasks in such a way that the truly important tasks can receive due attention.

Unlike in the past, when professors could not just finish their syllabus and assess learners, today's situation is more difficult. In the classroom, teachers must perform numerous responsibilities. Bringing in new creative techniques to meet current educational trends, updating the subject to new demands, gathering materials, content presentations, co-ordinating field excursions, and updating the subject to new demands, are just a few of them. Teachers are finding it extremely difficult to balance several duties due to a lack of planning time. The pressure of preparing, planning, and executing duties that are required of them is amplified by the shortage of time.

Prioritising and creating goals are two-time management skills that can be used at work daily. The principles aid in the establishment of a preference scale by identifying the tasks or workload that must be completed first before other less important schedules. It makes it simpler to keep track of any deadlines that must be met to complete any given task. In a school system, prioritising and creating goals can help teachers become more productive by ensuring that all work items are addressed in a timely manner (Kalu, 2012).

Teachers must manage their time and cover the full curriculum because this is how their work is assessed, but it is also vital that the curriculum allows all children in the classroom to participate in learning. In terms of efficacy, schools that are good at managing their time have an advantage. The effectiveness of a school's resources in producing results is measured by its efficiency. For successful curriculum differentiation implementation, time is the most valuable resource that schools should appropriately utilise (Delvin, Kift, Nelson, Smith & McKay, 2012).

Time management, which includes both preparation and teaching time, is a major determinant of curriculum differentiation implementation success (Kalu, 2012). Teachers have challenges owing to time constraints, as they do not have the time to attend to varied requirements and ensure that learners understand what is being taught. When compared to other teaching approaches, the administration of curriculum differentiation takes more time (Park & Sung, 2013). Curriculum differentiation is also difficult to apply due to teachers' lack of lesson preparation time. Due to the nature of curriculum differentiation, which necessitates additional

modifications to teaching aids, support provided, or classroom grouping to accommodate groups of differing competence levels, teachers perceive it to be a difficult effort when compared to their current workload (Maddox, 2015).

According to Park and Sung (2013), time is a one-of-a-kind resource and one of the world's most valuable commodities. Due to its non-recoverable nature, time is the most expensive of all resources. Hours of duty are applied to organisational operations to guarantee a balanced allocation of time and other resources. A timetable is used to manage time in a school system (Kalu, 2012). Therefore, time management is an important instrument for an organisation's success in achieving its objectives and goals (Ugwulashi, 2012). The time is allocated in a generic manner in the timetable, without taking into account the fact that various classes have different learners who study in various ways and may require a different approach to time allocation.

Getting accustomed to new teaching approaches required more time to adapt, resulting in heavy loads that made transformation implementation too stressful and exhausting for educators. Teachers view curriculum transformation as extra effort and are unmotivated to put it in place (Park & Sung, 2013).

3.2.3.4 Inclusive pedagogical praxis

Pedagogical praxis refers to evolving practices in the classroom that involve changes in what teachers and learners do and learn, preparing learners for lifelong learning in an information society (Howard, Becker, Wiebe, Carter, Gouzouasis, McLarnon, & Schuman, 2018). Activities that foster active and independent learning, in which learners take responsibility for their own learning, and activities that engage learners in collaborative learning, in which learners begin together on complicated, protracted, real-world problems, are examples of such practices (Majoko, 2019). Pedagogy is made up of the act of teaching, as well as the ideas, values, and beliefs that guide, maintain, and justify that act (Alexander, 2013). The term pedagogy encompasses the wide range of difficulties that face teachers. The terms 'pedagogy,' 'instructional programmes,' and 'curricula' are all used interchangeably.

According to Maguvhe (2015), inclusive pedagogy focuses on increasing the quality of mainstream education and the role that schools can play in lowering attainment outcomes' inequity by minimising variability in practice. To meet the increasing needs in educational structures and governance, promoting inclusion entails encouraging positive attitudes and enhancing educational and social frameworks. According to Majoko (2019), belonging is at the heart of the inclusive pedagogy concept, and research shows that sentiments of belonging improve learner engagement and learning.

In Grade 4 English classrooms, Omorogbe (2013) identified the employment of improper, ineffective teaching approaches as a primary issue impeding learners' knowledge and achievement. The teacher who is attempting to address the student's demand for active participation engages the learner in reflective and critical thinking exercises on the topic material (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011). Most teachers choose lecturing as a teaching style because they believe in a teacher-centred approach. This stems from the educational system to which the teachers have been exposed (Kubheka, 2018).

The concept of inclusive education, or inclusive pedagogics, refers not only to teaching acts, but also to other teaching abilities. All decisions are considered as being determined not only by teachers' knowledge, skills, and actions, but also by their values and beliefs about learners and the nature of teaching and learning, as well as societal processes and influences, according to inclusive pedagogy (Alexander, 2013). To prevent excluding particular learners, inclusive pedagogy has been characterised as an approach to teaching and learning in which teachers adapt to individual variations among learners (Florian, 2017). Teachers play a critical role in achieving inclusive education (DoE 2001) and must practice inclusive teaching. Teachers who are inclusive are required to embrace learner variety, support all learners, collaborate with others, and participate in ongoing professional development (Maddox, 2015). Their success is determined by teacher education and favourable attitudes.

Curriculum differentiation is a common feature of both inclusive education and inclusive practice, as defined by inclusive pedagogy. What inclusive pedagogy brings is an approach that is totally focused on teachers, including their social activities, attitudes, knowledge, and designs, as well as their teaching actions (Florian, 2017). There is a huge amount of information on differentiated pedagogy available to teachers who want to learn more about how to use it. Teachers can diversify their teaching by changing one or more of the following: the material that learners develop, the process through which they learn it, and the result, or how learners exhibit what they have learned (Ismajli, & Imami-Morina, 2018).

According to Woodcock and Hardy (2017), teachers must be knowledgeable about teaching strategies, how children learn, what they need to learn, classroom organisation, where to get help if needed, how to identify and assess difficulties, how to evaluate and monitor children's learning, and the legal context of education. According to Florian (2017), while providing teachers with this content-based knowledge is crucial, the research suggests that it is insufficient to enhance practice because many teachers fail to use what they have learned when asked to vary the Grade 4 English curriculum.

According to Andrew, Walton, and Osman (2019), social justice in the classroom does not promote treating everyone equally because that would just perpetuate existing inequalities. It argues that learners should be treated fairly based on their abilities, interests, and experience. Treating learners differently rather than equally has the potential to reduce current inequities (Mfuthwana & Dreyer, 2018). Advocating for social justice seeks a classroom where all learners have an equal opportunity to learn and achieve their goals, rather than a classroom where all learners must achieve the same goals at the same time.

3.2.4 Best practices for implementation of curriculum differentiation

This section demonstrates the best practices that make the curriculum differentiation model a success in meeting the needs of Grade 4 English learners. The best practices discussed are collaboration, developing a monitoring and evaluation tool, establishing a shared vision, and embracing the theory of change to sustain the model.

3.2.4.1 Collaboration

Collaboration is a well-defined and mutually beneficial relationship in which people work together to achieve common goals. A commitment to reciprocal relationships and goals; a jointly formed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for achievement; and resource and reward sharing are all part of the partnership (Hernandez, Chang & Ngunjiri, 2017). Collaboration, according to Wium and Louw (2015), is a co-ordinated, synchronous activity that is the consequence of a sustained effort to build and maintain a shared understanding of a problem. Collaboration is a deeply democratic technique of involving people in defining and addressing their own concerns in a group setting.

Collaboration, in this study, refers to teachers working together in a co-ordinated attempt to address an issue (Wium & Louw, 2015). Collaboration allows teachers to work together to complete a series of learning activities, culminating in the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes (Kunnari, 2018). To be successful, collaborative processes typically necessitate a certain level of patience and understanding among many partners. As the collaboration progresses and the participants get to know one another, trust develops, which improves understanding and allows for the early detection and resolution of potential barriers. According to Kabonga (2018), teachers and stakeholders must develop connections that are more than just social in nature and instead become collaborative partnerships characterised by the essential components of co-operation, such as interdependence, equality, and a shared goal.

According to Ainscow (2016), the benefits of collaboration in schools include improving learners' skills and providing them with better access to the national curriculum because it allows teachers to gain a better understanding of curriculum challenges and how to address them, resulting in successful teaching and learning. Collaboration promotes inclusivity, and major future efforts are needed to achieve the ultimate goal of assisting all learners in achieving the best possible educational achievements (Govender, 2018). Within the inclusive education approach stipulated by White Paper 6, collaboration and teacher support are extremely important.

Teachers gain from collaboration because it fosters a respectful climate in which the school can share ideas, innovations, approaches, and tactics (Hernandez, Chang & Ngunjiri, 2017). Common aims, collaborative work or interdependence, parity or equality, and voluntary engagement are all components of collaboration (Kimaro, 2018). Teachers who work together have common or mutual aims, which can help with the implementation of curricular differentiation in grade 4 English classes. Rather than being imposed from above, the goals are negotiated and defined by teachers themselves. Acceptance of shared goals fosters a sense of community among teachers and stakeholders, resulting in a shared commitment to achieve the objectives, which in this case, is the adoption of curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes.

Collaboration argues for a communicative power that has an idealised equal status, pointing toward future democratic arrangements in teaching practices that would be fully transparent, inclusive, and reciprocal (Nkoane, 2015). Teachers participate as peers, regardless of their roles, in constructively addressing the challenges that affect them, allowing for collaboration to function. Each person in a collaborative interaction has an equal opportunity to speak, be heard, and influence decisions. There is no one person or group that is in charge. Teachers take part as equals, with no differences made based on their position, power, or role. Collaboration aids in meeting the needs of all affected teachers as they share expertise and ideas that lead to successful implementation of curriculum differentiation (Kunnari, 2018).

Collaboration is a reflection of the school's community mentality. Organisational frameworks make it easier for colleagues to collaborate. Grant and Ray (2018) go on to say that collaboration, with its emphasis on common goals, relationships, and mutual interdependence, places a systemic rather than compartmentalised or segmented emphasis on interconnectedness and reorganisation. Learners' educational requirements will be met by evolving teams and partnerships with the flexibility, freedom, and authority to collaborate (Young, Cavanagh & Moloney, 2018).

Collaboration is conceptualised in this study as the central mechanism for improving the implementation of curriculum differentiation in a Grade 4 English class because it

facilitates the process of adopting change (Gregory & Noto, 2019). Collaboration is an important enabler, facilitating the implementation of curriculum differentiation policies, offering the professional teacher development and allows for resource sharing. Mendy (2017) argues that when teachers collaborate and share their expertise, all children are enabled to learn, children feel welcome, valued, and supported. Teachers use varied and active approaches to make the lesson more accessible to the diverse group of learners in the class because of the networking and collaboration with other teachers teaching the same subject.

3.2.4.2 Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are critical components of assuring programme development and ensuring that the strategic plan's goals, objectives, and strategies are implemented. Continuous evaluation should be carried out throughout a programme and should be in line with the action plan's goals, objectives, and tactics (Leithwood, 2016).

The M&E system consists of the planning, information collecting and synthesis, reflection, and reporting processes, as well as the supporting conditions and capacities that are required for M&E outputs to contribute meaningfully to decision-making and learning (Kabonga, 2018). Monitoring (internal) is the systematic and ongoing gathering, analysis, and use of information for management control and decision-making, and monitoring and evaluation professionals must determine the authenticity of the alleged change that has happened (Sector, 2016).

M&E can help improve the implementation of two Department of Education policies: Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom through Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement and the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS). The policies stated are a strategy for the Department of Basic Education to ensure that inclusive education is taught in schools. Monitoring the execution of the two policies will aid policymakers in determining whether the projects are on track and ensure that project inputs, activities, outputs, and external factors are all running well (Department of Education, 2010).

Evaluation can be used to assist project managers in determining whether the projects have met the objectives outlined in the project documents.

M&E is a never-ending procedure. It begins as a simple inputs and outputs monitoring effort, in this case referring to the implementation of curriculum differentiation policies, and subsequently evolves into a combination of M&E and, eventually, an evaluation of impact (Kusters, Buck, de Graaf, Minang, van Oosten, & Zagt, 2018). M&E can be thought of as a method of monitoring in a given scenario through time. Such changes, as well as their importance and quality, can be predicted, but they can also be unanticipated. What matters is that such measurements aid in the accurate understanding of changes, regardless of whether they are good or negative (Neumann, Robson & Sloan, 2018). Expected changes and windfalls can be beneficial; yet certain changes can indicate failures or unexpected issues. This will show where curriculum differentiation is needed.

Monitoring and evaluation plans are collaborative and mutually beneficial activities on a global scale. Monitoring and evaluation activities, according to Rosenberg and Kotschy (2020), provide government officials, development managers, and civil society with better ways to learn from experience, improve service delivery, plan and allocate resources, and demonstrate results to key stakeholders as part of accountability. Kimaro (2018) defines M&E as a methodical study of a planned, current, or completed project with the aim of answering management questions, judging the overall value of an endeavour, and providing lessons learned to improve future actions, planning, and decision-making. In the grade 4 English class, evaluations are frequently conducted to examine the efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and relevance of adopting curriculum differentiation.

M&E is the best way to see if the curriculum differentiation model is working since it employs a variety of ways for acquiring, analysing, storing, and presenting data. When new information is needed, it may be essential to adjust an existing approach or create a whole new one (Phetla, 2017). Monitoring is the process of checking information on progress on a regular basis to ensure that it is moving in the desired direction. It should be utilised to guarantee that the plans for implementing curriculum differentiation are

carried out as planned and within the budgetary constraints. The ability to demonstrate results is a key feature of monitoring and assessment. It is an important aspect of how curricular differentiation is applied in English lessons on a day-to-day basis. It provides data that allows management to detect and resolve implementation issues, as well as to assess progress.

3.2.4.3 *Establishing a shared vision*

The team's goal is to achieve a unified vision. According to Stensaker and Vabo (2013), a shared vision is not imposed on people as a school directive, but rather the result of deliberations designed to encourage common interests and a sense of shared purpose for all school activities, including curriculum differentiation. Shared vision encourages openness to learning, understanding one another's duties and responsibilities, clear communication, mutual respect, and the ability to modify one's mind, given new information (Oyedele, Chapwanya & Fonnah, 2015). A common goal or aspiration binds or connects team members. Team members generate a sense of togetherness, allowing the school to provide coherence in a variety of activities that support successful curriculum differentiation implementation (Makhanya, 2016).

A shared vision comes from the convergence of personal visions and leads to the formation of a sense of long-term commitment. A common vision is more than just an amalgamation of personal visions. People can only fully share a vision if they are committed to each other having it, not just to each person achieving it individually (Bockelmann, 2020). In educational management, there must be a sense of connection to the vision that provides the focus and energy for learning. The shared vision has power because of the school's commitment to helping each other achieve the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation. It also provides the guiding force that allows a school to get through difficult periods and keep the learning process on track (Gurr, 2015).

According to Adnan and Valliappan (2019), a common vision is not enforced as a school mandate by one or a few teachers. Rather, it comes from all teachers and stakeholders, resulting in shared interests and a feeling of purpose for all school activities. According to Brown (2020), a good vision should allow teachers and the

school to envision curriculum differentiation as a reality. The vision should be able to be translated from a concept to something that teachers can put into practice. This contributes to the vision's effectiveness and long-term viability. A good vision, according to Kantabutra and Saratun (2013), stimulates teachers to think about the future and gives them and the school a consistent, clear, and concise target. In the process of establishing inclusion in a school, a good, shared vision addresses both short-term objectives and long-term aspirations (Ingram & Williams, 2019).

The vision should serve as a road map that allows for a wide range of activities, interpretations, and innovation. This implies that the vision may shift. To keep the vision's meaning and applicability to the school, it should be examined and changed as needed. This guarantees that a school's ability to respond to both internal and external changes is maintained (Gurr, 2015). When a school has a vision that includes these key components, it can help teachers implement curriculum differentiation policies in the Grade 4 English classroom.

A common vision aims to ensure that the curriculum and teaching are consistent. Because teachers are repeating the same expectations and good practices, this consistency enables learners to succeed (Day & Sammons, 2016). A shared literacy vision focuses on schoolwork and helps teachers and learners create shared beliefs and a common language. It puts their core values and beliefs at the centre of teaching and learning and serves as a foundation for professional development (Bockelmann, 2020). A shared vision should be developed collectively in a learning-friendly environment and founded on the premise that all learners can succeed (Gurr, 2015).

According to Stensaker and Vabo (2013), a school should begin the process of creating a shared vision by encouraging people to generate personal visions. Everyone must perceive a piece of their own vision in the shared vision. It takes time for a shared vision to form, and it necessitates continual discourse in which advocacy is tempered with inquiry. New insights will emerge as a result of sharing and listening to each other's own visions, which will continue to shape the shared vision. Building a shared vision is an ongoing activity that is essential for effective teaching and learning. It tries to meet the different needs of learners. A shared vision offers varied actions coherence and a sense of commonality. Teachers collaborate to make exciting and

unusual discoveries about their profession. A shared vision gives people a sense of belonging and purpose. It also creates new ways of thinking, courage, and risk-taking and experimentation through encouraging new ways of thinking (Ghate, 2018).

A shared vision can both impact and be influenced by leadership (Bockelmann, 2020). This means that the type and quality of leadership, not just the presence of leadership, is critical to the accomplishment of a shared vision. A common vision, according to Kantabutra and Saratun (2013), can operate as a stimulus and a binding agent in an organisation with good leadership. Brown (2020) discovered that participants believed a visionary leader was required, but that actions and words must also reflect the goal. Employees would commit and begin to act toward the vision as a result of this alignment of rhetoric and behaviour. As a result, through leadership, a vision provides direction and enthusiasm to an organisation and its people (Makhanya, 2016).

Many new teachers said they had not seen any curriculum differentiation in the classrooms they observed, so they had no model to follow when they get their own classrooms (Yuen, Chan, Chan, Fung, Cheung, Kwan & Leung, 2018). Every teacher has a common goal and a common picture when they have a shared vision. Teachers collaborate as a team to implement curriculum differentiation successfully, supporting and motivating one another. Because there is no competition among teachers, there is no need to shift blame or hide your mistakes (Ingrams & Williams, 2019). Leaders must be thoughtful visionaries who involve others in creating a shared future in order to achieve a shared vision. Leaders should get into the habit of bringing their teams along, listening to their aims and objectives, and figuring out what the team wants to accomplish as a team.

3.2.4.4 Embracing the Theory of Change

A theory of change is a technique for discovering out how to solve complex social problems. According to Vandeyar (2017), the theory of change is frequently viewed as a process as well as a product. As a method, the Theory of Change is a means of mapping out trajectories for achieving a desired outcome, the product of which includes illustrations and narration created together and through several critical thinking activities. Teachers, who have the most direct contact with learners, must play

a larger role in the planning and implementation of school improvement. By creating space, removing barriers, and fostering an atmosphere of encouragement for teachers, policy may promote and support creativity (Rogers, 2014).

The Theory of Change process and visualisations make thinking and assumptions visible and accessible, which informs planning and programme designs for implementing curriculum differentiation in schools (Raymer, 2016). A theory of change is a deliberate model of how an initiative, such as a policy, plan, programme, or project, leads to the intended result through a chain of early and intermediate outcomes. Theories of change aid in navigating the complexities of societal change (Guarneros-Meza, Downe & Martin, 2018).

According to Breuer, De Silva, and Lund (2018), a theory of change provides a framework for teaching and learning by expressing the causes of a development challenge, making explicit assumptions about how the proposed approach is expected to yield results, and testing these assumptions against evidence, such as what has previously worked well or not. The theory of change offers a good rationale for obtaining new learning, while monitoring and evaluation lessons help clarify assumptions and inform decisions on how to adapt an approach to achieve planned results (Blustein, Kenny, Autin, & Duffy, 2019).

A theory of change outlines the precise interventions that will be utilised to try to produce the preconditions necessary for the effective implementation of curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes, as well as the long-term outcomes that must be nurtured. According to Reinholz, and Andrews (2020), the project's concrete activities are represented by outcomes. Developing well-articulated outcomes and preconditions help a team to choose treatments consciously, as opposed to a project that starts by designing its actions and then stipulating what it wants to achieve. Each long-term outcome or precondition is accompanied by a set of indicators that specify the forms of evidence required to determine whether or not an outcome has been met, in this case, successful curriculum differentiation implementation. To visually demonstrate a theory of change, a route of change is created as a visual depiction of the links between preconditions, long-term outcomes, indicators, and interventions.

The theory of change in educational space, according to Dhillon and Vaca (2018), progresses through distinct stages of initiation, implementation, and institutionalisation. Teachers who are confronted with changes go through numerous stages of worry and respond to educational change initiatives in a variety of ways, depending on their stage of life and profession (Vandeyar, 2017). Regardless of the system, theory of change helps teachers develop their efficacy as change agents and how systems need to be modified (Adler, 2019). It is more probable that systems will learn to change if more teachers act as learners, connect with like-minded individuals, speak up, and collaborate with those who hold opposing viewpoints. Educational transformation in an inclusive classroom mandates what curriculum changes should be implemented and how they should be implemented (Reinholz & Andrews, 2020).

3.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter reviewed related literature informed by the objectives of the study. Literature was reviewed with reference to the challenges of implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers, probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation, plausible threats impeding implementation of curriculum differentiation and the best practices for the implementation of curriculum differentiation. Related literature was drawn from developed countries, the African continent, the SADC countries and South Africa.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of the study was to develop the curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of Grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in the Endumeni circuit. This chapter presents the research design and methodology of this study. It clarifies the use of the Transformative Research Paradigm in the study, explains and justifies why the study used a qualitative research design. It further presents Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) as an approach followed by the study. This chapter further explains how sampling was done, the data collection method used, how data collected was analysed and ethical considerations and procedures employed in the study.

4.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, a qualitative design was adopted. Qualitative research, according to Tracy (2019), aims to discover how people make sense of their experiences. Qualitative researchers look at objects in their natural habitats, aiming to make sense of or interpret experiences in terms of the meanings that people assign to them (Beatty, 2013). Qualitative research is more sensitive to contextual elements and allows for the development of new ideas and theories. This research had deep engagements with teachers and enhanced the chances of developing new ideas and new ways of thinking that will help them when implementing curriculum differentiation in their grade 4 English classes.

Qualitative research, according to Borg (2015), is a contextual activity that situates the observer in the world. It is a collection of interpretive and material acts that make the world visible. These activities have a profound impact on the globe. They transform the world into a sequence of representations, which include field notes, interviews, dialogues, images, recordings, and self-reflection memos (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative research at this level entails an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This implies qualitative researchers look at things in their natural surroundings, aiming to understand or interpret events through the lenses of the individuals assigned to them (Mohajan, 2018).

4.3 TRANSFORMATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The transformative Paradigm (TP) was the paradigm used in this research. The transformational paradigm is consistent with Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire's dialogical conscientisation model, Habermas' communicative action theory, and Foucault, Lyotard, and Todorov's views on academic rhetoric that supports institutional forms of dominance and control were also considered (Creswell & Clark, 2017).

According to Romm (2015), TP confronts social injustice at all levels of research, directly addressing the politics in research. Transformative scholars intentionally and explicitly align themselves with the less powerful in a collaborative endeavour to bring about social transformation. According to Creswell (2014), TP emphasises that the community's agency for change rests with the researcher's collaborative efforts. In TP, respect for culture and the knowledge of power dynamics are essential (Bell & Waters, 2018). This paradigm enables scholars to comprehend how teaching and learning challenges have evolved in tandem with social factors, such as culture and politics. In the South African research, using a transformative approach when conducting focus groups resulted in improved collaboration with the focus group members and discussions with them about how they could collaborate more effectively amongst themselves.

4.3.1 Objectives of transformative paradigm

Its objective is to identify, contest and help in solving power imbalances that happen in classrooms (Flick, 2015). Furthermore, this paradigm aims at improving teachers' creative thinking when designing all teaching activities and suggest that they are articulated towards transformation, culturally sensitive and community oriented via key methodologies, such as participatory action learning and action research (Al Riyami, 2015).

4.3.2 Principles of Transformative Paradigm

Three principles of TP strongly align with the Critical Pedagogy and PALAR employed by the study. These principles are dismantling marginalisation, advocating for equity, and transformation.

4.3.2.1 Dismantling marginalisation

The lives and experiences of the various traditionally underprivileged communities are important to TP (i.e., women, minorities, and persons with disabilities). Kumar (2018) suggests that researchers look into the structures and reproductions of oppression rather than focusing on the lives and experiences of a single marginalised group. Researchers must concentrate on how oppressed people's lives are hampered by oppressors' acts, both individually and collectively, as well as the techniques used by oppressed people to oppose, challenge, and undermine oppressors' actions (Creswell, 2014). As a result, researching the lives of oppressed people needs a study of the oppressors' techniques of dominance.

4.3.2.2 Advocating for equity

Inequities based on gender, race or ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic classes are represented in asymmetric power interactions, according to the Transformative Paradigm (TP) (Creswell & Clark 2017). TP investigates how the findings of social investigations into injustices are linked to political and social action by those who have been discriminated against or oppressed, as well as other social justice activists (Al Riyami (2015). When all learners are not involved in the grade 4 English lesson, it signals that social inequalities are occurring in the classroom, and the researcher must connect with participants in a way that encourages them to address the social injustices they encounter as change agents.

4.3.2.3 Transformation

The programme theory and research approach were developed using a transformative theory in this paradigm. A set of assumptions about how a programme works or why a problem occurs is known as a programme theory (Kumar 2018). The creation of the transformative paradigm was aided by researchers who were concerned about a variety of situations and events. Participants chosen for this study are instrumental in bringing change to their classrooms and schools; this paradigm encouraged participants in adopting the theory of change as the best technique for successful curriculum differentiation implementation.

4.4 PHILOSOPHICAL STANCE OF TRANSFORMATIVE PARADIGM

The transformative Paradigm has its ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives. This section unpacks these three stances of the transformative paradigm and justifies how they relate to the conceptual framework and approach used by the study.

4.4.1 Epistemology of transformative paradigm

Knowledge in the transformative paradigm is socially and historically located within a complex cultural context (Tracy, 2019). The transformational paradigm, according to Hurtado (2015), views knowledge as a social construction formed by the knower's personal experiences, attributes, and community affiliations. Transformative scholars recognise the importance of learning from community members and see participants as valuable collaborators.

The epistemological assumption of the transformative paradigm, according to Creswell (2014), is centred on the meaning of knowledge as determined through a prism of cultural lenses, as well as the power dynamics involved in determining what is regarded as authentic knowledge (Flick, 2015). This means that not only is the interaction between the knower and the would-be known (i.e., the researcher and participants) interactive, but it also necessitates a grasp of the relationship's cultural intricacies (McNiff, 2013).

The transformative paradigm investigates the basic epistemological assumption concerning the nature of knowledge and the sort of relationship between the researcher and participants (Branch, 2019). This epistemological assumption is marked by close collaboration between researchers and study participants in order to determine what constitutes valid knowledge (Creswell & Clark, 2017). This type of collaboration makes it easier to generate culturally relevant research purposes, designs, and implementations. Exploring the ramifications of this assumption might lead to in-depth discussions about what it means to be objective and trustworthy. Punch (2013) says that, depending on the situation, knowing TP helps researchers be aware of power connections related to gender, disability, sexual orientation/identity, class, ethnicity, race, and nationality, as well as other features of diversity associated

with less power. In the framework of a study, a researcher must devise methods for establishing a trusting connection (Romm, 2015).

According to Al Riyami (2015), objectivity in this paradigm is attained by reflecting on the impact of the researcher's values and social position on the problems selected as relevant for research and important ideas developed. The PALAR approach to establishing not only the study focus, but also the partnership that must work throughout the research period, reflects the transformative paradigm's epistemological assumptions.

4.4.2 Ontology of transformative paradigm

To determine the reality that has the possibility for social transformation and enhanced social justice, transformative researchers must be aware of existing values and privileges (Hurtado, 2015). According to the ontology of the transformative paradigm, what is real must be critically investigated through an ideological critique of its role in perpetuating oppressive social structures and policies. What is thought to be true must be examined critically through an ideological critique of its function in the maintenance of repressive social structures and policies (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Adopting a transformational paradigm acknowledges that reality is socially constituted (as do constructivists). The transformative ontological premise acknowledges that there are multiple versions of what is regarded as real.

According to Flick (2015), the transformational paradigm's ontological presupposition rejects the influence of privilege in determining what is considered real and the repercussions of accepting one version of reality over another. This reality assumption corresponds to what happens in schools when inclusion policies are adopted and using TP in this study increases participant depowering and allows them to express themselves freely. This ontological presupposition raises questions of power, influencing who is more or less likely to be included in discussions about what constitutes reality (Hurtado, 2015).

Power considerations are widespread in research, according to Romm (2014), and pose questions about how decisions about what is researchable are made. He goes on to say that accepting such differences in perceptions as equally legitimate ignores the harm caused by ignoring the factors that favour one version of reality over another, such as the influence of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender, and

disability lenses. The transformational ontological belief, according to Punch (2013), highlights that what appears "real" may be reified structures that are deemed to be due to historical conditions. As a result, what is assumed to be true must be critically analysed through an ideological critique of its function in maintaining repressive societal structures and policies. TP reality in this study was more relevant because participants occupied different level positions of power which could interfere with how the research was conducted if this paradigm was not employed.

4.4.3 Axiology of transformative paradigm

The transformative paradigm arose from a dissatisfaction with current paradigm research that was deemed irrelevant to, or a misrepresentation of, oppressed people's lives. One of the main beliefs of the transformative paradigm, according to Archibald, Neubauer, and Brookfield (2018), is that increased concern for the rights and wellbeing of research participants leads to greater participation in the research process. As a result, the transformative axiological assumption studies how transformative researchers question and extend respect principles (Al Riyami, 2015).

If it is to be an ethically valid practice, the Transformative Paradigm pays particular attention to underlying assumptions about the nature of worth and value, and how these can come to be recognised in any given contextual setting. Respect, beneficence, and justice are the regulatory concepts promoted by the transformative paradigm. With TP, the cultural norms of contact in varied communities and across ethnic groupings are rigorously investigated. Participants' consent is obtained in full awareness and using culturally appropriate methods. It comprises awareness of one's own self in relation to others (Romm, 2015). The promotion of human rights and the advancement of social justice is defined as beneficence.

The transformational axiological premise establishes a link between the research process and the use of findings to promote human rights and social justice. In the transformative paradigm, the axiological assumption is valued as a guiding force for conceptualising future beliefs and study outcomes. The domain that incorporates human rights and social justice is the beginning point for transformational scholars (Branch, 2019). The process and outcomes of research and evaluation studies are explicitly linked to the advancement of a social justice agenda. Ethics codes must be

examined and changed to reflect a greater concern for principles that are reflective of the transformative paradigm's axiological assumptions (Archibald, Neubauer & Brookfield, 2018).

In the TP, an explicit connection is created between the research process and outputs and the advancement of a social justice goal. The transformative axiological position includes fundamental ideals such as transparency and mutuality. The theory of knowledge is an explicit connection drawn between the research process and outputs and the pursuit of a social justice objective (Tracy, 2019). When it comes to defining ethical standards, there are many opportunities to generate discussion about what it means to be ethical when conducting research. Through self-reflection and interaction with citizens of the researched community, TP invites researchers to consider how they may continue their quest for greater understanding. Beyond broadening the knowledge base, Bell and Waters (2018) emphasised the importance of returning the favour to the community that supplies the data by allowing access to the results so that they can be used to enhance practice and influence policy. Collaboration between the researcher and the host community is required by ethical norms.

4.5 POPULATION

According to Etikan and Bala (2017), a population is defined as the total of all objects, subjects, or individuals that match a set of criteria. The population is the set or group of all the units to which the research findings will be applied. In this study, population refers to all South African teachers teaching English to grade 4 learners who are not native English speakers and who are expected to implement curriculum differentiation in their classrooms. It further refers to school principals who are expected to manage implementation of curriculum differentiation in schools as well as English subject advisors who are employed to support schools in curriculum implementation. Units that represent characteristics of the population were selected. The sample of the study is made of four grade 4 English teachers, two principals and two subject advisors.

4.5.1 Sampling of participants

A sample, according to Mujere (2016), is a collection of people, things, or objects drawn from a large population for the purpose of measuring. The sample should be typical of the population, as the findings from the study sample will be shared with the

rest of the community (Mafini, 2015). According to Etikan and Bala (2017), sampling is the act, process, or technique of choosing a proper sample, or a representative fraction of a population, in order to determine population metrics or characteristics. The sample of the study is taken from two primary schools and made up of four grade 4 English teachers, two principals and two English subject advisors who support selected teachers.

4.5.1.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling, also known as judging, selective, or subjective sampling, was utilised in this investigation. It refers to a category of sampling approaches that rely on the researcher's judgement when selecting the units to be investigated (e.g., persons, cases, events, or pieces of data) (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

Purposive sampling, according to Taherdoost (2016), is a strategy in which specific places, people, or events are purposely chosen to offer significant information that cannot be gained from other options. It is when a researcher decides to include cases or participants in the sample because they are interesting.

This sampling method was chosen because it focuses on specific features of a population that are of interest and will best answer the research questions. This method gives researchers the rationale they need to draw theoretical, analytic, and logical conclusions from the sample they are studying (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016).

This study selected teachers who are teaching English first Additional Language in Grade 4 classes. It further selected subject advisors who support English teachers in intermediate phase and principals who lead and manage both schools. They were selected because they are in a position to provide important information that will best answer the research questions.

4.5.1.2 Rationale for inclusion of participation

In this study, population sampling entailed locating and choosing individuals teaching a grade 4 English class who are aware and experienced with curriculum differentiation. Aside from knowledge and experience, the relevance of availability and willingness to participate, as well as the ability to voice experiences and ideas in an expressive, articulate, and reflective manner, were all considered.

Participants in this study are four teachers teaching English in grade 4 in the selected primary schools, two English subject advisors from the district office supporting the teachers teaching English in the intermediate phase and the two principals of the involved schools. Participants were chosen based on their experience and involvement in 4th grade English language teaching. It is important to note that the names used and attributed to the participants are pseudonyms because the participants' identities must be kept confidential for ethical reasons.

4.5.2 Credentials of the team

This section presents the skills each participant brought to the research as benefits.

4.5.2.1 Grade 4 English Teachers

Grade 4 English teachers were selected because of their experience teaching the subject. They are responsible for the policy implementation. The teacher is in charge of everything that happens in the classroom; they have complete authority over what the learners do, as well as when and how they should talk and engage in class. Teachers assist students in overcoming any challenges they may have during the learning process, making learning easier for them. Teachers are the ones who experience challenges in the classroom and participating in this study gave them an opportunity to come up with solutions that directly address their challenges in implementing curriculum differentiation.

4.5.2.2 English subject advisors

English subject advisors were included because of their role in ensuring that schools become learning organisations and provide quality education that will ensure that all learners are developed so that they make a difference wherever they are. They facilitate curriculum implementation and information sharing between the authorities and schools. Subject advisors are also expected to play the role of mediators of learning in order to ensure that meaningful learning is taking place.

English subject advisers must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject matter, as well as numerous philosophies, methodologies, and resources relevant to teaching English in a South African setting, including curriculum differentiation to suit all learners in the classroom.

4.5.2.3 Principals

The principal manages school operations and distributes resources to ensure a safe and productive learning environment (Gudo, 2014). He incorporates parents and members of the community in the educational process and creates an atmosphere in which community resources help learners learn, achieve, and thrive. He assists in the development of a shared vision and clear school's goals, as well as ensuring that the goals are met. He is also in charge of ensuring that high-quality standards-based teaching is implemented, resulting in better levels of achievement for all learners. To encourage learning and achievement for all learners, he builds and maintains collaborative learning and shared leadership. His knowledge aided the study in accomplishing its goals.

4.5.3 Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data in this study was collected through focus group discussions and observations. According to Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick and Mukherjee (2018), a focus group is a form of in-depth interview conducted in a group setting, with meeting characteristics based on the proposal, size, makeup, and interview processes. The interaction inside the group is the focus or object of analysis. Through their responses to the ideas and contributions during the discussion, the participants have an influence on one another. During the focus group discussion, the moderator encourages debate by making comments or bringing up topics.

This data collection strategy was chosen because it works well with PALAR and is a good way to get individuals together who have similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a topic. According to Mishra (2016), focus groups are used to gather information on shared opinions and the meanings that underpin such opinions. They are also helpful for gaining a deeper insight into people's experiences and ideas.

According to Kawulich (2012), observation is the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artifacts in a group setting. Bryant (2015) claims that observations assist in determining how much time is spent on different activities, confirming nonverbal expressions of feelings, and determining who interacts with whom among participants. Furthermore, observations assist the researcher to learn about activities that participants may have difficulties mentioning in interviews.

This study used observations because they guided the researcher in becoming acquainted with participants, learning what constitutes appropriate questions, how to ask them, and which questions may best assist in answering the research questions (Kawulich & Chilisa 2015). Furthermore, observations assisted the researcher in learning how people interact in the setting and what is important to the people in the social setting under study.

Discussion reflections formed part of the data generation. The data collected was stored on audio tapes and the researcher was the only one to access data. Audio recordings were transcribed to make it easy for analysing data. The initial meeting also served to level out power differentials. The researcher intended to meet with the participants for eight consecutive months, but that may have changed to more discussion meetings, depending on the needs of the study. This study was designed in such a way that it accommodated creativity, communication spaces, and enhanced engagement among participants and the researcher in trying to design a curriculum differentiation model to assist in meeting the needs of Grade 4 English learners.

4.6 PARTICIPATORY ACTION LEARNING AND ACTION RESEARCH (PALAR) AS A RESEARCH METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This study used Participatory Action Learning and Action Research (PALAR) as a methodological approach for achieving its objectives. PALAR is a collaborative research approach that recognises each participant's individual abilities and contributions to the study (Wessels & Wood, 2019). PALAR emphasises community engagement and action in communities facing change challenges. It aspires to interpret the world by attempting to transform it collaboratively and completing several phases of reflection. It encourages empowerment, liberation, and emancipation and is more human-centred (Setlhare-Kajee, 2018).

PALAR is based on the belief that long-term learning and development should be transformative in nature in order to achieve systemic and structural social change (Datzira-Masip & Fletcher, 2021). By viewing structural and intersectional disadvantage as the problem, a transformative paradigm, along with critical pedagogy and PALAR, advocated preventative action toward social justice (Wood, 2019).

The research process in the PALAR approach began with establishing a foundation of participation by establishing relationships and defining roles and responsibilities. According to PALAR researchers, research should be liberated, equitable, democratic, and life-enhancing (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). PALAR's reasoning and operational agenda are both plainly political. It works with marginalised, and oppressed groups to improve their conditions at school and in society. It recognises that disparities between groups and people are systematically generated through irregular power relations in the workplace, education, and civic society (Smith, 2017). Democratic participation, transparency, inclusiveness, openness, a strong co-operative, multicultural, communitarian ethos, and a clear assurance to concerns concerning the creation and maintenance of inclusive classrooms are all values shared by PALAR and Critical pedagogy (Louw & Wood, 2018).

Working with oppressed groups of people who are experiencing inaccessibility, marginalisation, exploitation, racism, sexism, and cultural disaffection is a priority for the PALAR approach, which aims to restore their ability to create knowledge and practices that are in their own best interests and are eager for change. PALAR was employed in conjunction with Critical Pedagogy in this study because they both clearly enunciate change with collaborative procedures in empowering, motivating, improving self-esteem, and establishing solidarity and oneness among teachers, principals, and subject advisors (Setlhare, Wood & Meyer, 2016).

PALAR (Participatory Action Learning and Action Research) is positioned as one strategy for engaging learners in successful, collaborative, creative, innovative, and self-developed education (Zuber-Skerritt, Kearney, & Fletcher, 2015). PALAR's participation is to contribute to a better understanding of what resources, curriculum differentiation knowledge, and action are required to produce practical inclusive classrooms, social justice improvements, transformation, and long-term change.

4.6.1 Development of participatory action learning and action research (PALAR)

PALAR is an ongoing, evolving genre in the great family of action research, including participatory action research (PAR), action learning (AL), action research (AR),

collaborative action research (CAR), appreciative inquiry (AI), lifelong action learning (LAL), action science (AS), critical participatory action research (CPAR), action learning and action research (ALAR) and educational action research (EAR) (Zuber-Skerritt & Passfield, 2016).

In the pursuit for better effectiveness through democratic participation, action research is a method of systematic inquiry for all participants. Through action research and other methods, Lewin was particularly concerned with raising the self-esteem of minority groups and assisting them in their quest for independence, equality, and co-operation (Lewin, 1946). Action Research aimed to help marginalised peoples overcome the causes of exploitation and colonialism that had shaped their modern histories. The growth of reflective thought, discussion, decision, and action by ordinary people participating in communal study on private problems that they share was credited to action research (Wood, Seobi, Setlhare-Meltor & Waddington, 2015). Kurt Lewin (1890-1947), whose earliest ideas on what he termed "action research" were laid down around 1934, came to identify its characteristics after a series of practical experiences in the early 1940s (Zuber-Skerritt, & Louw, 2014).

Action research for Lewin was demonstrated by the discussion of difficulties followed by group decisions on how to proceed. Those who must carry out the work must actively participate in the exploration of challenges that they identify and foresee as part of action research. Following a study of these issues, the group makes decisions, monitoring and noting the outcomes (Zuber-Skerritt & Passfield, 2016).

PALAR is a concept that brings together Action Learning and Action Research, Participatory Action Research, and lifelong learning to achieve positive social change for a more just and better world for everyone. PALAR was created in 1990 at the First World Congress on Action Learning, Action Research, and Process Management at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia (ALARPM). That all sectors of society, including consultants from industry, government, and business schools, school and tertiary teachers and university staff, were present, indicates the diverse areas that shaped the institutionalisation of ALARAPM in the realm of scientific inquiry as a methodology (Senkoneng, 2020). In 1997, Orlando Fals Borda organised the fourth ALARA World Congress in Cartagena, Colombia, which drew around 1 850 attendees and partnered with the Participatory Action Research network, whose members were

primarily concerned with community development, mobilisation, and involvement. PALAR was developed as a methodological approach as a result of the congress (Zuber-Skerritt & Passfield, 2016).

PALAR can help one create action leadership (Wood, 2019). Participation, collaboration, communication, community of practice, networking, and synergy are just a few of the connected concepts and ideals that PALAR encompasses.

4.6.2 Objectives of PALAR

4.6.2.1 Empowerment

The PALAR approach strives to empower community members through collaborative transformation by allowing their informed voices to be heard, therefore honouring existing indigenous knowledge and abilities (Zuber-Skerritt & Teare, 2013). Learning takes place through an iterative process of action and critical reflection that encourages participants to reflect on their professional practice, both individually and collaboratively, in order to improve their educational circumstances while encouraging democratic, mutually beneficial partnerships (Meyer & Wood, 2017). The goal is to encourage transformative action, character development in individuals and communities, while also contributing to professional thought and practice (Zuber-Skerritt, 2018). Empowerment, in this study, assisted by bringing a critical attitude in participants and the promotion of knowledge construction through experiential learning in order to solve teaching and learning problems (Kolb, 2014).

4.6.2.2 Collaborative

Collaboration is a type of behaviour that encompasses co-operative arrangements in which two or more parties work together to achieve a common aim (Zuber-Skerritt & Passfield, 2016). When participants used their personal and collective agency to overcome problems in establishing curriculum differentiation in classrooms, they communicated as collaborative participants and knowledge distributors (Stringer, 2013; Teare, 2013). The information gathered is then reintroduced into the context for further action. Reflexive answers must be culturally and co-operatively constructed by individuals familiar with the environment, just as adversity develops inside one (Meyer & Wood, 2017). The PALAR process was unusual in that it permitted individuals who were previously excluded from standard researcher-driven interventions to take part

in empirically sound research. In this study, collaboration created an energising and creative environment in which people could try out new ideas and ways of thinking in order to meet the barriers of curriculum differentiation implementation.

4.6.2.3 Liberating

This is a freeing and revolutionary transition from traditional research, in which the researcher is the expert tasked with establishing objective truth in order to offer viable solutions in all situations (Setlhare-Kajee, 2018). PALAR aspires to recognise and evolve traditional empirical research to incorporate local knowledge in order to serve the community while also generating action and empirically sound theory (Setlhare, Wood, & Meyer, 2016). According to PALAR researchers, research should be liberated, equitable, democratic, and life-enhancing. Engaging PALAR in this study encouraged liberation, participation, and mutual interaction among participants while learning about how to work together in addressing teaching and learning challenges.

4.6.2.4 Democratic

PALAR aspires to develop democratic, real, trusting, and helpful relationships, according to Wessels and Wood (2019). Within the collaborative learning setting, regular personal and group reflection is required. PALAR is underpinned by democratic, participatory, and emancipatory values (Wood & Zuber-Skerritt, 2013). Zuber-Skerritt (2015) says democratic values, openness and respect for different beliefs can lead to the development of a shared wisdom that helps to guide the participants in transformation and sustainable transformation, in this case, the development of a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of Grade 4 English learners. PALAR aims to break down barriers imposed by power relations, and make the researcher and participants equal contributors, working together in a relationship based on respect and trust to realise sustainable change (Zuber-Skerritt, & Louw, 2014). Understanding the nature and fundamental causes of unpleasant circumstances in order to generate real methods to alter them is the goal of such emancipatory learning (Meyer & Wood, 2017). The democratic aspect of PALAR encouraged participants to engage in critical, collaborative thought, which included questioning established educational assumptions and exploring new approaches to curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes.

4.6.3 Benefits of using PALAR in this study

PALAR is interested in emotions and how they influence our actions. When implementing inclusive policies, such as White Paper 6 and the Screening, Identification, Assessment, and Support (SIAS) Policy, the critical reflection approach aims to discover patterns of action or thinking that may be biased and restricting. PALAR is inclusive and democratic. The researcher and participants were willing, committed, and passionate about changing the *status quo* of how teachers can enhance the way English FAL is taught inclusively in Grade 4. PALAR proved to be in a position to help achieve the objectives of the study through engaging in action research and action learning.

The PALAR cycle is a dynamic and adaptable process. As the researcher and participants worked from a big picture, goal-oriented topic, each facet of the cycle interacted with the others, resulting in a specific plan of action. Due to their lived experiences relating to the research topic, participants in the study were recognised as experts, guaranteeing that relevant concerns were addressed (Meyer & Wood, 2017). As a result, it provided crucial information to the study, allowing it to meet the research objectives.

Learning through PALAR was self-empowering. Participating in the study process allowed participants to have a better understanding of the research process and build decisive thinking abilities, allowing them to question information sources and make more informed judgements (Datzira-Masip & Fletcher, 2021). Participants benefited from the assistance of others who were dealing with similar concerns and struggles (Wood, Seobi, Setlhare-Meltor & Waddington, 2015). Participants' concerns, paired with the study team's supportive network, enhanced the possibility of one individual's voice being heard; more public awareness may be achieved with an entire team fighting for a comparable change (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

4.6.4 Principles of PALAR

PALAR is embodied by 7Cs which act as its principles. The 7Cs are commitment, communication, competence, compromise, collaboration, critical reflection, and coaching. PALAR principles were experienced during data generation and led to the team achieving its objectives in a gratifying manner. This study led to the 8th C which was celebration of achieving the study objectives. One cannot engage in a PALAR

process and not celebrate the learning that occurred during the study. The nature of the learning that took place was embraced, and participants were encouraged to construct their own differentiation model based on their own strengths and unique talents. PALAR, according to Wood (2019), recognises the talents, skills, and information that participants offer to the learning process. Throughout the investigation, the emphasis was on agency and informed choice. The following is the summary of how the 7Cs facilitated the achievement of the study objectives on designing the curriculum differentiation model for Grade 4 English classroom.

4.6.4.1 Commitment

Commitment of the participants to the project was an outstanding feature. It improved the relationship and assisted in achieving the study goals. The PALAR journey was enjoyable and rewarding because all members attended meetings and made valuable contributions when engaged in planned actions. Commitment to the PALAR process, according to Schoonen, Wood, and Kruger (2021), aids in reaching the negotiated programme outcomes as well as participants' own learning and development goals and contributing to the learning and development of those in the group.

4.6.4.2 Communication

Communication in PALAR is dialogical, symmetrical, and respectful rather than directive and one-sided. This principle played a significant role in bringing people together and closer to each other which led to the formation of authentic, trusting relationships (Wood, 2019). Communication in the study helped participants to understand each other better and they could associate themselves with the difficulties faced by their colleagues when implementing curriculum differentiation in the classroom.

4.6.4.3 Competence

Self-directed learning competency is obtained by recognising learning requirements and defining personal learning goals. The PALAR cycle activates the brain's multiple memory systems, allowing it to transition from memorisation to more dynamic generation of information by investigating personal, related, and novel experiences (Moloi, 2018). During the PALAR process participants drew from their prior knowledge of teaching the subject, related to what worked when they tried implementing

curriculum differentiation in the classroom. Building on their competence in teaching the subject, connections were made and led to the successful planning of the process, engaging in actions and creating new knowledge.

4.6.4.4 *Compromise*

Participants in this study were flexible and able to accommodate all members during the PALAR process. The effort that each participant made to ensure that the study was a success meant compromising so that everyone felt valued and respected. PALAR encourages and rewards effort by creating a welcoming learning environment that encourages participants to seek out new information and change existing practices (Wessels & Wood, 2019).

4.6.4.5 *Collaboration*

Collaboration entails active participation by all participants in a democratic decision-making process during the study. PALAR is social and we learn together. Professional learning team of participants worked collaboratively, developed social and professional relationships, and engaged in critical dialogue. During the data generating meetings there were critical, collective reflections that challenged existing norms and tried to gain insight into finding possible solutions to the development of a model that could assist in meeting the needs for Grade 4 English learners.

4.6.4.6 *Critical reflection*

PALAR is a meta-cognitive process that involves critical reflection and paying attention to the conscious and unconscious forces that influence one's behaviours and observations while collecting and evaluating data over time (Schoonen, Wood & Kruger, 2021). In each stage of the PALAR process that the participants and the researcher engaged on, there was on-going critical reflection which started as self-reflection. PALAR is a cumulative process that builds on previous cycles; the reflections built from the meetings through actions shaped the process on which the team was engaged.

4.6.4.7 Coaching

Knowledge is shared among all participants, by giving freely of their insights and experience for the benefit of other (Wessels & Wood, 2019). In this study, coaching was guided by questioning and dialogue, which resulted in greater understanding of how to implement curriculum differentiation in the classroom. It was characterised by learning throughout the PALAR process and enhanced understanding of the unique circumstances of the teachers' conditions in each school.

4.7 PHILOSOPHICAL STANCE OF PALAR

PALAR plays an essential role not only as a technique or approach, but also as a perspective on epistemology, ontology, and axiology. Epistemology has to do with assumptions about the nature of knowledge and knowing. Ontology is a set of beliefs concerning the nature of reality and being. Finally, axiology pertains to ethical and value beliefs.

4.7.1 Epistemology of PALAR

Meaningful information is generated in PALAR through the lens of relationships and the time-consuming process of relationship building. PALAR is about the belief that understanding one another and building trust between the knower and the knowee in the co-creation of knowledge that leads to transformation requires a long-term collaborative effort (Louw & Wood, 2018). Its goal is to recast the traditional relationship between researchers and knowledge production by putting participants at the centre of their own knowledge growth (Fletcher & Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

PALAR places a strong emphasis on both learning and research. According to Zuber-Skerritt (2018), action research has two goals: first, to take deliberate action to improve situations, and second, to research the change process in order to get a deeper knowledge and hence, build theories to explain the change that occurs. Participants are more concerned with enhancing their overall quality of life. In this study, PALAR's epistemology played a vital role as teachers were interested in improving their English teaching by implementing curriculum differentiation to accommodate all learners in the classroom. The focus is on improving the community's social standard; they are held accountable for creating research outputs as a result of their involvement and writing up and distributing the learning is a crucial duty (Wood, 2019).

PALAR and CP are based on community experiences and engagement, and they encourage and seek a more horizontal power distribution. They are also concerned with action change, knowledge generation, social control, and social inequality.

4.7.2 Ontology of PALAR

PALAR openly confronts power and political systems, creating the opportunity for innovative change and efficient solutions to community and school concerns, such as the implementation of curriculum differentiation in English Grade 4 classrooms. Its focus is on privilege and power systems, as well as researchers' many identities and positions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013). Identity development, according to PALAR and CP, is an emergent quality that occurs because of practical and social engagement. It also emphasises that identity is formed in connections of recognition and desire, which are motivated by a desire for change and the need to play a social role (De Finney & Ball, 2018).

4.7.3 Axiology of PALAR

PALAR, the methodological approach employed in this study, and CP, the conceptual framework used in this study, are both intrinsically ethical since the research requires continual reflexivity and attention to emergent ethical dilemmas as the research programme evolves (Zuber-Skerritt & Louw, 2014). This includes qualities like personal respect, loyalty, humility, and dignity as well as the intended decorum. Both CP and PALAR are based on participant respect, a responsibility to care for vulnerable participants, ongoing responsiveness to the requirements of research partners, an endeavour to minimise risk and maximise collective and individual gains, and periodic review by those involved in the research (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

4.8 FEATURES OF PALAR

This section discusses some of the characteristics of PALAR that sets it apart from other types of action research, as well as the argument that makes it better suited to forming democratic, mutually rewarding partnerships between researchers, participants, and any group of stakeholders in education who want to take action to improve their educational circumstances. Relationship, reflection, and recognition are three aspects of PALAR that are described in this section.

PALAR has three components (reflection, relationship, and recognition) that lead the process and can be utilised as a type of validation, according to Zuber-Skerritt, Wood, and Kearney (2020). These three components include the development of democratic, authentic, trusting, and supportive relationships, the practice of constant critical reflection in a collaborative learning context, and the celebration of all participants' triumphs. PALAR's approach to learning and research is based on the assumption that potential participants have preconceived notions of traditional academic research and, as a result, are resistant to it since they see no real advantage to them (Wood, 2019). PALAR's three key components are the kick-off workshop, the creation of action learning sets, and the celebration of triumphs and milestones, all of which foster relationship, reflection, and acknowledgment, and ultimately, participant learning and long-term success (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015).

The section on PALAR process presents how the three PALAR features guided the study.

4.8.1 Relationship

The start-up workshop allows all participants to come together to begin negotiating how and why they will collaborate and establish collaborative alliances. This session is best held over a few days to allow participants to devote their whole attention to developing relationships and strategising tactics. Relationship deepening exercises assist participants in getting to know one another, building trust, and recognise the shared bonds that bind them. Concerns and expectations about power relations are openly explored, and the PALAR process is considered in light of the group's current project.

Regular meetings of all participants, as they come together as an action learning group to critically reflect on their project/s' development, deepen and build the relationships that began at the start-up workshop. PALAR focuses not only on improving conditions during the action learning set sessions, but also on the learning that occurs from participants' critical and collaborative reflection on their personal and community change experiences (Wood, Seobi, Setlhare-Meltor & Waddington, 2015).

This learning process is critical because it makes PALAR's positive outcomes more sustainable; dialectic reflection's epistemological and ontological insight has far-reaching and long-lasting effects on people's thinking and actions (Wood, 2019), as

well as their ability and willingness to sustain project outcomes. Sharing and reflection in action learning set meetings, according to Zuber-Skerritt and Louw (2014), promote deep learning. Instead of simply developing theory separated from its environment, Zuber-Skerritt (2018) believes that this method to collaborative learning allows participants to create knowledge about the interaction between human behaviour and socio-cultural conditions in specific scenarios.

4.8.2 Reflection

Critical, collaborative contemplation entails questioning existing assumptions and seeking out new perspectives (Zuber-Skerritt & Wood, 2019). PALAR understands that how we reflect on our experiences gives them meaning and increases our self-awareness. Asking insightfully self-aware questions, such as those about the participants' influence on the knowledge gained, stimulates the opposing voice, which can lead to the establishment of a new consensus that all project participants own. The action learning set allows participants to join a tight group with a common goal of investigating and making decisions on real-life issues. This is a life-changing learning experience that helps people develop confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of purpose (Moloi, 2018). Participants have a voice and can create knowledge needed for a full grasp of change and development in their local community because they can communicate with each other in a safe setting (Wood, Louw & Zuber-Skerritt, 2017).

4.8.3 Recognition

PALAR's acknowledgement of participant and project accomplishments is the third feature that sets it apart. If this component is not prioritised in the research project it leaves the participants feeling unrecognised unvalued and detracts from their experience of the partnership (Datzira-Masip & Fletcher, 2021). Everyone in this study was treated equally, and everyone desired to learn from one another and work together toward a similar objective. Giving participants the opportunity to recognise and maybe pass on their learning publicly, as well as to appreciate one other's contributions to the project's success, according to (Zuber-Skerritt, 2015), also gives a space to explore further requirements that arise from the project findings. Because action research initiatives never truly come to an end, recognition allows for continuous engagement.

4.8.4 PALAR process

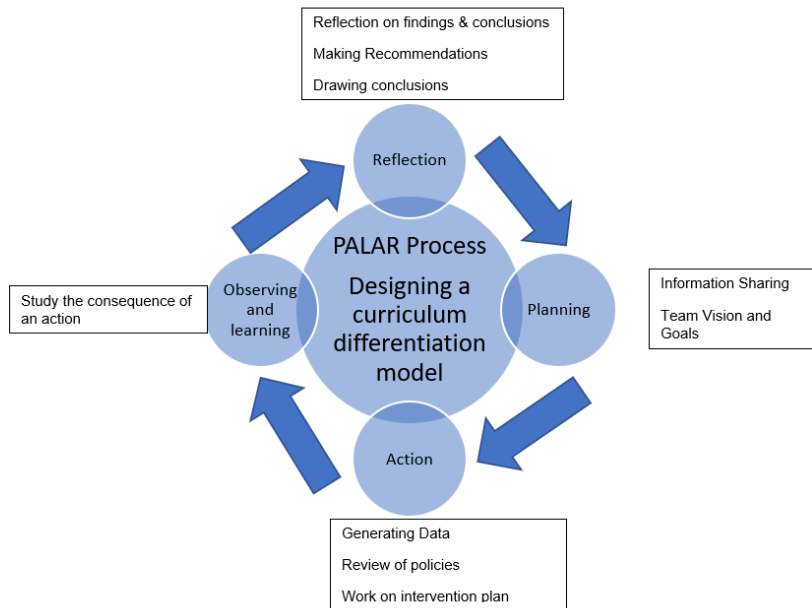


Figure 1: Adapted PALAR cycle

4.8.4.1 Planning- Aim

The team was put together during the planning phase, and the credentials of all the participants were shared. This was an information sharing session where all participants were still familiarising themselves with the process. The participants were informed about the research's nature and goal, as well as the procedures that would be followed and the expected outcomes. This conference gave an opportunity for all attendees to come together and begin to discuss how and why they will collaborate and form collaborative alliances.

PALAR is time-consuming, as it necessitates connection building, knowledge, and dedication on the part of the research team if it is to be properly executed. Discussions were moderated by the English subject advisor who shared policies that were used to implement curriculum differentiation and participants were engaging on them to gauge the understanding of the concepts in curriculum differentiation.

4.8.4.2 Action

This was a workshop which emanated from the first meeting's engagements. The action plan was drawn, based on the challenges that teachers and schools were

experiencing when implementing curriculum differentiation in Grade 4 English classes. The other issues were how the challenges and threats that hinder the implementation of curriculum differentiation could be addressed. The team also looked at the best practices that lead to the success of the model that was anticipated. The team set the issues to be addressed as priorities and agreed on the plan. The priorities in which the team would be engaged were set out and reviewed every time the team met.

Regular meetings of all participants extended and developed the relationships established during the start-up workshop, as they came together as an action learning set to critically reflect on project progress. Participants were given a voice and the ability to create information needed for a thorough grasp of change and growth of the curriculum differentiation model because they were able to interact with one other in a safe atmosphere.

4.8.4.3 Observing and Learning

There were three meetings that followed which resulted with the challenge of unpacking the SIAS policy and the guidelines on responding to learner diversity. The workshop was led by subject advisors who invited the Special Needs Education Services (SNES) officials to collaborate with them. The guests that were invited left and the participants were given time to implement the learning that had occurred on that day which was specifically addressing their context. The team members showed commitment to and accountability for the given tasks.

The second meeting was the reflection on the learning and feedback from the given tasks.

The third meeting was sharing what worked and what did not work. This meeting resulted in the two schools deciding that they would like to continue working together after this research has been concluded. They then asked the subject advisor to share with them documentation on how they could form a successful Professional Learning Community (PLC) and who in the district could assist them in ensuring that they get support to sustain it.

Everyone was treated equally, and everyone wanted to learn from one another and work together to achieve a common objective. This stage can be related to recognition of participants and project achievements in PALAR features.

4.8.4.4 Reflection

The team reflected on what had been accomplished. The meeting looked at whether the team had improved in the implementation of curriculum differentiation for their English classes or not. It looked at the practices that led to the success of the activities that were done. Collaboration that occurred between the two schools and the district office proved to be the one that yield most results. The networking that happened with the subject advisor and his colleagues proved to be the way forward for the PLC that was formed. There was a need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the engagements that started for sustainability purposes. Collaboration, formation of a PLC, shared vision, networking and monitoring and evaluation were the best practices that made the participants successful in implementing curriculum differentiation in their English classrooms.

The reflection made indicated that the study was a success because all the research questions were answered.

4.9 SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT stands for S = Strengths, W = Weaknesses, O = opportunities and T = Threats. The SWOT principle identifies the most effective techniques for aligning organisational resources and competencies with the environment in which the organisation works (Shozi, 2018). A SWOT analysis evaluates an organisation's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as development possibilities, improvements, and threats.

In this context, the SWOT analysis attempted to formulate how a team could successfully achieve the objective of formulating a model to enhance the implementation of curriculum differentiation in a Grade 4 English class.

4.9.1 Strengths of the team

Strengths, according to Al-Araki (2013), are internal elements that aid in the achievement of an organisation's goal. They are current elements that have aided in the achievement of exceptional organisational results. Competent personnel, a clear understanding of the organisation's goals among employees, and a focus on quality improvement are just a few examples.

4.9.1.1 Presence of subject advisor

The subject advisors served as a guide to the kind of support that had been given to the school with regard to the training on implementing the SIAS policy and guidelines to respond on learner diversity.

4.9.1.2 Inclusion of experienced teachers

Teachers brought experience in teaching English First Additional Language which helped a lot in achieving the objectives of the study.

4.9.2 Weaknesses of the team

Internal variables that are detrimental to accomplishing an organisation's goal are known as weaknesses (Gretzky, 2010).

4.9.2.1 Power dynamics

If PALAR principles had not been followed correctly, power imbalances would have resulted in power abuse and dominance. Those in authority would have dominated talks, while others would have been afraid to express their ideas.

4.9.2.2 Research experience

PALAR needs a person to continuously reflect on his practice and the learning that took place; as much as this was discussed, participants needed some probing questions to respond to the outcomes of their practice.

4.9.3 Opportunities of the team

External variables that are favourable for accomplishing an organisation's goal are referred to as opportunities (Al-Araki, 2013).

4.9.3.1 Shared vision and teamwork

The research team had one vision which was successfully implementing curriculum differentiation in the Grade 4 English class. Commitment to achieving this goal increased the team spirit and focus.

4.9.3.2 Education officials who are in different levels

The team included people who work in different levels within the education sector. Each member's experience was valuable in this study, and it aided in leading and providing direction to the research team.

4.9.3.3 Opportunity for collaboration

Teachers were from the two different primary schools. Mutual trust, candid discussions, shared criticism, and healthy arguments were all possible because to the team's collaboration. Professional orientation, experience, education, gender, age, and socio-economic status all influenced the participants' opinions, which were influenced by experience, professional orientation, education, age, gender, and socio-economic status.

4.9.4 Threats to the team

External variables that are detrimental to attaining an organisation's goal are referred to as threats. Threatening someone or something is also a declaration of desire to act violently against them (Team, 2013).

4.9.4.1 Presence of supervisors

The discussion included subject advisors and principals, and teachers found it difficult to speak honestly about their sentiments and recount their experiences because they were in front of the principal, who was also their supervisor.

4.9.4.2 Resources

The team's lack of resource competence posed a threat; for example, if the team needed to use the internet to find strategies used by other countries, it posed a problem for those who could not use the internet. Conducting meetings needed participants to have access to the computer because smart phones sometimes did not show documents shared on the screen.

4.9.4.3 Time factor

The study was conducted at the beginning of the Covid 19 pandemic which led to time being the threat to the accomplishment of the study. Within their busy schedule, participants had to make time for meetings. The majority of the participants worked

full-time and had to complete their study commitments after work, which was challenging to do.

4.9.4.4 Funding for the project

This academic research was not funded. This had a negative impact on the study as meetings were held virtually, and participants had to use data to attend meetings. Document sharing needed downloading and printing which needed a person to have a printer, toner and photocopying paper.

4.10 DATA ANALYSIS

The method of putting facts and numbers together to solve a research challenge is known as data analysis. Finding the answers to the research question is critical. It is an important part of the research during the interpretation of the data, which is derived from the data analysis and draws inferences and conclusions (Samuels, 2020).

Thematic Analysis was utilised to analyse the data in this study. The practice of discovering patterns or themes within qualitative data is known as thematic analysis (Silverman, 2020). It is adaptable to a variety of epistemologies and research concerns. It is a technique for finding, analysing, organising, summarising, and reporting themes in a set of data (Clarke & Braun, 2014). A rigorous thematic analysis produces insightful and trustworthy findings (Good & Lavigne, 2017).

4.10.1 Thematic Analysis (TA)

Thematic Analysis (TA) is a method of presenting qualitative data in a descriptive manner. Qualitative data might be obtained in the form of discussion transcripts from research participants or other identified texts that reflect on the study's topic experientially (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). According to Clarke and Braun (2014), TA helps the researcher to pinpoint the links between concepts and compare them to replicated evidence. Thematic analysis allows one to connect the numerous concepts and opinions of the participants and compare them to the facts collected in various situations at different periods throughout the project.

According to Terry, Hayfield, and Braun (2017), TA is the most suited method for any study involving interpretations. It gives data analysis a logical structure. It enables the researcher to link a frequency analysis of a theme to one of the entire contents. This,

according to Frost (2021), confers precision and complexity, as well as enhancing the research's overall meaning. TA allows you to gain a better understanding of any issues (Good & Lavigne, 2017).

Rather than counting explicit words or phrases, thematic analysis focuses on recognising and describing both implicit and explicit ideas. Following that, codes for concepts or themes are applied to raw data as summary identifiers for further analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes or subjects within a data collection, verifying for code co-occurrence, or graphically displaying code relationships (Clarke & Braun, 2014).

According to Clarke and Braun (2013), thematic analysis provides a very flexible approach that can be changed according to the demands of numerous investigations, offering a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data, due to its theoretical freedom. Other qualitative methodologies demand significant theoretical and technological understanding; TA provides a more accessible kind of analysis. TA is especially excellent for summarising significant elements of a huge data collection since it compels the researcher to handle data in a well-structured manner, resulting in a clear and well-organised final report (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017). The purpose of TA is to uncover themes, or relevant or intriguing patterns in data, and then use these themes to address the research or make a point about a problem. A strong thematic analysis does more than simply summarise the data; it analyses and makes meaning of it (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013).

4.10.2 Thematic Analysis Steps

4.10.2.1 Step 1: Become familiar with the data

Reading and re-reading the transcripts is the initial stage in thematic analysis. A researcher must read the data in a proactive manner, looking for patterns and interpretations. Researchers should look over the full data set at least once before beginning coding, according to Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013), because thoughts and identification of possible patterns can be shaped as researchers become familiar with all parts of their data.

4.10.2.2 Step 2: Generate initial codes

The second phase comes after researchers have studied and become familiar with the data, and they have thoughts about what is in it and what is intriguing about it (Clarke & Braun, 2013). This step entails the initial generation of codes from the data, which is a theorising process that necessitates the researchers examining the data on a regular basis. Qualitative coding is a method of interacting with and thinking about data that involves reflection (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). Coding helps the researcher to focus on specific data qualities while simplifying the data.

4.10.2.3 Step 3: Searching for themes

A theme is a pattern that captures something fascinating or meaningful about the data and/or research question. According to Good and Lavigne (2017), a theme is defined by its importance in answering the research question. Another crucial aspect of this stage is beginning to investigate the relationships between themes and how they will work together to tell a broader story about the data.

4.10.2.4 Step 4: Reviewing potential themes

The evolving themes are reviewed about the coded data and the complete dataset in this phase, which is a cyclical process. At this point, revision entails either adding new themes or removing old ones. During this phase, preliminary themes that were identified in the previous step are reviewed, modified, and developed. Themes should be unique from one another and should be coherent (Clarke & Braun, 2014).

4.10.2.5 Step 5: Defining and naming themes

This is the ultimate refinement of the themes, with the goal of determining the essence of each theme (Clarke & Braun, 2013). A researcher must be able to clearly describe what makes each theme unique and specific while defining themes.

4.10.2.6 Step 6: Producing a report

The research culminates in the creation of a report. In qualitative research, writing and analysis are deeply entwined, from the casual writing of notes and memoranda to the more formal procedures of analysis and report writing. The report's goal is to tell a captivating tale about the facts gathered through analysis. The report needs to make an argument that answers the research question (Clarke & Braun, 2014).

4.10.3 How the study analysed data using Thematic Analysis

In this study the first four steps were done and the part that is presented and examined in the next chapter is the fifth and the sixth step. These two steps are presented in a way that shows how the data collected relate to the policies, the literature reviewed in different countries, how the conceptual framework guided the study during data collection and finally, how the data collected answer the objectives of the study.

4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The participants in the study were informed about the research's nature and goal, as well as the techniques that would be employed and the study's benefits. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education granted the study full approval. The study's results and recommendations will benefit both the schools and the province. The participants were shielded from the study, and their identities were kept hidden. The participants were informed about the study's goals and how they will help the community and the schools involved. The participants were informed that they had the option to stop participating in the study if they so desired (Akaranga & Makau, 2016).

This process was determined by the informed consent of the participants to be part of the research process. The research guarantees the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants (Gray, 2021), which has the potential to add value to the credibility of the research. The participants signed the consent letters to enhance authenticity. According to Akaranga and Makau (2016), acquiring accurate information is emphasised in all research projects. The researcher must clarify the study's goal and potential hazards to the participants, as well as ensure the confidentiality of the research subjects by maintaining anonymity. Almalki (2016) emphasises that subject confidence can only be gained if the researcher is able to properly identify himself or herself to the subjects by describing the study's benefits.

The study's credibility must be assessed based on how morally involved the researcher was during the study's execution. It was thought that maintaining a positive relationship with teachers as participants in this instance would result in ethical difficulties being balanced. Participation was entirely voluntary, and interviewees were free to leave voluntarily (Mbatha, 2016).

According to Gray (2021), it is the researcher's responsibility to develop a project that does not infringe on the interviewees' rights or safety. This is critical in terms of campaigning for, promoting, and defending their rights. While conducting the research, the hazards associated with the study must be thoroughly addressed with the respondents. Guetterman (2015) says that in order to develop collaborative efforts, research involves co-operation and co-ordination among different participants and diverse fields, institutions, and ethical standards. Trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness are all part of this.

4.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS

It is critical that academics, practitioners, policymakers, and the general public recognise and accept research as valid. Researchers might persuade themselves and readers that their research findings are worthy of attention by demonstrating their trustworthiness (Lune & Berg, 2017). Researchers should develop the methods and processes necessary for a study to be judged worthy of attention by readers, according to Amankwaa (2016). For this reason, this study had its focus on how data was collected, the interpretation, and methods used to ensure that its quality and credibility is maintained.

4.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design, transformative paradigm and PALAR as a methodological approach was discussed. PALAR was explored in terms of its nature and breadth, as well as its relevance in this research, how it would be used, and the advantages of employing it in this study. The team's credentials, the SWOT analysis, the action plan, and the study's priorities were examined, as well as the ethical considerations. Thematic Analysis, which was utilised for data analysis, was also discussed in this chapter and is covered in further detail in the following chapter. The interlink between the study, PALAR, CP and Thematic Analysis were also discussed.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of English grade 4 learners in selected primary schools in the Endumeni Circuit. This chapter presents, interprets, analyses, and discusses the data collected towards designing the curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of English grade 4 learners. To realise the above, the chapter categorises data into four objectives as a foundation. The objectives of the study can be captured as follows: to determine the challenges experienced by grade 4 English teachers when implementing curriculum differentiation; probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation; plausible threats that might impede the implementation of curriculum differentiation and best practices for the implementation of curriculum differentiation.

The data was analysed using Thematic analysis and in relation to what the literature in Chapter 3 has argued and what empirical data attest. Extracts are analysed using Critical Pedagogy (CP), which is a conceptual framework underpinning this study and where the implementation of PALAR principles were observed.

5.2 CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION BY TEACHERS

The following contests experienced by teachers when implementing curriculum differentiation were identified by participants during the Focus Group Discussions: inadequate professional development, improper curriculum management, insufficient transformational initiatives, and ineffectual policy implementation. These constructs were drawn from this main theme.

5.2.1 Inadequate professional development

Education has the longest-lasting effects of these inequities. It further said that schools must directly address inequalities by assisting in the preparation of each succeeding generation of learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to understand and contribute to overcoming such challenges, as well as to realise their own personal

potential and aspirations. It recognises the need of professional development in preparing teachers to carry out this responsibility. While many in the basic education sector have successfully promoted teacher professionalism, and while South Africa's public schooling system has many dedicated and capable teachers, the Department of Basic Education's Action Plan towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030 acknowledges that much more needs to be done to raise the levels of teacher development and professionalism. This effort is mostly about addressing the historical legacy of apartheid-era teacher training (Department of Education, 2020).

Inclusion, according to White Paper 6 (2001), is about supporting all learners, educators, and the system to meet the full spectrum of learning needs. The focus is on teaching and learning actors, with a focus on developing effective teaching practices that will help all learners. Curriculum differentiation is one of the good strategies to respond to the diverse needs of grade 4 English learners. The intentions of the White Paper cannot be realised if there is inadequate educator professional development.

Inadequate professional development was emphasised during data collection by participants.

Ms Zulu commented that *“There is no teacher development that is taking place, there are gaps that need to be filled”*

This was also mentioned by **Mr Khumalo** when he said *“The department was supposed to capacitate us when curriculum differentiation was introduced”*

The above participants agree that there is inadequate professional development that is hindering them from implementing curriculum differentiation in the grade 4 English classes.

Mr Magubane affirmed what was said by Mr Khumalo: *“Yes, I agree the department has to capacitate us even on how to assess those differentiated lessons.”*

Mr Mbatha also mentioned that: *“As teachers do not know how to do curriculum differentiation. We need to be trained so we do not know where to start.”*

Mr Magubane and Mr Mbatha both show that there is no curriculum differentiation happening in the classrooms because they are still waiting for the department to engage in professional development and how to assess when your lesson has been differentiated.

Mr Mtshali also made a comment that showed that there is inadequate professional development: *“Many teachers did not do learner support in colleges, so they do not know how to do it”*

The above comment from the subject advisor affirms that teachers who have been in the field for a long time were not exposed on how to support learners during their teacher training and therefore cannot successfully implement curriculum differentiation.

The literature also indicated that teachers need more professional development on curriculum differentiation to instil confidence in them so that they can welcome and accommodate all learners in their classrooms (cf section 3.2.1.1). The key issue that teachers have reported is that they do not feel prepared to teach in classrooms that have learners with mixed levels because they have not received enough professional development. Initial teacher training institutions do not have education programmes that offer learner support modules (cf section 3.2.1.1). Teachers have stated that their teacher education programmes could have done a better job of preparing them for the varied classrooms they would be in, and that they require professional development specifically adapted to address issues of learner support. Many new teachers lack the requisite experience to manage an inclusive classroom, and they are unable to meet the needs of all learners due to a lack of professional development. The feeling of being unprepared can cause anxiety and have a significant effect on all learners in the class.

The literature further indicates that a significant number of teachers are in classrooms with learners who need support, but they have not had any capacitation to help meet the needs of those learners, this also affect their attitude about the inclusion of learners with learning barriers (cf 3.2.1.1). Learning depends on the quality of teachers and improvement of their capabilities on working with the learners that need a differentiated curriculum in their classrooms.

According to the Critical Pedagogy (CP) conceptual framework that underpins this study, teachers are disadvantaged in the sense that their professional identity and agency are compromised, and learners are disadvantaged in the sense that they are unable to access a quality curriculum and to feel valued and accepted members of an inclusive school community (cf section 2.5.7). The goal of emancipation in CP is to have a better insight and knowledge of the nature and reasons of unsatisfactory situations so that meaningful solutions to transform them can be developed. It also aspires to engage enthusiastic teachers in informed social and educational involvement, in order to develop a more equitable and socially just democracy. This paper discussed how curriculum differentiation can be used to make grade 4 English classes more equitable.

Implementation of curriculum differentiation in a grade 4 English class advocates for action that embodies certain professional qualities, not only action based on reflection. Qualities include a commitment of teachers to implement the curriculum that do not only theorise inclusivity but apply it in practice by creating different ways to make all learners understand the same concept. Reflective praxis also embodies the act of engaging, applying, exercising, realising, and practicing ideas. This requires that a professional teacher makes a wise and prudent practical judgement about how to act in a classroom of learners with different abilities.

5.2.2 Improper curriculum management

Teachers have a critical role to play in ensuring that all learners, regardless of their background, feel included and validated in the classroom. When reacting to learners, they should be aware of their own beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours (Department of Education, 2011). Every teacher must recognise that curriculum management is the

most effective strategy to respond to learner diversity in the classroom. The NCS determines the content to be taught, but it is up to the teachers to determine how they will teach it to different types of learners in the class. Curriculum differentiation is one of the most significant aspects a teacher can employ to respond to diversity.

Schools that are not performing well in responding to learner diversity are characterised by improper curriculum planning. Teachers plan as individuals and do not get enough supervision and support. There is no suitable lesson planning which addresses the needs of the diverse learners in the classroom. Department heads do not verify and monitor the plans to see if they are appropriate to the given curriculum. This is further observed in the plan for assessments conducted to keep track of learners' progress (cf section 3.2.1.2). Principals of schools that are not performing well in terms of responding to learner diversity are responsible for all aspects of the school, apart from being the curriculum manager, who oversees curriculum delivery and provides support to teachers in implementing curriculum differentiation in the classrooms (Department of Education, 2018).

Improper curriculum management came up during the discussions when participants raised issues mentioned below:

Ms Mthembu mentioned that: *“The challenge workload is a lot, we are overloaded. Managing the curriculum is a problem.”*

Mr Mbatha also mentioned that: *“There is pressure caused by completing the ATPs, you have to complete the ATPs that is what the department checks you on not how many learners understood the lesson.”*

Mr Khumalo added that: *“There is too much administrative work in curriculum differentiation and the district officials only checks us on curriculum coverage.”*

All the above statements indicate that the focus is only on what to accomplish in the curriculum, not how many learners were included in the learning that occurred. There is no accommodation for a teacher who may not cover all the expected sections of the

curriculum because of the curriculum differentiation that he had to implement to ensure that all learners learn.

Ms Mngadi indicated that: *“It is also too early to expose learners to English as LOLT they have not adequately developed their mother tongue. Systemic challenges these include CAPS as a prescriptive and restricting policy.”*

The subject advisor concurs with the statements from the teachers but in a deeper way where the curriculum itself poses the challenge to the teacher by taking away creativity. If the curriculum is... *prescriptive and restricting*... it limits what the teacher can do in class.

Literature also attests that teachers are paced on their teaching to ensure that they are not behind and meet the deadlines set for them. Teachers need content-specific knowledge to be able to manage the English Grade 4 curriculum. They need to be equipped with teaching skills necessary for teaching English in the intermediate phase. Abilities include curriculum differentiation and assessment strategies and methodologies, differentiated classroom management skills, and the use of data to make educated judgements (cf section 3.2.1.2).

There is a claim in the literature that principals in South African schools are unaware of their roles and responsibilities in curriculum management, and as a result, their performance in these roles and responsibilities is ineffective (cf section 3.2.1.2). To be able to manage the curriculum and implement curriculum differentiation in their English classrooms, critical pedagogy advocates for teachers with qualities such as critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, problem solving, logical and independent thought, effective communication and information management skills, creativity and intellectual rigour; and values such as ethical practice, persistence, integrity, and tolerance (cf section 2.6).

Teachers who are committed to their fields and who will follow developments both inside and outside their subject matter are required by critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy, according to Jeyaraj (2014), necessitates teachers who will not wilfully

mislead themselves or their learners, teachers who will confront power dynamics in their classrooms, schools, and society. At the same time, critical pedagogy equips teachers with the tools they need to execute curriculum differentiation effectively. It is not so much that critical pedagogy produces these instruments and hands them over to teachers; rather, it indicates how they may be used to help learners and teachers become more human (cf section 2.6). Because curriculum differentiation is a novel way to teaching, teachers must receive curriculum management training in order to deal with curriculum changes and work with learners with different learning abilities.

5.2.3 Insufficient transformational initiatives

The White Paper 6 (2001) addresses how teacher preparation and professional development, both initial and in-service, must change, in order to contribute to the creation of a caring and humane society. Also, how these projects could evolve to meet the complete range of learning needs, as well as the processes that need be implemented. It goes on to say that accomplishing these goals should be prioritised through a realistic and effective implementation approach that progresses responsibly toward the establishment of a system that accepts and respects diversity. This approach necessitates the gradual implementation of departmental, institutional, pedagogical, and curriculum change techniques. It also necessitates the active participation of social partners and communities in order to minimise exclusion and negative stereotyping in the educational system (cf section 3.2.1.3)

DBE created guidelines for responding to learner diversity in the classroom ten years after White Paper 6 was implemented, acknowledging that one of the major impediments to learning is the school curriculum. It claims that many characteristics of the curriculum, such as content, language, classroom organisation, teaching approaches, pace of teaching and time available to finish the curriculum, teaching and learning support resources, and assessment, create barriers to learning. In order to meet the diverse requirements of learners in the class, differentiation in curriculum delivery is essential to ensure that all learners have access to learning. All schools must provide the same curriculum to learners while also ensuring that modes of delivery and assessment processes are varied to accommodate all learners. Respecting variety entails believing that all learners can learn. The two policies listed above indicate the move by the DBE to implement transformation in the South African

education system but the time it has taken to successfully implement the policies shows that the transformation initiatives done are not enough or are not correctly implemented.

In 2014, DBE developed the policy on *Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support* (SIAS). SIAS policy is a strategy and mechanism to ensure that the educational system is transformed into an inclusive education system in accordance with the prescripts of *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001)*.

In discussions with participants, the issue of the need for effective transformation initiatives to facilitate the implementation of curriculum differentiation also came up. The following are some of the comments from participants:

Ms Zulu said: *“English as a language has two twin devils, reading and spelling, when you support learners, you have to support them at different levels. They can read at different levels, and they can write at different levels but there is one teacher the system needs to change and have teaching assistants in critical grades.”*

Ms Buthelezi added: *“The trackers that track curriculum implementation do not accommodate curriculum differentiation that needs to change, and it needs to be changed by the department.”*

The statements uttered by teachers indicate that teachers do not think about curriculum differentiation when thinking about change that needs to happen in the classroom to address learner diversity. Admitting that learners *...read at different levels and they can write at different levels...* shows the need for differentiating the curriculum to accommodate the learners at different levels. Teachers see the challenge and understand that there must be change but there are no initiatives identified to enhance transformation needed in classrooms.

Mr Khumalo also commented: *“Even tests or projects set by DBE, province and district do not show that shift towards implementing curriculum differentiation they send one paper to be written by all learners for a prescribed time”*

The above statement calls for the Department of Education to also change the structure of assessments. In the test/project itself, there must be an indication that there are learners who will be accommodated because of their abilities. There must be an indication that a teacher can adapt the question paper or the project to suit his learners' needs.

The change in the medium of instruction alone comes very early when a learner is still taught the foundations of his mother tongue (cf section 3.2.1.3). This change calls for a teacher who has adequate knowledge on how to approach the curriculum in a manner that will include all the learners in the classroom. Teachers must devise transformation activities to support learners as they progress from the foundation to intermediate phases. This transformation is about confronting school assumptions, preconceptions, traditional teaching methods, and long-standing practices. Change is feared, according to the literature, and worries must be addressed successfully if curriculum differentiation is to be successful. Teachers' beliefs, values, practices, and interests are typically ignored by lawmakers when considering curricular improvements. This obstructs curriculum implementation because teachers may not understand the foundations for changing the curriculum (cf section 3.2.1.3).

Emancipation from all types of oppression, the development of hope and happiness, and commitment to freedom are all objectives of critical pedagogy, as well as the transformation of individuals and society through human activity. Oppression is the broader societal practice, manifesting in numerous ways and forms based on race, class, and gender (cf section 2.5.1). When the school does not change its *status quo* and continues with traditional teaching methods that do not accommodate the differences in learners, it still oppresses learners who have different abilities. Classes need to transform and come with strategies that will accommodate all learners and bring emancipation to the classrooms (cf section 2.5.1).

According to CP, teachers as citizen scholars, are also obliged to take critical viewpoints and connect their work to key social concerns in society in order to inspire learners to change the world for the better (cf section 2.5.1). Transformative efforts assist learners to learn to look at topics and problems from diverse perspectives and to recognise multiple points of view, as well as to generate their own thoughts and potential answers to problems they encountered in their English classes (cf section 2.5.1). As a result of applying critical transformational pedagogical perspectives to teaching English in Grade 4 classes, teachers will have a better grasp of the difficulties and procedures they encounter when differentiating the grade 4 English curriculum.

The ability of teachers to understand the curriculum changes they experience daily is critical to the curriculum's effectiveness. When teachers understand why there is change, they are in a better position to design the model that suits their context to transform their teaching and learning.

5.2.4 Ineffectual policy implementation

The right to a basic education is guaranteed by the Constitution. The right to education must be interpreted in conjunction with provision 9, which mandates that all people be treated equally under the law (cf section 3.2.1). The Department of Education, according to Education White Paper 6, has a specific obligation to guarantee that all learners, with and without learning impediments, maximise their learning potential (Department of Education, 2001). These policies were created to ensure that every student in the classroom has the opportunity to learn at his or her own pace.

The National Development Plan Vision 2030 (2013) envisions an education system that contributes to the development of an inclusive society by providing equal opportunities and assisting all South Africans, particularly those previously disadvantaged by apartheid policies, such as black people, women, and people with disabilities, to reach their full potential. Access, redress, equity, efficiency, quality, and inclusivity are all social justice characteristics to which the DBE adheres. The development of effective policy implementation, management, planning, and monitoring to guide and promote the development of an inclusive education and training system is one of South Africa's policy obligations. Learning challenges are not

only viewed as residing within a learner in the classroom, but also within many components of the curriculum, according to policy implementation.

Policies developed by DBE imply that learners are enrolled in schools that have formally adopted a framework to address concerns through responding to learner diversity in the classroom. This reflects the success of various initiatives to advance the inclusive education philosophy, yet learners are still in schools that lack the basic facilities to implement curriculum differentiation in classrooms. This was evident during focus group meetings.

Ms Mngadi: *“All skills in English are allocated time that limits the teacher on differentiating the curriculum. The gap is systemic and policy implementation programmes are one size fits all.”*

Ms Mthembu said: *“Education system is a problem; policies are developed but not implemented.”*

Mr Khumalo: *The challenge that we see is that teachers don't take notice of policy implementation serious, teachers they do not follow the SIAS policy”*

The above statements attest to ineffectual policy implementation. The ineffectual implementation of policies hinders the implementation of curriculum differentiation in the classrooms. If teachers...do not follow the SIAS policy... one can ask a question relating the profiling of learners to understand how each of them learn so that the lesson is planned in a way that is suitable for the learner.

Ms Buthelezi: *“The policies are contradictory we need a collaborative strategy for policy implementation”* **Mr Mbatha** added by saying: *“The programmes designed by the districts for support exclude curriculum differentiation that shows that there are gaps in policy implementation”.*

The above statements refer to the implementation of CAPS and at the same time, infusing the guidelines responding to learner diversity and SIAS policy. The mentioned

policies must be used collaboratively to avoid ineffectual policy implementation. If the mentioned policies are not collaboratively used, teachers are unable to implement curriculum differentiation successfully.

Policy implementation challenges are caused by inadequate human or financial resources, a lack of clarity on operational guidelines or roles and responsibilities for implementation, conflicts with other policies, a lack of co-ordination and collaboration between parties responsible for implementation, or a lack of teacher motivation (cf section 3.2.1). While all this has been said, it does not change that one way to ensure that classroom teaching and learning is inclusive is using curriculum differentiation. Teachers in differentiated classrooms provide precise techniques for each learner to learn as profoundly, as feasibly, and as quickly as possible, rather than assuming that each learner's education path is the same as everyone else's. All the mentioned teacher responsibilities are not carried out because of the policy implementation strategy that has not been successful.

The way of thinking, negotiating, and transforming the relationship between classroom pedagogy, knowledge production, the school's institutional structure, and the material and social relations of the wider community and society, according to CP, requires policies and an achievable realistic implementation strategy. Policy makers need to depower themselves and share a policy implementation management strategy with teachers and school managers to ensure that everyone is committed to the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation in English grade 4 class. The Department of Education must still work on a clear and achievable policy implementation strategy to make the curriculum differentiation a reality in the classroom.

5.3 PROBABLE SOLUTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

After the challenges had been identified, participants collaborated on the solutions to the challenges. The following solutions were unearthed: enhanced professional development, strengthened curriculum management, feasible transformational initiatives, and effective policy implementation.

5.3.1 Enhanced professional development

Professional development is a mechanism used by schools and district offices to ensure that teachers improve their skills throughout their careers. Professional development that is most effective, involves groups of teachers focusing on the needs of their learners. They work together to learn and solve problems so that all learners succeed.

Teacher professional development is seen as crucial to the success of numerous educational reform programmes, such as changing the curriculum to fit the needs of all learners in the classroom. Support staff within district support services are orientated and professionally developed in their new roles of giving support to all teachers and other educators, according to White Paper 6 in Education (2001). Professional development is aimed at assisting all learners, educators, and the system in meeting the entire range of learning needs. The focus is on teaching and learning aspects, with an emphasis on developing strong teaching practices that benefit all learners, overcoming systemic barriers that hinder the system from meeting the full range of learning needs, and adapting and supporting classroom systems.

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education (2007) emphasises that professional pedagogical knowledge, as well as the teacher's willingness and aptitude to reflect on practice and learn from the learners' own experiences of being taught, are required for effective teaching. These characteristics must be combined so that teachers can confidently use conceptual knowledge in the classroom. To deliver the new curriculum, all teachers must improve their professional skills. Most teachers need to improve their topic expertise, pedagogical content knowledge, and teaching abilities. All teachers must learn how to recognise, identify, and resolve learning barriers, as well as how to create inclusive and supportive teaching and learning environments for all learners. Comments made during focus group discussions backed up the importance of the latter statement.

Mr Magubane said: *“We need extensive professional development these 12h00 to 14h00 workshops do not work”*

Mr Mbatha commented by saying: *“As teachers we need to have our programmes to change our way of teaching and capacitate each other”* and **Ms Buthelezi** added to Mr Mbatha statement by saying: *“Yes, like grade workshops and teachers teaching the same subject can meet and support each other that can change the status quo”*

Mr Magubane indicated that the professional development is given only a few hours while it is a very important aspect to ensure successful implementation of curriculum differentiation. Teachers also confirmed in their statements that having their own programmes for professional development is needed to change the prevailing challenges and effectively implement curriculum differentiation in their grade 4 English classrooms.

Preparing teachers for the teaching profession is regarded as a high priority in any country since it is considered as a challenging and critical profession that can lead to a nation's rise and success in various sectors. Education, as an agency, plays a critical role in the development of strong and developed societies, and the teacher is one of the key agents in this process. As a result, it is always an essential educational need for teachers to get adequate educational and professional development so that they can have adequate knowledge and teaching abilities and be able to devote themselves to the teaching profession (cf section 3.2.2.1).

Teachers must be trained in how to deal with inclusive classrooms. Inclusive education leads to the development of an inclusive community that recognises and reacts to the different needs of its learners, accommodating all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other circumstances.

Critical pedagogy encourages teachers to practice critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, problem solving, logical and independent thought, effective communication and information management skills, creativity, and intellectual rigour, as well as values like ethical practice, persistence, integrity, and tolerance. Teachers who take a nurturing approach, aim to establish a balance between challenging learners to do their best while also nurturing and supporting their efforts to succeed. Teachers who

take a social reform approach to education are more engaged to education issues and believe they are advocates for the changes they want to see in their classrooms. Learners benefit from watching teachers in action as they complete meaningful activities in real-world settings. Teachers who take a professional development approach try to use their learners' prior knowledge and skills to bridge knowledge gaps (cf section 2.8).

5.3.2 Strengthened curriculum management and pedagogy

Curriculum management, according to Kyahurwa (2013), is academic leadership, instructional leadership, or management of the school's main business, the teaching and learning process. It entails ensuring that the curriculum policy statement is correctly interpreted and implemented.

Schools were divided by race under apartheid education, and education perpetuated disparities and a divided society. Because it served to reinforce the position of one race over another, many people saw the curriculum as improper and culturally discriminatory. Since then, education policies have been changed to address inequities, and curriculum delivery strategies have been devised. States and districts are being forced to define what it means to have high standards for all learners and to provide a fair opportunity for all learners to learn necessary, important, and challenging content (cf section 3.2.2.2)

Curriculum management is a crucial component of effective teaching and learning. It establishes a shared vision and implements consistent curriculum policies, methods, and processes to achieve high learner performance requirements. It aids school managers in concentrating resources, responsibilities, and personnel. The importance of strengthened curriculum management emerged during discussions with participants.

The following are the statements taken from discussions to show that all participants in their different capacities emphasised the importance of curriculum management in the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation.

Mr Mtshali commented: *“The content that you teach and the methods that you employ when teaching must talk to the needs of your learners, that is how we can successfully implement curriculum differentiation”*

Ms Mthembu said: *“If teachers plan well there will be a big difference. The main issue that will help us is proper curriculum implementation planning. Teachers need to plan how they are going to teach and carry out those plans”*

The statements above affirm that successful implementation of curriculum differentiation depends on the prioritisation of effective curriculum management and pedagogy. All participants agreed that if curriculum plans are carried out correctly, there will be a difference.

Mr Magubane: *“We must stop planning for compliance but plan for implementing”*

The statement above indicates that the officials checking the curriculum might not see a true reflection of what happens in the classroom when they check curriculum plans, not implementation. There needs to be a shift of focus from planning for compliance to planning for successful implementation. For curriculum change to be implemented smoothly, school principals must encourage teachers and learners to embrace it. One of the approaches that is used to ensure that equity and social justice in the delivery of the curriculum are addressed in South African classrooms is curriculum differentiation. Implementing a curriculum is more than just following a set of instructions or replacing old practice with new practice; it is a process of transforming the curriculum so that it meets the needs of learners and gets ingrained in the teacher's personality (cf section 3.2.2.2).

Curriculum differentiation begins with a teacher's recognition that each child brings their own memories and previous experiences to class, that each child has their own strengths and weaknesses, emotions, opinions, and attitudes, and that each child can learn. The critical teacher recognises the need of educating a learner for more than just the job he or she will pursue. The critical teacher gives learners the tools they

need to transform their society. A willingness to develop while teaching is also demanded of such a teacher.

Freire conceived of critical pedagogy as that which is of humanising value, opening learners' minds to engender creative, critical, and imaginative thought (cf section 2.5.6). Teachers must engage in constant examination of the relationship between power, knowledge, and curriculum, in order to create liberating classroom settings. When teachers engage with the curriculum, they find ways to address the diversity of their learners through curriculum differentiation.

5.3.3 Feasible transformational initiatives

The importance of transformation is emphasised in the preamble of the South African School's Act (SASA), which states that this country requires a new national school system that will correct past inequities in educational provision, provide a progressive high-quality education for all learners, and lay a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities. To successfully implement curriculum differentiation, the roles of principals, educators, and stakeholders are shifting and will continue to be reshaped, redefined, and renegotiated (SASA, 1996).

South Africa's educational transition emphasises everyone's right to a good education (Education White Paper, 1995). The first objective is to address the apartheid regime's discriminatory, uneven, and inequitable allocation of education services, and the second objective is to produce a world-class education system able to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The theory of transformation agrees with the latter statement since it emphasises emancipatory transformation, equity, and inclusivity, all of which are critical components in making classrooms effective in meeting the needs of grade 4 English learners (cf section 3.2.2.3.).

In the discussions with participants, it was evident that some reasons for reforming teaching and learning include addressing the wider challenges faced by English first additional teachers when differentiating the curriculum for the purpose of inclusion in the classrooms.

Mr Magubane commented by saying: *“The department itself needs to change and train the support teams on curriculum differentiation strategies so that they can give support to schools”*

Mr Khumalo added that: *“The school management teams (SMT) support also need to be redesigned and be innovative. It must have programmes to assist with curriculum differentiation implementation strategies”*.

The engagements indicated that as much as a lot of work is done to implement curriculum differentiation, strengthening the initiatives that can make the drive a success is needed. Education system needs to come up with initiatives or programmes that enable the transformation to happen.

The objective to achieve educational excellence is to improve teaching and learning in the classroom through school reform, teaching practices, and curriculum administration (cf section 3.2.2.3). There have been various changes in the system, including pedagogy, curriculum formats, learning styles, and academic regulations, during this time of educational paradigm transformations. Transformative learning is defined by participatory pedagogies that encourage critical self-reflection and result in changed mental habits. Continuous, challenging, and purposeful assessment of one's professional obligations, beliefs, skills, motivations, and practices, both individually and collectively, is what capacity for change is all about. The long-term sustainability of inquiry and reflection, the long-term sustainability of conversations inside and outside the classroom, and the long-term sustainability of continuous learning designed to improve learners' success and curriculum differentiation are all connected to the significant educational value of this type of learning.

CP is based on the powerful ontology of becoming; it sees people as being constantly in the process of becoming whatever they choose to be. CP is infused with hope for change, transformation, betterment (cf 2.7). The critical teacher equips learners with the capacity to transform their education. A willingness to learn while teaching is also demanded of such a teacher. Teachers prepare their learners not only as agents of change who fight oppression in their classrooms, but also as agents of change who

will transform learning. The improved awareness will aid in the comprehension of the flaws in the classroom that must be addressed (cf 2.8). Learners in CP are engaged as critical thinkers and active learners who collaborate to imagine alternative options for their learning reality. As a result, it is unlikely that transformation will stop in the classroom and instead will spread throughout the community.

5.3.4 Effective policy implementation

The process of turning a policy into reality is known as policy implementation. It is the operational area of function for carrying out the authority's declared public policy (cf section 3.2.2.4). Policy implementation processes are influenced by motivation, information flow, and the balance of power and resources among schools. Overcoming policy implementation obstacles necessitates a wide range of stakeholders' dedication and endurance, possibly over a long period of time.

Implementation of policy imperatives (i.e., SIAS policy, regulations for responding to learner diversity in the classroom policy and White Paper 6 policy), need commitment and an effective implementation strategy from stakeholders. In the discussions, it was evident that the policies mentioned are very important for effective implementation of curriculum differentiation in South African classrooms.

Mr Mtshali said: *“If policy makers, I am making reference here to SIAS and other policies, they can monitor how the policies are implemented, they will know how other priorities interfere with implementation.”*

Mr Magubane commented: *“Collaboration of all stakeholders involved will solve this, and continuous monitoring of the implementation to identify gaps, that is what I think”*

The statements above emphasised the importance of engaging and collaboration between policy makers and policy implementers. If there is collaboration, it will be easy to identify areas that pose challenges to policy implementation and can be quickly addressed to ensure that it is effectively implemented and serve its purpose. Policies

are not supposed to interfere with each other, but they are developed to strengthen the system. The feeling of competition can also be solved by stakeholder collaboration.

Mr Khumalo said *“Redesign how the policies are cascaded from the National office to schools to enhance policy implementation”*

Teachers' opinions and attitudes toward the transformation process as a paradigm shift appear to be critical for policymakers to comprehend. Stakeholders must identify the fundamental cause of the difficulty and establish focused solutions to overcome each barrier in partnership with other interested and empowered parties to address policy implementation barriers. Barriers should be examined and addressed throughout the policy creation, implementation, and monitoring stages. Existing policies must be re-evaluated for any potential gaps that could compromise curriculum differentiation implementation.

English language teachers are viewed in a new light as critical pedagogues who use education to promote social justice and change. Key challenges in executing the curriculum differentiation policy include collaborative behaviour among policy stakeholders, which is defined by goal alignment, the creation of strong personal relationships, and a high willingness to share skills and knowledge. The operational plan that directs the policy-making process must be well-articulated. Critical pedagogues argue against a marginalised group's influence in policymaking and decision-making (cf section 3.2.2.4). Because there are policymakers, unequal power distribution has split society. The impact of this separation on culture and education is a concern for critical pedagogues. This problem could be solved by developing a critical ability in learners or individuals in general, allowing them to resist such power dynamics.

Educators in inclusive education must be taught to help learners with a variety of learning styles, and curriculum delivery must be strengthened and emphasised as one of a whole-school development strategy. Teachers must take action to make change a reality by implementing curriculum differentiation to accommodate learners who

learn differently. CP encourages people to take steps to close the gap between theory and practice.

5.4 PLAUSIBLE THREATS IMPEDING IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

In this case, risks might be interpreted as elements that may hamper the model's ability to improve curriculum differentiation implementation. The participants' concerns are captured in the following themes: large classrooms, inadequate Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM), time management and inclusive pedagogical approaches.

5.4.1 Large classrooms

Large classes, often known as overcrowded classrooms, are those in which the learner–teacher ratio exceeds the requirements of a country's educational policy. The admission policy of 1998, which is part of the National Education Act 27 of 1996, mandates that learner–teacher ratios in public primary schools should not exceed 40:1. (cf section 3.2.3.1). Large classrooms also refer to the physical environment, which includes things like classroom areas, infrastructure, furniture arrangement, noise level, class number, classroom displays, and resources. When seeking to meet the learners' needs, teachers must take these aspects into account. Schools must develop, renovate, and maintain educational infrastructure, as well as adopt policies that provide a permanent, healthy, and conducive learning environment to increase access to high-quality education.

In large classes, inequity is magnified, and disadvantaged groups are more likely to experience inattention, which can lead to learning difficulties. In a large class, learners who have a barrier in speaking English are frequently ignored and given insufficient attention, and they can quickly become lost in the crowd. Learner engagement in participatory activities may present a challenge due to sheer numbers and, in some cases, due to constraints of physical space in lecture-style classrooms due to many learners in a classroom (cf section 3.2.3.1).

During the discussions, large classrooms emerged as a threat to the implementation of curriculum differentiation. The following are the comments that were made by participants:

Ms Mngadi said: *“teachers will then complain on the load of work they have, they will complain about the number of learners they have in class and overcrowded classes they can't even identify learners' needs”*

Ms Zulu commented: *“this thing of being congested in class is a challenge because you can't make a follow up in each learner if they need more attention or not”*

The statements made indicate that large classrooms pose a threat to the implementation of curriculum differentiation. There is an urgent need to address large classrooms for effective implementation of inclusion policies.

Mr Mbatha said: *“Another thing is our classrooms, yoooh our classes are overcrowded even if you wish to attend each learner's needs individually, you will not be able to because it's packed and you won't be in each and every one of 60 learners in class”*

Ms Buthelezi said: *“Classrooms are overcrowded, teacher: learner ratio is not followed when staffing, curriculum differentiation is difficult to implement in big classes”*

Schools do not stick to the teacher-learner ratio as stipulated in the policy, which then interferes with the implementation of curriculum differentiation. This indicates that when one policy is not correctly followed, all other policies that are developed become ineffectual.

The above statements made by participants were confirmed by literature where it is argued that large class size does not afford teachers an opportunity to pay attention

to differentiating the English curriculum. It is further argued that it is difficult to satisfy all the needs of learners who have different interests, personalities, and capabilities, to organise efficient class activities due to the constraints of time and space, to provide equal chances for the learners to participate and practice and to give timely and effective feedback and evaluation (cf 3.2.3.1).

Large classrooms deprive learners of an opportunity to learn in their own way and oppose the reality of CP which emphasises that language is what assists people in breaking free from repressive and debilitating thought and action patterns. There is minimal engagement in large classrooms which does not allow effective communication. Teachers need to teach language in a way that will be understood by all learners in the classroom through a differentiated curriculum (cf section 2.7). Furthermore, learners are deprived of an opportunity of engaging in dialogues in large classrooms which is how knowledge is created, according to CP. Large classes do not encourage learners to construct terms from their own experiences to better understand their surroundings and communicate with others. In huge classrooms, the goal of maximising each learner's progress and achievement by fulfilling individual needs and helping the learning process is compromised.

5.4.2 Inadequate Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM)

Principals have been given powers by the Department of Basic Education to ensure that the quality of school leadership improves, including the procurement of textbooks and other educational materials, as well as human resource management. Principals are held accountable for their schools as a result of these delegations (Department of Education, 2020). Learners require exposure to and access to high-quality educational materials, which can be found in the form of prescribed textbooks and workbooks, as well as materials kept in a school library or multimedia centre. Computers in the classroom are an important tool for learners and teachers to access information. Teachers must research what works best for their learners in the context of their school.

SASA (1996) requires all public schools to do everything possible to improve educational quality by raising additional resources to augment those provided by the

state through public funds in order to successfully implement curriculum differentiation in the classrooms. This has not been achieved and inadequate LTSM emerged during the discussions when participants raised the following issues:

Ms Mthembu said: *“the most important aspect is the shortage of learner teacher support material because if there's shortage there are some topics that need resources, especially in us under resources schools do not have those resources to implement curriculum differentiation, for example a learner who is good in listening will learn best when I play the comprehension and he listens, but we do not have that”*

The statement made by the teacher above shows that the shortage of LTSM hinders implementation of curriculum differentiation. At this stage, what is good is that teachers are referring to how curriculum differentiation should be conducted in class but the threat that they have is the availability of LTSM.

Mr Mbatha said: *“the aspect that is more challenging is the shortage of resources then you end up having a challenge in differentiating curriculum, because you end up teaching learners as if they're the same in class.”*

Ms Buthelezi said: *“The challenges that we have is the lack of resources, we don't have enough resources, it's not even that we don't have enough but we don't have them at all. Whatever you have it's because you did it yourself at that time. We cannot make different worksheets we do not have photocopiers and paper”*

Mr Khumalo commented: *“availability of resources when the school is doing requisitions them must consult with teachers on what resources are, they going to need for teaching so that they can teach effectively”*

Statements made by participants show that there is no provision of essential LTSM in schools, but schools are treated as if they are at the same level when it comes to implementation of curriculum differentiation. In the policies, there is no mention of

resourcing schools first with essential LTSM for the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation.

Implementing curriculum differentiation without the necessary resources to teach produces stress and strain, which can have serious effects and have a negative impact on teachers' motivation to make the changes. The lack of LTSM, which is required for the execution of teaching and learning, can impede effective curriculum differentiation. Essential materials are provided so that teachers can concentrate on educating their learners rather than looking for materials they do not have (cf. 3.2.3.2).

One of the CP objectives is awareness and empowerment, which is a challenge when teachers must teach without LTSM. Learners cannot perform to their best abilities if they are not exposed to LTSM that will stimulate their learning. The objective of critical pedagogy is to enrich the lives of learners in general. Learners are given the opportunity to question commonly held beliefs and investigate the relationship between their society and the content of their educational environment in this manner. When schools do not have necessary LTSM, learners are deprived of the opportunities for self-realisation. Critical pedagogy argues for the elimination of injustices and believes that learners can achieve self-awareness and self-actualisation to change their unfavourable circumstances (cf 2.5.2).

5.4.3 Time management

Time management is an effective instrument that is necessary for an organisation's success in achieving its objectives and goals (cf section 3.2.3.4). In this study, time management refers to the planning and control of the amount of time spent on tasks in order to improve the efficacy and efficiency of curriculum differentiation implementation.

Lack of time management is also caused by competing demands and mandates imposed by the Department of Education on schools, such as a focus on academic accomplishment. Academic excellence, on the other hand, can be easily achieved when the classroom environment is favourable to learning for all learners. The timetable allocates time in a generic approach, without taking into account that

different classes have different learners who learn differently and may require a different approach to time allocation (cf section 3.2.3.4).

The issue of time management was considered by participants as one of the factors that pose a threat to the implementation of curriculum differentiation. The following are the statements that came up during discussions.

Mr Mbatha commented: *“Time is not enough and if you have 40 learners in class, already you have a problem because you will not be able to attend to all of them individually in one lesson.”*

The statements show that the threat to implementing curriculum differentiation emanates from limited time for lessons that do not allow the teacher to attend to individual needs. Another threat is that learners are at different levels and learn in different ways that might also mean learning takes time for some learners and that must be catered for when planning lessons.

Mr Khumalo said: *“There is no time to focus on learners that need attention, ATPs must be completed”*

Ms Buthelezi said: *“The pandemic made it worse we don't have time and learners do not get enough support even from parents.”*

The statement from the principal indicates competing priorities of implementing curriculum differentiation and completing annual teaching plans in time. It may be a threat to prioritise ATP completion over implementing curriculum differentiation. There is a need to understand that the two cannot be separated and happen at the same time.

Time is the most valuable resource of which schools should make optimal use. The efficiency of a school is a measure of how well time is used to develop outcomes. Teachers must manage their time and cover the curriculum for learners to receive appropriate content, but it is also critical to make teaching and learning inclusive and to accommodate all learners in the classroom.

Time management, which includes both preparation and teaching time, is a major determinant of how well curriculum differentiation is implemented. Teachers have challenges owing to time constraints, as they do not have the time to attend to varied requirements and ensure that learners understand what is being taught. When compared to other teaching approaches, the administration of curriculum differentiation takes more time (cf section 3.2.3.3.). Curriculum diversification is also difficult to apply due to a lack of class preparation time. Due to the nature of curriculum differentiation, which necessitates additional modifications to teaching aids, assistance provided, or classroom grouping to accommodate groups of differing competence levels, teachers perceive it to be a substantial effort in comparison to their existing workload (cf section 3.2.3.3).

Critical Pedagogy is a language pedagogical approach in which language education is used to combat discourses in the classroom. It views teacher as critical pedagogues who manage time in a manner that is beneficial to learner development. Teachers who are critical, seek to strike a balance between authority and humanity, as well as professional skill and humility. Teachers need to hear the unspoken voices of their learners when teaching and be able to respond by adapting their instruction and make their teaching democratic for all learners even when time is limited (cf section 2.5.7).

Within their seven hours of teaching and learning, they have a limited number of hours during the day to concentrate on issues of curriculum differentiation implementation, where they are supposed to develop English programmes, provide capacitation, and implement and monitor programmes.

5.4.4 Inclusive pedagogical praxis

Teaching and learning approaches that promote ideas, values, and beliefs that inform, sustain, and justify discourses and narratives are referred to as pedagogy. The term 'pedagogy' refers to the study of the various aspects of teaching and learning. To prevent excluding learners, inclusive pedagogy praxis is defined as teaching and learning in which teachers adapt to learners' individual abilities (cf 3.2.3.4). All learners have the right to learn, because of inclusive pedagogy. The democratic state and common citizenship of South Africa were established on the values of human dignity,

equality, and the development of human rights and freedoms, according to the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) (Section 1a). These principles demand of all actors to take on the commitment and challenge of building a humane and caring society for all South Africans, not just a selected few. There is a unique obligation to execute these values and to develop a 21st-century education and training system to ensure that all learners, with and without learning barriers, pursue their learning potential to the fullest.

Access, reparation, equity, efficiency, quality, and inclusivity are all social justice values to which the DBE adheres. Establishing strong management, policy, planning, and monitoring capability to lead and support the development of an inclusive education and training system is one of the policy tasks. This includes ensuring that learning issues are not simply seen as a learner's problem, but also as a problem that exists throughout the educational system (Department of Education, 2020). In Grade 4 English classes, the employment of inappropriate, ineffective teaching pedagogies is a major factor impeding learners' knowledge and accomplishment. This was evident during discussions as participants made the statements below:

Ms Mngadi said: *“Grade 4 is the first grade of the intermediate phase they are now exposed to new ways of teaching, new subjects, new handwriting and new teachers who teach in different methods”*

Mr Mbatha said: *“Learning environment limits the teaching methods and skills that the teacher can use”*

Ms Mthembu commented: *“There are teachers who teach in primary schools with high school qualifications, and they use teaching methods that are only suitable for high school learners.”*

All participants indicate the importance of using pedagogies that allow learners to learn according to their abilities. There are challenges that make it difficult for teachers to implement curriculum differentiation in the classroom, that is, learning environment,

limited knowledge of pedagogies, and exposure of learners to new phases with more work and different learning styles.

The teacher who is attempting to address the student's need for active participation engages the learner in reflective and critical thinking exercises on the subject content. Because most teachers are devoted to a teacher-centred approach, they choose to employ lecturing as a method. This stems from the educational system to which the teachers have been exposed (cf section 3.2.3.4).

According to the literature, teachers must be knowledgeable about teaching strategies, how children learn, what they need to learn, classroom organisation, where to get help when needed, how to identify and assess difficulties, how to evaluate and monitor children's learning, and the legal context of education (cf section 3.2.3.4). While providing content-based information to teachers is crucial, data suggests that it is insufficient to enhance practice, as many teachers fail to use what they have learned when asked to differentiate the grade 4 English curriculum. CP is concerned with social justice and explores strategies for changing oppressive institutions or social connections, primarily through educational practices and pedagogy. Critical pedagogues promote social justice and change via education, and they use a differentiated approach to learning and teaching. In a grade 4 classroom, the inclusiveness of language teaching invites learners to consider what other creative possibilities they could have for articulating their unique way of learning and understanding.

In the classroom, social justice does not promote treating everyone the same because it would merely perpetuate existing inequalities. It argues that learners should be treated fairly based on their abilities, interests, and experience. Treating learners differentially rather than equally has the potential to reduce current inequities (cf section 3.2.3.4).

5.5 BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

For the success of the model to implement curriculum differentiation, the best practices that make the model successful are collaboration; developing a monitoring and evaluation tool; establishing a shared vision and embracing the theory of change to sustain the model.

5.5.1 Collaboration

Collaboration is a well-defined and mutually beneficial relationship in which people work together to achieve common goals. Collaboration enables an undertaking of a series of learning activities by teachers in unison with colleagues, resulting in a change in teaching and learning. Building a collaborative network of support for teachers is crucial to successful curricular differentiation. At all levels and phases of teaching and learning, assistance is required. Teachers who collaborate learn from one another, support one another's activities, generate learning materials together, and serve as a resource and critical peer to one another. Support is available at many levels of the educational system (Guidelines for responding to learner diversity, 2011).

Collaboration is an important enabler, facilitating the implementation of curriculum differentiation policies, offering the professional teacher development and allows for resource sharing. When teachers collaborate and share their expertise, all children to learn, children feel welcome, valued, and supported. Teachers use varied and active approaches to make the lesson more accessible to the diverse group of learners in the class because of the networking and collaboration with other teachers teaching the same subject (3.2.4.1).

Learners' educational requirements are met through developing teams and partnerships with the flexibility, freedom, and authority to collaborate. The importance of collaboration as a best practice emerged during discussions and participants made the statements below:

Mr Magubane said: *“...teachers must work as a team they should collaborate, share ideas share strategies, they can collaborate at cluster level and at district level...”*

Mr Mtshali: *“...you learn from other people you use other people’s strengths to address your weaknesses...”*

The statements above emphasise the role that collaboration can make in the implementation of curriculum differentiation. There are already clusters for schools which are close to each other that are used for moderation of assessments and other meetings, the suggestion to use the existing structures means showing that this initiative of collaborating for curriculum differentiating will be extending the scope for the cluster and can be a great success because already teachers meet.

Ms Buthelezi said: *“...we can even collaborate at National level because technology has made that possible...”*

Ms Mthembu added: *“...we can make use of initiatives like PLCs at school and district level...”*

The use of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is the initiative that gets the support from the district, provincial and national offices. This is a best practice if teachers in the English grade 4 PLC have a discussion on curriculum differentiation. Collaboration at National level is now possible since the country is now used to virtual meetings which can bring experts closer to teachers when the need arises.

Collaboration benefits teachers, according to the literature, since it fosters a respectful environment in which the school can share ideas, innovations, approaches, and tactics. Common aims, collaborative work or interdependence, parity or equality, and voluntary engagement are all components of collaboration. Participants in collaborative relationships share or have common aims that benefit the school.

Teachers and stakeholders must develop connections that are more than just social in nature and instead become collaborative partnerships characterised by the basic components of co-operation, such as interdependence, equality, and a common goal (cf section 3.2.4.1).

When the school does not change its *status quo* and continues with traditional teaching methods that do not accommodate the differences in learners, it still oppresses learners who have different abilities. Classes need to transform, form collaborations, and come with strategies that will accommodate all learners and bring emancipation to the classrooms (cf section 2.5.1). The free interchange of ideas, the airing of differences, the establishing of consensus, and the reflection on action are all possible with critical teachers (cf section 2.5.5).

CP encourages collaboration through dialoguing as it believes that it is through exploration of meaning that we learn who each person is and how we can work together appropriately. Dialogue helps teachers understand their learners better and plan their lessons in an inclusive way that will address the needs of learners, including differentiating the curriculum. In order for collaboration to function, citizens must be constructively engaged in addressing their concerns. All participants must engage as peers. Each person in a collaborative interaction has an equal opportunity to speak, be heard, and influence decisions.

5.5.2 Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan

Monitoring and evaluation are critical components of guaranteeing the continual development of programmes and the implementation of the strategic plan's goals, objectives, and strategies. Continuous evaluation should be carried out throughout a programme and should be in line with the action plan's goals, objectives, and tactics (cf section 3.2.4.2).

Monitoring and evaluation are the best practice for successful implementation of curriculum differentiation because it makes use of a wide range of methods for gathering, analysing, storing, and presenting information. Sometimes the information one requires make it necessary to adapt an existing method or develop an entirely

new method (cf section 3.2.4.2). The National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation, developed by the Department of Basic Education, aims to improve the overall quality of education in South African schools. It aims to ensure that all learners are given an equal opportunity to maximise their skills. Whole-school evaluation is intended to be a supporting and constructive process, with the goal of ensuring that national and local rules are followed. Its main goal is to help schools improve their performance, including curriculum management, by utilising methodologies that emphasise partnership, collaboration, mentoring, and guidance.

The power of monitoring and evaluation manifests in the ability to demonstrate results. It is an integral part of day-to-day management of how curriculum differentiation is implemented in English classes. It provides data that allows management to detect and resolve implementation issues, as well as assess progress. Monitoring and evaluation were identified as the best approach for assessing the success of curriculum differentiation implementation during the discussions.

Mr Khumalo said: *“There has to be a way of tracking the impact of what has been implemented, check if the impact was intended and what can we do better. There is a need for reflection”*

Mr Mtshali added: *“There should be a way of evaluating what is happening with regard to curriculum differentiation, knowing what worked and what didn’t work can help us going forward”*

The statements made by the subject advisor and principal validates what PALAR advocates, which is continuous reflection and learning. Monitoring if everything goes according to plan helps in identifying the successes and gaps early and to intervene if there is a need. Evaluating also helps in identifying what to continue with in the next steps and what needs to be changed in the future.

Ms Zulu said: *“When you monitor the progress, you see how far you have achieved your goals in implementing policies”*

Ms Mthembu commented: *“Evaluation is also important because you are able to assess progress and see if you need to change the strategy”*

The above statements validate monitoring and evaluation as the best practice for achieving successful implementation of curriculum differentiation. During monitoring and evaluation, there will be assessing of implementation progress and recording of successes.

The literature also alludes to the importance of monitoring and evaluation in implementing curriculum differentiation policies when it emphasises that the progress in liberating classroom settings requires teachers to engage in an ongoing analysis of the curriculum implementation policies. It emphasises that when teachers assess how they engage with the curriculum; they find ways to address diversity of their learners through curriculum differentiation.

CP advocates for a social justice approach which position teachers as relevant people to monitor the eradication of inequities in the schools and by redistributing educational opportunities to all learners in their classrooms. CP emphasises that the basic purpose of education is to continuously examine the status for better learning opportunities (cf section 2.5.3). Monitoring and evaluation are the regular checks on implementation progress to ensure that it is moving in the right direction. It provides data that allows management to detect and resolve implementation issues, as well as assess progress in implementing curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes.

5.5.3 Establishing a shared vision

A shared vision is what an individual and the other members want to create or accomplish as part of the organisation. A shared vision offers varied actions' coherence and a sense of commonality. Teachers work together in creating exciting, extraordinary discoveries about their work. A shared vision gives people a sense of belonging and purpose. It further encourages new ways of thinking, gives courage, and fosters risk taking and experimentation (cf section 3.2.4.3).

The team's goal is to achieve a unified vision. Rather than being imposed on people by a school mandate, a shared vision emerges through discussions targeted at promoting similar interests and a sense of common purpose for all school activities, including curriculum differentiation implementation. A shared vision encourages openness to learning, understanding one another's duties and responsibilities, clear communication, mutual respect, and the ability to alter one's opinion in light of new information. A common goal or aspiration binds or connects team members. Team members develop a sense of unity, allowing the school to provide coherence in a variety of activities that support successful curriculum differentiation implementation (cf section 3.2.4.3).

Mr Magubane said: *“All stakeholders should have the same goal and share the same vision. The shared vision must be for the school informed by the provincial and national DBE offices”*

Ms Mthembu said: *“Each stakeholder must be aware of the shared vision and there must be understanding, and communication of what is expected and have the buy in”*

Ms Zulu said: *“Sharing a vision helps because everybody owns the vision and become committed in achieving goals”*

All the statements made above show the importance of owning the vision and have the same goal which is successful implementation of curriculum differentiation. Statements also allude to the correct alignment of school policies to the national department policies. When the goals are clear, the plan for achieving them is shared among committed stakeholders.

People can only fully share a vision if they are committed to each other having it, not just to each person achieving it individually. In learning organisations, there must be a sense of connection to the vision that provides the focus and energy for learning. The commitment to help each other realise the shared vision is what gives the vision its strength. A shared literacy vision focuses on schoolwork and helps teachers and

learners create shared beliefs and a common language. It puts their core values and beliefs at the heart of teaching and learning and serves as a springboard for professional development. A shared vision should be developed collectively in a learning-friendly environment and founded on the premise that all learners can succeed.

The CP principles establish the potential participants in the argumentation discourse's co-responsibility for contributing to the abolition of injustices that exist in real societies. These injustices also limit the realisation of discursive answers to challenging moral dilemmas by prohibiting citizens involved in the communicative contact from fully engaging in the dialogue. Injustices include using the same lesson plan for all learners with different capabilities but expecting the same results with little room for differentiating the curriculum to meet learners needs.

5.5.4 Embracing the theory of change

The Department of Basic Education emphasises that a theory of change for the entire basic education system is invariably a simplification of reality, but it is a useful tool for understanding and explaining fundamental processes that aid educational transformation (Department of Education, 2020). It goes on to say that the theory of change is about increasing learning in a way that increases a learner's life prospects through acquiring core language and numeracy skills, as well as specific subject knowledge and life skills.

Embracing the theory of change as the best practice in the implementation of curriculum differentiation in schools is imperative. Principals, with the help of their School Management Teams (SMTs), must take a more active role in curricular leadership as change agents in the educational system. SMTs should pay closer attention to how teachers educate and how the school's academic progress is tracked over time.

Transformation as a best practice towards successful implementation of curriculum differentiation emerged during discussions with participants. The statements below were made by participants:

Mr Khumalo said: *“...transformation does not happen overnight, each and every step towards implementation of curriculum differentiation must be appreciated...”*

Mr Magubane added: *“...theory of change is an ongoing process to transformation...”*

Mr Mtshali said: *“Even if we go a step back but if there are things that are changing, we are transforming”*

The statements above allude to embracing the theory of change. Discussions are showing that initiating transformation in small steps is the best practice towards the implementation of curriculum differentiation. Discussions further emphasise the importance of patience as transformation takes time, but schools need to assess if there are any changes happening as an indication of the adopted transformation.

Ms Buthelezi said: *“Transformation must not be a big word we use in meetings, but we must have programmes that show that transforming from traditional ways of teaching and adapting our lessons is being achieved in our classroom”*

The statement above indicates that transformation happens in theory but not in practice and it is a call to put it into practice as it is an indicator of successful implementation of curriculum differentiation.

Embracing change, according to the literature, refers to an inner shift in people's perspectives. The beginning of change is the transformation of people's views and projects outwards into the social and institutional sphere. The emphasis shifts to focus on how people change internally, with personal change affecting institutional change. Personal change refers to the personal ideals and missions that individuals bring to the change process (cf section 3.2.4.4).

Regardless of the system, the theory of change can help teachers improve their efficacy as change agents and understand how systems need to be modified. It is more probable that systems will learn to change if more teachers act as learners, connect with like-minded individuals, speak up, and collaborate with those who hold opposing viewpoints. In an inclusive classroom, educational transformation necessitates determining which curriculum modifications to adopt and how to do so.

Schools, according to CP, should be viewed as sites of social development and progress. Schools should not only encourage critical thinking in learners, but also teach them how to make positive changes in their communities and advocate for social inclusion. Not only is the critical person skilled at recognising injustice but, for CP, that person is also moved to change it. This emphasis on change, and on collective action to achieve change, moves the central concerns of CP which is teaching teachers to think critically when planning their English lessons in a Grade 4 class which is the first grade in the intermediate phase characterised by the introduction of many subjects.

Teachers must review their views about teaching and examine the efficiency of their techniques in accommodating the many cultures, lifestyles, and learning styles of their learners in order to learn to educate diverse learners. Teachers' ability to grasp their own belief systems as well as the value systems of their learners may have an impact on how successfully they respond to diversity in the classroom.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented, interpreted, analysed, and discussed data collected towards designing the curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of English grade 4 learners. Data was categorised into four objectives encapsulated as follows: challenges for implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers; probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation; plausible threats impeding implementation of curriculum differentiation and best practices for implementation of curriculum differentiation.

Thematic Analysis was the data analysis technique used in this study. The data was analysed in relation to what the literature in Chapter 3 had argued and what the

empirical data attested. Furthermore, extracts were analysed using Critical Pedagogy (CP), which is the conceptual framework underpinning this study.

CHAPTER 6: SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners in two selected primary schools. This chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, findings, and recommendations of the study as informed by objectives which can be encapsulated as follows: challenges for implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers; probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation; plausible threats impeding implementation of curriculum differentiation and best practices for implementation of curriculum differentiation. This chapter further presents the recommendations for further research as informed by findings and limitations of the study are also alluded to. Lastly, this chapter gives conclusion to the study by highlighting the focus of each chapter.

6.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT – REITERATED

There seems to be a transitional challenge for learners in terms of the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) from the foundation phase to the intermediate phase. Learners seem to be operating at different conceptualisation stages of understanding English as a LOLT and as a subject. Because learners do not speak the LOLT, teachers are compelled to apply traditional teaching approaches such as chorus teaching, repetition, memorisation, recall, code-switching, and relatively safe discourse, according to Heugh (2012). Authentic teaching and learning cannot take place in this context. There seems to be a need for curriculum differentiation by teachers to accommodate all learners in the classroom.

The use of English as a LOLT in grade 4 has an impact on how various learners react and adjust, while teachers must find a way to deal with the issue that they and the learners face (Nthulana, 2016). Learners who speak one of the nine indigenous African languages at home have a twofold disadvantage: not only do they begin studying in an unfamiliar language in fourth grade, usually English, but they also tend to originate from socio-economically disadvantaged households (Department of

Education, 2019). According to Heugh (2012), using unfamiliar languages leads teachers to use traditional and teacher-centred teaching approaches, undermining both teachers' and learners' efforts to learn. During most classroom encounters, teachers do most of the talking, while learners remain silent or passive participants.

Curriculum differentiation in Grade 4 provides alternatives for individual learners to learn as much as possible, as rapidly as possible, without presuming that one learner's learning path is the same as anyone else's (Tomlinson,2014). This study aims at designing a curriculum differentiation model that will assist in meeting the needs of grade 4 English learners.

6.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY – RESTATED

6.3.1 Research aim

The aim of the study was to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners in two selected primary schools.

6.3.2 Research objectives

The research objectives were as follows:

- To determine the challenges experienced by grade 4 English teachers when implementing curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.
- To explore the probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.
- To investigate the plausible threats that might impede the implementation of curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.
- To demonstrate the best practices for the implementation of curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.

All the study's objectives have been achieved. The literature findings revealed the need to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners, and the empirical data supported the literature findings. The participants discussed the challenges that teachers encounter when implementing curriculum differentiation and the solutions to address the challenges. This was accomplished successfully and contributed to the study's aims and objectives. The plausible threats

that would hinder the success of implementing curriculum differentiation were examined by participants during the focus group discussion and the literature confirmed what transpired in the discussions. The study established that the best practices that can make the implementation of curriculum differentiation a success are collaboration among stakeholders, developing a monitoring and evaluation plan, establishing a shared vision, and embracing the theory of change to sustain the curriculum differentiation model.

6.4 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of English grade 4 learners in selected primary schools in the Endumeni Circuit. This chapter presents, interprets, analyses, and discusses the data collected towards designing the curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of English grade 4 learners. To realise the above, this chapter categorises the data into four objectives as a foundation. The objectives of the study can be captured as follows: challenges for implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers; probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation; plausible threats impeding the implementation of curriculum differentiation and best practices for the implementation of curriculum differentiation.

The data was analysed in relation to what the literature in Chapter 3 has argued and what the empirical data attest. Extracts were analysed using Critical Pedagogy (CP), which is the conceptual framework underpinning this study, and where the implementation of PALAR principles were observed. The process of analysing data collected using Thematic Analysis is also presented.

6.5 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the findings that emerged in the study: inadequate professional development, improper curriculum management, insufficient transformational initiatives, and ineffectual policy implementation. Each finding is discussed, followed by recommendations. Threats that hinder the implementation of curriculum

differentiation are also discussed. This section also presents the best practices that can make the implementation of curriculum differentiation a success.

6.5.1 Inadequate professional development

The literature indicated that inadequate professional development is a challenge that is encountered by teachers when they implement curriculum differentiation. Teachers indicated that they do not feel prepared to teach in classrooms with mixed-level learners because they had not received enough professional development (cf section 3.2.1.1). Furthermore, universities and colleges in the past did not have education programmes that offer learner support modules which could have equipped teachers with skills to implement curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes. New teachers also experience the challenge because they do not have the requisite experience to teach in an inclusive classroom, and the inadequate professional development makes them unable to accommodate the needs of all learners (cf section 5.2.1). This challenge was confirmed by participants in the discussions. Subject advisors, principals and teachers affirmed that they had inadequate professional development that made it a challenge to implement curriculum differentiation in the classroom.

6.5.1.1 Recommendation on enhanced professional development

Teacher professional development is seen as critical to the success of various educational transformational initiatives, such as modifying the curriculum to cater for the needs of all learners in the classroom. Enhanced professional development was recommended, with a focus on developing effective teaching practices that benefit all learners, eliminating systemic barriers that impede meeting the full range of learning needs, adapting curriculum and support systems in the classroom (cf section 3.2.2.1). Teachers also confirmed in their statements that having their own programmes for professional development is needed to change the prevailing challenges and effectively implement curriculum differentiation in their grade 4 English classrooms (cf section 5.3.1).

6.5.2 Improper curriculum management

Literature attested that teachers are paced on their teaching to ensure that they are not behind and meet the deadlines set for them. The individual responsibility, collective expectations and corrective action becomes a challenge to the teacher in the classroom. Teachers need content-specific knowledge to be able to manage the English Grade 4 curriculum. The focus is not on the teachers' needs to be equipped with teaching skills necessary for teaching English in the intermediate phase. The focus is only on what to be accomplished in the curriculum, not on how many learners were included in the learning that occurred (cf section 3.2.1.2). There is no accommodation for a teacher who may not cover all the expected sections of the curriculum because of the curriculum differentiation that he had to implement to ensure that all learners learn (cf section 5.2.2).

6.5.2.1 Recommendation on strengthened curriculum management

Curriculum management is an essential part of ensuring successful teaching and learning. Curriculum management advocates for a shared direction and implementing coherent curriculum policies, practices, and procedures for achieving high standards of learner performance. In realising successful teaching and learning, the teacher needs to differentiate the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of learners in the classroom. Curriculum differentiation begins with a teacher's recognition that each child brings their own memories and prior experiences to class, that each child has individual strengths and weaknesses, feelings, emotions, and attitudes, and, most important, that each child can learn (cf section 3.2.2.2). Participants in their different capacities emphasised the importance of strengthened curriculum management and pedagogy in the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation (cf section 5.3.2).

6.5.3 Insufficient transformational initiatives

Teachers must come up with transformation initiatives that will assist learners when they transition from the foundation phase to intermediate phase. This change calls for a teacher who has adequate knowledge on how to approach the curriculum in a manner that will include all the learners in the classroom. The need for effective

transformation initiatives to facilitate the implementation of curriculum differentiation was identified in the study (cf section 3.2.1.3). The study discovered that the success of teaching and learning depends on teachers' capacity to understand the curriculum changes they experience on a regular basis. When teachers understand why there is change, they are in a better position to design the model that suits their context to transform their teaching and learning. However, the study found that teachers do not think about curriculum differentiation when thinking about change that needs to happen in the classroom to address learner diversity (cf section 5.2.3).

6.5.3.1 Recommendation on feasible transformational initiatives

Many changes in the system have occurred as a result of educational paradigm shifts, including pedagogy, curricular formats, learning styles, and academic policies. Two important elements in making classrooms effective when addressing the needs for grade 4 English learners are equity and inclusivity and these are achieved when the curriculum is differentiated. The emphasis towards excellence in education is to enhance learning and teaching in the classroom by the school transformation, teaching strategies and curriculum management (cf section 3.2.2.3). The engagements with participants indicated that as much as a lot of work is done to implement curriculum differentiation, strengthening the initiatives that can make the drive a success is needed (cf section 5.2.3). The education system needs to come up with initiatives that enable the transformation to happen to reform teaching and learning, including differentiating the grade 4 English curriculum for the purpose of addressing learners' diverse needs.

6.5.4 Ineffectual policy implementation

Policies developed by the DBE imply that learners are in schools which have formally adopted a structure to deal with the issues through responding to learner diversity in the classroom. This reflects the success of various initiatives to advance the inclusive education philosophy, yet learners are in schools which still lack the necessary arrangements to implement curriculum differentiation in classrooms. Implementation of policies that advocate for inclusion are not successfully implemented due to different factors, e.g., conflicts with other policies due to a lack of clarity on operational guidelines or roles and responsibilities for implementation, etc. (cf section 3.2.1.4).

The Department of Basic Education still must work on a clear and achievable policy implementation strategy to make the curriculum differentiation a reality in the classroom (cf section 5.2.4). Policy makers need to depower themselves and share the policy implementation management strategy with teachers and school managers to ensure that everyone is committed to the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation in English grade 4 classes.

6.5.4.1 Recommendation on effective policy implementation

To overcome policy implementation constraints, stakeholders must identify the root cause of the problem and develop specific strategies to remove each barrier in collaboration with other interested and empowered parties. Throughout the policy creation, implementation, and monitoring stages, barriers should be identified and overcome. Key issues in implementing the curriculum differentiation policy are collaborative engagement among policy stakeholders, which is characterised by goal alignment, the establishment of strong personal relationships, and a high willingness to share skills and knowledge (cf section 3.2.2.4). The operational plan that guides the process to make the policy happen must be clearly articulated. Teachers need to act as policy implementers and bring transformation to reality by accommodating learners who learn differently through curriculum differentiation (cf section 5.2.4).

6.6 PLAUSIBLE THREATS IMPEDING IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

This section presents the plausible threats that might impede the curriculum differentiation model designed to meet the needs for grade 4 English learners which are large classrooms, inadequate resources, time management and an inclusive pedagogical approach.

6.6.1 Large classrooms

Large classrooms deprive learners of an opportunity to learn in their own way. In large classrooms, inequity is accentuated, and disadvantaged groups are more likely to experience inattention, which can lead to learning difficulties. Learners who have English language barriers are often side-lined and given limited attention in a large

class and can also be easily buried in the crowd. Learner engagement in participatory activities may present a challenge due to sheer numbers and, in some cases, due to constraints of physical space in lecture-style classrooms because of many learners in a classroom (cf section 3.2.3.1). In large classrooms, there is minimal engagement which does not allow effective communication. Learners in large classrooms are deprived of an opportunity of engaging in dialogues which is how knowledge is created. Furthermore, schools do not stick to the teacher-learner ratio as stipulated in the policy, which then interferes with the implementation of curriculum differentiation. This indicates that when one policy is not correctly followed, all other policies that are developed become ineffective (cf section 5.4.1).

6.6.2 Inadequate Learning Teaching Support Material (LTSM)

To successfully implement curriculum differentiation in the classrooms, all public schools must do their utmost to improve the quality of education by raising additional resources to augment those provided by the state from public funding. Essential materials are provided so that teachers can concentrate on teaching their learners rather than searching for materials they do not have. Implementing curriculum differentiation without the necessary teaching tools creates stress and strain, which has serious implications and has a negative impact on teachers' willingness to implement the planned curriculum changes (cf section 3.2.3.2). Furthermore, when schools do not have the necessary LTSM, learners are deprived of the opportunities for self-realisation. The most important threat is that inadequate LTSM required for the execution of teaching and learning in grade 4 English class inhibits effective curriculum differentiation implementation (cf. section 5.4.2).

6.6.3 Time management

It is important for teachers to manage their time and cover the curriculum so that learners gain adequate content, but it is equally important to make teaching and learning inclusive and to accommodate all learners in the classroom. Time management, which includes preparation time and teaching time, is a large determining aspect in ensuring effective curriculum differentiation implementation (cf section 3.2.3.3). Teachers have challenges owing to time constraints, as they do not have the time to attend to various needs and to ensure that learners understand what

is being taught. When compared to other teaching methods, curricular differentiation requires more time to implement. Due to the nature of curriculum differentiation, which necessitates additional modifications to teaching aids, assistance provided, or classroom grouping to accommodate groups of differing competence levels, teachers find it to be a major problem which adds to their current workload (cf section 5.4.3).

6.6.4 Inclusive pedagogical approaches

The teacher who is attempting to address the learner's need for active participation engages the learner in reflective and critical thinking exercises on the subject content. While providing content-based knowledge to teachers is crucial, evidence suggests that it is insufficient to improve practice, as many teachers fail to use what they have learnt when asked to differentiate the grade 4 English curriculum. Because most teachers are oriented to a teacher-centred approach, they choose to employ lecturing as a method. This emanates from the school system to which the teachers have been exposed and the size of their classes (cf section 3.2.3.4). Multiple teaching styles, how children learn, what the child needs to learn, classroom organisation, how to identify and analyse issues, and how to evaluate and monitor children's learning are all necessary for grade 4 English teachers (cf section 5.4.4).

6.7 BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

This section demonstrates the best practices that make the curriculum differentiation model a success in meeting the needs of Grade 4 English learners. The best practices discussed are collaboration, developing a monitoring and evaluation tool, establishing a shared vision, and embracing the theory of change to sustain the model.

6.7.1 Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as one of the best practices in the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes. Schools need to transform, form collaborations, and come with strategies that will accommodate all learners and bring emancipation to the classrooms. Collaboration is an important enabler, facilitating the implementation of curriculum differentiation policies, offering the

professional teacher development and allows for resource sharing. When teachers collaborate and share their expertise for all children to learn, children feel welcome, valued, and supported (cf section 3.2.4.1). Teachers use varied and active approaches to make the lesson more accessible to the diverse group of learners in the class because of the networking and collaboration with other teachers teaching the same subject. Collaboration benefit teachers because it creates an atmosphere of mutual respect in which the school can share ideas, innovation, pedagogies, and strategies that help in successfully implementing curriculum differentiation (cf section 5.5.1).

6.7.2 Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan

Monitoring and evaluation are the best practices for successful implementation of curriculum differentiation because this makes use of a wide range of methods for gathering, analysing, storing, and presenting data. M&E provide data that allow management to identify and resolve policy implementation issues, as well as assess progress. Monitoring and evaluation are supposed to be supportive and developmental, and their role is to make sure that national and local policies are followed. the principal purpose is to enable schools to improve their performance through approaches that emphasise collaboration, guidance and mentoring (cf section 3.2.4.2). Monitoring and evaluation are viewed as an approach which position teachers as relevant people to monitor the eradication of inequities in the schools and by redistributing educational opportunities to all learners in their classrooms (cf section 5.5.2). They emphasise that when teachers assess how they engage with the curriculum, they find ways to address the diversity of their learners through curriculum differentiation.

6.7.3 Establishing a shared vision

A shared vision is what the team wants to accomplish. Teachers collaborate to make exciting, extraordinary discoveries about their work, and they are connected or linked by a shared purpose. A shared vision is not imposed on people, as a result of a school command, but rather the product of discussions aimed at encouraging shared interests and a sense of common purpose for all school activities, including curriculum differentiation implementation (cf section 5.5.3). Openness to learning, understanding one another's roles and responsibilities, clear communication, mutual respect, and the

ability to adjust one's opinion, given new facts, are all encouraged by shared vision (cf section 3.2.4.3). This creates a sense of commonality and generates a sense of unity that helps the school to provide coherence in many activities that promote successful curriculum differentiation implementation.

6.7.4 Embracing the theory of change to sustain the model

Embracing the theory of change as the best practice in the implementation of curriculum differentiation in schools is imperative. Principals, with the help of their School Management Teams (SMTs), must take a more active role in curriculum leadership as change agents in the schooling system. SMTs should pay closer attention to how teachers teach and how the school's academic improvement is tracked over time (cf section 5.5.4). Regardless of the system, the theory of change can help teachers improve their efficacy as change agents and understand how systems need to be transformed. In an inclusive classroom, educational transformation necessitates determining which curriculum modifications to implement and how to do so. Teachers must examine their beliefs about teaching and examine the efficiency of their practices in accommodating the different cultures, learning styles and lifestyles of their learners in order to learn to teach diverse learners (3.2.4.4). Teachers' ability to understand their own belief systems as well as the value systems of their learners may have an impact on how successfully they respond to diversity in the classroom.

6.8 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The aim of the study was to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners in two selected primary schools. The focus of the study was only on grade 4 English, possibly a study focusing on other grades could give more insight on the success of curriculum differentiation implementation. Engagements with participants revealed the need to investigate the effectiveness of curriculum-based teacher development programmes offered by the Department of Education. The other important aspect is to investigate the monitoring and evaluation procedures employed by the Department of Education to assess the policy implementation in schools. In conclusion, this study used PALAR as an approach; however, it could be done using a different format, and the outcomes could differ.

6.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were achieved and the curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners was successfully designed; however, the study encountered some limitations. Data collection was done during the Covid 19 pandemic and meetings were held on Microsoft Teams. Participants were not used to virtual meetings and that caused delays. PALAR needs time to implement all the stages, that also became a limitation. The study was conducted with participants from two schools and in one district. If many schools participated in the study, the impact of the curriculum differentiation model might produce more desirable results.

6.10 CONCLUSION

This study was conducted with the aim of designing a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners in two selected primary schools. The study used Critical Pedagogy as a conceptual framework guiding the study. This conceptual framework was used because of its clear standing on emancipation, dialoguing and critical reflection. Critical pedagogy worked well with the PALAR approach that was adopted for the study. During focus group discussions, the principles of CP guided the engagements, together with the principles of PALAR. There was fruitful dialoguing and critical reflections during meetings aligned with CP, PALAR and the transformative paradigm.

Data was collected in different discussion settings and thematic analysis was used to categorise data collected in themes. Data was analysed and the findings identified challenges that prevent the implementation of curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes, which are inadequate professional development, improper curriculum management, insufficient transformational initiatives, and ineffectual policy implementation. The team further explored the recommendations that could address the existing challenges and they emerged as enhanced professional development, strengthened curriculum management, feasible transformational initiatives, and effective policy implementation.

Threats that could impede the implementation of curriculum differentiation also emerged and were identified as large classrooms, inadequate learning and teaching

support material (LTSM), time management and inclusive pedagogical practices. The team concluded that grade 4 English classes need to transform and come with strategies that will accommodate all learners and bring emancipation to the classrooms. The curriculum differentiation model that was designed, identified collaboration, developing a shared vision, developing a monitoring and evaluation plan, as well as embracing the theory of change as the best practices that will make the model a success. The model for curriculum differentiation that was designed is presented in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7: PRESENTATION OF A CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION MODEL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF GRADE 4 ENGLISH LEARNERS

7.1 DEVELOPMENT OF A CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION MODEL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF GRADE 4 ENGLISH LEARNERS

The aim of the study was to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners in two selected primary schools. This section presents the PALAR process that was used for the development of the curriculum differentiation model.

7.1.1 PALAR Process

The following is the illustration of how PALAR guided the study into designing the curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners.

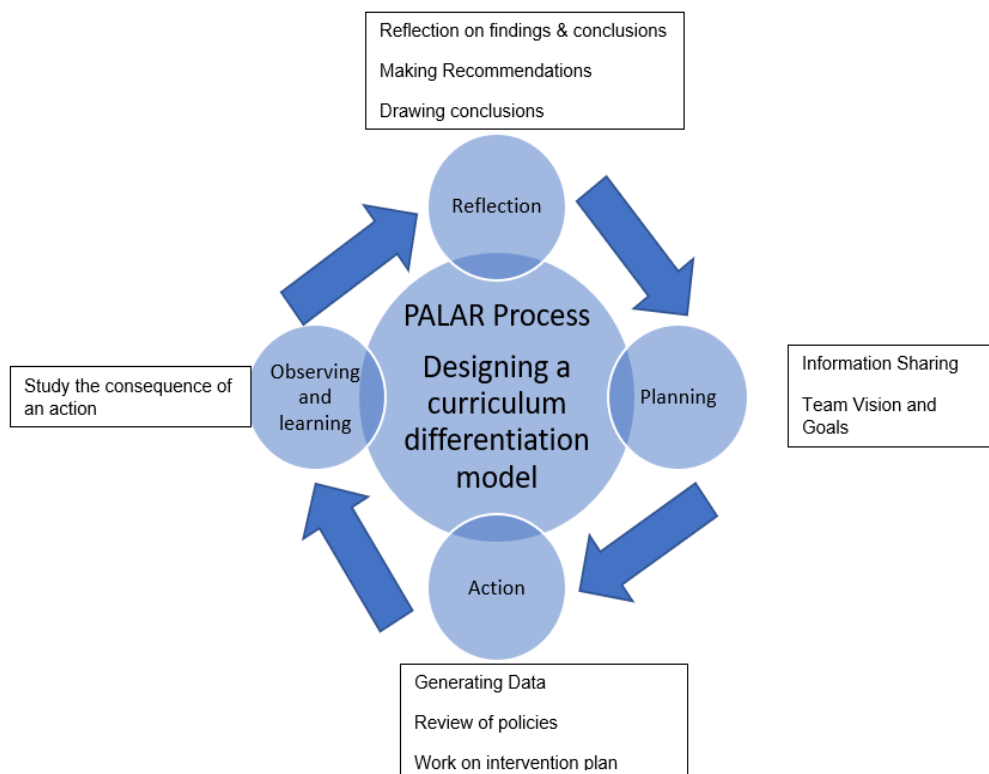


Figure 2: Adapted PALAR cycle

7.2 PRESENTATION OF A CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION MODEL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF GRADE 4 ENGLISH LEARNERS

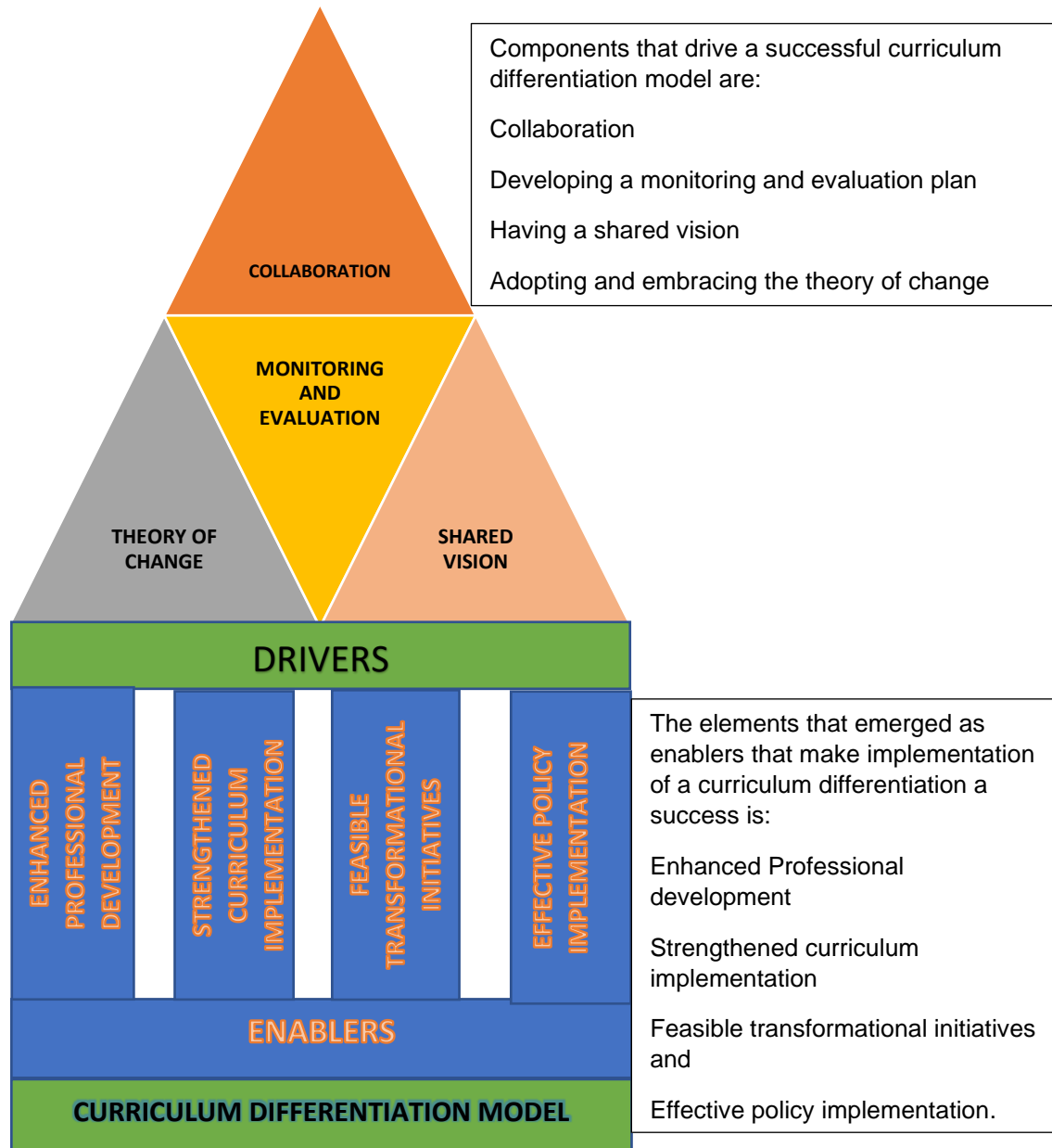


Figure 3: Curriculum differentiation model to meet the needs of grade 4 English learners

7.2.1.1 Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as one of the best practices in the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation in grade 4 English classes. Schools need to transform, form collaborations, and come with strategies that will accommodate all learners and

bring emancipation to the classrooms. Collaboration is an important enabler, facilitating the implementation of curriculum differentiation policies, offering the professional teacher development and allows for resource sharing. When teachers collaborate and share their expertise for all children to learn, children feel welcome, valued, and supported. Teachers use varied and active approaches to make the lesson more accessible to the diverse group of learners in the class because of the networking and collaboration with other teachers teaching the same subject. Collaboration benefits teachers because it creates an environment of respect that offers an opportunity for the school to be able to share ideas, pedagogies, strategies and innovations that help in successfully implementing curriculum differentiation.

7.2.1.2 Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan

Monitoring and evaluation are the best practices for successful implementation of curriculum differentiation because it makes use of a wide range of methods for gathering, analysing, storing, and presenting data. It provides data by which management has the ability to detect and resolve implementation issues, as well as assess progress. Monitoring and evaluation, in this study, is viewed as an approach which position teachers as relevant people to monitor the eradication of inequities in the schools by redistributing educational opportunities to all learners in their classrooms.

7.2.1.3 Establishing a shared vision

A shared vision is fundamental to the successful implementation of curriculum differentiation. Teachers work together in creating exciting, extraordinary discoveries about their work and a common aspiration binds or connects them together. A shared vision encourages openness to learning, understanding one another's duties and responsibilities, mutual respect, clear communication, and the ability to change one's mind in the face of new information. It generates a sense of belonging and togetherness, allowing the school to give coherence in a variety of activities that help with curriculum differentiation implementation.

7.2.1.4 Embracing the theory of change to sustain the model

Embracing the theory of change as the best practice in the implementation of curriculum differentiation in schools is imperative. Principals, with the help of their School Management Teams (SMTs), must take a more active role in curricular leadership as change agents in the school system. Regardless of the system, the theory of change can help teachers improve their efficacy as change agents and understand how systems need to be transformed. In an inclusive classroom, educational transformation necessitates determining which curriculum modifications to adopt and how to do so. To learn to educate different learners, teachers must assess their attitudes about teaching and the efficacy of their techniques in fitting the many cultures, lives, and learning styles of their learners. The ability of teachers to comprehend their own belief systems as well as the value systems of their learners may influence how well they respond to diversity in the classroom.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant)

Project Title:

A curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in Endumeni Circuit

SHOZI N G from the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies, **University of Zululand** has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project, and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to design curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in Endumeni Circuit.
2. The **University of Zululand** has given ethical clearance for this research project, and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project, I will be contributing towards designing a **curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in Endumeni Circuit.**
4. I will participate in the project by organising and contributing to discussions that will be held to discuss **the challenges of implementing curriculum differentiation by teachers, probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation, plausible threats impeding implementation of curriculum differentiation and the best practices for the implementation of curriculum differentiation.**
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research.
7. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that

- a. the following risks are associated with my participation: emotional states of participants when we expose challenges that may be based in schools and homes where learners are coming from with challenges.
 - b. the following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: counselling will be provided after the sessions.
 - c. there is a 5% chance of the risk materialising.
8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of a journal articles/ theses. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.
 9. I will receive feedback telephonically/email and in the form of a report regarding the results obtained during the study.
 10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation, will be answered by Professor_____.
 11. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.
 12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, ----- have read the above information/ and confirm that the above has been explained to me in a language that I understand, and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask, and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B: ACCESS LETTER TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

University of Zululand

PO Box X1001

KwaDlangezwa

3886

The Principal

.....

Private Bag

.....

Date

Dear Ms/Mr/Mrs

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a registered doctoral student in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies at the University of Zululand. My supervisor is Professor M.M. Nkoane.

The proposed topic of my research is: A curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of grade 4 English learners in selected primary schools in Endumeni Circuit. The objectives of the study are:

- To determine the challenges experienced by grade 4 English teachers when implementing curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.
- To explore the probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.
- To investigate the plausible threats that might impede implementation of curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.
- To demonstrate the best practices for implementation of curriculum differentiation in selected primary schools.

I am hereby seeking your consent to be one of the team members in this project. To assist you in reaching a decision, I have attached:

- (a) A copy of the ethical clearance certificate issued by the University.
- (b) A copy of the research instruments which I intend using in my research.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor. Our contact details are as follows:

N.G Shozi

Professor M.M. Nkoane

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you with a bound copy of the thesis.

Your permission to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely

Signature:

NG Shoji

APPENDIX C FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) SCHEDULE

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Focus Group Discussion schedule:

A CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION MODEL TO MEET NEEDS OF GRADE 4 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ENDUMENI CIRCUIT

*Questions to read out are in **bold**. **Prompts** are also provided, to be read out if and when needed (for example, if participants do not understand a question, or to help encourage further discussion).*

Running the Focus Group Sessions

Ideally two people to facilitate the Focus Group Discussion sessions - one to lead the session, the other to take notes and make sure the recording equipment is running properly and effectively.

The group-session discussions will be recorded using an audio-recording device and/or note sheets.

It is important to seek to reach a group viewpoint as far as possible. Everyone will be involved in the discussion. This does not mean that everyone must have the same view, but the discussion should lead to some conclusions. You need to record both majority and minority views.

Before the group assembles

The recording equipment will be tested to make sure it is working properly and that the sound is recording at an acceptable level.

The facilitators or researcher will ensure that all paperwork is ready before the participants arrive (e.g., notes, name badges, and Participation Consent Forms).

Preparing to start the session

As participants enter the venue, they will be welcomed.

Once participants are settled, the researchers or facilitators will check with the group whether they all know each other. If not, the researcher will start by going around the group and getting everyone to introduce themselves. It is important to establish that the group or all participants in the study know one another beforehand.

I will read out the **confidentiality clause**:

Opinions expressed will be treated in confidence among project participants for the purpose of establishing a base of evidence as to how research on designing a curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of a grade 4 English class, could be made a community learning. I guarantee that all responses will remain confidential.

I will make sure as a researcher that for **ethical reasons** participants are asked to sign a **Participation Consent Form**, containing the following declarations:

- *I have been given an explanation of the nature and purpose of the study.*
- *I understand what I will need to do to take part; and my questions have been answered satisfactorily.*
- *I have the contact details of the staff involved.*
- *I understand that I may withdraw myself and my data at any time, without consequences.*
- *I am satisfied with the arrangements to ensure that it will not be possible for me to be identified when the results are made available.*

I will go through all relevant information with each participant and ask him/her to sign the form.

I will check that there are no objections to the use of the audio-recorder.

Introduction to the session

I will start of by reiterating the purpose of the meeting. I will use an introduction such as:

I'm very grateful to you all for sparing time to talk about your experiences and challenges on assessment. The purpose of this focus group is to establish a base of evidence as to how to design a curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of Grade 4 English class.

There are no right or wrong opinions; and I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you best think we could proceed with this kind of a study.

Discussion 1: CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY GRADE 4 ENGLISH TEACHERS WHEN IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

The starting point of this discussion and the first objective of this study is to determine the challenges that educators encounter when implementing curriculum differentiation in a grade 4 English class. The whole discussion will be focusing on issues relating to the challenges.

Q1. What are the main challenges that teachers and district officials encounter when implementing curriculum differentiation in a grade 4 class?

(Prompt: This does not necessarily need to be research-published findings or outputs, but might include your own feelings and experiences, and what is deemed as important? (e.g., speed of communication, depth of communication etc.)

Q1 (a) Thinking in terms of challenges and problems, which are the most important to address? AND to your class at your school?

Q1 (b) In terms of getting your research message ‘out there’, are these research problems and challenges you experience when differentiating the English curriculum in grade 4?

Q1 (c) Do you feel that there are factors external to the two selected centres that might contribute to problems experienced when differentiating the curriculum in a grade 4 class?

Q2. Thinking about the community practices, school practices and the family’s learners come from, what do you do as a teacher when you want to apply curriculum differentiation in a grade 4 English class?

Prompt:2(a) For example, in terms of conscientising all stakeholders both within and outside the school?

Prompt: 2(b) How can we make our school community be able to face the problems and challenges related to implementing curriculum differentiation in classrooms?

1.4.1 Discussion 2: THE PROBABLE SOLUTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

This research is likely to have an impact on proposing the best components or features of a curriculum differentiation model to meet needs of a grade 4 class.

1.4.2 Q3. What are the probable solutions for implementing curriculum differentiation?

Q3 (a) Can we think of what are the causes of teachers to teach English grade4 learners without differentiating the curriculum?

Q3 (b) What initiatives do you think we could take to respond to problems of not applying curriculum differentiation in a grade 4 English class?

Q3 (c) Do you feel that it is important to respond to problems arising when curriculum differentiation is not implemented in grade 4 English class?

Q4. What are your main motivations for responding to problems of curriculum differentiation not effectively implemented in grade 4 English class?

Q5. Do the schools selected have an intervention plan to improve implementing curriculum differentiation in grade 4 class?

Discussion 3: THE PLAUSIBLE THREATS THAT MIGHT IMPEDE IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION

Similar prompts and further clarifying questions to probe discussions will be made for **Discussion 3 or Session 3**

Discussion 4: THE BEST PRACTICES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Similar prompts and further clarifying questions to probe discussions will be made for Discussion 4 or Session 4

Ending the session

Finally, summarise the discussions and thank participants/co-researchers for their time and co-operation.

I will then collect the Participation Consent Forms from the co-researchers

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli

Tel: 033 392 1063/51

Ref.:2/4/8/4037

Miss Nonhlanhla Gugulethu Shozi
10 Barker Place
BELLAIR
Durban

Dear Miss Shozi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"A CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION MODEL TO MEET NEEDS OF GRADE 4 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ENDUMENI CIRCUIT"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 22 January 2020 to 10 January 2022.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma /Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 22 January 2020

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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APPENDIX E: LETTER OF EDITING

CONFIRMATION OF PROOFREADING

This serves to confirm that I have proofread this thesis and have made the necessary corrections, suggestions, and emendations:

A CURRICULUM DIFFERENTIATION MODEL TO MEET NEEDS OF GRADE 4 ENGLISH LEARNERS IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ENDUMENI CIRCUIT

by

NONHLANHLA GUGULETHU SHOZI

I have been proofreading articles, Honours, Masters and Doctoral dissertations, research reports and theses for the past 16+ years for, *inter alia*, the following institutions: University of the Witwatersrand; GIBS; University of Cape Town; Milpark; Mancosa; University of KwaZuluNatal; University of Johannesburg; Unisa; Tshwane University of Technology; Stellenbosch; Henley Business School, University of Zululand, the Da Vinci Institute and, more recently, the Stadio group.

I have also undertaken proofreading for publishers, such as Oxford University Press and Juta & Company, companies, institutions and non-governmental organisations.

I have a major in English, and excellent knowledge of Afrikaans.

