

**Exploring self-directed continuous professional development for English  
Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools**

**by**

**Hilma NM Amakutuwa**

**2024**

**Exploring self-directed continuous professional development for English  
Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools**

**Hilma NM Amakutuwa**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree**

**Master of Education in English Language Teaching  
Department of Secondary and Post-School Education  
Faculty of Education  
Rhodes University  
Makhanda, South Africa**

**Supervisor: Professor Nhlanhla Mpofu**

**Co-supervisor: Dr Clement Simuja**

**2024**

## DEDICATION

---

I dedicate this thesis to my creator, the author and perfecter of my faith, for the grace and strength he gave me to embark on and complete my thesis.

I also dedicate this thesis to the memory of my late mother, Zita Sofia Itewa-Moongela, for her unwavering love, prayers and sacrifices that continue to sustain me to this day. Thank you for raising a daughter (me) who embodies your values and teachings. Your spirit lives on in everything I do.



## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP AND COPYRIGHT

---

I, Hilma NM Amakutuwa, student number 22A7152, declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it has been written in my own words. In all instances where I made use of citations from published or unpublished works, I have acknowledged these authors in text and referenced them in full. I understand that all rights regarding the intellectual property of this thesis belong to Rhodes University which has the right to publish the work as they deem fit.

I agree that, subject to the authorisation of Rhodes University as owner of all intellectual property rights, the approved version may be placed in the University archive with the following status:

**Release the entire work immediately for worldwide access**

I certify that this version of the dissertation is the same as that which was approved by the examination panel and that changes to the document as requested by them have been done.



---

**Signed**

13 June 2024

**Date**

## DECLARATION – LANGUAGE EDITOR

*Alexa Barnby*

*Language Specialist*

Editing, copywriting, formatting, translation

BA Hons Translation Studies; APEd (SATI) Accredited Professional Text Editor, SATI  
Mobile: 071 872 1334 alexabarnby@gmail.com

11 June 2024

### DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDIT

Exploring self-directed continuous professional development for English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools

by

Hilma NM Amakutuwa

I declare that I have edited this Master of Education dissertation, ensuring that the work follows the conventions of grammar and syntax, correcting misspelling and incorrect punctuation, changing any misused words and querying if the word used is what is intended, as well as ensuring consistency in terms of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation and other aspects of style.

The onus is on the author, however, to make the changes and address the comments made.



A K BARNBY



**Alexa Barnby**  
Full Member  
Accredited Professional Text Editor: English (SATI)  
Membership number: SA8001  
Membership year: March 2024 to February 2025  
071 872 1334  
alexabarnby@gmail.com  
[www.editors.org.za](http://www.editors.org.za)



**SATI**  
SOUTH AFRICAN  
TRANSLATORS' INSTITUTE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

First and foremost, I would like to thank God Almighty for his love, protection and wisdom which enabled me to undertake and complete my study.

Secondly, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor, Professor Nhlanhla Mpofo, for her unwavering professionalism and steadfast guidance throughout my journey. Your selfless mentorship and support of my study has been a constant source of motivation and has challenged me to strive for excellence. I am deeply grateful for your constructive comments which helped me to develop a love for research. Thank you for believing in me, God bless you abundantly.

My appreciation extends further to my lovely husband, Tate Tonateni Amakutuwa, who has been my anchor throughout my academic journey. Thank you for stepping in for me in our family when I was absent; your love motivated me and sustained me. To my beloved children, Johnathan and Jeremy Amakutuwa, you inspire me to work hard and to set a positive example for you to follow.

Special appreciation goes to my brother, Harry Moongela, my classmates Selma and Lomo, my supportive friends and colleagues. Thank you for your invaluable academic support and guidance. You inspired me to broaden my knowledge of my research topic.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and express my gratitude to Khomas Region Education Directorate and the schools that facilitated my data collection, giving me an opportunity to conduct my research. I extend my sincere appreciation to the teachers who willingly participated in the interviews. Their valuable contribution has enriched the data gathered in the field of ESL teacher professional development in Namibia. I will forever be indebted to you.

May God bless you all.

## ABSTRACT

---

Continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers, with all its diverse notions, has been noted and articulated in various policy documents in Namibia, and is understood as in-service training and professional development for teachers to improve learning outcomes. In Namibia, challenges have been experienced with the performance of learners in English as a Second Language (ESL) at the national level, and teacher professional development could be one way of changing the status quo. However, in answer to the call from the Namibian Ministry of Education Arts and Culture for a more idiosyncratic orientation, limited literature was found on how ESL teachers use self-directed learning (SDL) to shape their CPD activities.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to address this gap by exploring the self-directed CPD needs of English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools. The study was oriented to theoretical insights from SDL, reflective practice and social constructivism. Through the use of a qualitative approach, the study employed an exploratory case study research design. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to generate data from eight selected Grade 8 to 12 ESL teachers in the Khomas region of Namibia. The data gathered were analysed using an inductive thematic framework.

The findings of the study indicate that ESL teachers are faced with a myriad of challenges ranging from classroom experiences, the type of learners they work with and the support system available at school, regional and national level. The study found that due to changing education paradigms, ESL teachers need to broaden their knowledge base in specialised education and systematic professional interventions at school level. They indicated that this would help learners with challenges in reading, writing and comprehension to improve their skills in ESL classrooms. They further emphasised the necessity for mentors, education specialists, systematic schools and circuit based collaborative CPD, as well as more support from school heads and regional ESL senior education officers, which is an area that is inadequately managed. Finally, they pointed out that in order to make their ESL classes engaging and enjoyable, teachers needed to have a strong foundation in ICT education. This foundation can be leveraged to create

resources that are now lacking. The findings have implications for ESL teachers, school administrators, education specialists and policymakers, as they provide insights and recommendations for enhancing ESL education practices.

**KEYWORDS:** English Language teachers; English as a second language (ESL); continuous professional development (CPD); self-directed learning; reflective practice; Namibia

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP AND COPYRIGHT .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>DECLARATION – LANGUAGE EDITOR.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>xvi</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>xvii</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>xix</b>
<b>TERMINOLOGY .....</b>	<b>xx</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2. The Namibian continuous professional development programme .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.3. Continuous professional development programmes in English language teaching .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.4. Problem statement.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.5. Purpose of the study .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.6. Research questions .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.7. Theoretical framework .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.8. Summary of the research .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.8.1. Interpretivist approach .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.8.2. Qualitative approach.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.8.3. Exploratory case study design.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.8.4. Selection of participants.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.8.5. Data collection methods .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.8.6. Data analysis .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1.8.7. Ethical considerations .....</b>	<b>14</b>

1.9.	Trustworthiness .....	15
1.10.	Outline of the study .....	16
<b>CHAPTER 2 .....</b>		<b>17</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>		<b>17</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	17
2.2	Knowledge base of second language teachers .....	17
2.2.1	The nature of the teacher-learner .....	20
2.2.2	The school context: School and schooling .....	21
2.2.3	The pedagogical process: Language teaching and learning .....	21
2.3	Namibian knowledge base for ESL teachers.....	22
2.3.1	Knowledge of the curriculum .....	23
2.3.2	Pedagogical knowledge .....	23
2.3.3	Knowledge of learners.....	24
2.4	Definition of CPD .....	25
2.5	Traditional models of continuous professional development (CPD).....	26
2.5.1	Transmission CPD model .....	26
2.5.2	Transitional CPD model .....	29
2.5.3	Transformative CPD model.....	30
2.5.4	Purpose of the Namibian CPD framework .....	32
2.5.5	Steps for drafting the CPD framework curriculum .....	33
2.5.6	Steps for implementing the CPD framework.....	33
2.5.7	The monitoring and evaluation processes of the framework.....	33
2.5.8	Expected outcomes of the CPD framework in Namibia.....	34
2.6	Self-directed professional development for language teacher education .....	34
2.7	Reflective practice as professional development for language teacher education 37	
2.8	Self-directed approach to the ESL CPD model .....	39
2.9	Chapter summary.....	40
<b>CHAPTER 3 .....</b>		<b>42</b>
<b>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>		<b>42</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	42

3.2	<b>A social constructivist approach to language teacher continuous professional development.....</b>	<b>42</b>
3.2.1	<b>Interaction and collaboration .....</b>	<b>43</b>
3.2.2	<b>Active engagement and experiential learning .....</b>	<b>44</b>
3.2.3	<b>Reflection and metacognition .....</b>	<b>45</b>
3.2.4	<b>Cultural context and diversity.....</b>	<b>46</b>
3.3	<b>A self-directed learning approach to language teacher continuous professional development.....</b>	<b>47</b>
3.4	<b>Conceptualisation of the self-directed process .....</b>	<b>48</b>
3.4.1	<b>Humanistic philosophy (individual) in self-directed learning theory .....</b>	<b>49</b>
3.4.2	<b>Pragmatic philosophy (purposeful).....</b>	<b>50</b>
3.4.3	<b>Constructivist epistemology (developmental) .....</b>	<b>50</b>
3.5	<b>Self-Directed learning activities .....</b>	<b>51</b>
3.6	<b>Self-directed learning outcomes .....</b>	<b>52</b>
3.7	<b>A reflective practice approach to language teacher continuous professional development.....</b>	<b>52</b>
3.7.1	<b>Defining reflective practice .....</b>	<b>52</b>
3.7.1.1	<b>Dewey’s (1933) theory of reflective practice .....</b>	<b>53</b>
3.7.1.2	<b>Schön (1987) theory of reflective practice .....</b>	<b>53</b>
3.7.2	<b>Three levels of reflective practice.....</b>	<b>54</b>
3.7.2.1	<b>Reflection-on-action .....</b>	<b>54</b>
3.7.2.2	<b>Reflection-in-action .....</b>	<b>54</b>
3.7.2.3	<b>Reflection-for-action.....</b>	<b>55</b>
3.7.3	<b>Reflective practice and teacher continuous professional development.....</b>	<b>55</b>
3.7.4	<b>Self-directed learning in CPD as a reflective practice.....</b>	<b>56</b>
3.8	<b>Chapter summary.....</b>	<b>58</b>
	<b>CHAPTER 4 .....</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>60</b>
4.1	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>60</b>
4.2	<b>Interpretivist paradigm.....</b>	<b>61</b>
4.3	<b>Qualitative approach.....</b>	<b>63</b>
4.4	<b>Exploratory case study.....</b>	<b>65</b>

<b>4.5</b>	<b>Selection of participants</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Data generation</b> .....	<b>69</b>
<b>4.6.1</b>	<b>Focus group discussion</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>4.6.2</b>	<b>Semi-structured interviews</b> .....	<b>71</b>
<b>4.6.3</b>	<b>Document analysis</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Inductive thematic analysis</b> .....	<b>73</b>
4.7.1	Familiarising myself with the data.....	74
4.7.2	Generating initial codes.....	75
4.7.3	Searching for themes.....	75
4.7.4	Reviewing themes.....	75
4.7.5	Defining and naming the themes.....	76
4.7.6	Producing the report.....	76
<b>4.8</b>	<b>Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>4.8.1</b>	<b>Credibility</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>4.8.2</b>	<b>Confirmability</b> .....	<b>77</b>
<b>4.8.3</b>	<b>Dependability</b> .....	<b>77</b>
<b>4.8.4</b>	<b>Transferability</b> .....	<b>78</b>
<b>4.9</b>	<b>Ethical considerations</b> .....	<b>78</b>
<b>4.9.1</b>	<b>Informed consent</b> .....	<b>79</b>
<b>4.9.2</b>	<b>Confidentiality and anonymity</b> .....	<b>79</b>
<b>4.9.3</b>	<b>Right to withdraw from the study</b> .....	<b>80</b>
<b>4.10</b>	<b>Positionality</b> .....	<b>81</b>
<b>4.11</b>	<b>Chapter summary</b> .....	<b>81</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5</b> .....		<b>83</b>
<b>PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS</b> .....		<b>83</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>83</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Biographical data of research participants</b> .....	<b>84</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Findings</b> .....	<b>87</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Theme 1: Need for specialised knowledge and professional interventions</b> .....	<b>88</b>
<b>5.4.1</b>	<b>Subtheme 1.1 Specialised knowledge</b> .....	<b>89</b>
<b>5.4.2</b>	<b>Subtheme 1.2 Professional intervention</b> .....	<b>91</b>

5.4.3	Theme 2: Professional support for teachers.....	92
5.4.4	Subtheme 2.1 CPD programmes at school and at region for teachers .....	93
5.4.5	Subtheme 2.2: Determiner of available CPD .....	94
5.4.6	Subtheme 2.3: Teachers and learners' attitude towards English as a Second Language .....	96
5.4.7	Theme 3: Self-driven initiatives to improve learning outcomes.....	98
5.4.8	Subtheme 3.1: Consultation and collaboration.....	98
5.4.9	Subtheme 3.2: Use of available resources.....	99
5.5	Summary of findings: similarities and new insights.....	102
5.6	Chapter summary.....	104
<b>CHAPTER 6.....</b>		<b>105</b>
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>		<b>105</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	105
6.2	Overview of the study.....	105
6.3	Conclusions of the study in terms of the research questions .....	106
6.3.1	Research question 1: What specific CPD needs do in-service ESL teachers have on an individual level? .....	107
6.3.2	Research question 2: What contextual experiences shape the CPD individual needs highlighted by ESL in-service teachers? .....	108
6.4	Situating the findings within the theoretical framework of the study .....	110
6.5	Recommendations for practice.....	111
6.5.1	Recommendation 1: Teacher training for all teachers on special education and psychosocial support.....	111
6.5.2	Recommendation 2: Implementation of continuous and systematic CPD programmes.....	112
6.5.3	Recommendation 3: Reinforcement of the use LAC to change the attitudes of teachers and learners towards ESL.....	112
6.5.4	Recommendation 4: Promote transformative CPD approaches in schools... 113	
6.5.5	Recommendation 5: Provision of adequate and sustainable teaching and learning resources .....	113
6.6	Recommendations for future research .....	113
6.6.1	Recommendation 1: Assessment of the knowledge base of ESL teachers in Namibia .....	113

<b>6.6.2</b>	<b>Recommendation 2: Explore and assess the current CPD framework in Namibia</b> .....	114
<b>6.6.3</b>	<b>Recommendation 3: Investigate the use and impact of EAC in primary and secondary schools on English language proficiency</b> .....	114
<b>6.7</b>	<b>Limitations of the study</b> .....	114
<b>6.8</b>	<b>Concluding remarks</b> .....	115
<b>6.9</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	116

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

<b>Figure name</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1: Framework for knowledge base for language teacher education (Freeman & Johnson, 1998)	20
Figure 2: Spectrum of CPD models (Kennedy, 2005)	26
Figure 3: Framework for reflecting on practice (Farrell, 2015)	37
Figure 4: Foundational positions of self-directed learning: SDL (Morris, 2019)	48
Figure 5: The six phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)	72

## LIST OF TABLES

---

<b>Table name</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 2.1: Categories of content knowledge (Shulman 1986)	18
Table 3.1: Theories and their linkage to the language teachers' CPD	57
Table 4.1: Research design summary	59
Table 5.1: Summary of biographic data of the participants	76
Table 5.2: Summary of the study themes	78

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
CLIL	Content Language Integrated Learning
CPD	Continuous professional development
ELT	English language teaching
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESL	English as Second Language
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
FDG	Focus group discussion
ICT	Information and communication technology
IICBA	International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
MoEAC	Ministry of Education Arts and Culture
NCBE	National Curriculum for Basic Education
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
NNTIP	Namibian Novice Teacher Induction Programme
PCK	Pedagogical content knowledge
RCPDCC	Regional CPD coordinating committee
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SATs	Standardized Achievement Tests
SBCPDCC	School/site-based CPD coordinating committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SDL	Self-directed learning
SEO	Senior education officer
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## LIST OF APPENDICES

---

<b>Appendices name</b>	<b>Page</b>
A: Focus group discussion schedule	177
B: Semi-structured interview guide	178
C: Document analysis guide	179
D: Approval letter for ethical clearance	180
E: Request for permission to conduct study – Director	181
F: Request for permission to conduct study – Principal	182
G: Request for permission to conduct study – Teacher	183
H: Informed consent teachers	184
I: Permission to conduct study – Director	185
J: Permission to conduct study – Executive Director	186
K: Data analysis excerpts	187
L: Thematic analysis process	188
M: Excerpts from focus group discussion	189
N: Excerpts of interview transcripts	196

## TERMINOLOGY

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Continuous professional development (CPD)	The process and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitude of teachers to improve learner outcome and performance (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019)
In-service teachers	Teachers who have already completed their basic training and are now teaching in schools.
In-service teacher education	Relevant courses and activities in which a serving teacher may participate to upgrade his or her professional knowledge, skills and competence in the teaching profession.
Self-directed CPD	Self-directed CPD gives individuals a platform to assume responsibility for controlling their learning objectives and the means for doing so in order to meet their personal goals or the perceived demands of their individual context (Morris, 2019).
Reflective practice	Reflective practice is usually considered a form of cyclical and systematic inquiry where teachers carefully collect evidence about their teaching practice in order to analyse, interpret and evaluate their experiences with the intention of improving their future teaching (Suphasri & Chinokul, 2021).

## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

---

#### 1.1. Introduction

Namibia is a country situated in the southern part of Africa which gained its independence from South Africa in 1990. After independence, English was adopted as an official language and therefore the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). This was a paradoxical decision because, at that time, only 0.8% of the Namibian population constituted first-language speakers of English, with English not being widely spoken in communities and rarely used in rural regions (Iipinge, 2018). In pre-independent Namibia, Afrikaans was the language of the colonial administration and the implication of the adoption of English as a medium of instruction is that teachers who were trained in other mediums of instruction had to teach English language in schools (Mushelenga, 2023). Having endured a segregated education system prior to its independence, the country is believed to have inherited a large army of teachers who were either unqualified or underqualified, unable to meet the minimum expected requirements for a teaching position in an independent Namibia (Kretchmar et al., 2012; World Bank, 2015). Another argument advanced in the literature is that Namibian teachers were not sufficiently trained and were not proficient enough to teach English language (Muzira, 2021), thus Namibia committed to change this and to transform the teachers through investing in institutions of teacher training and to advance robust teacher training capacity. Additionally in order to attain a knowledge-based society, a curriculum reform was inevitable, and the provision of quality education and the consequent attainment of quality educational outcomes was a critical focus for the Namibian education system (MoEAC, 2016). However, to transform the Namibian education system, the provision of quality education relies on an investment in teacher professional development.

According to UNESCO-IICBA (2024), no matter how excellent the quality of pre-service education is, continuous professional development (CPD) is indispensable for teachers and school leaders to keep abreast of required teaching standards and competencies. Hence, teacher professional development has been used as the most effective approach to promote teacher change (Barut & Wijaya 2020). CPD refers to the process and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitude of teachers so that they might, in turn, improve learner outcome and performance (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). Several approaches to teacher CPD have been used to support teachers to remain relevant and on a par with current innovations, to upgrade their professional knowledge and to transform education systems (Irgatoglu & Perker, 2021). The most common approach to CPD has been the traditional top-down, one-size-fits-all approach, which

focuses on direct intervention in the form of skill sets transferred to teachers, assisting them to conform to a certain standard (Artman et al., 2020). Traditional approaches to teacher CPD have been highly criticised because of their once-off nature and their lack of consideration of individual teacher experiences and learning styles, which creates a lack of teacher agency (Williams et al., 2022). However, current CPD approaches have emerged grounded in the human, moral and social capacity of teachers, promoting reflective practices and collaborative learning to enhance the construction of new knowledge and the formulation of communities of practice (Purnamasari, 2023).

Since teachers are an indispensable part of the provision of quality education and the most important components of the education system (Irgatoglu & Perker, 2021), the quality of the CPD opportunities given to them remains critical. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2016), Kayumbu (2020) and Fauth et al. (2019), CPD is not a static concept but a social construct which is fluid in nature. Thus, understanding how teachers learn provides a foundation for and insight into the type of CPD to engage in to ensure its effectiveness and success (Cross, 2020; Freeman, 2020; Mpofu & De Jager, 2018).

Furthermore, the quality of teaching and academic performance in Namibia has been found to be below the averages of other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries who form part of the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), with low performance in literacy among learners over the years (SACMEQ IV, 2017). According to the SACMEQ IV report, Namibia is ranked seventh out of 13 in reading among countries in southern and East Africa, which generally means that the majority of Namibian learners fail to read, write and speak effectively in the medium of English, despite English Second Language (ESL) being made official in the school curriculum at independence in 1990 (Muzira, 2021). Additionally, between 2009 and 2018, Namibia through the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture conducted national mid-phase assessments known as the National Standardised Assessment Test (NSAT) for Grades 5 and 7, setting a national baseline and establishing a database for numeracy and literacy levels in the country. The results of the last tests showed a trend similar to that of the SAQMEQ IV report indicating that only about 50% of Grade 5 and Grade 7 learners could read with comprehension (MoEAC, 2019).

As a result of this situation discussed in the previous paragraph, the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC), together with other education stakeholders, was prompted to develop a CPD framework with implementing guidelines to upgrade and update the knowledge and skills of in-service teachers (Kayumbu, 2020; Mushelenga, 2023; UNAM, 2016) to enhance and upgrade

teachers' skills and instructional practices and, in turn, to influence learner outcomes. In line with educational environments where English serves as a second language and acts as the instructional medium for multilingual learners, the ongoing professional growth of English language educators in Namibia stands as a critical priority (Abakah et al., 2022; Haifidi et al., 2019; Muzira, 2021; Nakambale, 2018). This imperative arises as the nation endeavours to fulfil the benchmarks of quality education outlined in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) (Darling-Hammond, 2021; MoEAC, 2022; UN, 2016) which asserts that quality education encompasses teaching and learning that is rooted in a wide-ranging knowledge base. Additionally, it combines an understanding of content and pedagogy to focus on meeting learners' diverse social, emotional and academic needs rather than just covering the curriculum (Kim et al., 2019).

Despite the existence of CPD initiatives for all educators in Namibia, their efficacy remains predominantly generic, with numerous stakeholders questioning their efficacy in bolstering teaching, particularly in core subjects like ESL (Haifidi et al., 2019; Haufiku, 2022; Ngololo & Nekongo-Nielsen, 2017; Porter & Freeman, 2020). For instance, a study by Frasen (2022) highlighted that while well-structured, most CPD programmes in educational settings where English serves as the LoLT have been largely inadequate as a means to support teachers' professional advancement. According to Mpofu (2023), this issue arises because CPD programmes lack opportunities for self-directed learning (SDL), instead favouring a structured and generic approach that does little to enhance teachers' comprehension of second language acquisition in multilingual and superdiverse contexts. Hence, this study explored self-directed CPD for English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools.

## **1.2. The Namibian continuous professional development programme**

In the Namibian context, CPD refers to a vehicle that facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and skills, enabling educators to remain current and maintain certain levels of competence in their areas (UNAM, 2013). In the past, teachers' CPD activities were centrally developed by the Namibian MoEAC or the curriculum development agency, the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED). These consisted of short, often once-off, non-continuous activities which did not articulate to a formal qualification and did not consider the needs and desires of teachers (Haifidi et al., 2019; Kayumbu, 2020; UNAM, 2013). The use of these kinds of activities or workshops position teachers as clients who need fixing and discounts the possibility of building on their current strengths (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). In 2013, when the MoEAC and other education stakeholders developed a CPD framework and a CPD unit, the University of Namibia (UNAM) was tasked with coordinating the implementation and management of all CPD activities at national

level (Kayumbu, 2020). Guidelines for the implementation of decentralised regional and school-based CPD coordinating committees (RCPDCC and SBCPDCC, respectively) were compiled to promote ongoing learning for educators, using a practical, needs-based approach to improve classroom effectiveness and foster learner performance (UNAM, 2014). These committees further encouraged local structures like schools to be empowered through participatory processes to identify their own professional needs, plan for them and have them addressed (Haufiku, 2022; Kayumbu, 2020). It is believed that this approach mitigates the negative effects of the past traditional cascade CPD approach by emphasising sustained support mechanisms from central institutions to site-based CPD structures (UNAM, 2014).

For ESL teachers, their specific needs were thought to be subsumed by these structures and be addressed through the guidelines provided in the CPD booklets (Junias et al., 2022; UNAM, 2013). One such guideline is that every school will have a CPD committee and a plan that creates opportunities for teachers to research and improve on their practices, to share and exchange experiences of CPD activities, as well as have collaborative communities of learning with other school-based CPD committees to exchange best practices (MoEAC, 2016; UNAM, 2014). However, for CPD to be effective at these levels, regular and sustained monitoring and evaluation is critical for measuring its impact (Kayumbu, 2020; UNAM, 2013). Since, there are limited studies on CPD particularly regarding CPD needs and models for ESL teachers (Kayumbu, 2020; Nakambale, 2018), this study will provide some insight and add to the literature of CPD for this context.

While the worldwide trend is a generic professional development programme for teachers, with the challenges besetting countries like Namibia in achieving high-quality education (Mwila et al., 2022) there is an urgent need for CPD based on SDL to address the need for teachers to enhance ESL teaching across the curriculum (Irgatoglu & Perker, 2021; Özer et al., 2020). Hence, CPD that is self-directed by teachers may be considered effective because in-service training in which teachers participate voluntarily is more effective than that which is organised by institutions (Irgatoglu & Perker, 2021). As defined by Özer et al. (2020), SDL in CPD is a new approach which refers to professional development arising from the teachers' own initiative, where the process is internally determined and teachers take responsibility for their own learning. Researchers such as Irgatoglu & Perker (2021), Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009), Özer et al. (2020), Kretchmar et al. (2012) and Porter and Freeman (2020) support self-directed CPD activities because they emphasise the teacher's voice as a critical factor in identifying, planning and executing professional development activities. It is also believed to be a potential key to reducing the mismatch between CPD inputs (teacher learning activities) and the outputs (teacher cognition and

classroom practice) (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009, p. 376). It is essential for ESL teachers to achieve successful ESL lessons in Namibia; hence, the present study explored the self-directed CPD needs of English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools. In line with the call by researchers such as Farrell and Macapinlac (2021), Kayumbu (2020) and Zeng and Day (2019), it is essential to further investigate the role of self-directed Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in enhancing the effectiveness of English language teachers. Moreover, fostering reflective practices and collaborative CPD approaches beyond traditionally oriented approaches, would help teachers better understand their professional identities, drive their professional growth and adapt to the evolving demands of ESL education in Namibia. Hence my study explored the self-directed CPD needs of English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools.

### **1.3. Continuous professional development programmes in English language teaching**

Continuous professional development (CPD) programmes in English language teaching (ELT) are structured initiatives designed to enhance the skills, knowledge and effectiveness of English language educators (Mwila et al., 2022; Purnamasari, 2023). These programmes aim to support teachers in keeping pace with the evolving demands of language instruction, pedagogical techniques and educational trends (Nzarirwehi & Atuhumuze, 2019). CPD in ELT encompasses a wide range of activities, including workshops, seminars, conferences, webinars, online courses, mentoring and SDL opportunities (Potter & Freeman, 2020).

Firstly, in terms of content, the ELT CPD programmes offer content tailored to address various aspects of ELT, such as language acquisition theories, teaching methodologies, assessment techniques, classroom management strategies, technology integration, cultural awareness and linguistic diversity (Abakah et al., 2022; Vadivel et al., 2021). Researchers have found that ELT teachers' content in countries like Namibia covers knowledge of the curriculum, pedagogy and the knowledge of learners (Haufiku, 2022; MoEAC, 2016; Norro, 2021). According to the website of the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching at UNAM, the existing CPD system serves as a model of best practices in the provision of ongoing professional development in Namibia, with structures at regional, circuit and school level. It further states that CPD content is based on collaboration, networking and sharing of best practices to enhance learning opportunities among educators, where their voices are recognised in determining their own professional development needs and planning through the existing structures rather than having them centrally determined by someone else (UNAM, 2013). In contrast, findings from participants in this study reveal a

different picture, pointing to the common use of traditional approaches to CPD for ESL teachers, where CPD is centrally determined and applied as reiterated by (Mpofu, 2023), in her exploration of CPD operations for TESOL teachers in South Africa, and found them as broadly being traditional and passive learning activities consisting of seminars, conferences and workshops.

Secondly, delivery methods refer to CPD activities that are delivered through diverse methods to accommodate different learning styles and preferences (Kapur, 2018; Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020). These methods may include face-to-face training sessions, online modules, peer collaboration, reflective practice and action research projects (Abakah et al., 2022; Fransen, 2022). Researchers have found that CPD delivery methods based on traditional approaches such as award bearing, deficit, cascade and workshops are popularly used in countries like Namibia due to the fact that they are believed to be a direct solution to teachers' challenges (Mooney Simmie et al., 2024; Sancar et al., 2021). These delivery methods are also seen as cost saving measures and can target a large group of teachers at once, however they do not reflect the concepts of participation, collaboration and ownership, which are regarded as vital to a self-directed approach to CPD (Abakah et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2022) which my study explored. In support of this, other researchers (De Paor & Murphy, 2018; Mwila et al., 2022) revealed that these approaches to CPD were found to be ineffective because of their disconnect from teachers' contextual experiences, which is a critical component of teacher professional development.

Thirdly, researchers such as Abakah (2023) and Vadivel et al. (2021) indicate that CPD in ELT also includes professional networking. CPD programmes provide opportunities for English language educators to network, collaborate and share best practices with colleagues locally, nationally and internationally (Purnamasari, 2023). Professional networking fosters a supportive community of practice where teachers can exchange ideas, seek advice and collaborate on educational initiatives (Coppe, 2023; Prenger et al., 2021). Researchers have found that there is a growing shift in ELT teachers' professional development programmes from the ones aiming at changing instructional practices towards strengthening ELT teachers' professional networking as CPD (Coppe, 2023; Prenger et al., 2021). This is because it was discovered that these ELT networks are the best way ELT teachers grow professionally, as networking within and between schools in different regions is considered as a potential tool for improving learner outcomes (Azorin, 2020). Although leadership and resources for facilitating ELT professional networking remain critical, there is still more that needs to be done in this area. Researchers continue to emphasise that the enthusiasm for professional networking far exceeds the evidence base outlining the impact it has on teacher CPD (Feldman & Gouveia, (2022). Therefore, further research is needed to fully understand the

underlying mechanism through which ELT teachers' professional networking and CPD positively affect teachers' professional development.

Fourthly, reflective practice is also part of the CPD content for ELT. Abakah et al. (2022) explain that CPD encourages teachers to engage in reflective practice, where they critically evaluate their teaching methods, assess student learning outcomes and identify areas for improvement (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). Reflective practice enhances teacher self-awareness, promotes continuous learning and fosters professional growth (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Farrell & Macapinlac, 2021). In countries like South Africa and Ethiopia, Gudeta (2022) found that although teachers believed that they used a considerable number of reflective teaching skills and attitudes, they were actually not engaged in reflective teaching at all, they merely held attitudes of the pre-reflection level during their teaching and learning processes. Hence, Mpofu (2023) asserts that reflective practice is critical in enhancing and shaping the quality of language instruction and the depth of teachers' personal professional development, especially for Namibian ESL teachers. While reflective practice now enjoys prominence in many teacher education programmes worldwide, its adoption into the field of TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) is relatively recent (Farrell, 2018; Freeman, 2020). As one second language teacher educator put it, reflecting offers a way into the less "accessible aspects of teacher's work" (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). Thus, Gudeta (2022) cautioned that although reflection can be a valuable process for teachers and teacher educators, it needs to be explicit about what it is attempting to explain, and a reflective teacher must be aware of its limitations.

Lastly, through assessment and evaluation the CPD programmes incorporate mechanisms for assessing teacher participation, learning outcomes and the impact of professional development activities on teaching practice and student achievement (Sancar et al., 2021). Evaluation feedback helps refine CPD offerings and ensure their relevance and effectiveness (UNESCO-IICBA, 2024). For Namibia to determine whether ELT teachers' CPD practices are designed to accomplish their purpose, an assessment should be done to gain insight into how CPD may best assist teachers to deepen their knowledge and skills and grow professionally (Sancar et al., 2021). Although the CPD framework in Namibia advocates for regular and sustained monitoring and evaluation, an inconsistent CPD monitoring system would appear to be in place, and few resources are deployed to carry out an evaluation on the impact and efficacy of the current CPD (Iimene, 2018). The support for teacher professional growth and learner academic outcomes based on the provision of CPD is also undocumented (Hangula, 2021). In light of the above, researchers (Gudeta, 2022; Mwila et al., 2022; Nakambale, 2018) also found that there are many hindrances to applying effective CPD in countries such as Namibia, South Africa and Ethiopia, including a lack of

planning on the part of ministries, and a lack of human and capital resources, psychological support, infrastructure, motivation and guidance.

An understanding of the CPD programmes in ELT is crucial for fostering the continuous growth of English Language educators. Such programmes empower teachers to deliver exceptional instruction, cater to the diverse needs of their students and foster positive educational outcomes (Artman et al, 2020; Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). However, the organisation of CPD programmes in Namibia differs from this broader ELT perspective (cf. previous section). In light of this distinction, the present study aimed to probe into the self-directed CPD needs of English Language teachers in selected secondary schools across Namibia. By exploring these needs, the study sought to identify areas where CPD initiatives can be tailored to better support Namibian educators in their professional development journey, ultimately enhancing the quality of English Language instruction in the country's schools. The study also revealed the experiences and findings of the researcher while conducting this study.

#### **1.4. Problem statement**

The pursuit and provision of high-quality education are global priorities, particularly evident in ELT (Galaczi et al., 2018; Garira, 2020). This emphasis stems from the indispensable skills acquired through quality education, vital for 21st-century demands and for sustaining social and economic development in countries (Fauth et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2019). In numerous nations, including Namibia, where English is the primary medium of instruction for multilingual learners, CPD serves to equip educators with requisite skills for addressing contemporary demands. However, concerns arise regarding the alignment of CPD objectives with classroom realities in such settings (Barahona, 2018; De Paor & Murphy, 2018; Haufiku, 2022; Mpofu, 2023; UNESCO & Education International (2019), raising doubts about the efficacy of CPD initiatives in addressing specific needs and challenges faced by teachers, particularly in multilingual educational environments like those in Namibia. Additionally, scrutiny has been directed towards the content of CPD programmes provided to teachers, as noted by researchers like Barahona (2018), De Paor and Murphy (2018), Mwila et al. (2022), NIED (2022) and Haufiku (2022) amid continued failure in English language performance and instruction.

In the Namibian context, MoEAC (2019) highlights poor practices regarding in-service training, where CPD workshops remain the primary means of knowledge dissemination through the cascade model, contributing to persistent academic decline. Furthermore, poor performance in ESL national examinations has been attributed to generic CPD programmes, eliciting fierce criticism (MoEAC, 2018, 2019, 2020; Nakambale, 2018; UNAM, 2013; Haifidi et al., 2019). While

researchers in ELT, such as Mpofu (2023), Adams (2021) and Cirocki and Farrell (2019), challenge CPD programmes that lack provision for SDL and reflective opportunities which are essential for educators' pedagogical competence and professional success, ultimately benefiting their learners. Although the Namibian CPD framework advocates for SDL and CPD (Ndemuweda, 2011; UNAM, 2013, 2014), limited studies indicate the presence of self-directed programmes contributing to teachers' professional development within the implementation framework. Hence, this exploration examined the self-directed CPD requirements of English Language teachers in some secondary schools in Namibia where a generic CPD is the norm.

### **1.5. Purpose of the study**

The aim of this exploratory case study was to probe into the self-directed CPD requirements of ESL teachers in selected Namibian schools. In context of this study, self-directed CPD refers to professional development that empowers teachers to govern and steer their own learning trajectories, set their objectives, select appropriate teaching methodologies and assess learning achievements (Fransen, 2022; Gencel & Saracaloglu, 2018; Morris, 2019). Through this exploration, I aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the unique CPD needs of ESL educators in Namibia, thereby informing future initiatives tailored to enhance their professional growth and effectiveness in the classroom. The specific objectives of this study were to

- i. describe the CPD needs of ESL in-service teachers based on their individualised needs
- ii. explain the contextual experiences that shape the individualised CPD needs highlighted by ESL in-service teachers.

### **1.6. Research questions**

Specifically, my study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

- i. What specific CPD needs do in-service ESL teachers have on an individual level?
- ii. What contextual experiences shape the individual CPD needs highlighted by ESL in-service teachers?

### **1.7. Theoretical framework**

The theoretical insights for this study were drawn from self-directed learning, reflective practice and social constructivism. Self-directed learning is learning which involves controlling and directing the learning process, consciously and constantly to understand any situation and concepts, solve problems or strengthen any skill (Gencel & Saracaloglu, 2018; Mahlaba, 2020). It

is a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies and evaluating learning outcomes (Collier, 2022). I used the key foundational positions of SDL in humanistic, pragmatic philosophy, as well as constructivist epistemology, to conceptualise the processes of SDL (Loeng, 2020). Together these concepts represent a process of learning that is individual, purposeful and developmental. What signifies the SDL process is that the teacher is empowered to take personal responsibility for choosing what information they use and how they use it in the process of meaning-making (Morris, 2019). I use this theory to explain teachers' autonomy and freedom in directing their own CPD needs and in understanding that teachers learn best when involved in transformative CPD activities (Gencel & Saracaloglu, 2018; Morris, 2019). Using interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), I obtained an understanding of the teachers' CPD needs, why they have these needs and what experiences shape them. SDL helps us to understand what motivates teachers to continuously learn and improve their skills professionally. However, this alone is not sufficient, as the cognitive process of reflecting on one's teaching and thinking deeply about one's teaching and one's beliefs about teaching is influenced by another process called reflective practice (Collier, 2022; Porter & Freeman, 2020).

Reflective practice means that teachers take responsibility for looking at their professional practice, at the underlying philosophy, beliefs and theories that shape their classroom practice so that it can become personally meaningful to them (Farrell, 2015, 2018; Farrell & Macapinlac, 2021). The main premise of reflection is that teachers who engage in reflective practices (Abakah, 2022) may develop a deeper understanding of their philosophy, as well as theories, as they relate to their actual practices and thus become proactive and confident in their teaching. Different ways can be used to promote teacher reflection such as keeping reflective journals or diaries, peer observation of teaching, lesson study, action research and reflecting using digital technologies (e.g. blogging and photo voicing). In Namibia, Luwango (2021) reiterates that successful teachers reflect critically on their teaching because they think critically about their lessons and take action to resolve problems encountered in the classroom. As a result, their learners perform well, leading to overall improved academic performance due to effective instructional strategies emerging from reflective teaching. Reflective practice theory was founded by Donald Schön in 1983 (Farrell & Macapinlac, 2021; Mwila et al., 2022), who described it as the practice where professionals become aware of their implicit knowledge base and learn from their experience. There are two fundamental types of reflection (Farrell, 2018; Mwila et al., 2022), namely, reflection on action and reflection in action. Reflection on action takes place after the event where the practitioner

evaluates the theories of action used to solve a problem, while reflection in action describes interactions with a problem or interventions as they unfold. According to Lupinski et al. (2012), a third concept of reflection was added to Schön (1987) studies as the work on reflective practice began to expand. This is termed “reflection for action”, which looks at what has occurred in the past and how this can help change the teaching process in the future. I drew from the analytical toolkit provided by all three types of reflection to orient the individual teachers’ CPD needs, by allowing them to reflect on their current contextual experiences to inform the way they wanted their needs to be addressed in future. This theory complements the theory of SDL in that teachers can only direct their own learning and identify their own CPD needs if they reflect on their knowledge base and experiences to shape these needs.

As teachers reflect on their practices, they construct new knowledge through making meaning of their experiences and share knowledge with their peers, creating a community of learning through social connections. This concept aligns with the third theoretical framework underpinning this study called social constructivism. The theory of social constructivism by Lev Vygotsky states that language and culture are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate and understand reality (Akpan et al., 2020), as constructed through social practice and realities (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021). In the context of my study, this means that teachers are capable of constructing their own understanding and knowledge of the world by experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Therefore, designing and employing teacher development programmes based on a social constructivist approach would be an effective CPD approach to provide a platform for teachers to utilise their cultural and linguistic setting, to co-construct new knowledge and formulate solutions for their classroom and their personal experiences.

## **1.8. Summary of the research**

### **1.8.1. Interpretivist approach**

This qualitative study used an interpretivist paradigm, which seeks to discover the meanings and truths of those who are being researched (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Interpretivism advocates the need to consider the subjective interpretation of human beings and their perceptions of the world as the starting point for understanding social phenomena (Maree et al., 2019). To understand the true perceptions of participants, I valued their views, backgrounds and experiences in ESL, which gave insights into their CPD needs and the contextual experiences that shaped these needs. These cannot be determined by a person located outside their world; only by their own realities (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Therefore, they used the platform provided by the semi-structured interviews and FGDs to reflect on and co-construct knowledge and solutions.

### **1.8.2. Qualitative approach**

A qualitative approach was used to explore the CPD needs of ESL teachers. Qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings (Maree et al., 2019). For this study, this approach fits the enquiry into exploring and understanding the CPD needs of ESL teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools, as in looking at their contexts, participants were given a platform to reflect on their experiences and think about why they need the identified CPD. Using interviews and lesson evaluations, participants were given insights into what works and what does not work in the classroom. Qualitative research methods were applied to answer the what, why and how by exploring the social phenomena and meanings derived from those who interact with such phenomena (Nieuwenhuis, 2019a).

### **1.8.3. Exploratory case study design**

Exploratory case study is one of several types of case study applied in qualitative research. Researchers (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Klopper, 2008; Maree et al., 2019) define it as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I investigated a phenomenon whose content is usually sourced from avenues other than the teachers themselves, who know their context better than anyone. Employing an exploratory case study provided a thorough understanding of the CPD needs of ESL teachers, because all case study research starts by deriving a close or in-depth understanding of a single case or a small number of cases set in their real-world contexts (Maree & Pietersen, 2020); in this context, providing a platform for the teacher to reflect on and become aware that they are able to identify what is required in their classrooms.

### **1.8.4. Selection of participants**

Purposive sampling, a widely used method in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Maree et al., 2019; Nakambale, 2018), is aimed at selecting participants who can provide comprehensive insights into a specific target group. This sampling technique involves deliberately selecting individuals with the intent to represent a particular phenomenon or group based on specific criteria (Maree et al., 2019). In this study, purposive sampling was used to recruit eight in-service ESL teachers from various schools in the Khomas region. These participants were then interviewed to gather valuable data regarding their experiences of and perspectives on CPD needs in ESL teaching.

### **1.8.5. Data collection methods**

Data collection in case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, documents and audiovisual materials (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As a qualitative researcher, I employed three data collection tools, namely an FGD and semi-structured interviews as well as document analysis. The use of an FGD assumes that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experiences and releasing inhibitions that may discourage participants from disclosing information (Maree et al., 2019). An FGD was beneficial for my study because it produced data that were rich in detail which would have been difficult to achieve with other research methods (Hollweck (2015) & Yin, 2014; Klopper, 2008; Maree & Pietersen, 2020; Nakambale, 2018). I conducted one FGD with the ESL in-service teachers, which lasted about 60 minutes, to inquire about and understand their CPD needs, the contextual experiences that informed them and how they wanted them to be addressed through a community of practice. The FGD provided them with an opportunity to socialise and cultivate their identities as practitioners in their workplaces (Henry & Namhla, 2020). This kind of data collection was informed by a self-directed theoretical framework which allowed the teachers to identify their own CPD needs through collaborative engagement and, consequently, together they identified solutions rather than waiting for external expertise to design solutions for them.

Semi-structured interviews were used as a method for collecting data from the sample of subjects. Semi-structured interviews are an important data collection tool owing to their strength in giving prominence to the meaning participants attribute to their lived experiences (Nieuwenhuis, 2019a). The interviews were informed by the theoretical framework of SDL to capture and obtain data on what CPD needs teachers have based on their idiosyncratic needs (Maree & Pietersen, 2020). The interviews were informed by reflective practice theory and aspects of social constructivism, in that through reflection, teachers probed deeper into their individual experiences to shape their individual CPD needs through social interactions in their various contexts. I conducted eight interviews, one with each teacher. In this way, I gathered teachers' understandings of CPD and probed how their contextual experiences shaped their idiosyncratic CPD needs. The interviews lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes and the FGD lasted for 67 minutes.

In preparation for the interviews and FGDs, I conducted an analysis of various CPD documents available in Namibia. Among these documents, a significant discovery was the presence of a CPD framework for Namibia, which offers a comprehensive overview of the country's CPD agenda (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). This framework delineates the different elements of CPD implementation

across various levels in Namibia, encompassing aspects such as implementation protocols, monitoring procedures and evaluation criteria. Furthermore, I identified ministerial policies and directives pertaining to teacher CPD in Namibia. These included the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Namibia, and the Namibian Novice Teacher Induction Programme (NNTIP) facilitated by the NIED in 2006 and 2009, respectively. A thorough examination of these documents yielded valuable insights into the objectives, priorities and proposed strategies of CPD initiatives in Namibia.

#### **1.8.6. Data analysis**

For this study I employed inductive thematic analysis as a method of data analysis because of its strength as a method that seeks to identify themes and interpret them to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study without a predetermined theory (Nieuwenhuis, 2019a). As teachers identified their CPD needs and reflected on their classroom and teaching experiences through the above data generation tools, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of analysis. Firstly, I familiarised myself with the data by noting down their CPD needs as articulated in the interviews and the FGD. Secondly, I generated initial ideas by coding interesting features of the data in a systematic way across the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thirdly, using reflective learning theory I searched for potential common themes by gathering all similar contextual experiences that shaped the CPD needs and further reviewed the themes by examining whether they worked in relation to the coded extracts at the first two levels. The analysis resulted in three themes explaining the needs and contextual experiences of ESL in-service teachers in Namibian secondary schools. Finally, I produced an analysis that gave vivid examples, relating it back to the research questions, literature and theoretical frames.

#### **1.8.7. Ethical considerations**

As a qualitative researcher, I needed to ensure that the best interests of the participants were maintained by observing ethical considerations. Ethical considerations refer to the protection of the participants' rights and confidentiality, as well as to a general sensitivity, by obtaining informed consent and adhering to the institutional review process (Klopper, 2008; Maree et al., 2019). I obtained permission for the research in line with the ethical guidelines of Rhodes University by applying for ethical clearance and ensuring that the requirements of informed consent, the right to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymity were complied with throughout my study. Firstly, to attend to informed consent, all participants were informed of the nature of their participation, the way in which the data would be collected, and the length of the interviews and focus group. Thereafter, I invited the participants to indicate their willingness to take part in my study by signing

a letter of consent. In addition, I informed the participants about their rights to withdraw at any stage should they wish not to continue with any interview or discussion. Secondly, to address confidentiality and privacy, I assured the participants that their identity and their responses would be regarded as extremely confidential. To maintain anonymity, I explained to them that their real names would not be used; instead, I used pseudonyms when referring to them.

### **1.9. Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness refers to the quality of the research process and the extent to which the data analysis is credible and reliable. (Maree et al., 2019). This is why the soundness of the research should be reflected in the entire proposal (Klopper, 2008). I ensured the trustworthiness of my study using Maree and Pietersen's (2020) criteria, which I believe should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study. These included credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Firstly, credibility determines whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings with the participants and within the context in which the research was undertaken (Klopper, 2008). I employed multiple research instruments to maintain consistency and developed early familiarity with the participants, as well as including detailed data collection methods using triangulation. Secondly, transferability refers to the ability to invite the readers of the research to make connections between the elements of a study and their own experience or research, rather than making generalisation claims (Maree et al., 2019). For my study I used two strategies often used in qualitative studies to increase transferability, namely, thick description and purposeful sampling (Klopper, 2008). For the former, I provided readers with a full and purposeful account of the context, participants and research design so that readers can make their own decisions about the transferability of my study. Thirdly, confirmability refers to the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not by researcher bias, motivation or interest (Maree et al., 2019). In this study I declared my own disposition and applied audit trails and triangulation.

Lastly, dependability is the notion that the methodological process is logical and traceable and is being documented (De Urioste-Stone et al., 2018). Through the research design and its implementation, the operational detail of data gathering and the reflective appraisal of the project is demonstrated (Maree et al., 2019). I ensured the dependability of my study by keeping a reflective journal from day one, in which I recorded all events and alternatives as well as the choices I faced when constructing my methodology.

## 1.10. Outline of the study

The study is organised into six chapters, each interconnecting to elucidate how the research questions were addressed. These chapters are integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study findings and their implications. The thesis is structured as follows:

**Chapter 1:** This chapter presents the background and orientation to my study. I positioned my study within teacher professional development specifically for in-service ESL teachers in secondary schools in Namibia. Accordingly, I outline the discourse of CPD from a global and regional perspective, which deliberates on CPD approaches for teachers to hone their pedagogical competencies and, thus, attain professional success in their environments. In addition, in this chapter, I outline my research purpose, research questions, the study design and the methodologies that generated new insights into and parallels with the literature and theoretical frames in relation to the study findings.

**Chapter 2:** In this chapter, I provide current and relevant literature related to traditional and transformative CPD approaches used to design CPD programmes for teachers at all levels. I review the literature on the knowledge base of second language teachers, as well as within the Namibian context, as an important aspect of a teacher's professional career when determining the type of CPD they receive. This allows them to plan and present their lessons in an effective and meaningful way that determines learners' achievements.

**Chapter 3:** This chapter examines and discusses three theoretical frameworks, namely, self-directed learning (SDL), as elucidated by Morris (2019), highlighting three fundamental areas of SDL, reflective practice by Schön (1983, 1987) and social constructivism by Vygotsky (1978). These theories complement one another in aligning language teachers' knowledge bases, personal beliefs and experiences with how they develop their profession through CPD within a social context. I also provide a justification for their selection for this study.

**Chapter 4:** Chapter 4 provides the paradigmatic perspectives and methodological choices employed in the data generation process which commenced upon receiving ethical clearance from Rhodes University Research Ethics Committee. In this chapter, the purposive sampling techniques, data methods, quality measures and ethical considerations applied in the study are discussed. The data generating tools employed included document analysis, an FGD and semi-structured interviews. The inductive thematic approach used to analyse the data is also explained. Thus, for a deeper appreciation of the findings, the themes that emerged are analysed and presented with my interpretation of them.

**Chapter 5:** In this chapter, I present the findings of my study in relation to the research questions using the extracted themes. The findings revealed that the CPD needs of in-service ESL teachers are determined by their idiosyncratic and contextual experiences, as well as by the knowledge base they possess. This implies that consistent self-directed CPD for ESL teachers is paramount for their professional success, resulting in ESL teachers who are equipped to translate the content knowledge they have into effective pedagogical forms that are adaptable to the differences in learners' abilities and backgrounds.

**Chapter 6:** The final chapter provides a summary of the study findings by discussing them within the theoretical frameworks. I subsequently make recommendations based on the findings. In addition, certain suggestions are made to various education stakeholders with an interest in investing in teacher CPD, specifically for ESL teachers in Namibia. I also made recommendations for future studies.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

---

#### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 outlined the rationale for my study and provided the background to education and language teaching in the Namibian context. It also highlighted the overview of teacher CPD, providing information and issues regarding the nature of continuous professional development (CPD) available in Namibia, which is the driving force of my study. As a result, the purpose and objectives of the study were defined leading to research questions that the study aimed to find answers to. The theoretical insight underscoring my study were also discussed, giving details of the theories of self-directed learning (SDL), reflective practice and social constructivism. In addition, the methodological aspects employed were discussed, giving insight into the approach to the study, the selection of participants and data collection, as well as issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

This chapter will place the study in context by exploring and presenting a literature review on the nature of CPD, as well as the history of CPD in education, to understand the current situation in the teaching profession. The chapter presents a review of the literature on the knowledge base of English Second Language (ESL) teachers to understand the benefits of an improved teaching workforce for the learners. Further, I discuss the concepts of CPD for language teachers in Namibia to conceptualise the need for self-directed CPD and the practice of reflection that empowers teachers to transform their profession and change their learners' performance in ESL. I draw on the available Namibian, regional and global literature on language teaching and second language teacher CPD. I begin with a review of the literature on concepts related to the professional knowledge base of second language teachers, the principles of CPD and self-directed CPD for language teachers. These are necessary to understand the statement of the problem and the research questions that seek to explore the CPD needs of ESL teachers in Namibia.

#### 2.2 Knowledge base of second language teachers

The knowledge base of ESL teachers is an important aspect of their professional career when determining the type of CPD teachers should receive, especially that of an ongoing nature. It helps them to construct and present their lessons effectively which in turn determines learners' achievements (Schleppegrell, 2020). The teachers' knowledge base refers to all pedagogical related knowledge that is relevant to teachers' activities in a teaching-learning situation (Guerriero, 2017). According to Mpofu and De Jager (2018), teacher knowledge originates from

several sources that include initial teacher education, continuing professional development, teachers' experience and their practical knowledge of being involved in the actual practice of teaching.

In an ever-changing world where educational reforms and technological advancements are inevitable, English language teachers are called to adapt their teaching approaches and upgrade their professional knowledge to align with current global innovations and transformation in language education (Alshaikhi, 2020; Williams et al., 2022). Equally, these innovations have placed pressure on governments, tertiary institutions, schools and teacher educators to reconceptualise what teachers need to know and how they learn to teach, in order to support them to meet the demands of 21st-century classrooms and improve learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2022) in ESL. With this knowledge, teacher education programmes through CPD are considered as the solution to the conundrum (MoEAC, 2016) of transforming the knowledge base of teachers so as to match fluid contextual demands. Much of the research on the teachers' knowledge base is grounded in Shulman's (1986) work on the knowledge base for teaching, based on his inquiry into conceptions of teacher knowledge. Shulman believes that the source of teachers' knowledge base comes from content knowledge which he divides into three categories, as needed by teachers to be professionals in the field of education (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1: Categories of content knowledge (Shulman, 1987)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Subject matter</b> content knowledge	The amount and organisation of knowledge per se in the mind of the teacher.
<b>Pedagogical</b> content knowledge (PCK)	An amalgam of content and pedagogy: the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics problems or issues are organised, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction.
<b>Curriculum</b> knowledge	The “materia medica of pedagogy, the pharmacopeia from which the teacher draws (Shulman (1986, p. 10) those tools of teaching that present or exemplify content and evaluate the adequacy of student accomplishments”.

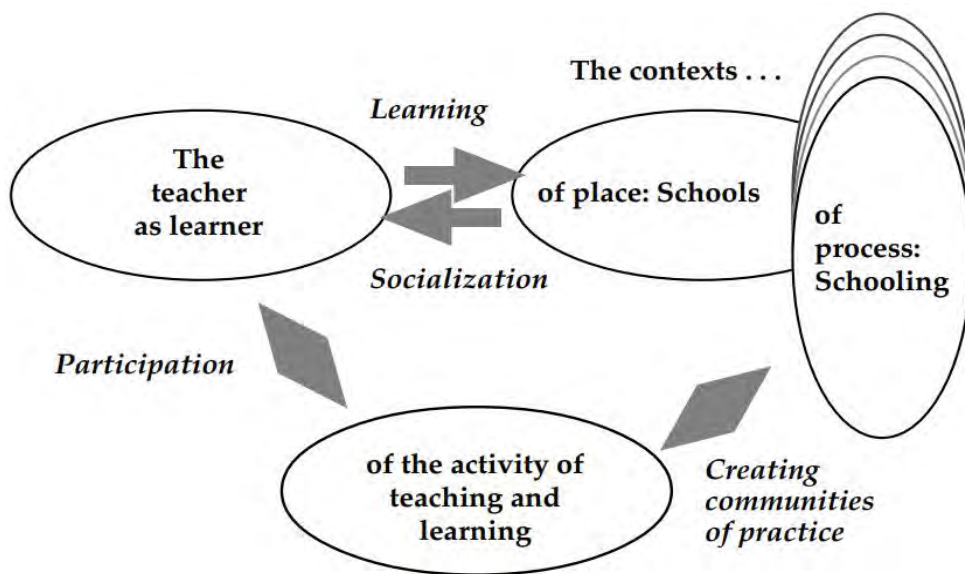
As many other categories and domains of teacher knowledge start to become apparent, Shulman (1986) suggests that the key to distinguishing the knowledge base of teaching is in the convergence

of content and pedagogy, which is solely the domain of teachers (Andrews, 2003). He further asserts that of the knowledge bases he suggests, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is the most essential because it enables teachers to translate the content knowledge, they have into effective pedagogical forms that are adaptable to differences in learners' abilities and backgrounds. In the context of this study, this highlights the fact that the different contexts ESL teachers find themselves in are what drives what they need to know to teach their lessons effectively, which then informs the type of CPD they ought to receive to achieve professional success. It also proves that content knowledge alone is not enough for ESL teachers to attain positive classroom outcomes; they need to reflect on their contexts, engage others and upgrade and direct their own learning.

In addition, a body of research in this field began to emerge with Freeman and Johnson (1998), based on Shulman (1986), further exploring the knowledge base of an ELT teacher which is the focus of my study. They revealed an epistemological framework connected to the activity of teaching itself within both conceptual and perceptual knowledge. They argue that teacher education programmes operate under the presumption that teachers need specific amounts of knowledge, typically in the form of generic ideas and practices that could be used in any teaching situation. However, this notion has been met with criticism, because of its lack of value for the individual experiences and perspectives of teachers; instead, it creates an abstract decontextualised body of knowledge that denies the intricacies of human connection and reduces teaching to a quantifiable set of behaviours (Mpofu & De Jager, 2018; Stephens, 2019).

Thereafter, by the mid-1980s, a shift in theory emerged from a behavioural view of what teachers do when they teach, leaning towards a constructivist view of how people learn to teach by recognising personal and social contexts as significant in teachers' CPD (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). In the context of my study, to find an answer to the research question asking, "What specific CPD needs do in-service ESL teachers have on an idiosyncratic level?", we must first understand their contextual experiences that influence their idiosyncratic CPD needs. These may be personal, social or academic needs. As their contextual experiences are addressed through CPD, their PCK will adapt to their environment, leading them to address differences in learners' abilities and improve their learners' performance. If the CPD they receive lacks the aspect of human connection derived from their learners' abilities and other contextual aspects, then it may not serve the purpose. This is because teachers are knowers and co-constructors of knowledge and their knowledge is a construct of their theoretical and contextual classroom practices (Mpofu & De Jager, 2018). In this way, engaging and directing their own learning through self-directed CPD will increase their professional knowledge and improve their classroom practices and learner's outcomes. Additionally, it also implies that English language teachers see their work as a reflection

of their past experiences, personal practical knowledge, as well as their values and beliefs. As stated by Johnson and Freeman (2001), “how teachers use their knowledge in the classroom is highly interpretive, socially negotiated and continually restructured within the classroom where teachers work” (p. 56). Taken together, they proposed a knowledge base of language teacher education consisting of three realms that encapsulate the complex terrain in which language teachers learn and practise their profession, arguing that future research in ESL should be framed within these three systemic domains. With this framework, Freeman and Johnson (1998) proposed a map (see Figure 2.1) of what they believe the knowledge base of language teachers should entail, focusing on the activity of teaching itself, within which both theory and practice are valued and experienced to inform and reform teachers’ practices.



**Figure 2.1: Framework for a Knowledge Base for Language Teacher Education (Freeman & Johnson, 1998)**

The three aspects highlighted in Figure 2.1 focus on three domains that look at the teacher as a learner (who does the teaching), the nature of schools and schooling (where is it done) and the nature of language teaching (how it is done). The framework is believed to reveal a deeper understanding of how language teachers teach and how their learners learn. Based on the literature, this implies that CPD programmes for teachers need to be informed by the three domains to form a deeper knowledge base of language teachers that values both theory and practice in their environments.

### **2.2.1 The nature of the teacher-learner**

This domain focuses on recognising that language teacher education is concerned with teachers as learners of language teaching rather than students as learners of language. It also looks at the

impact of L2 teachers' prior knowledge, beliefs and experiences on pedagogical practices and the complex variables that contribute to L2 teachers' learning to teach (Freeman, 2020). Therefore, the nature of the teacher as a learner requires that we no longer see teachers as empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills (Cross, 2020) but to see them as individuals who enter teaching education programmes with prior experience, personal values and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classroom. In the context of this study, this notion supports the basis of my study in that identifying teachers' idiosyncratic CPD needs would give a better understanding of the source of the CPD they ought to receive, supporting and highlighting the importance of self-directed CPD for ESL teachers. Thus, this teacher-learner notion and their learning processes can only be adequately documented or understood if the sociocultural context in which these processes take place are explicitly examined as part of that research process (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

### **2.2.2 The school context: School and schooling**

The second domain underscores the synchronic and diachronic influences that the sociocultural contexts of schools and the social processes of schooling have on pedagogical practices and on L2 teachers' learning-to-teach processes (Englund et al., 2018). In other words, it argues that an understanding of schools and schooling as the social and cultural context for teacher learning is critical to establishing an effective language knowledge base (Cross, 2020; Freeman, 2020). This domain also contributes to the basis of my study, because the teacher's context has an important impact on shaping their professional needs. Accordingly, I believe that it is important to understand schools, because this is where teachers test out theory and practice and where teachers engage in in-service education (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

### **2.2.3 The pedagogical process: Language teaching and learning**

Based on the work of Freeman and Johnson (1998), the last domain centres on "who teaches what to whom, where?", which is known as the activity of teaching and learning itself. Unlike most proposals for a knowledge base that puts the specific activity of teaching at the core, they argued otherwise; that is, that although any understanding of teaching must be anchored in the examination of learning and learners, teaching is an activity that cannot be separated from either the person of the teacher as a learner or the context of the schools and the schooling in which it is done. At the core of the activity of teaching lies the drive for teachers to understand themselves and the impact of their work on others, which is the wellspring of reflective practice, classroom inquiry and ongoing professional development (Freeman, 2020). I believe it is important to unlock English teachers' knowledge in the classroom as a way of understanding how their self-reflection

influences their teaching practice. No document in Namibia has revealed the domain or theory that governs the CPD offered to in-service teachers, whether it values teachers' prior knowledge, beliefs or experiences. It is therefore believed that the reason why there is a dearth of research on language teaching and the knowledge base of English language teaching (ELT) is because of the complexity of studying language teaching and learning in the classroom as it is lived and experienced by its protagonists – the teachers (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

### **2.3 Namibian knowledge base for ESL teachers**

Although teacher CPD is believed to be a key component for improving teaching and learning in Namibia (Nakambale, 2018), CPD for secondary school language teachers in Namibia is not distinctively defined in terms of the theories that govern its practices and the way it is administered. For English teachers, there has been a lack of theoretical frameworks to serve as a basis for language teacher education programmes, as most ESL research focuses more on (Freeman, 2020) what teachers need to know and how they should be trained, rather than using what they already know (professional knowledge) and how this knowledge shapes what they do. A CPD framework for Namibia was endorsed in 2013 to drive the coordination and delivery of regional and local teacher development support services. On the knowledge base of ESL teachers, little to no research has been conducted on the effect of such a framework on education, schools and overall learner outcomes. This existing gap stirred me to explore the CPD needs of ESL teachers, how their context influences these needs and the source of CPD content they receive to highlight awareness of this gap. In the absence of this knowledge, the National Curriculum of Basic Education (2016) highlights the generic knowledge base of teachers in Namibia, although not specific to language teachers themselves, giving insight into what the curriculum expects the teachers to know in Namibia.

Teacher education and training in Namibia is based on the 15-year national strategic plan called Vision 2030, which the government developed to strengthen the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the general education and training system (MoEAC, 2006). As a vehicle to attain the envisaged destination of a knowledge-based economy Vision 2030 has brought changes to the education sector through several curriculum reforms over the past years. In 2005 an education framework was developed called the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) aimed at guiding all educational activities to achieve the Ministry's objectives. Under the ETSIP, the National Professional Standard for Teachers (NPST) came into existence in 2006 with the focus on teacher education and development, identifying the CPD of teachers as the key

component in improving teaching and learning as consequently improving academic performance in Namibian schools.

One of the key components of the NSPT is professional knowledge (MoEAC, 2006), which refers to the knowledge that teachers require to effectively teach and facilitate student learning. It includes content or subject area knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge, similar to Shulman's (1987) knowledge base for teaching. Although not specific to English language teachers, the National Curriculum of Basic Education in Namibia (MOEAC, 2016) highlights certain general professional knowledge that a Namibian teacher should possess. It gives guidance to all teachers in general in the Namibian system, presumably inclusive of ESL teachers' knowledge base. However, I did not find documents specific to the professional knowledge of ESL teachers in secondary schools in Namibia, merely a generic knowledge base for all teachers at all levels in Namibia, creating another gap in this area. The professional knowledge that is expected from teachers is stipulated in the Namibian National Curriculum of Basic Education (MOEAC, 2016) and will be discussed in the following sections.

### **2.3.1 Knowledge of the curriculum**

Just as Shulman (1986) proposed, the Namibian curriculum also identifies knowledge of the curriculum as an essential part of the knowledge base for teachers and teacher education. It is stated that at school level, all teachers should be fully conversant with the curriculum and its implications, the process of knowledge creation, teaching and learning, as well as assessment, which should be done using a learner-centred approach.

### **2.3.2 Pedagogical knowledge**

The second aspect also stipulated in the curriculum (MOEAC, 2016) is pedagogical knowledge, which includes all the cognitive skills necessary to set up productive learning and teaching environments. These skills include knowledge of classroom management, maximising the quantity of instructional time, having a command of various teaching methods and knowing when and how to apply each method, being able to deal with disruptive learners, maintaining a steady pace while teaching and maintaining clear direction in lessons. Like Shulman's (1986) knowledge base concepts, PCK is the most important knowledge base for teachers because of its contribution of valuable content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular problems, or issues are organised. For example, in a learner-centred classroom teachers are expected to adopt a flexible approach to organising their teaching and learning (MoEAC, 2016). This is of interest to my study because it supports the aspect of pedagogical knowledge as context based, acquired through self-reflection and informed by teachers' classroom experiences.

### **2.3.3 Knowledge of learners**

The Namibian National Curriculum of Basic Education (MoEAC, 2016) also requires teachers to understand learners at all levels to enhance teaching. One aspect is for teachers to reflect on learners' experiences, their backgrounds and aspirations as these influence their learning. Without reflection, there is no human learning; it is merely activity or instinctive and habitual response. It is by reflecting on what has been experienced that understanding grows (MoEAC, 2016). Equally so, teachers learn in the same way (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019), and therefore any CPD programme should consider using teachers' experiences, contexts and perspectives in order to foster positive teaching and learning. Although teachers are seen as conduits to learners, their teaching knowledge develops over time and throughout their careers; they construct new knowledge as they are exposed to the different sociocultural contexts in which they find themselves. In support of this belief, Mporu and Jager (2018) also state that teaching is a complex interplay between the teacher and learners, which is based on their classroom experiences. For this study, this aspect is embraced because it recognises that the teacher should be at the centre of his or her own CPD in order for it to be meaningful. For ELT, knowledge is fluid and ever changing, so to ensure that this knowledge base is not stagnant, CPD was introduced both globally and in Namibia. Unfortunately for Namibia, the English in-service teacher knowledge base is not clearly defined. This implies that ESL teachers enter the education system with knowledge from pre-service training, but thereafter it is not clear how they acquire language PCK, as it is not clear whether the different environments, they encounter have any influence on the CPD they receive. At the regional arena, similar research was conducted by Mporu and de Jager (2018) of Zimbabwean ESL Literature teachers, which confirmed that teachers source their teaching knowledge from the theory of education, the nature of the subject and the problematic areas encountered in teaching to form PCK.

In Namibia, no study has been conducted to reveal how the Namibian language teachers acquire PCK, and little evidence shows whether teachers possess the knowledge base stipulated in the curriculum. This lack of information can have negative implications for developing CPD activities relevant to their contexts and needs, even though they can recognise the instructional methods they require. Nonetheless, based on the global and regional literature, the knowledge base for ESL teachers stipulated above this would appear to be the status of the knowledge base of ESL teachers in Namibia. Therefore, I believe that an understanding in this regard could provide a foundation for the CPD required which indicates a gap that this study envisages to explore and clarify.

## 2.4 Definition of CPD

Numerous studies have been conducted to explain the significance of teacher CPD in education. According to Abakah et al. (2022), in recent times, teachers' CPD has been of growing interest to governments, educators and researchers alike. This means different definitions of CPD have emerged over the years. CPD is a recurring process, instigated by changes in knowledge, beliefs and attitudes among teachers towards improving learning outcomes (Boylan et al., 2018; Darling-Hammond et al., 2016). CPD is defined by MoEAC (2013) as the formal and informal support and activities that are designed to help teachers develop as professionals. My understanding of this definition in the context of this study is that CPD is any form of activity a teacher is involved in, be it training, attending a workshop, being assigned a mentor teacher, doing a peer-class visit of another ESL teacher or any other activity that adds to the professional knowledge of a teacher. This definition can be supplemented by the view of Coldwell (2017) who stresses the development aspect, defining teacher CPD as an ongoing process that ensures that teachers have the practical and work-related knowledge to continuously function in their designated roles as teachers.

In sub-Saharan and Central Africa, CPD is understood as all-natural learning experiences with consciously planned activities intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which subsequently contribute to the quality of education in the classroom (Abakah et al., 2022; Kayumbu, 2020; Kretchmar et al., 2012; Mwila et al., 2022; Nzarirwehi & Atuhumuze, 2019). The emerging common denominator highlighted in these definitions is the continuous development of teachers' knowledge and skills in a cooperative environment, pointing to SDL. While most CPD experiences might be considered as a means for introducing or enhancing knowledge, skills and attitudes, it cannot be assumed that this is uncontested. Kennedy (2005) argues that it is not merely the type of professional knowledge being acquired that is important, but the context through which it is acquired and subsequently used that helps us to understand the nature of that knowledge. This refers to the setting and environment in which teachers find themselves, the school and the type of learners in the classroom.

The above definitions give an indication that teachers learn best in situations that involve self-direction, in this context pointing to CPD that is cooperative and enables dialogue with other teachers to construct meaning and new knowledge. However, Olivier & Wittman (2019) and Kayumbu (2020) highlight that the aspect of CPD models originating from teachers' self-directed needs remains under-explored in the educational literature and little attention is given to the professional development and learning opportunities that truly promote teachers' competencies in real classrooms within their contexts. In Namibia, CPD for teachers in the education sector has

been in existence for many years, as prescribed in the CPD framework mentioned in Chapter 1; however, the component of self-directed CPD practices and implementation does not come out clearly. It is for this reason that the organisation of my literature review in this study follows Kennedy’s (2005) spectrum of CPD models, where self-directed CPD appears as a transformation process for teacher development as professionals. This highlights the gaps in the literature which my study seeks to explore.

## 2.5 Traditional models of continuous professional development (CPD)

Traditionalist approaches to teacher development have been the backbone of upskilling teachers’ skills and knowledge in education for many years. It has also been widely employed in Namibia (Sancar et al., 2021; UNAM, 2013) where, up until the implementation of a decentralised approach to CPD, teachers’ CPD needs were decided upon centrally at the Ministry of Education Head office. This implies a technical-rational approach to teacher professionalism wherein teachers are requested to apply knowledge and theories supplied by others to their own contexts (Alshaikhi, 2020). These CPD models form the background to my study as they provide the context within which teachers’ CPD content is developed. Based on the work of Kennedy (2005), the framework analyses the types of knowledge that can be created through a certain model and considers the circumstances under which each specific model might be used. Nine models of CPD are integrated into the framework and further categorised into three stages, namely, transmission, transitional and transformative, based on their fundamental purposes, as shown in Figure 2.

Model of CPD	Purpose of model
The training model The award-bearing model The deficit model The cascade model	Transmission
The standards-based model The coaching/mentoring model The community of practice model	Transitional
The action research model The transformative model	Transformative

**Figure 2: Spectrum of CPD models (Kennedy, 2005)**

### 2.5.1 Transmission CPD model

The transmission model equips teachers with the required skills and knowledge to conform to educational reforms (Kennedy, 2005) using four approaches known as the training model, the award-bearing model, the deficit model and the cascade model.

Owing to mass coverage, the training model is the most common approach applied to CPD (De Paor & Murphy, 2018; Mwila et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2022). It enables teachers to update their knowledge through training by a specialist who would traditionally deliver the training while the teacher played an inactive role in the session. These training courses typically take place outside of a teacher's school, either at a conference for educators or at a different school in the same region.

Despite the way it is delivered to teachers, Alshaikhi (2020) believes that the training model is a direct intervention technique in which distinct information and skill sets are transferred to teachers via outside expertise; it is assumed that mastering these sets of skills will increase teacher competence and effectiveness. Kennedy (2005) criticises this model's off-site training approach, highlighting a disconnect between teachers and the classroom context, while teachers and the classroom context are the fundamental moral purpose at the core of teacher professionalism. Despite the critics, researchers (De Paor & Murphy, 2018; Williams et al., 2022) recognise the model to be an effective means of introducing new knowledge, as it supports a high degree of central control, often veiled as quality assurance, where the focus is firmly on coherence and standardisation. It strongly maintains a narrow view of teaching and education whereby the standardisation of training opportunities overshadows the need for teachers to be proactive in identifying and meeting their own professional development needs. According to the University of Namibia (UNAM, 2013), this concept is frequently used in the Namibian context as a means of offering CPD to teachers to develop and update their knowledge and abilities. A study on CPD in Namibia (Nakambale, 2018) also highlighted that since 1993, teacher education in terms of professional development remains at the level of in-service activities such as seminars and workshops. Advisory teachers and subject specialists facilitated these workshops and this “one-size fits all” content for the workshop was the only practice at every workshop conducted at the Teacher Resource Centre.

An award-bearing model of CPD is one that emphasises the completion of award-bearing programmes of study, usually, but not exclusively, validated by universities. Like the training model, this may be considered a mark of quality assurance (Kennedy, 2005; Mwila et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2022) and a beneficial practice, as extra training acquired by teachers through the upgrading of their initial qualification sharpens their competences. However, while gaining qualifications through various routes into teaching provides a necessary number of standardised experiences for those working towards becoming teachers, researchers have argued two important aspects that make this model undesirable. Firstly, the support on these courses is often perceived as academic rather than practical, and secondly, as evident in the Southern African Development

Community (SADC) region (Mwila et al., 2022), some teachers' additional qualifications do not translate into improved learner achievements because they are merely preoccupied with getting a promotion after upgrading their qualifications. Owing to a lack of studies on CPD for ESL teachers, it is assumed that this type of CPD may be perceived in the same way by English language teachers, that is, as a way of upgrading to another position without any real influence on learner outcomes.

The deficit model is designed to address a perceived deficit in teacher performance (Alshaikhi, 2020), where deficits in teachers' knowledge and skills are traditionally determined by external experts leaving teachers as the objects rather than the subjects of their development. While the deficit model uses CPD to attempt to remedy perceived weaknesses in individual teachers, Kennedy (2005) suggests that the root causes of poor teacher performance are related not only to individual teachers, but also to organisational and management practices. This means that viewing CPD as a way of fixing individual weaknesses and blaming individual teachers for poor performance takes away the collective responsibility of education from schools as institutions and ministries of education in general. The cascade model involves teachers attending training and then disseminating the information to their colleagues in a feedback or school training style format and mostly focused on knowledge rather than teachers' values and needs (De Paor & Murphy, 2018; Williams et al, 2022). Often referred to as a technician's view of teaching, it is a popular form of training especially in situations where resources are limited and not all the teachers can attend training. For example, in the Namibian context, officials at the head office train senior education officers (SEOs) in ESL from all the 14 regions on specific topics from the syllabus and these SEOs then deliver presentations on those topics to the teachers in their regions, as all the ESL teachers cannot attend in one place owing to scarce financial resources.

One of the drawbacks of this model is highlighted by Williams et al. (2022), who point out that this model does not reflect the concepts of participation, cooperation and ownership, which may be used to represent teachers' learning. In summary, the transmission model has proven to be a cost-saving approach; however, owing to a lack of continuous planning and/or funds, the information may never be passed on (Mwila et al., 2022). Other researchers (Abakah et al., 2022; Buendía & Macías, 2019; De Paor & Murphy, 2018; Ndemuweda, 2011) see these top-down, centrally mandated CPD approaches as inconsistent and believe they do not work because they do not include the teachers. In the context of my study, since I do not wish to highlight teachers' deficits but rather the assets they possess as individuals, the transmission model does not provide context and thus none of its theoretical insights will inform my study.

### **2.5.2 Transitional CPD model**

In this model, CPD activities include the standards-based model, the coaching/mentoring model and the community of practice model. According to Mwila et al. (2022), Kennedy (2005) and Abakah et al. (2022), standard-based models stress the professional competence of teachers, ensuring that teachers meet the minimum professional standards for the teaching profession. A desire to create a system of teaching that can validate connections between teacher effectiveness and student learning is central to this model. However, despite its empirical value of linking competence and achievement, a downside to this model is presented by Williams et al. (2022). They explain that this model limits teachers by setting standards and disregarding their ability and expertise to take control of attaining their potential. At times, successfully meeting a standard and focusing on the competence of individual teachers may be at the expense of collaborative learning, which is the basis of SDL. An independent comment made by Kennedy (2005) concludes that this model has a clear capacity for standards to be used to scaffold professional development and to provide a common language, thereby enabling greater dialogue between teachers; however, these advantages have the potential for standards to narrow conceptions of teaching.

Coaching and mentoring models are established through one-on-one engagement between two teachers to support CPD. These tend to be skills based and usually involve an element of counselling and professional friendship where one teacher is a novice and the other more experienced (Mwila et al., 2022). The foundation of this model lies in the notion that professional learning can take place within the school context and can be enhanced by having dialogues with colleagues which increases collegiality among teachers. This means a novice teacher would have support from an experienced teacher, who would be responsible for coaching and assessing them against the teaching standards. However, for this model to be effective, coaches have to possess knowledge and strategies in the pedagogical field, have the ability to initiate, frame and sustain the CPD learning process, gain the trust of the mentee and their willingness to combat the challenging factors of professional learning in daily school life together. Williams et al. (2022) also criticise this model in that it is becoming increasingly hierarchical, meaning that those being mentored may not be able to discuss their beliefs about teaching confidently, which presents potential problems as, in order for this model to be considered successful, mentees must be able to communicate well to convey messages about the cultural and social norms of teaching.

Community of practice models are based on mutual engagement, understanding and respect among teachers and can accommodate many teachers. Through communities of practice (Mwila et al., 2022), teachers are given opportunities to socialise and cultivate their identities by bringing individual experiences together as a collective to solve existing problems. Although there are similarities between

the coaching/mentoring model and the community of practice model, a significant difference is that the latter involves more than two participants, in contrast to the trainee and mentor example. The other significant difference is that it does not follow a hierarchical model, which is a considerable drawback of the former model. Kennedy (2005), Abakah et al. (2022) and Williams et al. (2022) argue that all participants are members of one community, which includes understanding the enterprise, mutual engagement and developing a repertoire. WhatsApp and Facebook are two examples of online platforms that can be utilised for engagement in ELT, which may result in the unanticipated provision of learning consolidation. These platforms are becoming more and more effective in generating new knowledge that goes beyond existing models. The community of practice model is therefore vital to my study because it allows teachers to co-construct knowledge (Barahona, 2018; De Paor & Murphy, 2018) through the negotiation of meaning in English classrooms, working in communities and networks formed with ESL teachers from different schools or regions. No ESL research has delved into this type of CPD in Namibia, hence this study seeks to explore and provide more insight into how this can work and influence teachers.

### **2.5.3 Transformative CPD model**

The last model, the transformative model, is characterised by CPD activities that include action research and professional enquiry. Based on Kennedy (2005), Mwila et al. (2022) and Williams et al. (2022), action research is defined as a social situation, involving teachers as researchers, with a view to improving the quality of action within it. It encourages teachers to view research as a process, as opposed to merely a product of someone else's endeavour, and allows teachers to ask critical questions about their practice. Through this approach, Namibian teachers may easily discover challenges related to practice, as research is done within their own context and solutions are devised that are practical for them. Additionally, this approach shifts the power dynamics in favour of teachers (Williams et al., 2022) as they successfully engage in research activities, even though the parameters around their practice determine their capacity for effective self-criticism. As confirmed by Kennedy (2005), action research enables teachers to experiment with different methods for developing their practices as it provides significant capacity for professional autonomy. In this process, teachers reflect in practice as a way of reporting to themselves whether the solution identified has worked or not.

Through this model, a variety of site-based professional opportunities are available. These are interactive in nature and conceive of teachers as active agents of their teacher professional development (TPD) (Alshaikhi, 2020). External expertise plays a minor or no role in the creation or direction of these learning events where schools are acknowledged as learning sites. Through the transformative model, teachers become reflective practitioners who can understand, challenge

and transform their practices and change educational agendas (Abakah et al., 2022, p. 4). Studies in English language and literacy support this type of “bottom-across” provision (Sangster, 2013, p. 619), citing the inclusion of both on-site and off-site dimensions. A few studies have been published on the challenges of the transformative model especially in English language as it has become the most preferred model to teacher CPD. Williams et al. (2022), for example, noted one challenge, namely, that schools may find it difficult to adapt transformational models to their CPD scheduling, since it demands and requires greater capacity. As a result, transformative CPD models are not frequently used because the implementation process takes more time and effort. Moreover, De Paor and Murphy (2018) noted that even though educators value classroom inquiry for their own work, their participation in it is minimal. It is also noted that some teachers may not be familiar with research methodologies.

There is also a gap in English language research on how this type of CPD is used in English classrooms, the challenges experienced by teachers and how teachers respond to it, which my study seeks to provide answers to through this exploratory study. Since this model demonstrates the increasing capacity for teachers’ professional autonomy and agency (De Paor & Murphy, 2018; Mwila et al., 2022), it significantly provides an avenue for self-directed CPD. I therefore locate my study within transformative CPD. This model is desirable because it allows the teachers to be knowers and to self-direct what they need within the context of their classrooms through a community of practice as well as through reflection and action. In the interests of my study, reflective practices are critical in self-directed CPD, as explained by Schön (1987), because they help teachers make their tacit knowledge and beliefs explicit and provide them with more control over their routine actions in the classroom, as they learn and refine their expertise through continuous learning from their experience. Interestingly, there is an existing CPD framework that guides such activities in Namibia and my study will explore its guiding principles.

### **CPD framework in Namibia**

The Ministry of Education Arts and Culture has recognised and acknowledged a myriad of challenges in the education sector. These range from poor quality symbols external examinations in key subjects like English, Maths and Science, MoEAC (2022), the digital divide among learners from rural and urban areas, unqualified teachers, the effects of the revised curriculum currently in its implementation infancy, overcrowded classrooms, learner indiscipline, to the need for robust in-service training to transform teachers into competent agents who can set standards that respond to the needs of the learners. Hence, a CPD consortium consisting of the UNAM Faculty of Education, the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) and the Directorate of

Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) was established (UNAM, 2013) to help ensure a unified system that can meet life-long learning needs not only for teachers but also for teacher educators, inspectors of education, advisory teachers, education managers and school principals. In this way, a decentralised CPD framework was developed for educators in Namibia to coordinate regional and local structures for the planning and delivery of teacher development support services, where teachers are seen as experts. The framework was developed to promote more ownership, responsibility and accountability at regional and local structures, i.e. schools throughout the country (UNAM, 2013). According to Nakambale (2018), the CPD unit also facilitates the identification of priorities for CPD and ensures coordination and collaboration in the planning, design, development and implementation of CPD programmes and activities, resulting in localised, site-based and practice-based CPD at the school, cluster, circuit and regional levels. It blends supply and demand-driven CPD, balancing site and localised CPD with networking and learning, and the sharing of best practices across schools, sites and regions to avoid isolation and limited learning opportunities.

In Africa, researchers such as Mwila et al. (2022), who compared the key characteristics that underlie the implementation, experiences and best practices of CPD for teachers in SADC countries, have demonstrated that Namibia has semi-autonomous policy intentions and a conceptual framework for the coordination and management of CPD. The CPD practices and initiatives used in the general education sector are well known, and are structured and outlined in terms of how well they work to achieve predetermined objectives. This reveals the well-thought-out intentions of the CPD framework in Namibia; however, there is a dearth of research on its implementation and impact on learner outcomes and the professional knowledge of teachers. It is therefore imperative to explore the CPD framework by analysing the elements of this framework in Namibia.

#### **2.5.4 Purpose of the Namibian CPD framework**

The importance of the CPD framework (UNAM, 2013) is highlighted as empowering local structures like schools through participatory processes to identify their own CPD needs, plan for them and have the needs addressed. The basis of the framework is to have a coordinated and seamless approach to teacher CPD where various CPD stakeholders work together under the umbrella of the CPD consortium to reach the common goal of improving educator effectiveness and enhance learning outcomes.

### **2.5.5 Steps for drafting the CPD framework curriculum**

Many aspects of the current CPD strategies in Namibia make use of the centralised cascade approach (UNAM, 2013), where CPD activities are delivered through workshops, conferences and courses. However, these brief, episodic and fragmented approaches are seen as being ineffective as they are sometimes isolated and removed from real classroom situations. Hence, the CPD framework envisages that local structures be strengthened by establishing regional CPD coordinating committees (RCPDCCs), as well as school/site-based CPD coordinating committees (SBCPDCCs) for all regions and schools. Although this sounds like a well-structured CPD framework, the current use or application of these CPD structures in Namibian schools has not been reported on, nor have ESL teachers specifically reported whether they follow what is stipulated in the policy or not. This creates a big gap in assessing the current status quo in CPD, which my study hopes to give insight into.

### **2.5.6 Steps for implementing the CPD framework**

The CPD framework stipulates that once the RCPDCC is established, it will collect school-based plans and analyse and identify school trends in the region by conducting surveys. A regional planning template is then developed to form regional CPD plans and to determine the nature of support appropriate for educators in the region. The plan would then prioritise the needs by looking at the urgency to improve teaching and learning in the region, considering the availability of financial, human and time resources. At school level the framework stipulates that once the SBCPDCC is established, it should identify teachers' development needs by giving them an opportunity to point out which area in their practices need to be developed. This can be achieved by using questionnaires, surveys, interviews, observations, teacher self-evaluation and self-reflection and learner performance data. Learner performance data are useful, allowing teachers to analyse learners' performance, and are obtained through tests and examinations. Where learners underperform, it may be an indication of areas where teachers need professional development.

### **2.5.7 The monitoring and evaluation processes of the framework**

The framework stipulates that CPD should institute a regular and sustained monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that planned activities meet their objectives and that observable improvements in practice occur because of the CPD activities (Kayumbu, 2020; UNAM, 2013). Schools are discouraged from doing their own evaluations but are encouraged to consider using external evaluators from neighbouring schools, clusters, the RCPDCC or the CPD Unit in order to obtain objective feedback (Iimene, 2018). A significant advantage of having a monitoring and evaluation system in place is the availability of data and information on the content and quality of

CPD activities at the national, regional and local levels (UNAM, 2013). This information will feed professional needs and plans for a more responsive CPD system.

### **2.5.8 Expected outcomes of the CPD framework in Namibia**

A well-facilitated CPD framework at all levels (UNAM, 2013), with an action plan in place and appropriate evaluation, will ultimately improve teachers' effectiveness as well as learning outcomes. Additionally, it will offer teachers a voice in defining their own CPD needs as opposed to those that are determined for them by others. Through this framework, teachers will be locally motivated in their learning, take ownership of their professional needs, consequently overcoming the challenge of funding for traditional national CPD models. It seems most of these theoretical requirements are well documented for implementation in schools, however there is no feedback on record on how Namibian schools are using this framework in practice. It is also worth noting that although the CPD framework clearly advocates for self-directed CPD for teachers, it is not specific to ESL in-service teachers and how they implement it in their ESL classrooms. According to Namibian researchers in ELT (Haifidi et al., 2019; Haufiku, 2022; Ndemuweda, 2011), Namibian CPD programmes are generally located in the traditional models of CPD, mainly consisting of getting teachers together to hold workshops with them on what is believed to be lacking. This reveals that there is poor implementation of the CPD framework and a lack of coordinated CPD planning between circuits and regions and at national level. Another reason for using traditional models to deliver CPD in Namibia, as unveiled by the scholars, is because of uncoordinated and inadequate CPD funding models at both the school and regional levels (Nakambale, 2018). This study will also explore this aspect to negate or support this observation.

### **2.6 Self-directed professional development for language teacher education**

The principle of SDL dates back to the 1800s. Up until the mid-1970s it was called by various names. Subsequently, scholars like Allen Tough and Malcolm Knowles started work on how adults learn and the concept started gaining popularity in the literature of language teaching in education. Scholars (Leong, 2020; Morris, 2019; Porter & Freeman, 2020; Olivier & Wittman, 2019) define self-directed teacher professional development as the independent learning of teachers, either individually or in groups, which often happens when teachers decide to pursue development at their discretion with or without institutional support using existing resources. In the context of my study, the goals of self-directed Teacher Professional Development lays on the shoulders of the language teachers as they would take the responsibility of selecting the most suitable CPD activities to help them establish and reach these goals. This can be carried out individually at school or through one-to-one interactions, where language teachers are paired to coach one another,

engage in peer observation and collaborate in team teaching. This approach fosters self-monitoring, analysis of critical incidents and reflection which are vital goals to promote self-directed professional development for language teacher education.

In their journal article, Porter and Freeman (2020) indicate that employing SDL principles in educators' professional development is effective in providing meaningful learning experiences that result in educators' professional growth and improvements in their practice. Therefore, an SDL approach to CPD for language teachers could offer them an opportunity to learn new skills in teaching new topics like blogs and vlogs, designing web pages and developing the higher order writing skills needed in the ESL secondary school curriculum. It may also improve their individual teaching skills based on their own professional identity and needs. This would empower them to construct knowledge, instead of solely offering them training based on the acquisition of new knowledge as is the practice. According to Barahona (2018), developing professional CPD trends in language teaching contexts supports activities that go beyond courses, seminars and workshops directed at a generic cohort of teachers. It is becoming more common for contemporary CPD to include some kind of critical engagement with teachers' own practices. Such programmes aim to increase in-service teachers' capability to improve language teaching and English language confidence, and to support ongoing professional development for teacher trainers and teachers.

Around the globe and in Africa in particular, recent educational reforms initiatives require teachers especially language teachers to change their teaching strategies and adopt new strategies in ways they have never experienced before. Necessitated by factors like the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in education (MoEAC 2016), there is no better time for CPD programmes to be reviewed than now. Based on Irgatoglu & Perker (2021), to remain knowledgeable and increase awareness of current innovations, language teachers ought to pay attention to continuous self-development because they must remain relevant in using the language and understanding innovations within the field. This is a change in professional development that reflects these innovations. Therefore, the promotion of CPD programmes that focus on teachers' individual backgrounds, education needs and reflective practices are crucial (Olivier & Wittman, 2019) and appear to be a matter of concern for language teachers in the 21st century. Directing own learning, commonly known as self-directed learning (SDL), allows teachers to tailor their professional development efforts to their individual needs to promote autonomy in learning and the ownership and meaningfulness of the learning activities. However, while an increasing range of literature focuses on particular aspects of CPD, there is a paucity of literature addressing self-directed CPD for language teachers specifically in Namibia, and this is where my study will be located to explore this gap and present findings on the status quo in the education system.

The realisation of this paradigm shift in language teaching also requires teachers to draw upon theoretical models derived from current advancements in the field. Scholars in the field like Alshaikhi (2020) and Barahona (2018) state that the traditional approaches to language teachers' CPD in the form of the top-down approach presented earlier may not be sufficient to address this shift. Such an approach lacks creative avenues for teachers to act as genuine actors in practice, which effectively limits the representation of realistic pedagogical practices and the creation of professional accountability for the teaching and learning methodologies in their classrooms. Furthermore, language teacher education should emphasise a range of site-based professional learning opportunities to address the dynamic and complex teaching profession, as stipulated in the Namibian CPD framework.

In search of a solution to a shift in teacher CPD, one that suits the complexity of the teaching profession, more bottom-up approaches emerged, with Alshaikhi (2020), Farrell and Macapinlac (2021) and Olivier & Wittman (2019) acknowledging the centrality and importance of teachers' experiences and their reflection on their practices. Although scholars have been challenged to come to a consensus on the definition and nature of reflective practice for second language teachers, many see it as a structured way for teachers to reflect on their practice, focusing on pedagogy and themselves. Therefore, Farrell (2021) points out that reflective practice should not only focus on classroom teaching behaviours, but also acknowledge a teacher's previous learning and life experiences, or their inner lives, so that they can become more self-aware in order to be better able to understand, interpret and even reshape their professional practice. A holistic approach to reflective practice is one way to unite these disparate aspects of self and teaching behaviour that have been missing in many of the other approaches.

Through this bottom-up approach, teachers are seen as active participants who initiate and design their own CPD based on their contexts. It is believed that for teacher CPD programmes to be effective (Olivier & Wittman, 2019) they have to be highly individualised if they are to motivate teachers to remain lifelong learners. Such an approach also helps teachers prepare a personalised professional development plan; which guides their career development, while following the plan assists them to achieve their goals (Özer et al., 2020). Each teacher analyses his or her individual development needs, sets specific annual goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, implementing appropriate learning strategies and learner outcomes, and targeting opportunities to achieve those goals. A good set of professional goals will ultimately benefit learners, the school and the region at large. Nevertheless, researchers like Abakah et al. (2022), Mwila et al. (2022) and Tannehill et al. (2021) too often still find that existing teacher development programmes seem to be designed with a one-size-fits-all approach, focusing on cost-efficiency

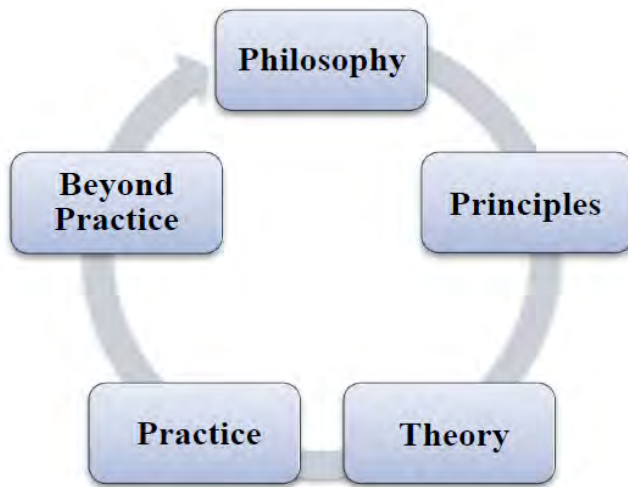
rather than on teachers' real learning. Thus, this growth paradigm of individualised teacher development known as SDL, focusing on reflective practices, is seen as a countervailing model to the traditional approaches to TPD that have dominated teacher professionalism for a long time.

One important key component of these professional programmes is collaboration. According to Barahona (2018), the following are some common effective practices of self-directed CPD for language teachers. Team teaching involves two language teachers co-teaching a single group, with one teacher doing the teaching and another one providing feedback, and two teachers dividing the group between them. This can be a simple yet highly effective form of teacher development. Peer evaluation and group tasks require groups of teachers to come together to pursue an issue of common interest. Other forms of innovative and collaborative professional development programmes for language teachers are those that use a lesson study model. This model is also centred on team teaching, with teachers working together to design lessons and develop teaching approaches and evaluation strategies in order to attain their outcomes. This is intended to be a cyclical process, with the objective of collaboration allowing teachers to become more conscious of their own teaching practices, develop their pedagogical knowledge and establish strategies to cope with their contexts. The lesson study model has been widely used for CPD in Zambia as well as for teacher professional development in many settings worldwide (Farrell, 2015). These common effective practices within contemporary approaches are used in countries to transform language teachers' CPD through collaborative approaches and reflective practice, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice.

## **2.7 Reflective practice as professional development for language teacher education**

Complementing these collaborative practices, meant to transform self-directed CPD for language teachers, is an approach called reflective practice. According to Gheith and Aljaberi (2018), reflection is a key activity in the learning process of a teacher. They describe reflection as the key to teachers' learning and development of teaching practice, while stating that there is a relationship between reflection and action. Farrell (2015) later developed a holistic framework for this approach because he discovered that much of the reflection teachers engage in was focused either on individual aspects of their practice, their beliefs and theory or lesson planning and teaching behaviours: no research has really focused on the amalgamation of all of these as an integral part of reflective practices. Additionally, preparing teachers to become reflective practitioners is a frequently articulated goal in TESOL teacher education and CPD (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). Likewise, the construction of reflective identity in practitioners has become a prominent theme within a transformative education discourse. Hence, Farrell's (2020) holistic framework integrates all the aspects of practice in language teaching for language teachers to reflect on. This framework entails

five interconnected levels of philosophy, principles, theory, practice and beyond practice, as presented below.



**Figure 3: Framework for reflecting on practice (Farrell, 2015)**

The first stage of Farrell’s (2015) framework, reflecting on philosophy, involves teachers looking at themselves in the form of self, for the purpose of obtaining self-knowledge and reflecting on their background and previous life experiences, which have a critical influence on the evolution and shape of a person’s life. Through this process of collecting information about their experiences, teachers’ piece together their own life stories, thus gaining a more in-depth picture of who they are as teachers. As they become confident in their abilities, they tend to invest in their teaching strategies, which affects their lesson delivery in positive ways that are fun and relevant.

The next stage involves reflecting on one’s principles of teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language. Reflection on theory requires teachers to consider how their theories about teaching can be translated in the classroom in terms of what type of lesson they want to deliver. It implies that every language teacher has a language teaching theory, even if it is only implicit in their value judgements, decisions and actions, or in the organisational pattern in which they operate. Reflection on practice gives teachers a chance to examine observable actions in the classroom. Farrell (2015) explains that a teacher’s practice is strongly connected and influenced by the first three levels of the reflective framework and by observing their own practice, teachers can test and compare the hidden aspects of teaching which are philosophy, principles and theories. With this information, teachers can examine whether their actions in the classroom are consistent with their reflections. When teachers piece together the connections between their philosophy, principles, theory and practice it can help to develop their abilities to consciously reflect during a

lesson, reflection-in-action, to reflect after a lesson, reflection-on-action, and to reflect prior to teaching, reflection-for-action. The final phase is reflection beyond practice or critical reflection which requires teachers to explore the sociolinguistic factors, the moral, political and social issues that influence their practice inside and outside their teaching context. Reflection at this stage encourages teachers to engage in a dialogue with their profession, helping them to develop awareness of the impact of their lessons on their classrooms, society and vice versa.

It must therefore be clarified that as reflective practitioners, teachers are no longer technicians or curriculum transmitters who follow a banking model of education (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). Instead, they serve as autonomous decision makers who continually learn from their experience and reconstruct this experience through reflection. Even though reflective practice is seen as very important and should be integrated in CPD and teacher education, it is not without any negative elements. Reflecting on one's own experience and work is a skill that comes with experience and it requires a depth of understanding of how one can explore or examine personal theories of teaching and learning, something which some in-service teachers have not yet mastered. In the Namibian context where ESL teachers are faced with low literacy among learners, poor working conditions, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of teaching resources (MoEAC, 2022), reflecting on own practice may be seen as a time-consuming process, using up much of teaching time, therefore some of them may choose not to put much effort into their reflection. Also, reflective practice can become counter-productive if in-service ESL teachers are forced to do so to fulfil the teaching requirements.

## **2.8 Self-directed approach to the ESL CPD model**

SDL as a theoretical approach to exploring the ESL in-service teachers' CPD programmes is not a new approach in ELT. Since the SDL approach surfaced, several studies have examined the use of SDL as a theoretical approach to exploring ESL in-service teacher CPD programmes. A self-directed teachers' professional development model is a form of teacher professional development that places the teacher in control of the entire learning process and has been found to eliminate the dominant limitations found in traditional CPD which lacks teachers' autonomy and agency (Alzahrani, 2019). Previous studies that used an SDL approach to design ESL in-service teacher CPD found that the approach provides an internal locus of control that ensures that teachers continue to build new understanding of teaching and learning (Mushayikwa & Luben, 2009). In other words, if teachers engage in this type of learning, it has a powerful influence on sustaining professional development behaviour in teachers. It also guides and enables CPD developers to design more effective and sustainable interventions instead of wholesale ones (Leong, 2020), as is

currently the practice in Namibia. While Mushayikwa and Luben (2009) revealed the sustainability of continuous SDL professional development interventions, other researchers found additional benefits. According to Alshaikhi (2020), self-directed teacher CPD provides teachers with a platform for hands-on learning opportunities on which to build both content knowledge and PCK. Although the traditional approach of CPD or institutional training is designed to transmit knowledge and skills to teachers, an SDL approach to teacher CPD changes teachers' roles from passive recipients of knowledge to active learners, constructing their knowledge through reflection, collaboration and networking. It engages teachers actively in concrete tasks related to their classroom practices.

Additionally, another advantage of implementing a self-directed teacher professional development approach is its power to provoke teacher self-examination and reflection and the analysis of critical classroom incidents, which can be used to drive the CPD needed by ESL teachers. Evidently, adopting this kind of approach towards teacher continuous professional development in Namibia, in a systematic way, may empower teachers to be agents of change, which will positively impact the entire teaching profession. Based on studies carried out in several countries where teachers are involved in self-directed teacher professional development, researchers (Alzahrani, 2019; Haufiku, 2022; Morris, 2019) noted that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks because it is proven to provide a systematic and sustainable learning process in which teachers reflect and collaborate collegially with one another to improve their practices. Therefore, with the increasing limitations of traditional professional development approaches and the development of theories informing teachers' learning, it is evident that research has shifted its focus from transmissive approaches to more practical ones, particularly those that can address such limitations.

## **2.9 Chapter summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore the self-directed CPD needs of English Language teachers with the focus on selected secondary schools in Namibia. To accomplish this, Chapter 2 reviewed the knowledge base of teachers grounded in Shulman (1986) and in the knowledge base of English Language teachers, as suggested by Freeman and Johnson (1998, 2018), who explain what the knowledge base of language teacher education should account for. Another significant aspect of the knowledge base for Namibian teacher education was covered, explaining the professional knowledge of ESL teachers in Namibia and across the world in relation to how language teachers learn and to consider their individual perspectives and experiences to inform transformational teachers' practices in CPD.

A review of traditional CPD approaches, based on a framework by Kennedy (2005), was presented, giving an analysis of CPD models used in teacher professional education. This chapter also presented a review of the literature on SDL approaches to CPD through reflective practices, which provides a platform for teachers to be actively involved in directing their own CPD. A framework for reflective practices was also discussed, showing an amalgamation of moral and emotional non-cognitive approaches which teachers engage in to reflect on their practices in order to direct their own professional development. Through document analysis, I also analysed and discussed the Namibian CPD framework which is aimed at providing guidance on the implementation of CPD in Namibia. This framework unveils a transformational approach to CPD to replace the widely used traditional approach applied in offering CPD to teachers in Namibia. I discussed the steps involved in drafting, implementing and monitoring the framework, as well as the expected outcomes of the framework at regional and school levels. Thus, drawing from multiple sources of self-directed CPD approaches in education and in ESL, the theoretical foundations that underpinned the study's theoretical (see Chapter 3) and methodological choices (see Chapter 4) were presented.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

---

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the dynamics of English language teacher continuous professional development (CPD) from current literature, official documents and policies, were explored for a foundational understanding of the importance of enhancing teaching knowledge through ongoing learning. To further appreciate CPD in this context, this chapter examines three theoretical frames that offer valuable insights into this essential process. Accordingly, the theoretical lenses of social constructivism, self-directed learning (SDL) and reflective practice form the bedrock of this investigation, providing a comprehensive understanding of how language teachers continuously develop professionally. Specifically, this chapter discusses the relationship between language teachers' knowledge base and the theory and approaches of social constructivism, based on the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed from experiential practices (Potgieter & Potgieter, 2021).

The chapter further deliberates on the theory of SDL as a fundamental competence for language teachers to adopt in the modern world, emphasising the importance of self-driven professional development efforts tailored to their individual needs, thereby fostering autonomy (Farrell, 2021; Morris, 2019). Finally, the chapter will delve into the theory of reflective practice, a theory used in the professional development of teachers in the 21st century, to highlight its significance in the professional development of ESL teachers, exploring how it shapes the CPD needs they have. The amalgamation of these three theories is reflected in the questions posed to the ESL teachers during the data collection process to provide a deeper understanding of the self-directed CPD needs among ESL secondary school teachers in Namibia.

#### 3.2 A social constructivist approach to language teacher continuous professional development

In the context of language teacher CPD, the key principles of social constructivism play a vital role in shaping effective and impactful learning experiences for teachers. Social constructivism is a theoretical framework that emphasises the significance of social interactions, cultural context and collaborative learning in the process of knowledge construction (Akpan et al., 2020; Conner, 2022; Knapp, 2019). Grounded in the pioneering work of Lev Vygotsky (1978), it has become increasingly significant in language acquisition, including learning and teaching a second language, because of the belief that learning is a result of mental construction, where teachers learn

by integrating new knowledge with what they already know from their own experiences (Knapp, 2019). Additionally, Balfe and Ní Bhroin (2022) explain that the principles of social constructivism view learning as a collaborative process, where new knowledge is socially constructed and generated through discussion and reflection within a group setting. This collective perception greatly enhances the ability to solve problems, as discussion within the group clarifies ideas when the process is collaborative.

Seen through the lens of social constructivism and from the standpoint of language teacher CPD, teachers learn best when they engage with others about their experiences to improve their teaching, thereby promoting a collaborative process influenced by social interactions and cultural contexts (Aljohani, 2017; Priya, 2021). Likewise, as Vygotsky established, language acquisition is not merely a matter of knowledge transfer or passive absorption; rather, it involves knowledge construction through active engagement with others and the environment (Erbil, 2020; Mpofu, 2015). When language teachers actively engage and interact with learners, peers and the environment, they define their learning and enhance their teaching knowledge, adding to their knowledge base; thus determining what they need to know by restructuring their pre-existing knowledge.

Hence, according to Saleem et al. (2021) and Mohammed and Kinyo (2020), when social constructivism is embedded in language teacher CPD, it augments teaching practices, promotes learner engagement and contributes to teachers' growth and effectiveness in the classroom. From this understanding, social constructivist theory emphasises the role for others in the individual construction of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978), and learning in this paradigm is a primarily social process (Erbil, 2020). The principles of social constructivism, namely, social interaction and collaboration; active engagement and experiential learning, reflection and metacognition; cultural context and diversity as they relate to language teacher CPD (Akpan et al., 2020; Potgieter & Potgieter, 2021; Sakarneh & Swelmyeen, 2020) are discussed in detail in the subsequent sections.

### **3.2.1 Interaction and collaboration**

In social constructivism, social interaction and collaboration refer to a social process in which one's learning is intimately associated with that of other human beings, including teachers, peers and other community members (Nilsson & Hay, 2016; Priya, 2021). It is recognised that the social aspect of learning uses conversation, direct interaction with others and the application of knowledge as integral aspects of learning. The nature of interaction and collaboration signifies the importance of social constructivism in teacher CPD because, teachers' knowledge construction involves active involvement in their context and active collaboration with others in shaping their

learning (Erbil, 2020; Potgieter & Potgieter, 2021). In the context of my study, I see this principle of interaction and collaboration as an essential component of teacher CPD, specifically for language teachers. This is because of their role of fostering conducive learning environment for effective language learning, bearing in mind that studies (Akpan et al., 2020; Mpofu, 2015; Sakarneh & Swelmyeen, 2020) on social constructivism, reveal that building a knowledge base and enhancing pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) requires interaction and collaboration with others, which leads to constructing meaning.

Previous studies have demonstrated that social interaction and collaboration are dynamic and open to change, allowing language teachers to continually construct new knowledge (Akpan et al., 2020; Balfe & Ní Bhroin, 2022). However, in contrast to traditional approaches to CPD, which often focus on transmitting new knowledge, owing to the absence of social interactions and collaboration among ESL teachers learning may not take place. Because the very nature of teacher knowledge is social, experiential and contextual (Freeman, 2020; Rannikmäe et al., 2020), I therefore believe teachers are active constructors of their teaching knowledge in a social context, integrating their contextual and idiosyncratic experiences into the learning process. Thus, knowing this implies that when language teachers engage in CPD without interaction or collaboration, it denies them the opportunity to reflect, integrate new ideas into existing knowledge structures and create personal meaning out of those experiences. While interaction and collaboration are significant aspects of language teacher CPD, I was cognisant that the body of research in the social context involved more aspects of learning.

### **3.2.2 Active engagement and experiential learning**

To account for the role of ESL teachers in knowledge construction, researchers such as Ajani (2023) and Blair (2016) define active engagement and experiential learning as learning from or through experiences that include the active practice of SDL, planning and setting goals for self-initiated learning, based on a specific learning situation. As a result, it promotes autonomous learning that deals with the personal freedom required for being an independent teacher (Sokel, 2019). The concept of experiential learning is thus significant for language teacher CPD as it facilitates the involvement of teachers in high-level personal engagement, as well as the development of activities and learning styles that enhance teachers' professionalism (Helate et al., 2022) in ESL teaching and learning. Within the context of language teacher CPD, I believe active engagement and experiential learning enable them to maximise their professional growth by leveraging their individual, contextual and PCK experiences (Akpan et al., 2020).

Thus, through the integration of these experiences, teachers construct experiential knowledge that improves their ESL classrooms. Although these principles play a pivotal role in language teaching discourse, there is more to be done, as there is a scarcity of studies exploring experiential learning from an integrative perspective in the ESL context, specifically among in-service ESL secondary school teachers in Namibia. Therefore, in this exploratory study on the CPD needs of ESL teachers in secondary schools, eight ESL teachers were selected to participate in a focus group discussion and interviews to collect data on the role of a social constructivist approach in teacher professional development. Parallel to this, the notion of teacher reflection (also known as reflective practice) and metacognition has also gained considerable momentum in the field, evidenced by existing work on the topic and its continued popularity in scholarship on language teachers (Hiver et al., 2021).

### **3.2.3 Reflection and metacognition**

To better understand the links between language teachers' inner worlds, their classroom teaching and students' learning, Portilho and Mendina (2016) highlight two aspects that have emerged in the constructivist approach to language teacher CPD: reflection and metacognition. Hiver et al. (2021) and Rannikmäe et al. (2020) define metacognition as a process used by teachers to guide, monitor and regulate their cognition. This implies teacher awareness of their performance, the selection of appropriate strategies that can positively influence their teaching and their appraisal of classroom outcomes leading to a reevaluation of the strategies that were used (Arslan, 2019). Furthermore, Hiver et al. (2021) and Cirocki and Farrell (2017) explain that reflection involves consciously analysing and evaluating one's teaching practices, experiences and beliefs, thus fostering a deeper understanding of learners' learning needs and promoting continuous growth and development for educators.

Therefore, engaging in reflective practice is a means of helping individuals towards greater self-knowledge and self-challenge, a useful way of achieving personal development, through the analysis of personal values and theories that underlie teaching (Zepeda, 2012). This means when language teachers reflect on their teaching practices and outcomes, they can develop metacognitive awareness, allowing them to make more intentional and effective instructional decisions. In the context within which this study was undertaken, Rannikmäe et al. (2020) states that a metacognitive teacher deliberately and actively monitors what they are doing, reflects on the rationale for doing so and adapts their instructional repertoire as required by various contextual demands. I therefore understand that the unification of the two practices into language teachers'

professional development programmes can lead to more meaningful and impactful learning experiences.

My understanding is supported by Cirocki and Farrell (2017) and Hiver et al. (2021) who assert that through reflection language teachers consciously analyse the steps to be taken in their classrooms and evaluate the material they have available. Then only will they know if they should implement specific approaches in their classrooms. Previous studies on reflection and metacognition (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019; Portilho & Mendina, 2016) reveal that although teachers had exhibited resistance to this new CPD approach of reflection on lessons and metacognition due to its unfamiliarity, they have embraced the opportunity to relate their life experience to the work experience which has encouraged them to talk, listen, discuss and learn with their peers, as well as look at themselves and at their professional performances, with a view to joint and effective action. Therefore, I recognise that the metacognitive approach in a continuing education programme may encourage learning and the regulation of cognitive activities towards transformative CPD.

#### **3.2.4 Cultural context and diversity**

My understanding of language teacher CPD is in line with the notions of cultural context and diversity in social constructivism. This is because social constructivist theory maintains that language and culture are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate and understand reality (Akpan et al., 2020). According to Vygotsky (1978), language and culture play essential roles both in human intellectual development and in how humans perceive the world. This is to say that language learning and teacher CPD embrace the idea of cultural context and diversity, where teachers engage with learners and co-construct the sociocultural realm and their decisions about scaffolding learning (McLeod, 2021).

My understanding is supported by Zepeda (2012) and Mohammed and Kinyo (2020), who maintain that adults are an important source of cognitive development as they transmit their cultural tools for intellect adaptation that children internalise. This means that language teachers ought to be equipped with knowledge to establish social constructivist learning opportunities for their learners that are beyond the school context, where they reconceptualise the everyday common-sense knowledge of home in the school environment, where formal theories and sense making abound (Kapur, 2018).

Therefore, I bore in mind that language teachers' knowledge is shaped by the realities of their classroom. Recognising this, the significance of the cultural context and diversity within the language classroom, which provide learners with the cognitive environment needed for development, is underscored. Language teachers, in turn, serve as conduits for culture, playing a

constructivist role in accessing and processing cultural history, as such concepts are transmitted by means of language, and interpreted and understood through experience and interactions within a cultural setting (Rannikmäe et al., 2020). Therefore, social constructivists believe in the principles of social interaction and collaboration, active engagement and experiential learning, reflection and metacognition, and cultural context and diversity in relation to language teacher CPD in order to pursue autonomy in mutual social relations.

The Namibian syllabus also encourages teachers to foster a connection between cultural identities and the English Second Language (ESL) classroom (MoEAC, 2016). However, without knowledge of the cultural context and the diversity prevailing within the language classroom, achieving this will be futile. While a social constructivist approach to language teacher CPD is valuable in fostering collaborative learning experiences and shared knowledge, it may be inadequate without the incorporation of SDL (Akpan et al., 2020; Alshaikhi, 2020; Morris, 2019). To account for individual educator effort in their CPD, there is a need to integrate SDL principles where educators can personalise their professional development, address specific needs and cultivate a culture of lifelong learning, in so doing enhancing their effectiveness as language teachers (Leong, 2020; Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009); Mahlaba, 2020; Strickland, 2021). In the context of this study, a balanced approach that combines social constructivism with SDL, which may lead to more comprehensive and impactful professional development for language teachers, is embraced.

### **3.3 A self-directed learning approach to language teacher continuous professional development**

Teacher professional development plays an important role in changing teachers' pedagogical practices and assisting teachers to move beyond a comprehension of the surface features of a new idea or innovation, to a deeper understanding of a topic (Ajani, 2023; Olivier & Wittman, 2019). Professional development provides teachers with opportunities to explore new roles, develop new instructional techniques, refine their practice, and broaden themselves, both as educators and as individuals (Abakah et al., 2022; Helate et al., 2022). It is only recently with a shift and addition of SDL in education research that CPD has been thought of as self-driven (Ajani, 2023).

Typically, traditional approaches have been employed to upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills; however, these traditional approaches are viewed as overly fragmented and not intricately connected to classroom practice, as well as out of alignment with current theories of learning and school reforms (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). In support of this discovery, Cirocki & Farrell (2019), Alshaikhi (2020), & UNESCO-IICBA (2024) suggest that there remain persistent concerns about

the quality of CPD provision especially in English language teaching (ELT) revealing that teacher CPD have been focused on traditional models of CPD where teachers are requested to apply knowledge and theories supplied by others to their own contexts.

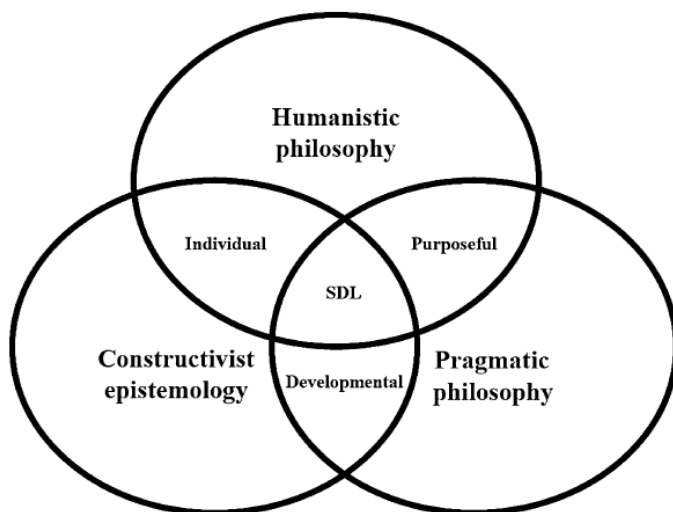
While a review of teacher CPD content and delivery models can be traced back in the literature, in the past two decades there would appear to have been an increase in the level of activity at a regional and global level (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). Unfortunately for many teachers, CPD has been developed outside of their contexts, comprising passive, centralised once-off workshops or cascading CPD approaches designed by the administrator (Tannehill et al., 2021), such as the ministry or regional office, and imposed on them as a directive for implementation. Although research shows that traditional CPD seems to support standardised needs for teachers, alas they tend to overshadow teachers' idiosyncratic needs and ideas (Williams et al., 2022). In the context of my study, traditional approaches to teacher CPD are being replaced by ones that are more closely aligned with constructivist approaches specifically grounded in classroom practice and involving the formation of professional learning communities, critically analysing ideas and directing teaching and learning, in the process responding to the shortcomings of traditional approaches (Bada & Olusegun, 2015; Tannehill et al., 2021). Fortunately for teachers, being involved in this kind of CPD increases their capacity for autonomy because their needs and interest take centre stage as they move from transmission through transition to transformative models of CPD, also known as SDL (Sancar et al., 2021).

### **3.4 Conceptualisation of the self-directed process**

The need for SDL for adult learners, specifically language teachers, is widespread and has become a crucial topic in education because according to Leong (2020), the promotion of and work on SDL in education is still ongoing, justifying annual international symposiums devoted merely to research and theory in the area. As a result, definitions, processes and models of SDL from different scholars (Alshaikhi, 2020; Irgatoglu & Perker, 2021; Leong, 2020; Morris, 2019) have surfaced. To better understand, I used the key foundational positions of SDL by Morris (2019) for my study, highlighting three fundamental areas of SDL, namely humanistic and pragmatic philosophy and constructivist epistemology, to conceptualise the processes of SDL.

Together these operate as a tripartite structure that holds that humans are rational beings possessing innate curiosity and the capacity to make meaning of their world (humanism), that the meaning-making process is mediated by nature and experience (pragmatism), and that knowledge develops through relationships with other meaning-makers (constructivism) (Morris, 2019). These three

epistemological foundations will support this study and represent a process of learning that is individual, purposeful and developmental, as shown in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4: Foundational positions of self-directed learning (Morris, 2019)**

### **3.4.1 Humanistic philosophy (individual) in self-directed learning theory**

One key humanistic assumption of SDL theory is that learning goals for teachers are based on the individual, taking into consideration their experiences throughout their teaching career (Morris, 2019). A humanistic philosophy in SDL theory places the learner (educator) at the centre of the educational experience, valuing their autonomy, intrinsic motivation and holistic development (Collier, 2022; Servant-Miklos & Noordegraaf-Eelens, 2021). By adopting a student-centred approach and providing flexible learning pathways, SDL empowers individuals to take charge of their education, leading to meaningful and transformative learning experiences. A humanistic process represents teachers' desirable and responsible growth when considering themselves and others and regards learning as a vehicle for personal development (Ahammad, 2023; Morris, 2019).

In this context, the humanistic process assumes that for CPD to be meaningful, teachers as individual are autonomous and capable of driving their own CPD by identifying their individual goals and decisions (Collier, 2022; Morris, 2019). They have a sense of responsibility to themselves and others in voicing their professional needs to improve their teaching practice.

### **3.4.2 Pragmatic philosophy (purposeful)**

The pragmatic nature of SDL highlights that adults often initiate learning to find solutions to real-world problems that are situated within their personal context (Morris, 2019). Through this process, teachers engage in SDL for highly practical reasons like making a good decision, or carrying out certain tasks related to their teaching, home, family or hobby informed by their purpose to do the job (Collier, 2022). In this case the purpose for teachers to engage in this process is based on explicit influence driven by life-centred problems. This is significant for this study as it proves that external elements play a significant role in teachers' engagement in SDL, for example their classroom set up, the kind of learners they have and the community of teachers they engage with, all of which influence the engagement of teachers in SDL.

### **3.4.3 Constructivist epistemology (developmental)**

The pragmatic dimension of adult learning supports its underlying constructivist epistemological foundations. Constructivists view learning as an individual, interpretive and active process of meaning-making, a learning process that is personal and individual (Collier, 2022) (see Figure 2 in Chapter 2). Indeed, the epistemological stance of the sociocultural turn defines human learning as a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and distributed across persons, tools and activities (Sze-Yeng & Hussain, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1997). Constructivist learning environments emphasise the importance of engaging learners and teachers in solving authentic real-world problems (Morris, 2019). These three epistemological foundations, humanistic philosophy, pragmatic philosophy and constructivist epistemology, will support this study.

While I acknowledge the significance of the humanist and pragmatic approach, my research aligns more closely with constructivist theory, as a crucial aspect of language teaching and teacher CPD and aligned to social constructivism which was introduced early in this chapter. This theory emphasises that human learning is a process of constructing knowledge, where new information builds upon existing knowledge (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). In the context of my study, I emphasise the importance of teachers engaging in self-directed CPD, as it enables them to participate in constructivism-based activities. These activities include conversations with fellow educators, collaborative efforts and reflective practices, leading to the construction of new meaning that fosters a conducive environment for learners to deepen their understanding and expand their knowledge in ESL (Orak, 2021).

While SDL is widely recognised and preferred in language teaching and learning, it is essential to highlight the specific activities that comprise SDL for a more comprehensive understanding. In

my research, I delve into the various elements that constitute SDL, shedding light on its effective implementation in language education. By emphasising the significance of constructivism and SDL in teacher CPD, my study seeks to contribute to the advancement of language teaching practices and the overall improvement of language learning outcomes for learners.

### **3.5 Self-Directed learning activities**

Although CPD based on traditional approaches has been frequently used in teacher professional development (Sancar et al. 2021), for many reasons like standardisation and assuring quality (Williams et al., 2022) they have not focused sufficiently on individuals' characteristics, needs and prior knowledge. This has attracted scholars to seek for innovative approaches focusing on the individual teacher where SDL is internally determined and initiated. As a result, common SDL activities and methodologies to improve teachers' practices, which embrace social constructivist and inquiry-based approaches, have been developed. Priajana (2017) cites such activities to be independent or individual reading, joining online professional communities, authoring articles and some reflective activities such as self-monitoring and reflective journal writing, peer observation, peer coaching, and classroom action research (CAR).

According to Abakah et al. (2022), having informal discussions and dialogues with other teachers, conducting enquiry-based, school-based research, a positive relationship between the teacher and the institution or context to empower the teacher and enable them to identify with the mission of the institution, also form part of SDL activities helpful for maintaining and developing teachers' competencies. In the context of my study, if teachers are involved in self-directed CPD through these kinds of activities it allows for the personal construction of meaning regarding their work, using personal experience as the basis and stimulus for learning. In addition, their personal teaching practices would be explored to solve practice-related concerns (Priajana, 2017). As research in this area continues, new and novel SDL techniques emerge, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID 19 epidemic, resulting in a shift to online education, which had a negative impact on language teaching (MoEAC, 2022). The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in education, such as web-based teaching materials and participation in massive open online courses (MOOC), has also become a popular way to continuously improve language teaching practices.

Although there are certain limitations that come with SDL especially if teaching in a disadvantaged or under-resourced school, added to the fact that the quality of SDL learning outcomes is under-researched (Morris, 2019), in the context of my study it is important to recognise the powerful influence and outcomes that SDL has on sustaining CPD behaviour for ESL language teachers.

This is because it fosters collaborative learning and underscores human agency on the part of teachers to construct and co-construct their own knowledge for their professional growth and development (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). It is therefore vital to note the outcomes of these actions in terms of both pedagogical and professional competencies.

### **3.6 Self-directed learning outcomes**

Engaging in SDL is beneficial for teachers who can thus take responsibility for their professional growth. The outcomes of SDL “[contribute] to the betterment of educators because in their own professional development, teachers are given a responsibility, choice, and involvement in the planning of their own learning” (Porter & Freeman, 2020, p. 38). As a result, the CPD collegiality developed in schools can create favourable environments not only for individual teachers but also for other ESL teachers who could benefit greatly from participating in self-directed activities, thus keeping abreast of developments in ESL (Priajana, 2017).

Importantly, what differentiates the SDL process is that the teacher is empowered to take personal responsibility to choose what and how they use information in the process of meaning-making (Morris, 2019) This theory is used in my study to explain teachers’ autonomy and freedom in directing their own CPD needs. According to Gencel and Saracaloglu (2018) and Morris (2019), teachers learn best when involved in transformative CPD activities in the sense that they increase professional autonomy. It can therefore be concluded that collaborative internal CPD activities have vast potential effects related to better teacher professionalism (Collier, 2022). However, the most significant aspect of collaborative institutional CPD activities is the supportive environment of teachers, support groups and the informal collegial support that exists in schools.

## **3.7 A reflective practice approach to language teacher continuous professional development**

### **3.7.1 Defining reflective practice**

Reflective teaching or becoming critical of oneself has gained relevance in the professional practice of English language teachers because of the effects it can have on teaching practices and teachers’ professional life (Mesa, 2018). In language teaching especially when applied to the classroom, it is seen as an imperative interpretation of how language education may improve. Reflective practice is based on the work of Dewey (1933) and Schön (1987) and according to (Farrell, 2015, 2018; Farrell & Macapinlac, 2021), it refers to teachers taking responsibility to look at their professional practice, at the underlying philosophy, beliefs and theories that shape their classroom practice so that it can become personally meaningful to them. On the contrary, a review on reflective practice by researchers like Gudeta (2022) revealed a negative and excessive attention to the retrospective aspect of reflection instead of the prospective, creative aspects of the concept.

It also showed a lack of evidence regarding the contribution of reflection and reflective teaching to professional development and improved teacher or student performance, as the main practical problems of reflective teaching. However, the main premise of reflection is that teachers who engage in reflective practices (Abakah, 2022) may develop a deeper understanding of their philosophy, as well as theories as they relate to their actual practices, and thus become proactive and confident in their teaching. Across the globe and in Africa, the construction of reflective identity in practitioners has become a prominent theme within a transformative education discourse (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019). This means that, while traditional CPD has taken central stage, it is apparent that, as reflective practitioners, teachers are no longer technicians or curriculum transmitters who follow a banking model of education. Instead, they function as self-directed decision makers who constantly learn from their experiences and recreate these experiences through reflection.

#### **3.7.1.1 Dewey's (1933) theory of reflective practice**

With reference to the ideas of American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey (1933) and his philosophy of pragmatism, he defines reflective practice as the active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge embedded in the activities of practice (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021). It involves adult learners and in this case teachers, asking four questions: *What situation have we here? What sort of problem does it show? What latest information does it involve?* and *What action will set us on towards a solution?* Thus, an emphasis was placed on the importance of adult learners considering the contextual conditions of their situation in the process of finding fitting and purposeful solutions to their individual life-centered problems (Morris, 2019). Reflection is also considered as a thinking process, resulting in creating alternatives of teaching and Mesa (2018) further expands that teachers who do not reflect on their teaching often uncritically accept everyday reality in their schools and rarely concentrate their efforts on finding the most effective and efficient means to solve problems.

#### **3.7.1.2 Schön (1987) theory of reflective practice**

Donald Schön (1987) interpreted Dewey's conceptions of reflection in his work, describing reflective practice as the practice where professionals become aware of their implicit knowledge base and learn from their experiences (Farrell & Macapinlac, 2021; Mwila et al., 2022). It is further explained as the habit of inquiring into and investigating a situation to understand how to frame a solution. Based on both Dewey (1933) and Schön (1987) definitions, what this means for my study is it acknowledges teaching as evidence based where teachers gather data and use the evidence collected from their work and contexts to determine their CPD needs. In the end, this evidence

based reflective practice enables them to articulate what they do, how and why they do it and the impact it has on the learners (Farrell, 2012).

### **3.7.2 Three levels of reflective practice**

Earlier scholars on reflective practice, Dewey (1933) and Schön (1987) identified two fundamental types of reflections, namely reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action to explain forms of thinking about situations (Farrell, 2018; Mwila et al., 2022), however at a later stage a third type of reflection emerged as the work on reflective practice began to expand, naming it reflection-for-action. This is further revealed in (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019), citing literature findings that reflective practitioners' most common types of reflection are: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action. They further explains that according to Schön's (1983) terms, the first two reflection types are about dealing with problems as they emerge in the classroom and looking back at what occurred in the teaching-learning process, while reflection-for-action is defined as teacher thinking about future actions whose purpose is to make improvements to or change current practice (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019).

#### **3.7.2.1 Reflection-on-action**

Dewey (1933) considered reflective practice as intentional, systematic inquiry that is disciplined and that will ultimately lead to change and professional growth for teachers hence reflection-on action (Farrell, 2012), it takes place after the event where the practitioner evaluates the theories of action used to solve a problem (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021). Additionally, Russell (2018) explains that Reflection-on-action, on the other hand, is viewed as teachers' thoughtful consideration and retrospective analysis of their performance to gain knowledge from experience. This means that for teachers to determine their CPD needs, it should emanate from evaluation of their teaching experiences and lessons, making them agents of change by determining what they need as CPD. As such for my study, it demonstrates that teachers can go back to their experiences and evaluate how their lessons went and consider any mistake as an invitation to engage and further investigate to bring about change or improvement through CPD, and in this way they will direct what and where they need to grow professionally.

#### **3.7.2.2 Reflection-in-action**

Schön then expanded the concept of reflection to reflection on action, the idea of a practitioner being able to reflect on his or her intuitive knowledge while engaged in the action of teaching (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021), hence reflection-in-action, refers to teachers' interactions with a problem or interventions as they unfold in their classrooms or social contexts. Another scholar

suggests that reflection-in-action occurs in response to surprising and unexpected moments, typically moments when the response of a student or a class triggers a question about tacit practices and their underlying assumptions (Russell, 2018). For this study it means reflection-on-action causes the teacher to reflect while in class as engagements with learners are happening, triggering the teacher to think about a solution while teaching. This contributes to identifying the CPD they require which would come from their own reflection and not determined by others.

### **3.7.2.3 Reflection-for-action**

A third concept of reflection was added to Schön's studies termed "reflection for action", which looks at what has occurred in the past and how this can help change the teaching process in the future (Farrell, 2018). Contrary to the two types of reflection mentioned above, in which teacher thinking targets current or past class routines, in reflection-for-action, teachers' thinking is directed at future courses of action and in this type of reflection, benefit from the other two types of reflection in planning their future courses of action (Gudeta, 2022). It implies that when teachers are seeking to improve their current practices, and making future plans in teaching, they first consider what has happened in the past to inform their planned actions (Brownhill, 2022). In the context of my study, reflection-for-action is a critical aspect of reflection for teachers, as they synthesise their contextual experiences gathered throughout their professional career, from interacting with others and the knowledge they possess into identifying solutions to their classroom challenges for successful teaching and learning in the future (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019). I therefore regard reflection for action as a crucial need for teachers when they identify their CPD needs to grow professionally and to contribute to learner's academic performance in ESL.

### **3.7.3 Reflective practice and teacher continuous professional development**

The process of reflection may have consequences for teaching for the whole academic community and for teachers themselves because attitudes, perceptions, emotions and feelings may be modified when teachers are involved in rethinking how they perceive language education (Mesa, 2018). This is particularly the case in the field of language teaching and in the context of this study, since the pedagogy of ESL is fluid and is constantly changing (Oliver & Wittman, 2019), intensifying reflection on own beliefs, individual experiences, classroom practices and the school community in which teachers find themselves. English language teachers should be encouraged to reflect by themselves based on their personal interests, experiences and the kind of learner they have, because then they can develop their full teaching potential (Mesa, 2018). However, reflective practice for teachers comes with its challenges, including the fact that it is time and energy-intensive, there is a lack of professional support, and the purpose and nature of reflective practices in schools are

unclear and unarticulated (Suphasri & Chinokul, 2021). Shaping and facing the several challenges language teachers deal with in the classroom requires an ongoing process of reflection, examination and restructuring of teaching instruction, students' learning styles and interests, the teaching context, the real problems, and issues in the educative system in general. Self-directed CPD could be the answer to these challenges as it positions teachers to make professional development decisions, i.e. select activities for their own learning. Likewise, the use of self-directed professional development may reduce the mismatch between CPD inputs (teacher learning activities) and outputs (teacher cognition and classroom practice), a mismatch often reported for centrally directed professional development initiatives (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009).

In the context of the study, teachers systematically investigated their perceived contextual experiences to give meaning to the CPD needs they highlighted. This stance gives insight into what and how they can reflect on and consider their experiences and situations as an important aspect that gives birth to solutions to their needs. This is done by crafting their own CPD that works for them. Additionally, it will give them autonomy as a precondition to direct their practices to fulfil their individual CPD needs (Farrell, 2012). This theoretical stance acknowledges that through reflective practice teachers have agency, as they apply knowing in action (tacit knowledge) which they use to deal with and make meaning of the instruction tasks and actions. As such, CPD based on this theory will have teachers evaluating and reflecting on their classroom activities for the purpose of identifying what they need professionally to improve their learners' experiences.

#### **3.7.4 Self-directed learning in CPD as a reflective practice**

Reflective practice involves the conscious examination of experiences, actions and decisions to gain insights into one's strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. It enables professionals to learn from their experiences and apply that learning to future situations (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). This self-reflection is a crucial aspect of the learning process, leading to enhanced performance and personal growth. When SDL and reflective practice are combined, they create a powerful synergy. SDL equips individuals with the skills and motivation to actively seek out new knowledge and experiences (Collier, 2022; Morris, 2019). Reflective practice, on the other hand, allows them to process and internalise those experiences effectively, transforming them into valuable insights and actionable knowledge (Abakah, 2022; Farrell & Macapinlac, 2021). This synergy enhances the quality of learning and ensures that knowledge acquired is not only retained but also deeply understood and integrated into one's professional practice (Brownhill, 2022; Suphasri & Chinokul, 2021).

In their studies, Fransen (2022) and Mpfu and Maphalala (2021) found that to effectively integrate SDL into CPD as a reflective practice, language teachers ought to adopt several strategies. First, they should begin by setting clear goals and objectives, identifying the specific areas they wish to improve upon or explore further. Creating a personalised learning plan is another essential step, which involves choosing suitable learning resources, courses or workshops that are aligned with the identified goals (Mwila et al., 2022). Furthermore, leveraging information and technology, such as attending online courses and webinars, can facilitate easy access to relevant information and resources (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020). Thus, the process of reflection might have positive teaching consequences on the whole academic community and on teachers themselves because attitudes, perceptions, emotions and feelings can be modified when involved in re-thinking how they perceive language education (Mesa, 2018).

This is particularly the case in the field of language teaching and in the context of this study since the pedagogy of ESL is fluid and is constantly changing (Wittman & Oliver, 2019) intensifying reflection on own beliefs, individual experiences, classroom practices opening a a community of practice amongst teachers in schools. English language teachers need to be encouraged to reflect by themselves based on their personal interests, experiences, and the kind of learners they have because then, they can develop their full teaching potential (Mesa, 2018). When language teachers are faced with classroom challenges, an ongoing process of reflection, examination and restructuring of the teaching instruction and learning styles is required. This results in exploring topics of personal interest and shaping different interests among learners, where teachers stay updated with the latest teaching trends and continuously refine their teaching methodologies to improve the educative system in general (Fransen, 2022). This process, known as SDL, which underpins constructivism as a crucial possession for teachers, empowers them to co-construct knowledge and adapt to their ever-changing classroom experiences (Morris, 2019), forming a solid foundation for ELT. Along these lines, self-directed CPD could be the solution to these challenges as it positions teachers to make professional decisions when it comes to selecting activities for their own learning. Likewise, the use of self-directed professional development may reduce the mismatch between CPD inputs (teacher learning activities) and outputs (teacher cognition and classroom practice), a mismatch so often reported for centrally directed professional development initiatives (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009).

As such CPD based on this theory will have teachers evaluating and reflecting on their classroom activities for the purpose of identifying what they need professionally to improve their learners' experiences.

### 3.8 Chapter summary

Throughout this chapter, we have explored the way in which three theoretical frames – social constructivism, self-directed learning (SDL) and reflective practice – intertwine and complement each other in shaping the CPD journey of language teachers in Namibia. Understanding the significance of these frames will shed light on the transformative impact they can have on language teaching practices, fostering a community of empowered and effective educators dedicated to nurturing the next generation of linguistically proficient individuals. Table 3.1 below summarises the link between the theories discussed and how they link to CPD.

**Table 3.1: Theories and their linkage to the language teachers’ CPD**

Theory	Link to language teachers’ CPD
<b>Social constructivism</b>	This theoretical frame posits that knowledge is not passively transmitted but is actively constructed and emerges through social interactions and collaborative efforts. In the context of language teacher CPD, social constructivism emphasises the importance of fostering learning communities and spaces where educators can engage in meaningful discussions, share experiences and co-construct knowledge. By tapping into the collective expertise of their peers and mentors, language teachers in Namibia can gain fresh perspectives, exchange ideas and explore innovative teaching approaches. Collaborative learning experiences, workshops and collaborative projects play a significant role in nurturing a culture of continuous learning, where teachers collectively contribute to their professional development.
<b>Self-directed learning (SDL)</b>	The empowerment of language teachers lies at the heart of SDL. This theoretical frame acknowledges the capacity of educators to identify their own learning needs, set personalised goals and take responsibility for their professional growth. In the context of Namibia, where resources may be limited in some regions, SDL offers a flexible and accessible approach to CPD. Advancements in technology have opened up a vast array of resources, such as online courses, webinars, research materials, and educational forums, enabling language teachers to tailor their learning experiences to their specific contexts and challenges. By embracing SDL, language educators can explore topics of personal interest, stay updated with the latest teaching trends and continuously refine their teaching methodologies.
<b>Reflective practice</b>	At the core of reflective practice lies the notion of thoughtful contemplation and critical analysis. In the pursuit of effective language teaching, reflective practice empowers educators to examine their teaching experiences and actions, fostering self-awareness and a deeper understanding of their teaching practices. By engaging in reflective processes, language teachers can identify their strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. Reflective journals, peer discussions, feedback sessions and outcome analysis of teaching interventions all contribute to this essential practice. Reflective teaching encourages a growth mindset, as educators constantly seek to enhance their instructional strategies to better meet the needs of their diverse students.

To summarise, involvement in self-directed CPD, using reflective practice and a social constructivist approach, as well as reflection on their knowledge base and their experiences gained through their entire teaching career, will equip teachers to adopt professional practices that they perceive to be beneficial to them. The next chapter will focus on the design of the study and the

data collection and paradigmatic position used for the study. The sampling techniques, data methods and inductive thematic analysis will also be explained and the measure for ethical considerations will be clarified.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

---

#### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study, which sought to explore the self-directed learning (SDL) requirements of English Second Language (ESL) teachers in Namibian secondary schools. Three theories were presented that were applied explain how teachers acquire knowledge and grow as professionals by engaging in and driving their own continuous professional development (CPD). The way in which the three theories intertwine and complement each other in shaping the CPD of language teachers in Namibian secondary schools was also explained. It was acknowledged that in line with social constructivism, teachers are actively involved in knowledge construction and innovation through collaborations with others to advance their professional development activities. Through (SDL, teachers play a significant role in selecting the content of their CPD, thus allowing them ownership and the freedom to approach classroom problems based on the context in which they may find themselves. Through reflective practice teachers critically analyse their knowledge and experience in teaching English as a second language and try to adapt them to different circumstances to meet the requirements of their various learners. This sums up the three theoretical frameworks for this study.

It is against this background that in this chapter I present the research methodology, providing details of a paradigmatic orientation of the methods of design, data collection methods, data analysis and quality criteria and the ethical measures undertaken during the study to answer the research questions. According to Nieuwenhuis (2019c), research methodology is the bridge that brings our philosophical standpoint (on ontology and epistemology) and method (perspective, tools) together (Creswell & Poth, 2018) and methods are the tools that researchers use to collect data. Given the definition, this chapter includes the techniques I used in gathering data, and analysing, describing and explaining the phenomena, as well as overcoming research challenges thereby achieving the research goals. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the research design that I used during in my exploration. It summarises the research design highlighting the research questions, the paradigm orientation for my study, and how participants were selected. It further shows the data collection tools and how ethical issues were handled together with the trustworthiness of the study.

**Table 4.1: Research design summary**

<b>Research questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are ESL in-service teachers' idiosyncratic CPD needs?</li> <li>• What contextual experiences shape the CPD needs highlighted by ESL in-service teachers?</li> </ul>
<b>Epistemological paradigm</b>	Interpretivism
<b>Approach</b>	Qualitative
<b>Research design</b>	Exploratory case study
<b>Selection of participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposive sampling</li> <li>• ESL in-service teachers</li> <li>• Secondary schools ESL teachers</li> <li>• Schools in Khomas region</li> </ul>
<b>Data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group discussion</li> <li>• Semi-structured interviews</li> <li>• Document analysis (CPD framework in Namibia)</li> </ul>
<b>Ethical consideration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informed consent</li> <li>• Protection of participants from possible harm</li> <li>• Confidentiality and anonymity</li> </ul>
<b>Trustworthy strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credibility: triangulation</li> <li>• Confirmability: purposive sampling</li> <li>• Transferability: video recording and transcriptions</li> <li>• Dependability: reflective journal</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Interpretivist paradigm

All scientific research studies should be based on a key fundamental philosophical assumption that considers the nature of the research, the evidence available to support it and the method used for the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021). This is known as a paradigm, which according to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) and Yin (2018), refers to general viewpoints or ideologies or a set of common beliefs and agreements shared by scientists on how problems can be understood and addressed. Research paradigms can also be referred to as ways in which scientists respond to three basic questions of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Yin, 2018). Hence, Tenny (2022) explains that different paradigms have different ontology and epistemologies. Ontology is defined as assumptions about the nature of reality, whereas epistemology is defined as assumptions about the nature of knowledge that inform the work researchers do. Therefore, an understanding of these categories enables researchers to improve their comprehension of research, their application of theory to classroom practices, their engagement in academic debate and their presentation of their own research findings. This implies that interpretivists believe in several realities which can be constructed by people's experience

based on theoretical frameworks, cultural background of society and ideological categories (Tracy, 2019). This means that interpretivist researchers believe that reality is based on people's subjective experiences of the external world, believing that there is no single correct way or particular method for acquiring knowledge and that no objective knowledge is independent of thinking or human reasoning (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021). Thus, they attempt to derive their constructs from the field by means of an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2018).

Since interpretivism aims at making sense of the social world through the collective interpretation of humans' social and cultural backgrounds (Creswell & Poth, 2018), this study used an interpretivist paradigm because of the qualitative nature of my study, which sought to discover the knowledge and truths constructed by those who were being researched (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). In addition, interpretivism posits the subjective interpretation of human beings and their perceptions of the world as critical in understanding social phenomena (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020).

An interpretivist paradigm is relevant to my study for various reasons. One is that it enabled me to understand the phenomenon of the CPD needs of ESL secondary school teachers which are informed by their contextual experiences at a personal and professional level. Secondly, it provided a platform for these teachers to express their lived experiences and truths and share their different contextual practices regarding their CPD needs in a safe environment. It is relevant to note that participants agreed to participate in the study voluntarily and willingly, which became the starting point for understanding their cultural and ideological frameworks constructed from their experiences in teaching ESL. Lastly, this paradigm provided a lens through which I could present and analyse the study participants' standpoints, thus enabling me to draw conclusions and make recommendations from the research findings.

For the ESL teacher participants in my study, I argue that exploring their individual CPD demanded evaluating their classrooms, their peers and their communities at large as a basis to form an idea of how they interpreted the kind of CPD they needed. Using their social and personal experiences allowed them to form perceptions on what they needed in order to develop in their profession and gave me valuable insight into how they constructed knowledge to enhance their professional development. Hence, an interpretive paradigm enabled me to consider different factors such as behavioural aspects based on participants' experiences, and this helped to describe the participants, enabling me to treat the context of the research and its situation as unique, while also considering the circumstances associated with participants involved (Cresswell, 2014). Given this philosophical underpinning, the ontological assumptions of interpretivism are that social

reality is typified by multiplicity, since different people interpret events differently, leading to multiple perspectives on an incident (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

This means that in my study, different teachers interpreted CPD differently, causing them to have different CPD needs because of their different backgrounds and experience in class, in school and in their communities. Their views, background and experiences of ESL are valuable assets, enabling me to understand the realities of the ESL teachers' CPD needs in Namibia and their contextual experiences that shape those CPD needs. Since interpretivists believe that reality is not objectively determined, but it is socially constructed (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020), in the context of my study this means that participants' realities of the phenomena cannot be determined by a person located outside their world, and the content that teachers get to do in their CPD cannot be determined by an external person outside their world; this can be done only by themselves based on their realities which subsequently determine their CPD needs. As such, I valued their views, background and experiences in ESL, without imposing on them what CPD means and how it should be executed within their various contexts to improve teaching and learning to the benefit of their learners. Through this process I was cognisant of the social environment that influenced the participants to decide on the CPD they need. Therefore, participants used the platform provided by the semi-structured interviews and focus group to reflect on and co-construct knowledge and solutions related to CPD.

### **4.3 Qualitative approach**

A qualitative approach to research is a type of research that seeks to find and provide deeper insights into real-world problems by enquiring about participants' experiences, perceptions and behaviour in order to generate a hypothesis (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021). Creswell and Poth (2018) and Yin (2018) augment this definition by stating that qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit them. These questions seek how and why answers, instead of how many or how much. Typical methods that can yield qualitative data include document analysis, semi-structured interviews, observations and focus group discussions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These methods ensure that participants freely express their thoughts, feelings and experiences. Qualitative research also entails approaches (Yin, 2018) such as ethnography, grounded theory and narrative research. According to Tenny (2022), ethnography embraces social and cultural anthropology, requiring the researcher to immerse him or herself directly in the participants' environment, thus seeing it through the eyes of someone involved in the population. Grounded theory involves the generation of a theoretical model by observing a study population and developing a comparative analysis of their speech and behaviour.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), one of the strengths of qualitative research lies in its ability to tell a story, often from the perspective of those directly involved in it. Reporting on qualitative research involves including details and descriptions of the setting involved, as well as quotes from participants (Tenny, 2022), which has been done in my study.

In essence, qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings (Yin, 2018). Additionally, Creswell and Creswell (2017) asserts that qualitative research relates to the meaning and process, where it might not be examinable through quantity or amount. It aims to provide a specific understanding of a phenomenon based on the people experiencing although this cannot be generalised. Furthermore, qualitative research is aimed at attaining a deep understanding of a specific case using in-depth exploratory studies to enable the finding of quality responses throughout the research (Tracy, 2019).

Therefore, adopting a qualitative research approach is in line with a relativist ontological position (Diop, 2021) which underpins the methodological choices that have guided this study. In the context of my study, I used focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews, in which participants gave insights into what works and what does not work in the ESL classroom. As a qualitative researcher I was interested in understanding the meaning participants constructed, that is, how they made sense of their world and the experiences they had in their surroundings and in the world at large. This was done thoroughly, with an emphasis on openness and detail, by seeking the opinions, experiences and understanding of teachers regarding their specific CPD needs. Informed by a sociocultural perspective, which does not separate individuals from their social contexts, I contend that exploring teachers' CPD needs necessitates taking account of their work environment, their communities and society at large.

This approach fits the enquiry which sought to explore and understand the CPD needs of ESL teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools, as in looking at their contexts, participants were given a platform to reflect on their contextual experiences. Their context included their classrooms and other spaces in which they engage with peers to share experiences and co-construct knowledge, and to think about why they identified a particular need (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). This context fosters a community of practice since teaching is context-based, as professionalism is itself a sociocultural production that is not contained within the confines of the classroom, but which encompasses broader networks beyond it (Darling-Hammond et al., 2016). Participants were also given a platform to think about why they needed the identified CPD. Qualitative research methods were then applied to answer the what, why and how, by exploring the social phenomena

and meanings derived from those who interact with such phenomena (Nieuwenhuis, 2019b). In this sense, the findings are presented with as much detail as possible and areas for further research to build on this study are indicated in the final chapter.

#### **4.4 Exploratory case study**

Case studies are research designs that involve the intensive and holistic examination of a specific case or a set of cases, aiming to understand, describe and analyse the subject in its natural context (Peel, 2020). According to Priya (2021), a case study is a qualitative design in terms of which the researcher explores a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals in depth. In the context of my study, I explored a phenomenon using specific data collection procedures to obtain information pertaining to the self-directed CPD needs of ESL teachers. As Creswell and Creswell (2017) state, case studies are bound by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period. He further highlights that case studies are underpinned by key attributes, one of which should involve a detailed study of the unit of analysis concerned within its natural setting, which also gives the researcher leeway to use any method of data collection that suits their purpose, provided that it is feasible and ethical.

According to Yin (2014), there are three types of case study, namely, descriptive, exploratory and explanatory. Descriptive case studies focus on providing a detailed account of a particular case or phenomenon without attempting to answer specific research questions or test hypotheses (Peel, 2020). Exploratory case studies are conducted when there is limited prior knowledge about a subject or when researchers aim to gain a preliminary understanding of a complex issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The level of investigation is less rigorous than in a descriptive case study and can be used in the preliminary phase of a longer project (Yin, 2018). Explanatory case studies are conducted to explore causation and relationships between variables within a specific case (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). I conducted an exploratory case study to explore the specific CPD requirements of ESL high school teachers in Namibia, and how they navigate their individual CPD needs. This is an understudied area (Kalumbu, 2018) which could be used as a basis for future studies on CPD in the Namibian context. By adopting an exploratory approach, I gathered comprehensive data, shedding light on previously unexplored aspects of teachers' CPD needs and experiences.

Furthermore, an exploratory case study is a qualitative research method used to examine a particular phenomenon, event, or subject in depth with the primary aim of gaining a better understanding of it (Hirose & Creswell, 2023). Unlike a traditional case study that might focus on

testing specific hypotheses or theories, an exploratory case study is conducted when there is limited prior knowledge or when the topic is relatively unexplored (Peel, 2020). In the Namibian context, the subject of CPD has been relatively underexplored in research, aside from the CPD policy framework documents introduced in 2016, which were co-authored by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) and the University of Namibia (UNAM). Although a handful of scholars such as Ithindi (2019), Nakambale (2018), Dishena, & Mokoena, (2016) and Ndemuweda (2011) have touched on CPD in Namibia and the challenges related to CPD implementation and monitoring within the education system, there remains a substantial gap in the literature, particularly in the realm of CPD for ESL educators in secondary schools. Therefore, there is a need for further exploration of this area to address specific inquiries, as presented in this study.

One of the key characteristics of an exploratory case study is that it aims at understanding the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences (Merriam, 2009). Accordingly, this study is of great interest because of its focus on the contextual conditions and experiences of ESL teachers. To better understand how ESL teachers reflect on their experiences to determine the kind of relevant CPD they need, it is essential to focus on an in-depth study of their perspectives, since they are involved in this phenomenon within their natural contexts. I believe their experiences are relevant to understand whether their CPD needs are being met and how that contributes to classroom effectiveness and the performance of their learners. Thus, when examining the CPD needs of ESL high school teachers in Namibia, it is essential to start with a comprehensive understanding of their unique context, challenges and aspirations.

Researchers who make use of exploratory case studies gather data from a variety of sources, which may include interviews, observations, documents and archival records (Quintão et al., 2020). The method used is determined by the research questions and which data source will yield the best information to answer the questions. A multimethod approach helps to comprehensively understand the case and to explore participants' expertise and experiences and includes exploring how and why people behave in certain ways (Maree, 2019). For this study, I used document analysis, focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews as my source of evidence. Within the framework of my study, I explored and analysed the Namibian CPD framework with its supporting documents to gain more insight into the CPD activities prescribed for Namibian teachers and to explore how they are applied and experienced by the receivers, the teachers (Kayumbu, 2020; UNAM, 2013).

Additionally, in line with the nature of exploratory studies, a focus group discussion involving eight ESL teachers was conducted. The aim of a focus group discussion is to bring together

homogeneous groups of participants with relevant expertise and experience on a given topic on which they can share detailed information; in this case the participants included in-service secondary school ESL teachers in the Khomas region (Quintão et al, 2020). Thirdly, I conducted semi-structured interviews. The aim of semi-structured interviews is to elicit understandings from the participants, not to tell them what to say, but rather to offer pathways to conceptualise issues and to make connections that “coalesce into emerging responses” (Peel, 2020, pg. 6). During the interviews I guided the participants with questions that assisted us to focus on the themes of the study. In these interviews, they explained areas of individual CPD needs, as well as how these shape their classroom experiences. In the end, data from these multiple sources were converged in the analysis process rather than handled individually and each data source formed one piece of the “puzzle”, with each piece contributing to the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This convergence added strength to the findings as the various strands of data were braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case (Peel, 2020).

Related to the multiple data generation tools, exploratory case studies involve a relatively small number of cases or participants. This allows for an in-depth examination of each case (Palinkas et al., 2015). Since qualitative research involves studying a phenomenon in its natural setting, sampling specific and small size samples plays a vital role, as it helps the researcher to identify persons or localities rich in information which give more insights for the study findings (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). For my study, I ensured a small sample by defining the study sample to focus on in-service ESL teachers, teaching in secondary schools in Khomas region only, where I reside to make it viable for me to collect data. The purpose of using a small sample was to uncover the distinctions among these teachers and to understand the underlying reasons for these differences. The focus group conducted consisted of eight ESL teachers and sought to explore the unique aspects of their experiences as well as their opinions about the CPD they need. These teachers have special attributes that were of interest to my study because of their many years of experience in teaching different grades in secondary schools, as well as being in the education system for many years, providing them with rich experiences of CPD activities that have allowed them to construct their own knowledge to address their CPD needs. Inquiry in these types of studies focuses largely on teachers defining case features and the differences they exhibit from other individuals in the larger population (Yin, 2018). Additionally, knowledge gained from a small sample in case studies is often for the purpose of applying it to a larger population (Creswell, & Tashakkori 2007.) for further research in the area of interest.

Data analysis in exploratory case studies involves a thorough examination of the collected information (Busetto et al., 2020). Researchers look for patterns, themes and emerging concepts

that can contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, there is a need to search the data for patterns which may explain or identify causal links in the data (Bazen et al., 2021). In the process, the researcher first concentrates on the entire data set and then attempts to take it apart and reconstruct it again more meaningfully (Yin, 2014). I began the process of data analysis by organising the data I gathered and searching for patterns by identifying and naming the concepts of CPD that emerged during the discussion and the semi-structured interviews. I then categorised the data and grouped similar responses into themes. Categorisation helps the researcher to compare and contrast the patterns, to reflect deeply on certain patterns and complex threads in the data, and to make sense of them (Merriam, 2009). This method is sometimes known as "open coding". This is a commonly used method in which the researcher identifies and tentatively names the conceptual categories into which the occurrences observed are grouped (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). The goal is to create descriptive, multidimensional categories that provide a preliminary framework (Creswell & Poth 2018). Analysing the data for recurring patterns and themes deepened my understanding of various aspects of teachers' professional experiences. It also facilitated the identification of their specific CPD requirements, contributing to the formulation of the research findings.

#### **4.5 Selection of participants**

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of individuals, items, or elements from a larger population for the purpose of conducting research or drawing conclusions about the population (Creswell & Poth, 2018). There are two types of sampling, namely probability and non-probability sampling (Bazen et al., 2021). In random sampling, each member of the population has an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample (Quintão et al., 2020). The purpose of this is to ensure that the sample is unbiased and representative of the entire population (Cohen et al., 2018). Non-probability sampling involves selecting a sample from a population based on non-random methods, such as convenience or judgement (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It is employed to select participants that have defining characteristics which are crucial in answering the research questions and providing in-depth and rich data (Bazen et al., 2021) and is often employed in studies where a relatively unexplored field of study is the focus (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Such sampling includes techniques such as convenience, purposive, snowballing and quota (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Since I sought to capture in-depth insights about the CPD needs of the ESL teachers based on their individual and contextual needs, purposive sampling was used to select the participants (Cohen et al., 2018). Purposive sampling is a popular method for selecting participants in qualitative research and is focused on gaining deep insights from representatives of a target group

(Creswell & Poth, 2018; Nakambale, 2018). Members of the sample are chosen with a “purpose” to represent a phenomenon or group in relation to a key criterion (Quintão et al, 2020).

Purposive sampling involves the intentional selection of participants or items based on specific criteria (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This means researchers who use this type of sampling have a clear purpose in mind when choosing who or what to include in the study (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). As a scholar with an interest in teachers and CPD, using the right sampling type is paramount to my study to give me the correct information on and insight into teacher CPD. My focus was on using the best sampling approach to choose my participants strategically, in this case non-probability sampling was used. This kind of sampling elicited in-depth views from the teachers on their experiences of CPD over the years during which they have been teaching ESL in schools.

The research targeted teachers with specific characteristics such as being an in-service teacher, as well as teachers with more than three years’ teaching experience in ESL. Their extensive experiences were also considered to ensure they could offer valuable insights into their CPD experiences accumulated over the years. Participants were chosen because they were expected to provide information or insights that were directly relevant to the research objectives or questions (Palinkas et al., 2015). This study aimed to accomplish two main objectives: firstly, to describe the CPD needs of ESL in-service teachers according to their idiosyncratic needs, and secondly, to elucidate the contextual experiences influencing these identified CPD needs. To acquire this information in a field that is relatively unexplored, particularly in Namibia, participants were chosen from secondary schools in the Windhoek area within the Khomas region, where they were teaching learners ranging from Grade 9 to Grade 12. This specific approach was deliberately employed to ensure that the information collected from them aligned with the primary objective of the study and, as a result, to provide answers to the research questions. Hence, purposive sampling relies on predefined criteria for selection, which may include characteristics such as age, gender, expertise, experience and unique perspectives (Bazen et al., 2021). Additionally, all participants had to meet the qualification criterion of being qualified ESL teachers to enable them to reflect on their professional goals and needs with regard to their ESL teaching careers.

#### **4.6 Data generation**

The data collection stage is a crucial part of the qualitative research process, for it is during this period in the research that the researcher needs to reflect on the kind of methodologies adopted and the specific techniques used for collecting the data and their suitability to answering the research question. The researcher should also reflect on the role that their presence as a researcher

plays in the entire data collection process (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). Data collection in an exploratory case study research is typically extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, documents, and audiovisual materials (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Given that qualitative research is characterised by flexibility, openness and responsiveness to context, data collection and analysis are not as separate and consecutive as they tend to be in quantitative research (Busetto et al, 2020). This study generated data using three different sources, namely, document analysis, focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews.

#### **4.6.1 Focus group discussion**

A focus group discussion is a method for collecting qualitative data from a selected group of individuals (Guest et al., 2020). Given that a focus group discussion allows for participants to build on each other's ideas and comments, it serves to collect in depth qualitative data about a group's perceptions on, attitudes to and experiences of a defined topic (Merriam, 2009), which is difficult to achieve with other research methods. In this case, the topic entailed exploring the self-directed CPD needs of English language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools. I sought to inquire about teachers' CPD needs, to understand their contextual experiences that informed their CPD needs, and how they addressed or wanted their needs to be addressed through a community of practice. Accordingly, through focus group discussion the participants had the opportunity to engage and reflect on their own and others' experiences (Bazen et al., 2021) throughout their ESL professional careers.

Moderators of focus groups can observe engagement and interactions among participants, thus gaining an overall sense of group consensus. Participants are thus provided with an opportunity to socialise and cultivate their identities as ESL practitioners in their workplaces (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In my role as a moderator during this exercise, I closely monitored the participants' interactions and engagements, noting the emergence of collective agreement within the group (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This data collection method was informed by a self-directed theoretical framework, as bringing participants together as a collective allowed them to independently recognise their CPD requirements and to collaboratively address current challenges by combining their individual experiences (Patton, 2002). Through collaboration they shared their concerns or problems which further deepened their expertise as members of a community and consequently, together, they identified solutions, rather than waiting for external expertise to design solutions for them (Busetto et al., 2020).

The group participants selected for my study consisted of ESL teachers from a number of secondary schools in Windhoek, Namibia. I conducted one focus group discussion with ESL in-

service teachers in a noise-free room and prepared in such a way that participants would be comfortable and relaxed. The discussion lasted for about 60 minutes with some participants attending in person and some online. For the online participants, I used the Teams meeting application to record the session. In the room, I used an audio recorder to record the participants' views, which allowed me the opportunity to gather data on the facts they shared, the opinions they held and the attitudes they expressed regarding CPD. The participants were initially presented with a series of questions as an introductory step before delving into the main discussion (see Appendix A). I began by requesting that they share their personal experiences of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in various classroom and school settings. This initial step was aimed at gaining insight into their unique backgrounds as ESL teachers in secondary schools. It also provided an opportunity for them to discuss the challenges they faced within their specific contexts and how, as reflective practitioners, they had addressed or envisioned resolving these challenges. Another question pertained to their preferred structure for the CPD they receive. This inquiry sought to ascertain the voice of teachers in the CPD activities they receive and whether the CPD was self-directed or not. Without these insights, their capacity to identify their own learning and take responsibility for their own learning through different avenues would have been limited (Yin, 2014).

#### **4.6.2 Semi-structured interviews**

In qualitative research, interviewing participants is one of the most frequently used data collection instruments (Diop, 2021). The qualitative research interview is further described as an attempt to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience and to uncover their lived world (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The aim of semi-structured interviews is to elicit understandings from the participants, not to tell them what to say, but rather to offer pathways to conceptualise issues and to make connections that "coalesce into emerging responses" (Peel, 2020). I used semi-structured interviews to gain the ESL teachers' insights into their idiosyncratic experiences and opinions which are specific to their contexts, as opposed to facts or behaviour. The semi-structured interviews comprised open-ended questions framed to cover broad areas of interest about their experiences of CPD (Merriam, 2009). During the semi-structured interviews, I gathered the teachers' understandings of CPD and how it is executed within their contexts, as well as probing how their individual contextual and idiosyncratic experiences shape their CPD needs (Busetto et al., 2020). To steer this process, I used an interview guide (see Appendix B) which covered sub-questions derived from the focus group discussion held earlier and from the literature review conducted for this study. Semi-structured interviews are an important aspect of qualitative studies, as they have the advantage of being interactive and allow

for unexpected topics to emerge and to be discussed by the researcher during the conversation with participants (Peel, 2020).

I conducted one semi-structured interview with each of the eight teachers, as a follow-up to the focus group discussion. These interviews lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes per person and an audio recorder was used to record them. During the interviews, I enquired about the teachers' understanding of the term "continuous professional development" (CPD) to explore their knowledge and understanding of CPD. I further requested them to share the strategies that were in place to address their professional needs. This inquiry sought to uncover the existing professional development initiatives within their schools, with the objective of discerning whether these activities leaned towards traditional or transformative CPD approaches. Another question enquired about whether the CPD activities in place fulfilled their individual needs. This was meant to examine whether their individual CPD needs were considered and to find out the source of the CPD content they received. Overall, these questions helped the researcher to understand the participants' experiences that shaped their CPD needs.

#### **4.6.3 Document analysis**

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic (Merriam, 2009). It requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). Other researchers (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014) explain that document analysis involves the study of existing documents, either to understand their substantive content or to illuminate deeper meanings that may be revealed by their style and coverage. In my study, the documents I reviewed are official primary sources because they are the original documents of the MoEAC relating to CPD in the Namibian education system. The data available in this respect were limited owing to the scarcity of published research on teacher CPD in the Namibian educational context, as noted by Ithindi (2019). Even less information is available on self-directed CPD for language teachers in Namibia.

My goal in reviewing these documents was to delve deeper into the principles, aims and intentions of the Namibian CPD framework. Hence, I analysed the framework and the implementing guidelines to explore the given CPD approaches and to show the current CPD environment for the Namibian ESL teacher. I specifically looked at the purpose of the framework and the implementing strategies and evaluation processes involved to attain the intended outcomes, highlighting how self-directed practices are incorporated in each stage. This was important for my research because it provided insights into how the self-directed needs of teachers are handled, how teachers handle their own CPD needs, the source of CPD activities, and whether teachers' voices and contextual

needs inform these CPD activities. After analysing the CPD framework document, I further analysed it in light of the transcripts of the recorded interview sessions conducted with the participants.

#### **4.7 Inductive thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyse and report patterns or themes within a dataset, often in the form of textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It involves systematically examining and interpreting the content of the data to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying themes, concepts or ideas present (Peel, 2020). According to Clarke and Braun (2013), there are two types of thematic analysis, namely, deductive and inductive. Deductive thematic analysis begins with a predefined set of themes or codes based on existing theories, prior research or specific research questions. Researchers then apply these predetermined themes to the data (Riessman, 2008). This type of analysis is useful when the research is guided by specific hypotheses, or theories, or when researchers want to test pre-existing concepts within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In inductive thematic analysis, researchers start with little to no preconceived themes or codes, allowing themes to emerge from the data through a systematic and iterative process (Patton, 2002). Inductive thematic analysis is often chosen when the research aims to explore a new or poorly understood phenomenon, allowing themes to naturally surface from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Inductive thematic analysis, firstly, is well-suited when the research objective is to gain a deep and open understanding of a phenomenon, particularly when little is known about it (Nowell et al., 2017). In the context of Namibian ESL teachers' self-directed CPD, there may be limited prior research or established theories (Nakambale, 2018), making it necessary to explore the topic from the ground up. Secondly, inductive thematic analysis allows for flexibility in identifying and exploring emerging themes (Stake, 2005), as it does not impose preconceived notions or rigid frameworks onto the data (Riessman, 2008). This is essential when studying self-directed CPD practices, which might vary significantly from one teacher to another and from one context to another. Thirdly, inductive thematic analysis is particularly valuable when studying a topic in a specific cultural and educational context like Namibia (Saldaña, 2016), as it allows researchers to capture the culturally embedded factors that influence self-directed CPD practices. ESL teachers in Namibia may have distinct needs, barriers and opportunities that can only be discovered through an inductive approach (Peel, 2020).

Fourthly, this approach aligns with a participant-centred approach, emphasising the voices and experiences of ESL teachers themselves (Nowell et al., 2017). It empowers teachers to express

their perspectives on self-directed CPD, ensuring their views are not overshadowed by preconceived theories or researcher bias (Saldaña, 2016). Lastly, inductive thematic analysis enhances research transparency because it makes the research process clear and replicable (Clarke & Braun, 2013). It involves systematic steps for coding and theme development, which can be documented and reported in a way that adds credibility to the study (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019). I used the six phases of inductive thematic analysis as detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006), namely, familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing a report. These stages are iterative in nature to provide the required flexibility, complexity and structure for researchers to scrutinise the data comprehensively and to interpret them systematically (Peel, 2020).

<i>Six Phases of Thematic Analysis</i>	
<i>1. Familiarizing yourself with data</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>If required transcribe the data.</i></li> <li>● <i>Reading and rereading the data.</i></li> <li>● <i>Noting down any initial ideas.</i></li> </ul>
<i>2. Generating Initial Codes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Coding interesting features of the data in a methodical fashion across the data sets.</i></li> <li>● <i>Collating data relevant to each code.</i></li> </ul>
<i>3. Searching for themes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Organising data into potential themes.</i></li> <li>● <i>Proceeding to gather all data into relevant themes.</i></li> </ul>
<i>4. Reviewing the themes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Checking that themes work in relation to the coded extract.</i></li> <li>● <i>Generate a thematic 'map' of the analysis.</i></li> </ul>
<i>5. Defining and naming themes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and overall patterns the content shows.</i></li> <li>● <i>Generating clear definitions for each theme.</i></li> </ul>
<i>6. Producing the report</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>The final opportunity for analysis</i></li> <li>● <i>Selecting vivid and compelling extract examples</i></li> </ul>

**Figure 5: The Six Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)**

#### **4.7.1 Familiarising myself with the data**

In the first step of the analysis, I went through the different types of data that I had gathered during my study by reading documents and conducting the focus group discussion and interviews. This process began even before meeting with the participants. For example, I examined the existing CPD documents in the education system early on and highlighted related ideas and trends. I then continued with this trend by familiarising myself with more data by noting down the teachers'

CPD needs articulated in the interviews and the group discussion. This allowed me to write detailed descriptions of the data such as those from the interviews, which are discussed in the next chapter.

#### **4.7.2 Generating initial codes**

In the second stage, I generated initial ideas by coding interesting features of the data in a systematic way across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To unpack the various dimensions, I assigned codes to the different parts of the interviews, group discussions and official documents using printed document, with each one coded differently based on their relations to the research question's themes. For instance, I used codes like 'self-directed activities', 'individual CPD needs', 'reflective practice activities', 'updating one's knowledge', 'collaborative practices' and many more. This applied to the entire data set, allowing me to recognise distinct patterns and structure the data into broader themes.

#### **4.7.3 Searching for themes**

During the third stage of analysis, I searched for potential common themes by gathering all similar contextual experiences that shape the teachers CPD needs through reflection. I also searched for similar themes in the CPD framework document related to the kind of CPD provided to language teachers, as well as common themes on what informs the CPD activities provided to the teachers by the MoEAC. During interviews I further looked for themes in the activities teachers engage in when they reflect on practice and take ownership of their professional development as agents of their CPD. I then tried to merge the different codes into themes and subthemes. In the subsequent stage of writing my thesis, these themes were regularly examined for improvement.

#### **4.7.4 Reviewing themes**

This stage involves a researcher conducting a review on the themes generated in the previous stage. This can be done on two levels (Braun & Clarke, 2006) where level one involves reviewing at the level of the coded data extracts and level two involves a similar process, but in relation to the entire data set. For my study, I looked through various data sets from the focus group interviews, semi-structured interviews and my reflective journal in order to become acquainted with their content and to acquire a sense of the perspectives and ideas expressed (Mofolo, 2017). To ensure that every word recorded was captured in the interview transcripts, data from the audio-recorded focus group discussions and interviews were reviewed multiple times and then transcribed verbatim.

I sought to review all these themes by examining whether they worked in relation to the coded extracts and to see whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern; then I considered whether the participant responses reflected the meanings evident in the data set as a whole. This was a big challenge for me, as it required me to constantly go back and forth to ensure that my entire data

set was fit to answer the research questions. I subsequently grouped the data in a table so as to generate a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis and to gain a clear view of them to identify the different findings pertaining to most of the themes in the study and ensure the findings were supported by the data.

#### **4.7.5 Defining and naming the themes**

During the fifth stage I defined and refined themes for analysis and generated clear names for the themes I identified. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the fifth phase begins when you have a satisfactory thematic map of your data. Through refinement the researcher needs to identify whether particularly large and complex themes contain any subthemes in order to give them structure, and also for demonstrating the hierarchy of meaning within the data. For my study, themes like the teaching experiences of participants, the grades taught, the CPD training received and types of CPD involved, as well as contextual experiences, were well defined in the data analysis process.

#### **4.7.6 Producing the report**

After defining the themes by generating clear definitions and names for each theme, I conducted one last analysis by selecting vivid examples, relating the analysis back to the research questions and literature. Following this, extracts from the interview transcripts and other data sources were incorporated, and fieldnotes were added where appropriate within those chapters in the form of descriptions, which is one of the most common ways of presenting data (Diop, 2021) in a thematic approach.

### **4.8 Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness refers to the measure of quality and the extent to which the data analysis is believable and trustworthy (Maree et al., 2019). This is why the soundness of the research should be reflected in the entire proposal (Klopper, 2008). I ensured the trustworthiness of my study using Maree et al.’s (2019) criteria which I believe should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study. These criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

#### **4.8.1 Credibility**

Credibility determines whether the researcher has established confidence in the truth of the findings with the participants and within the context in which the research was undertaken (Morse, 2015). According to Kalu and Bwalya (2017), credibility refers to the accuracy of findings and how the researcher attempts to demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon being

investigated is presented. It addresses the issue of whether consistency exists between the views of the participants and the researcher's representation of them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The credibility of the study can be achieved by using various methods such as interviews and focus group discussion, as was done in my study. These are appropriate, well-recognised methods within qualitative research (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

I employed multiple research instruments to maintain consistency and develop early familiarity with the participants, as well as including detailed data collection methods. One important method I used to gain credibility (Morse, 2015) for my data, is triangulation, defined by Stahl and King (2020) as the process of utilising multiple data sources to identify themes emerging from data analysis. The multiple sources I used in my study are (teachers) and public documents (CPD framework), and the multiple research methods I used were document analysis, focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews. By employing triangulation, I gained a deeper understanding of the significance of self-directed CPD in Namibia, as well as an understanding of the CPD needs of ESL teachers and how their contextual experiences impact the CPD needs they highlighted. These insights were derived from a variety of sources and data collection methods, ultimately enhancing the coherence and reliability of the data generated (Yin, 2018).

#### **4.8.2 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not by researcher bias, motivation or interest (Yardley, 2000). The best way to ensure confirmability is to use reflection journals to record memories of the process of conducting the research as it is being carried out (Klopper, 2008). In this study I declared my own disposition and apply audit trails and triangulation. Morse (2015) claims that confirmable findings can also be supported by studies and academic readings by other researchers who engaged in similar studies. This study has acknowledged similar studies in Chapter 2 to provide a wide variety of insights into the stages of my research and to confirm my findings.

#### **4.8.3 Dependability**

Lastly, dependability is the notion that the methodological process is logical and traceable and is being documented (De Urioste-Stone et al., 2018). Through the research design and its implementation, the operational details of data gathering and the reflective appraisal of the project is demonstrated (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I ensured dependability for my study by keeping a reflective journal from day one of data collection and analysis. In this journal I recorded all events, alternatives and the choices I faced when constructing my methodology. As an interpretivist researcher I came to understand that what teachers know about teaching is socially constructed

from their experiences and how they use their knowledge in class is highly interpretive, socially negotiated and continually restructured within the classroom where they work (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Therefore, the documentation and record keeping of interview audios, transcripts and notes provided a data trail for the collection process which enhanced the dependability of my study (Yardley, 2000).

#### **4.8.4 Transferability**

Transferability as explained by Kalu and Bwalya (2017) refers to the ability to invite the readers of the research to make connections between the elements of a study and their own experience or research, rather than making generalisation claims. To attend to the transferability aspect of my study, I used two strategies often used in qualitative studies to increase transferability, namely, thick description of the methodology and purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). For the former, I provided readers with a comprehensive and intentional overview of the context, participants and research design so that they could make their own conclusions about the transferability of my work. For the latter, purposive sampling, which allows for the identification of key respondents, centred my investigation on a knowledgeable group (Shenton, 2004) and provided insight into how self-directed CPD for language teachers can be instrumental in improving learner outcomes. Unlike in the positivist traditions, generalisation in qualitative research is not aimed at making some grand statistical claims of research findings from a large randomised representative sample and applying them to a wider populace. Instead, the concern is more with the richness and depth of the data and making sure that the findings can be transferable and have some relevance when applied to other contexts, situations or individuals (Houghton et al., 2012). Therefore, the aim of my study was not to generalise the findings, but to ensure they could be applied to other similar circumstances (Merriam, 2009) in Namibia or elsewhere in the region.

#### **4.9 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations refer to the protection of the participants' rights and confidentiality, as well as a general sensitivity, by obtaining informed consent and adhering to the institutional review process (Polit & Beck, 2010). From the standpoint of Peel (2020), it is a vital part of research to highlight the ethical implications for the research before initiating any investigation. Similarly, Kalu and Bwalya (2017) assert that research can present risks to participants and thus the researcher has an obligation to ensure that participants' wellbeing is safeguarded throughout the research process. This involves adhering to the standard ethical principles by respecting the autonomy of the participants, protecting participants from harm, and ensuring confidentiality, informed consent and voluntary participation (Yardley, 2000). As a qualitative researcher, I

wanted to ensure that the best interests of the participants were protected by adhering to ethical issues. Accordingly, I applied to the Rhodes University Ethics Committee for ethical authorisation to conduct my research, subsequently obtaining authorisation/ethical clearance to perform the research in accordance with Rhodes University's ethical principles. This was to ensure that informed consent, the right to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymity were complied with throughout my study. A letter was submitted to the Khomas regional Director of Education requesting permission to conduct research at selected secondary schools. Thereafter I wrote another formal request for permission to the school principals of the schools where I intended to engage with the teachers. Both letters included a full description of the research objectives and the potential benefits of my study, and the research began only after approval from the Director of Education (see appendix V). The particular aspects attended to are discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.9.1 Informed consent**

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), participants should be informed about the nature of the study so that they can choose whether to participate. To attend to informed consent, I invited participants to take part in my study and I informed them about the nature of their participation, how data would be collected, and the length of the focus group and interviews. I also informed them about their right to withdraw at any stage should they wish not to continue with any interview or discussion. An informed consent letter was given to the participants after meeting with them which they then signed as proof of their agreement to participate in the study. The consent letter contained a short description of the request to take part in the study with spaces to fill in their full names, signature and date of consent. I also explained to them that this procedure was part of Rhodes University requirements and that their verbal consent would not have been sufficient.

#### **4.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

In a good qualitative research study, the researcher accounts for transparency and accountability in the way the research was conducted by openly stating and demonstrating to the reader how the respondents' anonymity was preserved (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017). According to Patton (2002), confidentiality refers to the researcher's responsibility to protect the identity and personal information of research participants. This means that any data provided by the participants should be kept confidential and not disclosed to anybody who is not directly involved in the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Researchers frequently employ pseudonyms or other means to ensure that participants' real identities are not linked to their responses or data (Guest et al., 2020).

Anonymity is achieved by not collecting any identifying information from participants as well as by using codes or numbers instead of names or other personal details (Maree et al., 2019).

To address confidentiality and anonymity, I assured all participants that their identities and those of their schools, as well as their individual responses, would be kept confidential throughout the study to maintain anonymity. Therefore, in my study anonymity was assured since the results were reported without revealing the identity of the participants. I was aware that owing to my position in the Ministry, some participants might feel compelled to conform. However, I assured them that I would in no way threaten their jobs if they did not participate; instead their presence would contribute genuinely to this study and would benefit the future of professional development for employees of the MoEAC in Namibia. To maintain confidentiality, I kept all the data I obtained from the focus group discussions and interviews (audio recordings) on my personal laptop, saved on the cloud, where it was only available to me for academic purposes.

#### **4.9.3 Right to withdraw from the study**

The right to withdraw from a study is an important ethical principle in qualitative research. This refers to the participant's entitlement to discontinue their involvement in the study at any point without facing any negative consequences or repercussions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This right is based on the principle of informed consent, which requires that participants are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities before they decide to participate in the research (Arifin, 2018). In this study, I provided clear and comprehensive information about the research, its objectives, the study procedures, and the potential risks and benefits to participants before the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), which empowered participants to make a well-informed choice regarding their participation in the study. Another aspect of upholding the right to withdraw from the study was to ensure the participants' involvement in the research was entirely voluntary. Hence, they were not subjected to coercion or pressure to take part, and I explicitly communicated to them that they had the option to withdraw from the study if they no longer wished to continue. Furthermore, the right to withdraw was not limited to the initial decision to participate (Polit & Beck, 2010) as participants remained aware of their right to withdraw throughout the course of the study and were free to exercise this right at any time, even after they had initially agreed to participate. Subsequently, one of the participants withdrew from the study for personal reasons.

Overall, the right to withdraw is a fundamental ethical safeguard in qualitative research, ensuring that participants have control over their involvement and that their autonomy and well-being are respected throughout the research process. As a result, after explaining the nature of their

involvement, I made it clear to the participants that their participation in the research was entirely voluntary until the end of my data generation process.

#### **4.10 Positionality**

Positionality refers to an individual's perspective and the standpoint they adopt in relation to a research endeavour and its societal and political context (Holmes, 2020). Essentially, it encompasses an individual's worldview, including their ontological and epistemological beliefs, as well as their assumptions about how we engage with and relate to our environment (Holmes, 2020, p. 1). Within the scope of my study, I made a concerted effort to maintain respect and express my profound appreciation for the valuable contributions of the participants. It is important to note that I hold the position of Chief Education Officer at the MoEAC, where my responsibilities include overseeing the implementation of the English Language curriculum and coordinating CPD activities. My typical interactions include collaborating with senior education officers (SEOs) stationed in various regions, particularly the SEO (Advisory) tasked with supporting ESL teachers in regard to the curriculum.

Given my role, participants might have perceived me as an authoritative figure, potentially influencing their decision to participate or not. However, it is worth emphasising that, while teachers may have been familiar with my name, I do not work directly with them but rather with their immediate supervisors. This aspect of my role appeared to facilitate interactions, as I encountered no challenges related to securing consent from participants based on my position. Furthermore, I took measures to ensure that participants did not feel compelled to engage or share their thoughts, experiences and emotions. I conveyed to them that, like them, I was a colleague striving toward the common objective of enhancing ESL teaching and learning in Namibia. I reassured them that my role did not entail passing judgement on them, underscoring that the group discussions and interviews would solely serve research purposes and not have any bearing on their professional standing.

#### **4.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter presented the methodology I used to explore the self-directed CPD needs of ESL teachers in secondary schools in Namibia. I have elucidated and substantiated the selected research epistemological and methodological paradigms, the sampling methodology, and the tools employed for data collection, all of which were applied to acquire the requisite data from the study participants. A comprehensive exposition on the six stages of thematic analysis, tailored to suit the specific requirements of my study, was provided. This discussion elucidated how the data were structured into distinct themes and data sets, facilitating a coherent interpretation of the CPD needs

and experiences of the participants. Furthermore, this chapter addressed the various trustworthiness strategies, encompassing measures aimed at upholding credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability. Ethical considerations were also thoroughly observed in this context. The next chapter will present and interpret the data generated and discuss the findings.

## CHAPTER 5

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

---

#### 5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I presented the methodological plan that influenced my study in exploring the self-directed, continuous professional development (CPD) needs of English language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools. I explained the methodology used in the study – a qualitative study situated within an interpretivist paradigm using an exploratory case study. I also provided the data generation techniques used to describe the sample selection and data collection and analysis procedures. In this chapter I present the data from the findings provided by in-service ESL teachers in secondary schools in Namibia on their specific CPD needs and their contextual experiences that shape these needs. I discuss the findings in line with the research questions. These findings were developed by analysing the data provided by the selected sample. The analysis resulted in three themes explaining the needs and contextual experiences of English second language (ESL) in-service teachers in Namibian secondary schools. The eight study participants, who were in-service ESL secondary school teachers in Namibia, were selected using purposive sampling. Specifically, the chapter provides answers to the following research questions:

- i. What specific CPD needs do in-service ESL teachers have on an individual level?
- ii. What contextual experiences shape the CPD individual needs highlighted by the ESL in-service teachers?

To safeguard the confidentiality of the participants and their personal information, I used pseudonyms to identify them. This approach ensured that their identities remain unlinked to their responses. The assigned pseudonyms represent the teachers' input as outlined below. The first teacher, Teacher A1, was assigned the code TA1. This form of coding continued up to and including the last teacher, Teacher H8, who was assigned the code TH8. Additionally, the number indicated after the teachers' assigned code e.g. TC3:6 represents the page number where the teacher's comment is stated in the interview transcript. If it indicates more information after the teachers' assigned code e.g. TG7:9FGD, the 9FGD indicates that the teacher's comment is stated on page 9 of the Focus Group Discussion transcript. All the documents are attached as appendices at the end of this document. In the following section, I discuss the biographical data pertaining to the participants by giving a brief profile of each teacher.

## 5.2 Biographical data of research participants

Biographical data provided a holistic picture of the age, qualifications and experiences of the participants to enhance the findings of the study. These aspects were considered to ensure that participants were aligned to the selection criteria for the study. The biographical data revealed that all participants were qualified ESL teachers and most fell into the 24–44 age group. This is in line with the fact that most teachers in Windhoek secondary schools fall into this age group. Additionally, data comprised, inter alia, participants' age, years of teaching experience, level of education and the geographical location of the schools they teach.

**(TA1)** is a confident young male ESL teacher, with five years of teaching ESL at a secondary school located in the middle-class area of Windhoek city. He holds a Bachelor of Education Honours and recently completed his Master's in English and Applied Linguistics. He currently teaches ESL to Grade 11. He described his teaching experience as challenging, particularly in navigating diverse learners and addressing issues related to discipline. In recounting his experiences, I sensed a self-assured young man with a strong desire to make a significant difference in his ESL classroom. His goal is to establish a rewarding and safe environment for both his learners and his school community.

**(TB2)** is a warm and compassionate young female ESL teacher, with four years of ESL teaching experience. Her school is situated in the lower middle-class area of Windhoek city. She holds an Honours degree in Education and is currently teaching ESL to Grade 9. Despite her four-year tenure as a teacher, she has encountered challenges in her journey, mostly stemming from language barriers faced by ESL learners. One notable aspect of Teacher B2's approach is her emphasis on involving parents in the learning process, actively seeking ways to create a supportive network that can contribute to her learners' improvement in ESL skills. Her journey as an ESL teacher reflects not only the challenges inherent in language education but also the resilience and commitment required to address them effectively.

**(TC3)** is an optimistic middle-aged female ESL teacher who has been teaching ESL for 14 years. She holds a Bachelor of Education Degree with an English major and teaches Grades 10 and 12. She considers herself an expert in the target language (ESL), because of the kind of support she receives from her supervisor who nurtured her professional career. She explains her teaching experience as a smooth journey which she enjoys because of the constant lessons she picks up every day. Her ambition is to give the best to her learners through the integration of ICT in her ESL classroom.

**(TD4)** is an enthusiastic and experienced middle-aged ESL teacher with a remarkable 18 years in the teaching profession. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree and a Master of Philosophy in cultural heritage and tourism. Currently teaching Grade 10 learners, she has extensive teaching experience across all secondary school grades. Her school is in an upper middle-class area of Windhoek city where she finds joy in teaching ESL, revealing that she loves how versatile the language is, and appreciates its dynamic and ever-evolving nature. She envisions a creative perspective for ESL in Namibia, expressing a desire to incorporate more visual learning aspects into the ESL curriculum, thus promoting innovation in language education in Namibian schools.

**(TE5)** is a passionate middle-aged female ESL teacher, currently teaching Grade 11 at a school located in a lower middle-class area of Windhoek city. She has been teaching ESL for 11 years and she holds a Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (BETD), a Bachelor of Education Honours and Master of Arts in English Studies. She has developed a passion for ESL education and this passion has been a driving force throughout her 11-year teaching career. She is passionate about leadership and school management, and she has initiated school CPD programmes that accommodate learners with diverse abilities. Her goal is to see all learners, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, thrive and perform at their best within the educational system. This is evident in her advocacy for inclusive education and effective school management, a clear reflection of the challenges she encountered in her teaching journey.

**(TF6)** is a mature middle-aged female ESL teacher who has been teaching ESL for 17 years. She was motivated to be an ESL teacher by the fact that during her time, there weren't many ESL teachers in Namibia. Although she initially pursued a different qualification, she could not secure a job and saw an opening as an ESL teacher. This prompted her to pursue a degree in Education which she currently holds. She teaches Grades 8 and 10 and her school is situated in a middle-class area of Windhoek city. She relates her teaching experience as interesting and that learners in the city are in a better place to acquire ESL due to language exposure from television and access to the internet.

**(TG7)** is a vibrant young female ESL teacher. I sensed her enthusiasm about being an English teacher. She holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Secondary Education and is currently pursuing her Master of Education (MEd). She loves teaching English, and her motivation to be an ESL teacher started when she was young. She described her childhood as fun where she would always play 'teacher when she was with her friends, and vividly remembered teaching them about verbs and nouns. She narrated in a lively fashion how when she was growing up English was always her favourite subject and from there, she knew she would be an English teacher. She has six years'

experience in the profession. Her school is situated in a middle-class area of Windhoek city. She believes ESL teachers have vibrant ideas that can be shared through collaboration and support from higher offices.

(TH8) is a compassionate middle-aged female teacher, who holds a Bachelor of Education with an English major. She has over 13 years’ teaching experience in secondary school and is teaching Grades 9 and 12 (currently called AS: Advanced Subsidiary). She loves being an ESL teacher. She portrays a deep care for learners with special needs in the mainstream, citing her role as not just an ESL teacher but as a mother, a counsellor and a nurse attending to learners’ different needs. She wants to see more learning support materials in schools to facilitate the holistic development of learners in Namibia. Table 5.1 summarises the biographic data pertaining to the participants.

**Table 5.1: Summary of biographic data of the participants**

<b>PARTICIPANT ID</b>	<b>AGE GROUP</b>	<b>ESL TEACHING EXPERIENCE (YEARS)</b>	<b>LEVEL OF EDUCATION: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS</b>
TA1	25–34	1–5	Bachelor of Education Honours Masters in English and Applied Linguistics
TB2	25–34	1–5	Honors degree in Education
TC3	35–44	11–15	Bachelor of Education
TD4	35–44	16–20	Bachelor of Arts degree MPhil degree in cultural heritage and tourism
TE5	35–44	11–15	Basic Education Teachers' Diploma, Bachelor of Education Honours and Master of Arts, English Studies
TF6	45–54	16–20	Degree in Education
TG7	25–34	6–10	Postgraduate Diploma in Secondary Education
TH8	45–54	11–15	Bachelor of Education

The age of the participants varied, the sample comprised of both young and middle-aged teachers. Of the eight participants, three were between the ages of 25–34 years, three others were between 35 and 44 and two were between 45 and 54. This may give an idea that there is a good representation of teachers in Khomas region between the age of 35 and 44. It may also suggest that there may be fewer older teachers especially over the age of 50, which can be viewed as both positive and negative. On the positive hand, the presence of predominantly young and middle-aged

teachers might indicate a dynamic and innovative teaching environment. On the other hand, the absence of older teachers particularly in secondary schools points to a high attrition rate, which can lead to difficulty in retaining a quality teaching workforce (Guerriero, 2017), an aspect that can impact learners' performance in ESL in Namibia.

The findings also revealed that most participants in the Khomas region have five to 20 years of experience in teaching ESL, implying most participants had substantial teaching experience and were able to give a comprehensive depiction of the CPD needs and challenges experienced by ESL teachers in Namibian secondary schools. Having teachers with a considerable teaching experience could benefit learners positively, owing to the wealth of pedagogical knowledge these teachers can bring to an ESL classroom. For Khomas region, this is an advantage, as it will contribute to academic excellence in ESL. However, a limited influx of teachers in the education system can also mean limited fresh ideas and pedagogy in the classroom, thus striking a balance between experienced teachers and new insights is a critical consideration for secondary schools in Khomas region.

As for professional qualifications, all teachers held a professional qualification, making them well suited to teaching ESL in secondary schools. Three participants had obtained a master's degree in the field of language teaching, and another was busy pursuing an MEd degree in English Studies. Holding an MEd remains an uncommon practice among teachers in Namibia, with only a small fraction furthering their studies in this area (MoEAC, 2020). In the context of Khomas region, this could be attributed to the favourable environment for studying provided by the presence and accessibility of institutions of higher learning in the city, contributing to professional growth, compared to teachers in other regions in Namibia.

### **5.3 Findings**

The findings revealed that secondary school in-service ESL teachers' specific CPD needs are a result of their contextual experiences. The analysis brought to light a total of three themes and seven subthemes which explain the CPD needs that ESL teachers have on an idiosyncratic level and their contextual experiences that shape their CPD needs. The three themes derived from the data include i) the need for specialised knowledge and professional interventions; ii) professional support for teachers, and iii) self-driven initiatives to improve learning outcomes. The challenges expressed during the focus group discussion and interviews formed a crucial part of the analysis and gave insight into their specific CPD needs and the solutions they explored when faced with challenges. The table below gives a summary of the derived themes and subthemes for this study.

<b>Table 5.2: Summary of the study themes</b>			
<b>THEMES</b>	<b>SUBTHEMES</b>		
<b>Theme 1: Need for specialised knowledge and professional interventions</b>	<b>1.1 Specialised knowledge</b>	<b>1.2 Professional intervention</b>	
<b>Theme 2: Professional support for teachers</b>	<b>2.1 CPD programmes at school, region for teachers</b>	<b>2.2 Determiner of available CPD</b>	<b>2.3 Teachers and Learners attitude towards ESL</b>
<b>Theme 3: Self-driven initiatives to improve learning outcomes</b>	<b>3.1 Consultation and collaboration</b>	<b>3.2 Use of available resources</b>	

#### 5.4 Theme 1: Need for specialised knowledge and professional interventions

All the participants noted a need for CPD in specialised knowledge and professional intervention. These needs referred to what participants highlighted as lacking in their profession, informed by contextual occurrences encountered during ESL lessons. Participants were asked to describe their classroom experiences and subsequently expressed several challenges, pointing to a common challenge that learners face, one that hinders the optimal acquisition of language skills in secondary school.

A trend of learners that are that are coming to high school that do not know how to read, that cannot focus, so it brings in some form of special aspect and so as a normal teacher who's just come from university, not trained in the area of special education or not well versed in educational psychology. (TE5:7FDG)

Now in grade 12 (AS) Level, I have a student that struggle to write the word “their”, you know, just to spell that word “their” instead of where to put the ‘i’ ‘where to put the ‘e’, he just mix it up. You try right and some of those things you trace them back, it's not that the child can't do it, it could be psychological, and you have so many cases like that in the mainstream, but you can't do anything, you just have to accommodate them.

They claimed that the challenges they experience drove them to realise a deficiency in their professional careers and in their knowledge base, that required specialist knowledge to support learners with special needs within the mainstream schools.

...it would then entail such a teacher engaging in research like the colleague said earlier, to figure out how to cope in such an environment, and also how those kinds of learners can benefit from their teaching. So, adaptation for instance. (TE5:7FDG)

Then one of the challenges, you asked the previous question is that teachers, we also need mentors just as my colleague said earlier, mentors, from other schools. (TH8:12FGD)

They also expressed a need for intervention in their professional skills to make their classrooms interesting for learners and to maximise their learning environment, as shown above.

#### **5.4.1 Subtheme 1.1 Specialised knowledge**

Participants revealed a common challenge in their classrooms – the prevalent difficulty faced by most learners in reading and writing. This revelation was a result of reflection-on-action where they engaged in reflection after their teaching practices to identify this shared challenge. As explained in theory by Farrell & Macapinlac (2021), language teachers are responsible for examining their professional practice, beliefs and theories, both inside and outside the classroom, so that this practice can become meaningful to them. This includes examining learner outcomes to determine the extent of the challenges experienced. This in turn informs their CPD needs. At this stage in Namibian secondary schools, the ESL syllabus for Grades 8 to 12 requires learners to be able to apply advanced reading and writing skills and master higher order thinking skills, and not learning how to read. Participants attributed this to the lack of fundamental language skills acquired in primary school, skills that are necessary to meet the basic competencies expected for their specific grade levels. Participants TC3 and TB2 noted that the absence of necessary language skills among learners poses a risk to the attainment of specific grade competencies:

Learners lack basic language skills, reading, writing, speaking, and listening ... most of them, not even just a few of them, its most of them. Only a few that have them but when they have them the skills need to be polished properly as they are nowhere closer to where they should be. (TC3:6)

Learners have failed to acquire the necessary language skills in Primary school and now lack the foundation of phonetics and sounds in high school, I don't think they will make it here in secondary school ... more than 80%, is just a struggle. (TB2:3)

The findings echo those of a study by Haifidi et al. (2019) which revealed that if foundation teachers fail to prepare learners well for using the English language, then no amount of remedial teaching at a later stage will achieve the child's full potential. Participants confirmed that a lack of adequately developed language skills in previous grades (primary school) continues to hinder effective learning and affects secondary school performance in ESL. Alumbungu and Mpofo (2023) further support the findings of this study, affirming that the EGRA project piloted by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) in Namibia to evaluate the competencies of foundation literacy revealed that many learners in junior primary had problems with reading but were nevertheless promoted to the Senior Phase (Grades 4–7) without addressing them. Therefore, participants argued that this is the reason why they are experiencing the low learner reading proficiency in secondary school now and indicated the need for CPD to address this issue. In

addition, during the focus group discussion, participant TE5 also observed she had numerous learners who exhibited psychological and learning challenges that warranted professional assistance:

I do not know if it's just emerging, but for me there's a trend of learners that are coming to high school that do not know how to read, that cannot focus, so it brings in some form of special aspect and so as a normal teacher who's just come from university who's not trained in the area of special education or not well versed in educational psychology. (TE5:7FGD)

Like teacher TE5, based on her observations and having experienced these learners, teacher TG7 expressed her concern about learners who appear to be placed in mainstream school while they could benefit more from a specialised education environment:

I mean you are working with kids who are not even fit for mainstream school, and it looks like we don't have special schools in Namibia or special needs schools in Namibia, so all these kids are literally packed in the mainstream and sometimes there's little you can really do to try and help them. (TG7:9FGD)

You were not really trained to know how to help them, you can just see clearly see that this child has a problem, for example but you just try the best you can to help and hoping that the child eventually, I mean that is just a in fact a very a small case ....but you find that a lot of children in the mainstream, they suppose not really to be there, just like one of us already mentioned. (TH8:12FGD)

The need for specialised CPD training implies that the current state of professional development provided to teachers does not adequately address the complexities associated with teaching learners with special needs in mainstream classrooms. This may be due to the traditional teacher CPD approaches used in Namibia, like workshops and cascade approaches, which do not consider teachers' idiosyncratic needs and contexts but are generally decided at the regional or national levels, ignoring teachers' contextual needs as revealed by Abakah et al. (2022) and UNAM (2013). In a similar vein, researchers (Alshaikhi, 2020; Haufiku, 2022; Sancar et al., 2021) confirm that traditional methods of teacher development have long served as the cornerstone for improving teachers' abilities and expertise regionally, locally and globally, and Namibia is no exception. It also suggests that the knowledge base of ESL teachers gained from their pre-service training is not adequate to address the challenges they face in their classroom every day. Hence, based on their contexts, they stressed the need for a specialised additional knowledge base from special education experts to support learners with reading deficiencies and learners with special needs in mainstream schools.

Both Shulman's (1986) and Freeman and Johnson's (1998) theories of the school context resonate with these findings, noting the synchronic and diachronic influences that the sociocultural contexts

of schools and the social processes of schooling have on the pedagogical practices of teachers in ESL. The implication is that the different contexts ESL teachers find themselves in, are what drive what they need to know to teach their lessons effectively. This implies that their challenges inform the type of CPD they ought to receive to achieve professional success, in this case the need for intensive CPD in special education to respond to this challenge. The needs highlighted by the participant related to the theoretical framework of this study of reflective practice, showed that participants reflected on their circumstances. Hence, it is by engaging in reflective practices that teachers come to recognise the diverse needs of learners with special requirements in ESL classrooms, emphasising the importance of ongoing and specialised CPD to meet these challenges effectively.

#### **5.4.2 Subtheme 1.2 Professional intervention**

Participants discussed the kind of professional interventions they needed to address their current challenges and to assist learners holistically. They cited the need for mentors, teacher shadowing, education specialists and integration of technology in their ESL classes. According to the literature, these are effective methods for teacher professional development because professional learning takes place within the school context, enhanced by having dialogues with colleagues which increases collegiality among teachers (Mwila et al., 2022). Participants shared the following on their CPD needs:

And I think one thing that is also lacking is we need mentors in schools, because we have a lot of new teachers, just graduated and it's like there's not proper guidance what to do. (TH8:8)

Maybe getting support for me, I think getting that support from specialists, someone at least who's more knowledgeable, for me I think that would really do (TB2:5)

Yeah, when it comes to collaboration, I think there should be a programme put in place for the exchange of teachers from school to school, because we have schools that are performing well there are also schools that are not performing well. (TF6:5)

These different viewpoints can be discussed in relation to the prior knowledge of teachers from where they express their needs. Furthermore, it demonstrates that teachers know what they need to develop and have the ability to decide what they require to drive their own CPD, although they need ongoing support and assurance for optimal self-directed CPD. This is because teachers are knowers and co-constructors of knowledge, and their knowledge is a construct of their theoretical and contextual classroom practices, as alluded by Mpofu and De Jager (2018). This aligns with the theoretical framework guiding my study on SDL, which views the central role of teachers as active participants in their contexts as potential sources of valuable knowledge. It therefore

signifies that when Namibian ESL teachers engage with and reflect on their classroom contexts, they are able to direct their own learning through self-directed CPD, which will assist in increasing their professional knowledge as well as their classroom practices.

Based on the inclusive Namibian education curriculum, learners with special needs and learning difficulties are embraced in mainstream schools. Their barriers to learning and other individual needs are addressed and attended to through the differentiation of teaching methods and materials as required (MoEAC, 2016). However, it would appear that teachers in the system are not adequately equipped to assist these learners as I realised that ESL teachers in secondary schools lack a knowledge base in specialised education and require professional intervention to respond to the needs of their learners. In addition, a study conducted by the MoEAC in 2022, investigating the learning support programmes in schools, concurs with most participants' revelations that they did not receive any training or workshops on how to support learners with special needs. These findings explain why participants of this study struggled and felt isolated when addressing the issue, expressing the desire to acquire a specific kind of in-depth knowledge base through CPD, one that they did not get during their pre-service education. This is confirmed by the findings of a study by Mpofu and De Jager (2018) that teachers' knowledge originates from a number of sources that include initial teacher education, CPD, teachers' experience and their practical knowledge of being involved in the actual practice of teaching. Therefore, teacher CPD is needed to close the gap between their classroom experiences and their content knowledge gained from their pre-service training to equip them to respond to classroom challenges like these. Clearly, self-directed CPD can support and provide a platform for a teacher knowledge base that uses teachers' contexts as a basis for acquiring new knowledge through professional development.

#### **5.4.3 Theme 2: Professional support for teachers**

During the interviews, the participants discussed the nature of CPD support made available to them through existing CPD programmes in the Khomas region at various levels. They also noted how CPD is determined and the attitude of teachers and learners towards ESL. They revealed that the CPD received is inconsistent, consisting primarily of traditional approaches like workshops. Researchers have also found these approaches unsuccessful, because they ignore teachers as the drivers and agents of change (Abakah, 2023; Mwila et al., 2022; Sancar, 2021). Although other researchers noted that traditional CPD methods equip teachers with the required skills and knowledge to conform to educational reforms (Kennedy, 2005), these approaches are in direct opposition to that advocated by a self-directed CPD approach, which this study sought to explore.

#### 5.4.4 Subtheme 2.1 CPD programmes at school and at region for teachers

Participant TH8 revealed that she takes pride in the fact that her school offers her professional support on a regular basis. During the focus group discussion when asked about the nature of the CPD programmes at her school, TC3 indicated the provision of CPD at her school as follows:

I have a slightly different experience from maybe many people because I was one of the fortunate people to have landed in the hands of a man who I regard as the biggest blessing in my career, because he has literally taught me most of the things that I know about teaching English. (TC3:19FGD)

Some sort of self-initiated CPD seemed to be happening in a few schools, especially between novice and experienced teachers. It is further revealed that in isolated schools, induction and school-based workshops are given to newly appointed teachers by their heads of departments. This suggests the preferred way of initial and continuous CPD for ESL teachers and supports the theoretical framework of collaboration in my study, as it promotes confidence in teachers to actively develop professionally. Additionally, the Namibian Novice Teacher Induction Programme (NNTIP), mandates that new and in-service teachers should be mentored, and be provided with CPD however in-service ESL teachers revealed that such activities rarely happened or exist in their schools. Furthermore, findings reveal that unlike TE5, the majority of participants were dismayed by the absence of any CPD structures or committees at their schools.

At our school, we don't have that (CPD structures), I heard of it being mentioned at some point, but it was not implemented. I do not know if school managers are also may be overwhelmed with their own load, but these things are not taken up. (TE5:13FGD)

On the type of CPD and the frequency at which it is made available to them, most of the participants noted one common type of CPD, mostly implemented periodically depending on resources available.

With the professional development the only thing that I've seen so far or that I've experienced, is like workshops. (TD4:11FGD)

At my school we have a CPD committee, but the challenge is ... the school budget is limited. (TH8:12FGD)

As a means of professional development, most of the participants had received sporadic workshops only from the regional office, while a few revealed the presence of CPD committees at their schools although they were not very active due to lack of funds. In accordance with the literature, workshops are associated with the traditional cascade model of teacher professional development (Mwila et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2022), which usually operates on the assumption that teachers

need specific knowledge, typically in the form of generic ideas and practices that can be generalised in any teaching situation (Stephens, 2019). This has proven unsuccessful because each teacher possesses different CPD needs at an idiosyncratic level based on their different contexts. Although the Namibian CPD framework claims to follow localised, site-based and practice-based CPD at school, cluster, circuit and regional levels, advocating to blend the supply and demand driven CPD, the findings of this study reveal a different picture. These findings affirm those of other researchers in Namibia (Nakambale, 2018; Dishena & Mokoena, 2016) who found that Namibian CPD programmes are located mainly in the traditional models of CPD, consisting of getting teachers together to workshop them on what is believed to be lacking and to upgrade their pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) base in different subjects like ESL. Aligned to my literature review and theoretical frames, employing SDL principles in educators' professional development can be an effective alternative, with the individual experiences of teachers informing the CPD they need, resulting in meaningful learning experiences.

#### **5.4.5 Subtheme 2.2: Determiner of available CPD**

The units responsible for determining CPD initiatives include schools, education regional offices and head offices or may be self-initiated. In this context, in responding to how CPD is determined, the majority of the participants noted that the CPD available to them is largely determined by external authorities. This is like the traditional CPD approaches mentioned in the literature by researchers such as De Paor and Murphy (2018) and Williams et al. (2022), which support a high degree of central control, often veiled as quality assurance. Teacher TD4 noted that despite being the one with first-hand information on learners' needs, she has had minimal or no input into the CPD opportunities she has received to address the specific needs of her learners.

In the 18 years that I've been teaching, I've had very little say in how I can professionally develop myself. I feel like I don't have a voice ... but we are working with the children 24/7 ... I know what I need to give them ... when decisions need to be made, you don't have a voice in that, your opinion is not being. (TD4:11FGD)

... the regional office ... they have the final say, many occasions they reject those ... So, you find that at the end of the day, although there's that document (CPD framework), it is not practical (TH8:12FGD)

As the quotations above illustrate, participants had minimal or no say in the CPD they received at school, which means that the periodic CPD they received came either from the Khomas regional office or from other divisions/directorates in the MoEAC.

I wasn't actually. I was not even part of the whole preparing of the of the whole lecture and so forth, and I was just informed by a former colleague of ours who works at NUST now that they will be conducting an English workshop (TA1:2)

This is similar to the approach used in the deficit CPD model cited in literature, which is designed to address a perceived deficit in teacher performance, where teachers' knowledge and skills are traditionally determined by external experts (Alshaikhi, 2020) leaving teachers as objects rather than the subjects of their development. In most cases, externally determined CPD approaches do not respond to teachers' needs and challenges, leading to a waste of resources and time for teachers that could have been used for productive CPD activities like research, lesson study and peer learning.

By contrast, one participant had a different experience. Teacher E5 revealed that her colleague had been offering her guidance and professional support throughout her career, which has made a remarkable impact on her teaching experience.

On a personal level, I have met a teacher there who's a senior and she was really instrumental in helping me understand ... how to mark, ... she had been instrumental in that aspect for me ... because we co-taught grades for about two years and the sharing of materials and coming together to plan was really helpful, but I've never experienced that with other teachers. I think other teachers are not really open to that, I don't know what it is that makes teachers shy away from that. (TE5:6)

In this case, TE5 had been an active agent in her learning and initiated a solution with her colleague, which yielded the results she wanted. Through initiation of other programmes at her school, she revealed the positive impact mentoring had on her professional development. This approach is in line with the literature, stating that being involved in peer learning is a transitional kind of teacher CPD, as teachers get opportunities to socialise and cultivate their identities by bringing individual experiences together as a collective to solve existing problems (Mwila et al., 2022). It is therefore evident that when teachers are involved in determining and deciding the CPD they need, through mutual engagement as alluded by TE5 above, the results respond to their specific CPD needs. Despite the non-involvement of participants in their own CPD, the majority of them expressed the desire to become involved, because of the experienced benefit of driving their own professional learning.

...that was the first time though in the 18 years that I've been teaching that I was actually involved in planning a CPD workshop. When I was involved.....like you take it much more seriously because you're also a part of it now. So, you kind of, you don't want to miss any of it, you really want to know, it's like you, you understand the kind of work and the planning that is involved behind everything and therefore you are just so much more attuned .....to the work. (TD4:6)

...most of the English teachers that I know, they are very passionate, ...and sometimes the fire dies because of the support that we are not getting .... So, I just feel like more activities would help us develop our classrooms, in terms of, you know, teaching methods, even if just coming together as teachers and learning from each other to say, what are you doing? How do you do this and that? Because most of the time we are isolated so I feel like even just within the region, you know, to say these are the language activities that we have in the region...(TG7:8)

They revealed that being involved and setting their own CPD goals directly enhances their ESL knowledge and skills in line with their specific contextual demands.

Farrell (2021) and Moradi (2018) agree with this practice, citing that self-directed learning (SDL) allows teachers to tailor their professional development efforts to their individual needs and to promote autonomy in learning. It places secondary school ESL teachers in the driver's seat on their professional learning journey. Therefore, in order to foster a more relevant form of CPD, particularly in the Namibian context where the majority of CPD activities are based on traditional CPD models, teachers should be at the centre of the CPD they receive for it to be more relevant to their school environments.

#### **5.4.6 Subtheme 2.3: Teachers and learners' attitude towards English as a Second Language**

During the interviews, participants discussed the impact of teachers' and learners' attitudes towards ESL on learners' perceptions of ESL and their overall performance in the subject. Participants reported that both teachers' and learners' perception of ESL form part of their contextual experiences and influence the type of CPD they sought to receive. Literature on education shows that satisfactory learner performance in ESL cannot be attained without a positive attitude to learning (Nkandi, 2015) and a positive attitude in turn creates interest in learners towards the ESL subject. Subsequently, these perceptions play a pivotal role in determining the level of learner motivation in the ESL classroom and the influence of non-ESL teachers on learners. A notable lack of learner commitment and interest in the subject was noted by the participants, suggesting that learners underestimate the linguistic complexity of ESL and demonstrate superficial familiarity with the English language. Teachers TC3 and TG7 noted the following regarding the attitude of learners towards the subject:

We have the attitude towards the subject itself, the learners think English is an easy language, ironically, they do not know anything about it, they think it's easy. Why I say they think it's easy is because they would tell you, "No I'm not going to study for English". (TC3:4)

... from the learner's side ... they feel like English is easy. They have that belief that it's easy and not something they study for, like they can just wake up and come and write ...

when you go through their exam papers, they are missing out on the little things that they would have studied ... So right now, they are just winging it, because it's English you can just write, but the structure is not there, so they need to take their books and study. So mostly it's the lack of commitment and interest from their side, yeah. (TG7:3)

Learner attitude and motivation is also not a new subject in Namibian literature since several studies have revealed its effect on learner performance. According to studies by Haufiku (2022) and Iimene (2018), having a poor attitude towards ESL is bad for the learners as they tend to put less effort into the subject and teachers tend to struggle to teach learners who have a poor attitude towards schoolwork. This means that attitude towards a subject is a critical factor in the teaching and learning of ESL, and it determines the success or failure of a learner (Nkandi, 2015). Several studies have revealed that the attitude of learners towards ESL in Namibia has a negative influence on learners' performance in ESL (Haifidi et al., 2019; Namutenya, 2022), calling for teachers to examine pedagogical approaches to teaching ESL. Similarly, participants expressed notable concern among teachers of other subjects such as in Commerce, Science and Mathematics towards ESL, with TC3 stating the following:

The attitude is not only about the learners themselves, but the attitude also lies in other teachers of other subjects, because they also believe that English is easy to teach ... when the learners go to those classes, they are made to feel as if it's not very important ... it's that same attitude that these teachers do not put in effort to correct even the simplest mistakes, that they find in the learner's work.(TC3:4)

These findings confirm those of Iimene (2018) who found that a positive attitude on the part of teachers towards ESL encourages positive viewpoints and enthusiasm in learners toward ESL. Therefore, the participants' concern indicates that the effort made by teachers of other subjects towards ESL is inadequate to support learners' proficiency in ESL and suggests minimal attention to language details and a reluctance to correct language errors in their subject classes. This concern raises the issue of Language across the Curriculum (LAC), sometimes referred to as English Across the Curriculum (EAC). Literature explains EAC as a strategy used in education to integrate the second language across the curriculum for content subject learning (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021). This is believed to improve learners' language proficiency and understanding of all academic content. Accordingly, if all content subject teachers are sensitised to this approach where skills such as writing, reading, speaking and listening are being taught across the Curriculum then ESL proficiency will improve in Namibian secondary schools. Although the purpose of EAC is also well established in the Namibian Basic Education Curriculum and in the ESL literature, there is a dearth of studies on the use of this strategy in Namibian secondary school classrooms and

research is silent on its use. The lack of EAC usage in secondary schools could potentially hinder the overall development of language skills in learners in Namibia.

For a working solution, there is a need for effective collaboration and teacher professional development to foster a more unified understanding of the role of EAC among all teachers in the Namibian context that fully aligns with the principles of social constructivism. This will motivate all content subject teachers to teach language skills and introduce related language concepts in their lessons, integrating both language and content as suggested in the education manual by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2015b), titled the English Across the Curriculum (EAC) strategy: Every teacher is a language teacher. Social constructivist theory supports these in-school collaborations among teachers to foster positive attitudes on the part of both teachers and learners through self-directed CPD to improve ESL in Namibian secondary schools.

#### **5.4.7 Theme 3: Self-driven initiatives to improve learning outcomes**

Amid the contextual challenges experienced by participants, and as they reflect on their classroom experiences, they naturally tend to apply initiatives that can ease their classroom challenges and learners' experiences. Participants shared self-driven initiatives in response to solutions they seek in absence of support and professional development from their schools or from the regional office as revealed earlier. Findings revealed several self-driven initiatives amongst others, with consultation and collaboration seeming more prominent than others. The use of digital and other learning resources to enhance teaching their ESL classroom was also discussed during interviews and the focus group discussion.

#### **5.4.8 Subtheme 3.1: Consultation and collaboration**

Participants noted that working in isolation with minimal CPD has compelled them at times to reflect on and navigate their experiences to find solutions to their classroom challenges. One of the solutions they found helpful is to engage in consultative and collaborative activities with others. In accordance with Vygotsky social constructivist theory, which states that language is constructed in social practice and is a construct of social reality (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2021), it is natural for ESL teachers to rely on consultation with others to find solutions to their classroom challenges. They were asked to share more on those initiatives and what they do when the CPD they receive does not address their needs and challenges in their ESL classrooms. They narrated the following:

We do departmental meetings, where we ... just encourage one another, and sometimes if one has either materials or find a way of how to pass across information for certain topic, we do that sometimes, or especially if you are sharing a grade ... two of you ... can share your mark schemes and ideas. (TH8:6)

A few of us from school embarked on something that we call Learning maximised ... targeted towards learners, (with learning difficulties) ... for our situation specifically, perhaps to have an internal curriculum, maybe that supplements the main one, because the children are not going to benefit from the main curriculum. (TE5:13FGD)

If I find that there's an area where I'm lacking ... I go to my head of department (HOD) .... I have a session with him so that he explains to me how to do that. We co-teach ... Because he's more of an expert than I am. When I find that I am lacking in this area, I call him to my class and then he teaches my class for that specific thing, and while he's teaching, I also now learn from him. So, we co-teach ... plan lessons and activities together, whatever I teach, he teaches. (TC3:5-6)

From the findings it is evident that when ESL teachers feel inadequately equipped in specific areas of a subject, they do not sit back and do nothing: they consult their colleagues or use other avenues to complement what is at their disposal to improve their classroom practices to the benefit of their learners. This approach would also go well with transformative CPD model demonstrated in the Literature review, in which my study is located. It is a desirable model as it gives teachers a platform to form a community of practice within their school context or communities of teachers to find solutions. As the findings reveal that collaboration is one effective way to improve their skills, it would be more effective to be done in a systematic CPD approach for all ESL teachers, for them to learn and refine their expertise. Moreover, referring to teacher professional development, Williams et al. (2022) confirm that consultation and collaboration are part of a transformative CPD model. Through this model, power dynamics shift in favour of teachers as they successfully engage in research activities, even though the parameters around their practice determine their capacity for effective self-criticism. Hence, the above views indicate that collaboration and consultation among ESL teachers is successful because it emphasises the importance of fostering learning communities and spaces where teachers can engage in meaningful discussions, share experiences and co-construct knowledge. The literature further reinforces the view that as ESL teachers tap into each other's knowledge and collective expertise, they can gain fresh perspectives, exchange ideas, and explore innovative teaching approaches (Bada & Olusegun, 2015; Morris, 2019). Moreover, some participants went the extra mile to initiate school-based CPD activities that better suited their specific contexts and that of their learners.

#### **5.4.9 Subtheme 3.2: Use of available resources**

Furthermore, based on their reflections, participants brought to light a common contextual need among ESL teachers that propelled them to initiate self-driven solutions. In reflecting on their experiences, they expressed a lack of teaching and learning resources, inadequate libraries, and an absence of information and communication technology (ICT) resources to integrate in their ESL classrooms. ICT in education is widely used to leverage teaching and learning, specifically

following the Covid-19 pandemic (UNESCO, 2022). Hence, the integration of ICT in ESL education is a crucial aspect to improve materials and activities to meet learners' needs and engage them in more meaningful learning (Aşık et al., 2022). Participants perceived the integration of ICT in ESL education, as well as employing other available resources, as a necessity to ensure that their classrooms accommodate learners with different abilities. Teachers TC3 and TF6 expressed how they reflect on their challenges and the solutions they initiated:

... we have lack of resources ... We try to improvise where we can, but we don't really receive much from the government as most things now require you to be up to date, especially with technology. We can no longer be traditional teachers where we just use the textbook and the chalk board. It doesn't help us because the world has moved from that space, we now need to constantly keep up with the latest trends so that we can help our learners learn better ... driven towards what they are going to experience in the real world. (TC3:4)

In most cases we have to use our own resources. For example, we find ways ... you go on YouTube, you get videos whereby a topic ... can be taught by different teachers with different educational backgrounds ... Sometimes I have also to invite a colleague from another school at my own cost. (TF6:4)

Similarly, participant TH8's views resonates with the others:

If I give you one example, there was this boy (could not read), I decided to make copies of some of my daughter's grade four reading ... because those are basic words ... give the boy to read ... to gain a little bit of confidence, because when you give them the materials for grade nine, there are challenging words there and they already they know they can't, but if you give them a kind of easier piece, they will develop a kind of confidence ... so I realised that it helped ... there was also another boy that the handwriting is just terrible, couldn't write, so I went to the Internet and printed out this free download and handwriting those grade 2 copies .(TH8:4)

....but the first thing that we are going, even a dictionary, you cannot even have financial resources, I don't think if whether this is what it has been or maybe because of COVID, but today its worse, we don't have resources every time you say I need ABC, they say no, the school doesn't have money, the budget concentrate is a lot. We don't have money and therefore as an individual we end up even using our own money to buy maybe posters and simple thing like posters.(TF6.FGD14)

The findings suggest that participants engage in reflection on the contextual experiences through which they initiate solutions based on available resources. Although there are limited resources in schools, like a lack of connectivity and well-resourced libraries, making it difficult for teachers to do research at school, my findings have shown the importance of recognising the powerful influence and outcomes that SDL has on sustaining CPD behaviour for ESL language teachers, fostering collaborative learning and underscoring human agency on the part of teachers (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009). In the process, the need for CPD is exposed, impelling teachers

to self-direct their learning. Participants therefore reflect on their experiences and try to improve their practice by initiating solutions to ensure that the lessons respond to the learners needs in ESL.

In accordance with the literature, Diseko and Pule (2016) explain reflection-on-action as reflection on how practice can be developed, changed or improved after an event has occurred. In this vein, I recognised reflection-on-action when participants noted that after assessing learners, they go the extra mile to browse the internet and watch YouTube videos to support their learners, especially when the available textbooks are not sufficient or interesting for their learners. However, the participants did not reveal how they integrate these means in the ESL classroom apart from using them to look for information. Nevertheless, to elucidate the theoretical stance of self-directed leaning and reflective practice in this study, teachers systematically investigate their perceived contextual experiences to give meaning to the CPD needs they highlighted (Farrell, 2012). This stance has provided insight on what and how they can reflect on and consider their experiences and situations as an important aspect that gives birth to solutions to their needs by crafting their own CPD that works for them. Consequently, this has given them autonomy as a precondition for directing their practices to fulfil their individual CPD needs (Farrell, 2012).

In the Namibian context, where resources may be limited, findings reveal that exposure to and advancements in technology have opened up a vast array of resources, such as online courses, research materials and educational forums, enabling language teachers to integrate ICT into their unique contexts. The findings likewise affirm that ESL teachers in Namibia embrace the approach of engagement in peer and group collaborations, which aligns with the principles of social constructivism. As they engage in collaborative processes, they share insights and collectively construct knowledge with their peers, to the benefit of learners with different abilities. These initiatives echo the findings of a study by Orak (2021), asserting that teachers' involvement in self-directed CPD allows them to engage in constructivist-based activities such as conversations with other teachers and collaboration and reflection on their practices.

The initiatives undertaken by the participants support the underpinning theoretical frameworks of my study, of SDL, reflective practice and social constructivism. As a result, the findings have given meaning to the amalgamation of SDL and reflective practice to create a powerful synergy, which will equip teachers with the skills and motivation to actively seek out new knowledge and experiences (Porter & Freeman, 2020). Therefore, ESL educators in Namibia need CPD in specialised and psychosocial skills and knowledge to empower them to effectively respond to the specific challenges experienced by the learners, and to build on their PCK base acquired during pre-service training. They also need continuous professional interventions, involving teacher

shadowing, mentoring and teacher exchange programmes, coupled with adequate and advanced ICT resources embedded in the teacher CPD programmes in Namibia. This kind of CPD is pivotal to language teaching and learning and also adds to the literature on CPD in English language teaching (ELT) in Namibia, an area that is under researched.

### **5.5 Summary of findings: similarities and new insights**

In summary, the study established that the CPD needs of ESL teachers in Namibian secondary schools are influenced by their contextual experiences which varied from teacher to teacher and from school to school despite being in the same region. It further revealed that ESL teachers have CPD needs at an idiosyncratic level which include the need for knowledge and skills in special education, the need to facilitate contextual CPD support to influence teachers' and learners' attitudes towards ESL, and the ability to self-direct their own learning by engaging in collaborative activities for the benefit of their learners. The findings clearly show that participants are indeed experienced ESL teachers who can reflect on their own practices and direct their own learning to provide adequate support to their learners regardless of their different abilities.

The particular need for CPD in specialised knowledge and skills, as expressed by the participants, arose when participants reflected on their practices. They recognised their lack of knowledge and skills to address challenges faced by learners with learning difficulties as well as those with special needs in mainstream classrooms. With reference to the literature, Farrell (2015) explained the importance of reflection affirming that teachers can test and compare the hidden aspects of teaching. Likewise, Farrell (2018) attests to the significance of reflection in teaching ESL by adapting instruction to learners' needs and capabilities. This viewpoint represents a novel insight, particularly within the context of Namibian language teaching literature.

Another key finding was the perception of teachers and learners towards learning ESL which affected their attitude and motivation in this regard. It was noted that secondary school learners' and content subject teachers' perceptions towards ESL play a significant role in the performance and learning of the subject, revealing that content teachers equally view ESL as subject that you don't have to study for. In addition, subject teachers were not applying the principles of EAC even though encouraged by the Namibian curriculum (NIED, 2016). In the same context, studies carried out by Haifidi et al. (2019) and Haufiku (2022) in Namibia revealed that learners' lack interest in ESL owing to negative perceptions of the subject, leading to underdeveloped language proficiency. Similarly, Geeti (2020), Haifidi et al. (2019) and Iimene (2018) posit that learners' and teachers' attitudes are influenced by social, educational and personality factors which affect performance in

ESL. However, teachers of other subjects can influence the reluctant learner's mindset by using a more flexible approach towards ESL to achieve academic mastery.

In addition, there appears to be highly uncoordinated CPD support specific to ESL teachers in the Khomas region, with some schools and teachers having received regular support and some none. This assertion was signified by a lack of systematic CPD support on a school, regional and national level, a lack of teaching and learning resources, inadequate libraries, and the absence of ICT resources to integrate in their ESL classrooms which made it difficult for them to cope with the challenges they face. Although the MoEAC employs traditional CPD approaches (Haufiku, 2022; Nakambale, 2018), these have proven to be inadequate in addressing teachers' CPD needs in ESL. Hence, participants resorted to devising their own teaching strategies to alleviate their situations, employing own resources and the pivotal strategy of collaboration and consultation with peers at school level.

Literature substantiates collaborative approaches in teacher CPD, stating that effective collaboration links theory and practice, embraces peer communication and interaction, and cultivates a learning and research community that builds generative associations (Sancar et al., 2021). In addition, the approach validates the theory of social constructivism which posits that knowledge is not passively transmitted but is actively constructed, emerging from social interactions and collaborative efforts (Potgieter & Potgieter, 2021). This study provides new insights in line with theories of SDL and social constructivism, with evidence from parallel insights in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, that teachers to some extent drive their own learning through self-initiated practices, reflect on their practices, and construct their own knowledge through peer learning, research and collaborative approaches. Similarly, Barahona (2018) affirms that collaborative approaches and reflective practice are effective and common in contemporary approaches used by countries to transform language teachers' CPD, as they bridge the gap between theory and practice. This is in accordance with Schön's (1983) proposal that when teachers practise reflective thinking, they become more aware of their classroom practices and become more capable of analysing, thinking critically and practising self-assessment. In my view this study has gained new insight, exposing a gap in the form of a lack of integration of self-directed approaches and theories of social constructivism in overall teacher CPD programmes which should be enforced systematically as a national CPD framework to transform ESL education in Namibian secondary schools. Ultimately, in the context of my study, leveraging self-directed approaches to ESL CPD may transform ESL education in Namibia forever due to the extent of benefits inductively extracted from the participants in this study.

## 5.6 Chapter summary

In providing answers to the research questions stated in the introduction, the chapter presented the key findings on the CPD needs specific to ESL in-service teachers, focusing on their idiosyncratic requirements. The chapter not only highlighted these individualised needs but further provided insights into their contextual experiences that shape the CPD needs they highlighted. Through an analysis of the data gathered from eight (8) in-service ESL secondary school teachers, I identified three themes and seven subthemes which provided a detailed understanding of the CPD needs and contextual experiences of these ESL teachers. The themes included the need for specialised and professional intervention, due to underdeveloped language skills among secondary school learners, hindering the optimal acquisition of language skills in secondary school.

The second theme on professional support for ESL teachers and self-driven initiatives to improve learning outcomes in ESL teaching and learning presented available CPD programmes at school and regional level which appeared to be inadequate to respond to the contexts of individuals' ESL needs. In addition, there is a lack of agency and autonomy in the CPD available for ESL teachers in schools which is mostly determined from above other than by teachers themselves. The last theme found that ESL teachers reflect on their practices because of the initiatives they developed to improve their classroom experiences and the collaborative activities they engage in to change their circumstances and improve their teaching practices. However, there was a lack of in-depth reflection and metacognition in the approaches used by teachers in guiding, monitoring and regulating their cognition to positively influence their teaching. Their experiences did not show how they select appropriate continuous strategies to change their classroom outcomes, hence this approach towards transformative CPD needs to be further explored. Researchers such as Rannikmäe et al. (2020) reiterate that a metacognitive teacher deliberately and actively monitors what they are doing, reflects on the rationale for doing so and adapts their instructional repertoire as required by various contextual demands. In Chapter 6, I conclude the study and make recommendations for both practice and research on CPD practices for in-service ESL teachers in Namibian secondary schools.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

#### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented and discussed the three themes and seven subthemes that emerged from the data I collected. I also presented and discussed the research findings drawn from the focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews on the self-directed needs of in-service ESL teachers and their contextual experiences in teaching ESL in secondary schools in Namibia. The themes that emerged from the findings revealed a need for specialised knowledge and professional intervention in the teaching and learning environment of the study participants. It also highlighted various types of CPD programmes and support made available to them, the attitude of learners and other teachers toward ESL and self-driven initiatives they devise to change or improve their learning outcomes through social interactions and establishing communities of practice.

#### 6.2 Overview of the study

CPD aims to equip educators with the necessary skills to meet current classroom demands (Barahona, 2018; De Paor & Murphy, 2018). However, there are concerns about whether the objectives of teacher CPD in Namibia truly align with the realities of the classroom in these contexts. To address this, especially the persisting poor performance in ESL, robust CPD programmes need to be implemented and current one be revised to attain teacher professional success which ultimately influence learner academic performance. The persisting poor performance in ESL in Namibian education specifically at the end of the secondary school phase (specifically in the end-of-year national examination) has been a concern over the years and various policy documents have articulated the need for robust teacher professional development to address this challenge. Thus, the belief that teacher competence is positively aligned to teacher quality, which in turn affects learner outcomes (Fauth et al., 2019), prompted me through this study to seek and explore the self-directed needs of in-service ESL teachers in selected secondary schools in Namibia in order to find out what their CPD needs are and how their contextual experiences influence their CPD needs at an idiosyncratic level for the purpose of influencing learners' performance. My study, then, provided the rationale of the study in the first chapter explaining this phenomenon. It also provided the background and an overview of the study, discussing the problem statement and expounding the research questions and the study methodologies.

Chapter 2 reviewed relevant and current literature related to the study phenomena, and elucidated issues relating to language teachers' CPD. This was done by assessing the significance of the

experiences and CPD needs of Namibian ESL secondary school teachers. Chapter 3 positioned and aligned my study to three theoretical frames, namely Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, Morris's (2019) self-directed learning (SDL) and Schön's (1983, 1987) reflective practice. These frameworks offered a lens through which ESL teachers shape their knowledge base and the way their contextual experiences influenced the CPD they required. In Chapter 4, I outlined the methods and design used to direct my study inquiry. I provided the paradigmatic perspectives and the methodological choices I employed in the data generation process, including document analysis, focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews. Chapter 5 presented and analysed the data from the findings provided by in-service ESL teachers in secondary schools in Namibia on their specific CPD needs and their contextual experiences. These data were extracted from the focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews. In addition, I presented the findings extrapolated within three broad themes, which emerged from the coded data. Chapter 6 serves as the conclusion of the study. In it I summarise the research findings backed by the insights I gained from the review of the literature on language teachers' knowledge base and CPD. Furthermore, using the findings, I discuss them in terms of the three theoretical frameworks and point out the pedagogical implications of the study together with the study limitations. Thereafter, I illuminate new insights provided by the study findings, providing an understanding of the self-directed needs of ESL teachers in secondary schools in Namibia. Finally, I discuss the implications of the study and make recommendations for future research.

### **6.3 Conclusions of the study in terms of the research questions**

The primary objective of this study was to explore the self-directed CPD needs of English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers within selected secondary schools in Namibia. In pursuit of this objective, two research questions were formulated and outlined in Chapter 1. These questions served as guides for the study enquiry and were subsequently addressed through thematic analysis of the collected data. The first research question aimed to identify the specific CPD needs of ESL teachers at an individualised level, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of their unique requirements. Through this exploration, insights were gained into the diverse professional development needs of ESL educators, allowing for tailored strategies to address their specific challenges and enhance their teaching practices. The second research question probed the contextual experiences of ESL teachers to discern how these experiences influenced the CPD needs they identified. By exploring the various contexts in which teachers operate, including school environments, student demographics and sociocultural factors, the study sought to uncover the underlying influences shaping their CPD requirements.

### **6.3.1 Research question 1: What specific CPD needs do in-service ESL teachers have on an individual level?**

This question sought to understand what participants needed to develop professionally in order to enhance their skills and knowledge in ESL and to better support their learners and improve their classroom practice. The study participants acknowledged a range of CPD needs at both an idiosyncratic and a general level. They revealed a need for knowledge and skills in special education, as well as professional interventions to complement their knowledge base acquired during their pre-service education. This was due to challenges and barriers experienced by ESL teachers, such as learners with psychosocial barriers and learners with poor reading and writing skills, thus hindering learning in the ESL classroom. Hence, they affirmed a lack of the special skills needed to efficiently address these barriers to learning and consequently highlighted training needs in this area.

Similarly, Purnamasari (2023) affirms the need for teacher support due to changes in language teaching as the result of the new educational paradigms, trends and challenges faced by schools and institutions in relation to curriculum and learners needs. CPD in special education and psychosocial support have the potential to yield a deeper understanding of learners' barriers and abilities, enabling teachers to provide differentiated support and implement strategic reading instruction that would help learners to improve their reading and writing. Furthermore, Main et al. (2023) highlight that reading difficulties among secondary school learners are associated with limited academic success and are related to social-emotional effects including anxiety and low motivation. This explains the concerns held by the study participants which led to the needs they expressed because they wanted to mould their learners in a holistic manner, enabling them to perform to the best of their abilities in ESL.

The study participants also revealed a need for CPD interventions for their professional careers, including mentors, shadowing other teachers, and the presence of education specialists, as well as the need for ICT integration in their ESL classrooms. Participants mentioned that they needed to be assigned to mentors through their teaching careers. Mentoring is the professional developmental relationship between a more knowledgeable ESL teacher or specialist (mentor) and another teacher (mentee), with the former working as coach and counsellor and usually engaging in authentic activities and inquiry in their everyday practice (Ali & Adel, 2020). ESL teachers need mentors to work with in a safe environment, building informal relationships, agreeing on specific goals and sharing predetermined plans to promote their instructional practices and overcome common challenges (Othman & Senom, 2019).

Despite the Namibian Novice Teacher Induction Programme (NNTIP), which mandates that new and in-service teachers should be mentored, in-service ESL teachers revealed that such a programme does not exist in their schools. Moreover, shadowing in the field of teacher and language education is limited. Based on existing studies, shadowing entails teachers following more experienced teachers closely over a period without intruding on their activities. This is in line with Anyanwu and Abe (2023), who recommend that having teacher mentors and teacher shadowing for in-service teachers is one of the most beneficial activities in education. Participants also expressed a need in the area of ICT integration in ESL classrooms. In accordance with Aşık et al. (2022), he affirms that although teachers may have had elective courses on ICT during their pre-service training, they are usually stand-alone, which leaves them unable to curate their ICT knowledge into pedagogical practices. This may be one of the reasons why teachers prefer to undertake CPD while they are in service, so that integrating ICT in the ESL classroom can induce motivation and interest in learners. However, there may be some limitations relating to inadequate infrastructure, lack of connectivity at school and a lack of know-how, especially in the Namibian education system.

### **6.3.2 Research question 2: What contextual experiences shape the CPD individual needs highlighted by ESL in-service teachers?**

Participants shared the contextual experiences that shaped the CPD they require, which they articulated in response to the first question. They pointed to three significant contextual experiences that shaped their CPD needs, namely, the type of CPD programmes and professional support available to them, the attitude of teachers and learners towards ESL and the resources or lack of resources to enhance their teaching. Furthermore, they acknowledged having devised self-driven initiatives as solutions to address their specific contextual challenges. The participants underscored that the type of CPD available to them is generic and is limited to workshops and training, organised by the regional office and sometimes by head office. They revealed that these workshops mostly use a cascade model which does not always reach all the teachers owing to a lack of funds for CPD in the region.

According to Eidin and Shwartz (2023) and Williams et al. (2022), the current CPD provided a traditional transmission paradigm of teacher professional development, with the intention to update teachers' knowledge through training by a specialist who would traditionally deliver the training while the teacher played an inactive role in the session. Participants further reiterated their lack of involvement in the CPD opportunities availed to them, which had a negative impact on their motivation and further stressed that these CPD opportunities do not adequately meet or address

their professional needs as they are not aligned to their specific contexts. By contrast, the participants claimed success when they worked together with colleagues to address their individual challenges at school level. This exercise corresponds with Abello's (2018) findings which revealed that teacher CPD programmes that are directly linked to teachers' daily experiences, and that are collaborative and guided by principles of inquiry, reflection and experiential learning, are effective and holistic.

Based on the theoretical framework underpinning my study, that of social constructivism, SDL and reflective practice, my study supports CPD approaches that are responsive to the needs of teachers and schools, based on the idea of construction of knowledge rather than the transfer of knowledge. The study participants also pointed to the significant influence of teachers' and learners' attitudes towards ESL learning on the learners' perceptions of ESL in school. They revealed a lack of support from some teachers of other subjects toward ESL, who do not see the value of learning ESL. This has a negative impact on learners' interest and motivation to actively participate in ESL classrooms. This sentiment resonates with Haufiku (2022) who outlined that a positive attitude is associated with good performance and a negative attitude with poor performance in ESL. Hence, (DBE, 2015b) recommends more collaborative CPD activities for all teachers to promote Language across the Curriculum (LAC) teaching approaches, a critical approach to language education in secondary schools in Namibia.

Additionally, the study participants revealed a lack of resources to support their learning and teaching in their ESL classrooms. They pointed to a lack of ICT knowledge and usage, an instrument that is believed to arouse learners' interest and facilitate learning in the 21st century (Aşık, et al., 2020). Although the literature on technology integration in language teaching provides valuable insights, many secondary schools still have inadequate infrastructure to support ICT integration in the ESL classrooms. In the context of my study, teachers are more likely to change their instruction or practices and gain greater subject knowledge and improved learning when their professional development was directly linked to their specific and daily experiences and aligned to the co-construction of knowledge (Zide & Mokhele, 2018). In contrast, the study participants shared self-initiated strategies to bridge the gap in their CPD and to tackle and address challenges in the ESL classroom. They shared that they use their phones and internet at home to look for materials to help learners who are struggling to read and write. They also engaged with other teachers in and outside the school to find out how they tackle similar challenges in their ESL classrooms. Some pointed to initiating school-based programmes to help learners with barriers to learning ESL effectively. This is supported by Cirocki and Farrell (2019) who state that teachers as co-

constructors of knowledge are individually motivated and can design and direct their own learning activities.

#### **6.4 Situating the findings within the theoretical framework of the study**

The theoretical framework of my study inquiry was drawn from social constructivism, SDL and reflective practice. Aligning with the theoretical framework and findings of the study, the participants agreed that being involved in CPD based on specific contexts and collaboration with others is effective and empowers them to provide differentiated teaching strategies for their learners. This leads to accommodating learners' diverse challenges in ESL lessons. The study participants also agreed that their CPD needs reflect their contextual experiences. They affirmed that they practise reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action after presenting their lessons, which drives them to identify the challenges faced by learners in their ESL classes and equally their own need for CPD. This confirms that reflecting on experiences influences participants' CPD needs at an idiosyncratic level and enhances their knowledge base, which is needed to develop pedagogical practices that meet the needs of ESL learners, and to transform their classroom environment (Cirocki & Farrell, 2019).

Participants also confirmed that the CPD made available to them has not been aligned to the challenges they experience daily. The CPD they receive does not, for example, address the issue of learners struggling to read and write in secondary school, nor does it equip them with strategies to foster the learning of ESL in learners with psychosocial barriers to learning. It is mostly focused on syllabus interpretation and reports on mistakes encountered during marking the national ESL examination, which does not necessarily address their specific classroom challenges. The above sentiments concur with Williams et al. (2022) who reiterate that traditional CPD is no longer useful for teachers because it does not reflect the concepts of participation, cooperation and ownership, which may be used to represent teachers' learning. Some participants claimed that because they lacked immediate mentors who could guide and assist them to advance professionally in ESL teaching, they were not progressing professionally. Hence Ali and Adel (2020) recommend school-based continuing mentorship programmes as a sustainable tool for teacher CPD.

On the other hand, participants shared that in the absence of aligned and effective CPD in ESL, they do not sit back and relax but they pursue solutions to their challenges. This approach, if further explored, has the potential to support SDL, demonstrating that ESL teachers can lead their own CPD especially at school level. However, in doing so, there seem to be minimal reflection when devising own solutions to meet learners needs as alluded in the participants' answers. These solutions respond more on addressing the needs of the learners rather than their own professional

development. Given that reflective practice is fundamental to teacher CPD, the lack of in-depth reflection in ESL teacher CPD highlights a gap that calls for an intervention in their CPD models. Hence engaging in collaborative practices with others, such as their HODs and neighbouring schools, they experience diverse cultural contexts and engage in experiential learning within their environment to model their meta-cognition and construct new knowledge collectively, aligned with the principles of social constructivism and reflection.

In light of the findings, I believe that all three theoretical frameworks interconnect and complement each other in shaping the CPD pathway of language teachers in Namibia towards a constructivist approach. In connection with the importance of teacher CPD in language teaching, Purnamasari (2023) and Eidin and Shwartz (2023) acknowledge that teacher CPD is a fluid concept that is effective when based on emerging trends in the classroom. Therefore, I posit that an understanding of the pivotal role of these theoretical frameworks when developing teacher CPD is an inevitable part of language teaching in Namibia. Additionally, it is inspiring to know that participants embraced transformative CPD and the impact it has on language teaching practices, fostering a community of empowered and competent ESL teachers to foster the next generation of linguistically proficient individuals.

## **6.5 Recommendations for practice**

As an educator and researcher, I have come to realise the importance of CPD for ESL teachers and its influence on the current persistence poor performance in English Second Language in Namibia. This is because teachers are regarded as one of the most significant stakeholders in the field of education, and teacher quality has always been a crucial aspect of improvement in the education system of a country. This necessitates the need for investment in this field, namely in-service teacher CPD (Erarslan, 2020; Fauth et al., 2019; Zide & Mokhele, 2018). During this study I reflected on documents regarding CPD in Namibia, on a review of the literature and the entire research process, including participants' views and opinions. This has helped me to accumulate concrete evidence and consequently come up with the following recommendations regarding my study inquiry, exploring the self-directed CPD needs of English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools.

### **6.5.1 Recommendation 1: Teacher training for all teachers on special education and psychosocial support**

Based on the alarming number of learners that enter secondary school without adequate reading skills, teachers should get CPD based on emerging trends in education. In this case there is a need for teacher CPD to be based on specialised knowledge and skills to support learners with special

needs and psychosocial barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms. This issue has a serious impact on learning and teachers do not have adequate skills in this area to accommodate and assist these learners to learn to the best of their abilities. Thus, all teachers should be adequately trained and equipped with basic/intermediate knowledge to address special needs and psychosocial barriers in mainstream classes, especially learners with severe backlogs in acquiring reading and writing skills.

### **6.5.2 Recommendation 2: Implementation of continuous and systematic CPD programmes**

Currently, the provision of CPD programmes in secondary schools is ad hoc and fragmented, based on available funding and commitment at national, regional and school level. This goes against the vision of the Namibian CPD framework, especially at school level, where school-based CPD requires little or no funding. Secondary schools should establish systematic school-based CPD, where CPD is planned and internally determined by the teachers using their contextual experiences and challenges, rather than being determined externally by the regional or national offices. Senior education officers should monitor the implementation of these school-based CPD initiatives and encourage ESL teachers to engage in self-directed CPD. This involves teachers engaging in collective learning (sharing feedback and learning from each other), reflective learning (evaluating teaching experiences) and active learning (trying new things in practice, applying theory into practice).

### **6.5.3 Recommendation 3: Reinforcement of the use LAC to change the attitudes of teachers and learners towards ESL**

Evidence shows that teachers of other subjects in secondary schools may not be aware of the benefits of ESL outside the ESL classroom. This affects the attitudes and motivation of learners towards learning ESL. Hence, schools should develop and embed a culture of employing English Across the Curriculum (EAC) approach (also known as Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)) in all subjects in their schools for the benefit of the learners. Research on English language teaching (ELT) has proven that this approach develops learners' English proficiency (Mpofu & Maphalala (2021)). Therefore, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) should reinforce strategies for schools to form strong partnerships between ESL and content subject teachers to strengthen the use of an EAC approach in schools, so as to change their attitude towards ESL and improve overall English proficiency.

#### **6.5.4 Recommendation 4: Promote transformative CPD approaches in schools**

Clearly, the self-initiated activities of ESL teachers are a sign that they are capable and willing to direct their own learning and find solutions to their specific needs. This they do by reflecting on their classroom contexts and experiences, empowering themselves as agents of change. Therefore, school heads, inspectors of education, and senior education officers at regional level should move away from providing traditional CPD programmes which are limited to transferring knowledge, and initiate activities that go beyond workshops and cascade training. Accordingly, they should initiate activities that provide teachers with a platform on which to share and co-construct knowledge such as mentoring and coaching, establishing communities of practice in schools, peer observation, team teaching, lesson study and many more. All these are classified as transformational CPD activities that provide meaningful learning experiences for teachers and result in improved teaching practice.

#### **6.5.5 Recommendation 5: Provision of adequate and sustainable teaching and learning resources**

With the ever-changing education landscape, there is no better time than now for CPD programmes to be reviewed. The MoEAC should invest in giving CPD training to ESL teachers geared towards the use of collaborative ICT platforms to develop and assess ESL lessons. Teaching and learning materials should be provided for teachers to enhance classroom practices, and further support be given to teachers to develop cost-effective teaching and learning resources and improve internet access. To meet the demands of the new curriculum, the MoEAC should ensure that all secondary schools have functioning internet connections and adequate ICT infrastructure for teachers and learners to access information beneficial to ESL content. The Ministry should therefore provide robust training to ESL teachers and equip them with skills to develop materials that induce interest and attention in learners, to make ESL classrooms fun and suitable for knowledge creation.

### **6.6 Recommendations for future research**

The findings of my study are suggestive of the need to carry out further studies in the area of CPD for ESL teachers in Namibia. Therefore, the following recommendations are made for future research based on my study findings.

#### **6.6.1 Recommendation 1: Assessment of the knowledge base of ESL teachers in Namibia**

The present study established that teachers' knowledge originates from several sources such as initial teacher education, CPD and their experiences, as well as from practical knowledge of being involved in the actual practice of teaching. A knowledge base for teachers is important as it serves

as a basis for effective language teachers education programmes. The Namibian Curriculum only stipulates generic knowledge base for all teachers, and no other document reveals what knowledge ESL teachers possess. This study therefore recommends that future research on the professional knowledge of ESL teachers should contribute to effective CPD programmes, in order for ESL teachers to match the fluid contextual demands in the provision of quality education.

### **6.6.2 Recommendation 2: Explore and assess the current CPD framework in Namibia**

Despite several curriculum reforms, the existing CPD framework for teachers in Namibia has been in place for close to two decades. It does not stipulate any specific subject but is generic to all teachers regardless of their distinct contextual circumstances. Over the years, there has been a dearth of studies on the impact of the CPD framework on the quality of teachers' or learners' outcomes. I therefore recommend that future studies should conduct an assessment of the current CPD framework in Namibia and its impact on and relevance to the current educational system.

### **6.6.3 Recommendation 3: Investigate the use and impact of EAC in primary and secondary schools on English language proficiency**

English Across the Curriculum (EAC) is a popular approach in the Namibian context. However, there have been limited studies on the extent of its usage and on its effect on English language proficiency in secondary schools. I recommend that future research explore how EAC is used in secondary schools, and the impact it has had on the teachers' and learners' attitudes towards ESL.

## **6.7 Limitations of the study**

My study experienced several limitations which are worth mentioning here and may be particularly useful for future studies to take into account. Firstly, my study included interviewing only eight participants who were in-service ESL teachers in secondary schools in the Khomas region. They were purposively selected based on predetermined criteria which took into consideration my needs in regard to cost. Despite the sample being small, it provided me with in-depth and diversified insights and opinions into the CPD realm in Namibia. It further enabled me to contextualise the findings and make informed recommendations for future research in CPD in language teaching in Namibia. Generalising in this context is not possible as qualitative studies use an interpretivist approach which advocates the need to consider the subjective interpretation of human beings and their perceptions of the world as the starting point in understanding social phenomena (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

During data collection, I experienced a considerable delay in getting all the teachers in one place to conduct the focus group discussion. This in turn delayed the semi-structured interviews and

affected the entire data collection and analysis process. However, the focus group discussion provided a warm and enlightening experience, as teachers freely shared their experiences with one another, utilising the platform to learn from each other and find comfort in sharing similar experiences. They also used the platform to construct new knowledge by sharing different insights, experiences and classroom initiatives to employ when addressing barriers to ESL learning, especially for learners struggling with reading in their ESL classrooms. Finally, it was truly heartwarming to discover how resilient the ESL teachers were as they revealed their continued efforts to foster inclusive classrooms, despite the limited CPD opportunities available to them. Their dedication to supporting learners with special needs with the little knowledge and skills they possessed said a lot about their dedication to their profession.

### **6.8 Concluding remarks**

The purpose of this study was to explore the self-directed CPD needs of in-service ESL teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools. The teachers in this study revealed that they practise different kinds of reflection to transform their classroom practices and enhance their learners' experiences while learning ESL. They further described the contextual experiences that shaped the kind of CPD they needed to improve their professional knowledge. Although they felt inundated with many contextual challenges, which sometimes influence their aspirations to improve their ESL classrooms outcomes, they were determined to remain committed to their profession and to create inclusive learning environments for their learners by initiating self-directed interventions. Finally, my study is the beginning of the expansion of knowledge about self-directed CPD in Namibia, providing valuable insights into in-service secondary school ESL teachers in Namibia and paving the way for future research on effective and transformational CPD approaches in language teaching education.

## 6.9 REFERENCES

- Abakah, E. (2022). Teacher learning from continuing professional development (CPD) participation: A sociocultural perspective. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 4, 100242.
- Abakah, E., Widin, J., & Ameyaw, E. K. (2022). Continuing professional development (CPD) practices among basic schoolteachers in the central region of Ghana. *SAGE Open*, 12(2), 21582440221094597.
- Abello, C. A. M. (2018). How professional development in blended learning influences teachers self-efficacy. Grand Canyon University.
- Adams, D. O. (2021). A correlational study of teacher quality and student achievement in 4th grade English language arts classes [Doctoral dissertation]. Tennessee State University.
- Ahammad, F. (2023). Self-Directed Learning: A Core Concept in Adult Education. *The Online Journal of Distance Education and e-Learning*, 11(3).
- Ajani, O. A. (2023). Teachers' professional development in the context of experiential learning theory for improved instructional delivery. *African Journal of Development Studies*, 13(4).
- Akpan, V. I., Igwe, U. A., Mpamah, I. B. I., & Okoro, C. O. (2020). Social constructivism: Implications on teaching and learning. *British Journal of Education*, 8(8), 49–56.
- Alharahsheh, H. H. & Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism vs interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(3) 39–43. <https://doi.org/10.36348/gajhss.2020.v02i03.001>
- Ali, A. D. A., & Adel, L. A. (2020). The impact of mentoring program on in-service teachers' perceptions and self-efficacy. *EKB Journal Management System*, 44(4), 13–48.
- Aljohani, M. (2017). Principles of "constructivism" in foreign language teaching. *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 7(1), 97–107.
- Alshaikhi, H. I. (2020). Self-directed teacher professional development in Saudi Arabia: EFL teachers' perceptions. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, 10(11).
- Alumbungu, M. N., & Mpofo, N. (2023). Examining the reading comprehension pedagogical practices developed by ESL teachers in Namibian primary schools. *Language and Education*, 1–20.

- Alzahrani, S. (2019). "... I am no longer sitting down and waiting for others to come and develop my instructional skills...": The Nature of self-directed professional development by EFL teachers in Saudi Universities [Thesis]. University of Exeter, UK.
- Andrews, S. (2003). Teacher language awareness and the professional knowledge base of the L2 teacher. *Language Awareness*, 12(2), 81–95.
- Anyanwu, J., & Abe, E. C. (2023). Influence of mentoring on teachers' instructional delivery in secondary schools in Obio/Akpor local government area. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 11(3), 12–24.
- Arifin, S. R. M. (2018). Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *International Journal of Care Scholars*, 1(2), 30–33.
- Arslan, F. (2019). The role of lesson study in teacher learning and professional development of EFL teachers in Turkey: A case study. *TESOL Journal*, 10(2), e00409.
- Artman, B., Danner, N., & Crow, S. (2020) Teacher-directed professional development: An alternative to conventional professional development. *International Journal of Self-Directed Learning*, 17(1).
- Aşık, A., Köse, S., Yangın E, G., Seferoğlu, G., Pereira, R., & Ekiert, M. (2020). ICT integration in English language teacher education: Insights from Turkey, Portugal and Poland. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 33(7), 708–731.
- Azorín, C. (2020). Leading networks. *School Leadership & Management*, 40(2–3), 105–110.
- Bada, D., & Olusegun, S. (2015). Constructivism learning theory: A paradigm for teaching and learning. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 5(6), 66–70.
- Balfe, T., & Ní Bhroin, Ó. (2022). A university supported social constructivist model of professional development. *Professional Development in Education*, 48(2), 254–272.
- Barahona, M. (2018). Trends in teacher development programs. *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*, 1–14.
- Barut, M. E. O., & Wijaya, A. (2020). Facilitating pedagogical content knowledge development through professional development intervention. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1581(1), 012062.

- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544–559. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2008.1573>
- Bazen, A., Barg, F. K., & Takeshita, J. (2021). Research techniques made simple: An introduction to qualitative research. *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, 141(2), 241–247.
- Bertram, C., & Christianssen, I. (2020). *Understanding research: An introduction to reading research*. Van Schaik.
- Blair, D. J. (2016). Experiential learning for teacher professional development at historic sites. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 39(2), 130–144.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2).
- Boylan, M., Coldwell, M., Maxwell, B., & Jordan, J. (2018). Rethinking models of professional learning as tools: A conceptual analysis to inform research and practice. *Professional Development in Education*, 44(1), 120–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2017.1306789>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brownhill, S. (2022). Asking key questions of self-reflection. *Reflective Practice*, 23(1), 57–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2021.1976628>
- Buendía, X. P., & Macías, D. F. (2019). The professional development of English language teachers in Colombia: A review of the literature. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, 21(1), 98–111.
- Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and practice*, 2(1), 14.
- Cirocki, A., & Farrell, T. S. (2017). Reflective practice for professional development of TESOL practitioners. *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*, 6(2), 5–23.
- Cirocki, A., & Farrell, T. S. (2019). Professional development of secondary school EFL teachers: Voices from Indonesia. *System*, 85, 102111.

- Cirocki, A., & Widodo, H. P. (2019). Reflective practice in English language teaching in Indonesia: Shared practices from two teacher educators. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 7(3) (Special Issue), 15–35.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The psychologist*, 26(2), 120-123.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in education* (8th ed.). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539>
- Coldwell, M. (2017). Exploring the influence of professional development on teacher careers: A path model approach. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 61, 189–198.
- Collier, C. (2022). *Self-Directed Learning: Historical and Theoretical Arguments for Learner Led Education*. Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2022. doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/25841999>
- Conner, J. O. (2022). Applying experiential learning theory to student activism. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(9), 1229–1242.
- Coppe, T. (2023). Teacher networks: From a catalyst for enactment of professional development to a source of professional development. *Teachers and Teaching*, 1–14.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2)
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed). Sage publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Tashakkori, A. (2007). Differing perspectives on mixed methods research. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 1(4), 303-308.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Cross, R. (2020). The ‘subject’ of Freeman & Johnson’s reconceived knowledge base of second language teacher education. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(1), 37–48.
- Darling-Hammond, L., (2021) Defining teaching quality around the world, *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(3), 295–308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2021.1919080>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardener, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.

- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2016). Policy brief. Learning Policy Institute
- De Paor, C., & Murphy, T. R. N. (2018) Teachers' views on research as a model of CPD: Implications for policy. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(2), 169–186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1416086>
- De Urioste-Stone, S., McLaughlin, W. J., Daigle, J. J., & Fefer, J. P. (2018). Applying case study methodology to tourism research. In R. Nunkoo, R. (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods for tourism and hospitality management* (pp. 407–427). Edward Elgar.
- Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa. (2015b). *The English Across the Curriculum (EAC) strategy: Every teacher is a language teacher*. Pretoria, South Africa: Author.
- Dewey, J. (1933). *How we think*. Heath & Co.
- Diop, D. (2021). An investigation of teacher professional development through the pedagogical cells of secondary school teachers of English in Senegal. Open University (United Kingdom).
- Diseko, R., & Pule, S. P. (2016). Teachers' reflections in the use of learning technologies in inclusive education. <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/26089>
- Dishena, R., & Mokoena, S. (2016). Novice teachers' experiences of induction in selected primary schools in Namibia. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 66, 335-354 <http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2016.66.19>
- Eidin, E., & Shwartz, Y. (2023). From ideal to practical: A design of teacher professional development on socioscientific issues. *Sustainability*, 15(14), 11394.
- Englund, C., Olofsson, A. D., & Price, L. (2018). The influence of sociocultural and structural contexts in academic change and development in higher education. *Higher Education*, 76(6), 1051–1069.
- Erarslan, A. (2020). The voices of English language teachers regarding professional development: A third space activity for in-service English language teachers. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 7(3), 1077–1090.
- Erbil, D. G. (2020). A review of flipped classroom and cooperative learning method within the context of Vygotsky theory. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 539791.

- Farrell, T. (2015). *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Farrell, T. S. (2012). Reflecting on reflective practice: (Re)visiting Dewey and Schön. *TESOL Journal*, 3(1), 7–16.
- Farrell, T. S. (2018). Reflective practice for language teachers. *The TESOL encyclopaedia of English language teaching. TESL Canada Journal*, 77–90.
- Farrell, T. S., & Kennedy, B. (2019). Reflective practice framework for TESOL teachers: One teacher's reflective journey. *Reflective Practice*, 20(1), 1–12.
- Farrell, T. S., & Macapinlac, M. (2021). Professional development through reflective practice: A framework for TESOL teachers. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics/Revue Canadienne de Linguistique Appliquée*, 24(1), 1–25.
- Fauth, B., Decristan, J., Decker, A. T., Büttner, G., Hardy, I., Klieme, E., & Kunter, M. (2019). The effects of teacher competence on student outcomes in elementary science education: The mediating role of teaching quality. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86, 102882.
- Feldman, A., & Gouveia, A. B. (2022). Temporary teachers in the municipal networks of Pará State (2011–2020). *Educação em Revista*, 38, e38517.
- Fransen, L. P. H. (2022). Exploring the self-directed professional development process of secondary education teachers in the context of educational change. *Master's thesis*. University of Twente.
- Freeman, D. (2020). Arguing for a knowledge-base in language teacher education, then (1998) and now (2018). *Language Teaching Research*, 24(1), 5-16.
- Freeman, D., & Johnson, K. E. (1998). Reconceptualizing the knowledge-base of language teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32(3), 397–417.
- Galaczi, E., Nye, A., Poulter, M., & Allen, H. (2018). *The Cambridge English approach to teacher professional development*. Cambridge English language assessment, University of Cambridge.
- Garira, E. (2020). A proposed unified conceptual framework for quality of education in schools. *Sage Open*, 10(1), 2158244019899445

- Gencil, I. E., & Saracaloglu, A. S. (2018). The effect of layered curriculum on reflective thinking and on self-directed learning readiness of prospective teachers. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 14(1), 8–20.
- Getie, A. S. (2020). Factors affecting the attitudes of students towards learning English as a foreign language. *Cogent Education*, 7(1), 1738184.
- Gheith, E., & Aljaberi, N. (2018). Reflective teaching practices in teachers and their attitudes toward professional self-development. *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 14(3), 160–179.
- Gonzalez, M. M. (2016). The coding manual for qualitative research: A review. *The Qualitative Report*, 21(8), 1546–1549.
- Gudeta, D. (2022) Professional development through reflective practice: The case of Addis Ababa secondary school EFL in-service teachers, *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2030076. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2030076>
- Guerriero, S. (2017). *Pedagogical knowledge and the changing nature of the teaching profession*. Educational Research and Innovation. OECD Publishing.
- Guest, G., Namey, E., & Chen, M. (2020). A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research. *PLOS One* 15(5), e0232076. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076>
- Haifidi, E. N., Mbendeka, H. N., Mupupa, S. P. & Uunona, G. N. (2019), An investigation into the causes of learners' persistent poor performance in ESL in the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary (NSSCO) Level. MoEAC.
- Hangula, P. K. (2021) The role of transformative leadership in enhancing grade 6 English reading. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Johannesburg, South Africa
- Haufiku, I. (2022). Teaching challenges of English second language teachers in senior secondary schools in the Ohangwena region, Namibia. Doctoral dissertation. University of Namibia, Windhoek
- Helate, T. H., Metaferia, T. F., & Gezahegn, T. H. (2022). English language teachers' engagement in and preference for experiential learning for professional development. *Heliyon*, 8(10).
- Hennink, M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Social Science & Medicine*, 292, 114523.

- Henry, C., & Namhla, S. (2020). Continuous professional development for inclusive ECD teachers in Chiredzi Zimbabwe: Challenges and opportunities. *Scientific African*, 8, e00270.
- Hirose, M., & Creswell, J. W. (2023). Applying core quality criteria of mixed methods research to an empirical study. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 17(1), 12–28.
- Hiver, P., Whiteside, Z., Sanchez Solarte, A. C., & Kim, C. J. (2021). Language teacher metacognition: Beyond the mirror. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 15(1), 52–65.
- Hollweck, T. (2015)., & Robert K. Yin.(2014). Case Study Research Design and Methods . *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 30(1), 108-110.
- Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher positionality: A consideration of its influence and place in qualitative research: A new researcher guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 1–10.
- Houghton, J. D., Dawley, D., & DiLiello, T. C. (2012). The abbreviated self-leadership questionnaire (ASLQ): A more concise measure of self-leadership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 7, 216–232.
- Imene, T. (2018). Examining factors influencing the academic performance of grade 12 learners in English language: A study of four schools in the Oshikoto region of Namibia. Doctoral dissertation. University of Fort Hare.
- Ipinge, K. (2018). Consequences of ideology and policy in the English second language classroom: The case of Oshiwambo-speaking students in Namibia. Doctoral dissertation. University of the Western Cape.
- Irgatoğlu, A., & Peker, B. G. (2021). EFL instructors' attitudes towards professional self-development. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 8(2), 172–191. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.894375>
- Ithindi, S.N. (2019). The role of reading in enhancing English Second Language learning of ordinary level learners in Namibia. Doctoral dissertation. University of Pretoria
- Johnson, K. E., & Freeman, D. (2001). Teacher learning in second language teacher education: a socially-situated perspective. *Revista Brasileira de Linguística Aplicada*, 1, 53-69.

- Kalu, F. A., & Bwalya, J. C. (2017). What makes qualitative research good research? An exploratory analysis of critical elements. *International Journal of Social Science Research*, 5(2), 43–56.
- Kapur, R. (2018). Significance of digital technology. *International Journal of Transformations in Business Management*, 8(2), 20–33.
- Kayumbu, J. (2020). Effective management of the continuous professional development program in selected schools in Oshana education region, Namibia [Doctoral dissertation]. North-West University, South Africa.
- Kennedy, A. (2005). Models of continuing professional development: A framework for analysis. *Journal of In-service Education*, 31(2), 235–250.
- Kim, S., Raza, M., & Seidman, E. (2019). Improving 21st-century teaching skills: The key to effective 21st-century learners. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 14(1), 99–117.
- Klopper, H. (2008). The qualitative research proposal. *Curationis*, 31(4), 62–72.
- Knapp, N. F. (2019). The shape activity: Social constructivism in the psychology classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, 46(1), 87–91.
- Kretchmar, K., Nyambe, J., Robinson, M., Sadeck, M., & Zeichner, K. (2012). Policies and practices for the continuing professional development of teachers in South Africa and Namibia. In J. Nixon (Ed.), *The Routledge international handbook of teacher and school development* (pp. 307–318). Routledge.
- Kumatongo, B., & Muzata, K. K. (2021). Research paradigms and designs with their application in education. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology*, 5(1), 16–32.
- Linneberg, M. S., & Korsgaard, S. (2019). Coding qualitative data: A synthesis guiding the novice. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 19(3), 259–270.
- Loeng, S. (2020). Self-directed learning: A core concept in adult education. *Education Research International*. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/3816132>
- Lupinski, K., Jenkins, P., Beard, A., & Jones, L. (2012). Reflective practice in teacher education programs at a HBCU. *Educational Foundations*, 26, 81–92.
- Luwango, L. (2021). Teacher reflection templates: Tools for whole-hearted, open-minded and responsible teachers. *The Namibia CPD Journal for Educators*, 6(1), 53–70.

- Mahlaba, S. C. (2020). Reasons why self-directed learning is important in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 34(6), 120–136.
- Main, S., Hill, S., & Paolino, A. (2023). Improving the reading skills of struggling secondary students in a real-world setting: issues of implementation and sustainability. *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 28(1), 73–95.
- Makuwa, D., Amadhila, L., Shikongo, S., & Dengeinge, R., (2011). SACMEQ III Reports [Policy Brief]. Namibia.
- Maree, K., & Pietersen, J. (2020). Sampling. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (3rd ed., pp. 213–224). Van Schaik.
- Maree, K., Creswell, J. W., Ebersohn, L., Eloff, I., Ferreira, R., Ivankova, N. V., Jansen, J. D., Nieuwenhuis, J., Pietersen, J., & Plano Clark, V. L. (Ed.). 2019. *First steps in research* (3rd ed.). Van Schaik.
- McLeod, S. (2021). Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. *Teacher Support Info. Simply Psychology*. Retrieved May 10, 2022 from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>
- Merriam, S. B., & Grenier, R. S. (Eds.). (2019). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Mesa, M. L. O. (2018). Reflective teaching: An approach to enrich the English teaching professional Practice. *HOW*, 25(2), 149–170. <https://doi.org/10.19183/how.25.2.386>
- Michailidi, E., & Stavrou, D. (2021). Mentoring in-service teachers on implementing innovative teaching modules. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 105, 103414.
- Ministry of Education (2015). Directorate of National Examination and Assessment (DNEA). Windhoek. Namibia.
- Ministry of Education (2015). SACMEQ III report. Windhoek
- Ministry of Education Arts and Culture (MoEAC). (2020). EMIS report. Windhoek.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (2016). *English Second Language Syllabus Grade 4-7*. NIED printing, Okahandja.

- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). (2017). Directorate National Examination and assessment: Examiners report. Namibia Junior Secondary Certificate. Windhoek.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). (2017). Press statement on the provisional results of grade 10 and 12. Windhoek.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). (2018). Press statement on the provisional results of grade 10 and 12. Windhoek.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). (2019). National Standardised Achievement Tests (NSAT). NIED printing: Okahandja.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). (2019). Press statement on the provisional results of grade 10 and 12. Windhoek.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). (2022). Investigating the Practice of the Learning Support Programme in Schools. NIED printing. Okahandja.
- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC). (2022). National Conference of Education. Windhoek.
- Mofolo, M. I. (2017). A professional development intervention in the teaching of English in a rural high school in Lesotho. Master's thesis. University of Pretoria, South Africa.
- Mohammed, S., & Kinyó, L. (2020). Constructivist theory as a foundation for the utilization of digital technology in the lifelong learning process. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 21(4), 90–109.
- Mooney Simmie, G., O'Meara, N., Forster, A., Ryan, V., & Ryan, T. (2024). Towards a model of Teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD): A border crossing journey with embedded contradictions, ethical dilemmas and transformative possibilities. *Professional Development in Education*, 50(1), 46–58.
- Moradi, H. (2018). Self-directed learning in language teaching-learning processes. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods (MJLTM)*, 8(6), 59–64.
- Morris, T. H. (2019). Self-directed learning: A fundamental competence in a rapidly changing world. *International Review of Education*, 65(4), 633–653.
- Morse, J. M. (2015). Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(9), 1212–1222.

- Mpofu, N. (2015). Exploring beginner teachers' knowledge in the teaching of Literature in English [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Pretoria, South Africa.
- Mpofu, N. (2023). A continuing professional development programme for TESOL teachers in South African secondary schools. In A. Cirocki, R. Farrelly, & H. Buchanan (Eds) *Continuing professional development of TESOL practitioners*. Springer Texts in Education (pp. 77–100). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-42675-9\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-42675-9_4)
- Mpofu, N., & De Jager, L. J. (2018). Exploring beginner teachers' sources of knowledge for teaching Literature in ESL classrooms. *English Teaching & Learning*, 42(2).
- Mpofu, N., & Maphalala, M. C. (2021). Content subject teachers' views of implementing the English Across the Curriculum (EAC) approach: A study of some South African High Schools. *Journal of Language and Education*, 7(26), 189–203.
- Murray, D. E., & Christison, M. (2019). *What English language teachers need to know volume I: Understanding learning*. Routledge.
- Mushayikwa, E., & Lubben, F. (2009). Self-directed professional development: Hope for teachers working in deprived environments? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(3), 375–382.
- Mushelenga, P. (2023). The impact of discrepancies between teacher training institutions and secondary schools' curricula in the teaching of English as a second language in Namibia [Doctoral dissertation]. Great Zimbabwe University.
- Muzira, A. (2021). The influence of online lessons in learning English Language amid Covid-19 in Namibian schools. *Journal for Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, 10(1&2), 30–41.
- Mwila, K., Namuchana, M., Lufungulo, E. S., Chinemerem, O. G., Mudenda, S., & Mangwatu, D. H. (2022). Teachers' continuous professional development (CPD) in southern African development community (SADC): A review of policies, approaches, and implementation strategies in enhancing teacher competences. *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*, 05(01), 104–124. <https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2022.0349>
- Nakambale, E. N. (2018). A philosophical analysis of continuing professional development of teachers in Namibian schools [Doctoral dissertation]. Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa.

- Namibia. Ministry of Education (MoE). (2006). National professional standards for teachers in Namibia. Windhoek: Government Printer.
- Namibia. Ministry of Education (MoE). (2009). Namibia Novice Teacher Induction Programme. Okahandja: NIED.
- Namibia. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MOEAC). (2016). The National Curriculum for Basic Education. Okahandja: NIED printing.
- Ndemuweda, V. V. N. (2011). An exploration of the learning experiences of Life Science teachers through professional development initiatives: a case study of the Ohangwena region, Namibia [Doctoral dissertation]. University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
- Ngololo, E. N., & Nekongo-Nielsen, H. (2017). Teachers views on the implementation of the English language proficiency programme in Namibia. *International Education Studies*, 10(11), 155. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v10n11p155>
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2019a). Analysing qualitative data. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (3rd ed., pp. 118–146). Van Schaik.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2019b). Introducing qualitative research. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (3rd ed.). Van Schaik.
- Nieuwenhuis, J. (2019c). Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques. In K. Maree (Ed.), *First steps in research* (3rd ed.). Van Schaik.
- Nilsson, O., & Hay, P. (2016). Group works impact on the cognitive learning processes in the ESL classroom. Retrieved October 10, 2023, on [www.diva-portal.org](http://www.diva-portal.org)
- Nkandi, S. (2015). Factors influencing grade 12 learners' performance in English second language in two selected senior secondary schools in the Omusati education region [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Namibia.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1609406917733847.
- Nzarirwehi, J. & Atuhumuze, F. (2019). In-service teacher training and professional development of primary school teachers in Uganda. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 7(1), 19–36.

- Olivier, J., & Wittmann, G. E. (2019). Professional development in fostering self-directed learning in German Second Additional Language teachers. *Per Linguam: a Journal of Language Learning – Per Linguam: Tydskrif vir Taalaanleer*, 35(3), 125–142.
- Orak, S. D. (2021). In between 21st century skills and constructivism in ELT: Designing a model derived from a narrative literature review. *World Journal of English Language*, 11(2), 166–176.
- Othman, J., & Senom, F. (2019). Professional development through mentoring: Novice ESL teachers' identity formation and professional practice. Routledge.
- Özer, B., Can, T., & Duran, V. (2020). Development of an individual professional development plan proposal that is based on continuing professional development needs of teachers. *The European Educational Researcher*, 3(3), 139–172. <https://doi.org/10.31757/euer.334>
- Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42, 533–544.
- Patton. M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Peel, K. L. (2020). A beginner's guide to applied educational research using thematic analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 25(1), 2.
- Pervin, N., & Mokhtar, M. (2022). The interpretivist research paradigm: A subjective notion of a social context. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(2), 419–428.
- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2010). Generalization in quantitative and qualitative research: Myths and strategies. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 47(11), 1451–1458.
- Porter, B. D., & Freeman, M. K. (2020). Experienced outcomes of a self-directed professional development program. *Professional Educator*, 43(1), 36–47.
- Portilho, E. M. L., & Medina, G. B. K. (2016). Metacognition as methodology for continuing education of teachers. *Creative Education*, 7(01), 1.
- Potgieter, A., & Potgieter, M. J. (2021). Grade six students' and teachers' attitudes towards socio-constructivism in science education. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 26, 145.

- Prenger, R., Poortman, C. L., & Handelzalts, A. (2021). Professional learning networks: From teacher learning to school improvement. *Journal of Educational Change*, 22(1), 13–52.
- Priajana, N. (2017). Continuing professional development activities for English teachers. *ELT echo: The journal of English language teaching in foreign language context*, 2(1), 37-48.
- Priya, A. (2021). Case study methodology of qualitative research: Key attributes and navigating the conundrums in its application. *Sociological Bulletin*, 70(1), 94–110.
- Purnamasari, A., (2023). Continuing professional development (CPD): How in-service EFL teachers see mentoring as a relevant technique. *Docens Series in Education*, 4, 01–18.
- Quintão, C., Andrade, P., & Almeida, F. (2020). How to improve the validity and reliability of a case study approach. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education*, 9(2), 264-275.
- Rannikmäe, M., Holbrook, J., & Soobard, R. (2020). Social Constructivism – Jerome Bruner. In B. Akpan (Ed.), *Science education in theory and practice: An introductory guide to learning theory* (pp. 259–275). Springer. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-43620-9\\_18](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-43620-9_18)
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage Publications.
- Russell, T. (2018) A teacher educator’s lessons learned from reflective practice. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(1), 4–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1395852>
- Sakarneh, M. A., & Al-Swelmyeen, M. B. (2020). The extent to which the Jordanian inclusive basic school teachers use the constructivism theory in teaching. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 10(1), 182–197.
- Saleem, A., Kausar, H., & Deeba, F. (2021). Social constructivism: A new paradigm in teaching and learning environment. *Perennial Journal of History*, 2(2), 403–421.
- Sancar, R., Atal, D., & Deryakulu, D. (2021). A new framework for teachers’ professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 101, 103305.
- Schleppegrell, M. J. (2020). The knowledge base for language teaching: What is the English to be taught as content. *Language Teaching Research*, 24(1), 17-27. *Education for Information*, 22, 63-75. <https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201>
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York. Basic Books.
- Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions*. Jossey-Bass.

- Servant-Miklos, V., & Noordegraaf-Eelens, L. (2021). Toward social-transformative education: An ontological critique of self-directed learning. *Critical Studies in Education*, 62(2), 147-163.
- Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects.
- Shigwedha, A., Nakashole, L., Auala, H., Amakutuwa, H., Ailonga, I. (2017) Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality: SACMEQ Project IV report. MoEAC printing. Windhoek.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational researcher*, 15(2), 4-14.
- Soili Norro (2021) Namibian Teachers' Beliefs about Medium of Instruction and Language Education Policy Implementation, *Language Matters*, 52:3, 45-71, DOI: 10.1080/10228195.2021.1951334
- Sokel, F. (2019). The effectiveness of a professional development course: Teachers' perceptions. *ELT Journal*, 73(4), 409-418.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies.
- Strickland, T. N. (2021). The self-directed goal theory experiment: a mixed methods study of personal development goal-setting programs and self-efficacy (Doctoral dissertation, Lindenwood University).
- Suphasri, P., & Chinokul, S. (2021). Reflective Practice in Teacher Education: Issues, Challenges, and Considerations. *PASAA: Journal of Language Teaching and Learning in Thailand*, 62, 236-264.
- Sze-Yeng, F., & Hussain, R. M. R. (2010). Self-directed learning in a socioconstructivist learning environment. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 1913-1917.
- Tannehill, D., Demirhan, G., Čaplová, P., & Avsar, Z. (2021). Continuing professional development for physical education teachers in Europe. *European Physical Education Review*, 27(1), 150-167.
- Tenny, S., Brannan, G. D., Brannan, J. M., & Sharts-Hopko, N. C. (2022). Qualitative study. *Stat Pearls-NCBI Bookshelf*. National Centre for Biotechnology Information. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395>.

- Thomas S.C. Farrell & Brennan Kennedy (2019) Reflective practice framework for TESOL teachers: one teacher's reflective journey, *Reflective Practice*, 20:1, 1-12, DOI: 10.1080/14623943.2018.1539657
- Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Wiley.
- Trudell, B. (2019). Reading in the classroom and society: An examination of “reading culture” in African contexts. *International Review of Education*, 65(3), 427–442.
- UNESCO and Education International. (2019). *Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. (2022). *World Teachers' Day 2022 Factsheet: Transforming Education from within - Current Trends in the Status and Development of Teachers*. Paris, France: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2013). *Assessment of teacher training and development needs to ensure Education for all (EFA). Needs Assessment Report*: Paris: UNESCO
- UNESCO. (n.d.).(2022). Online statistics. Retrieved April 20, 2022 from <https://stats.uis.unesco/>
- UNESCO-IICBA (2016). *Teaching Policies and Learning Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Addis Ababa: UNESCO-IICBA.
- UNESCO-IICBA (2024). *Africa Teachers Reports Series: Empowering teachers for all learners to thrive*. Addis Ababa: UNESCO-IICBA.
- UNICEF Namibia. (2017). *The impact of language policy and practice on children's learning: Evidence from Eastern and Southern Africa. Country Review*.
- United Nations (2016) *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2*. New York: United Nations
- University of Namibia (UNAM). (2013). *Introduction to continuous professional development*. University of Namibia Press.
- University of Namibia (UNAM). (2014). *CPD implementation guide: a decentralized model for continuing professional development (CPD) of educators in Namibia*. Windhoek: University of Namibia.
- University of Namibia (UNAM). (2016). *Faculty of Education: continuous professional development*. Windhoek: University Press.

- Vadivel B, Namaziandost E and Saedian A (2021) Progress in English Language Teaching Through Continuous Professional Development—Teachers’ Self- Awareness, Perception, and Feedback. *Front. Educ.* 6:757285. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2021.757285
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. In M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman (Eds.), *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (pp. 79–105). Harvard University Press.
- Wertsch, J. V. (1997). *Vygotsky and the formation of the mind*. MA: Cambridge Press.
- Williams, R. T., Kamarulzaman, M., & Cuthrell, K. M. (2022). Reviewing Kennedy's models of CPD and the relevance in TEL. *Asian Journal of Advances in Research*, 5(1), 955–961.
- Yardley, L. (2000). Dilemmas in qualitative health research. *Psychology and health*, 15(2), 215–228.
- Yin R. K. (2014). *Case study research design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 30(1). DOI: 10.3138/CJPE.BR-240
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6th ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zeng, Y., & Day, C. (2019). Collaborative teacher professional development in schools in England (UK) and Shanghai (China): Cultures, contexts and tensions. *Teachers and Teaching*, 25(3), 379–397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2019.1593822>
- Zepeda, S.J. (2012). *Professional Development: What Works* (3rd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315386744>
- Zide, L., & Mokhele, M. L. (2018). Enlisting On Teacher Professional Development: Reflections Of Teachers ‘experiences. *E-Bangi*, 13(4), 36-47.

## APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Justification</b>
1. What challenges do you experience when teaching ESL?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To examine teachers' contextual challenges and how as reflective practitioners they envisage resolving them?</li><li>• To explore how teachers reflect on their context to resolve their needs</li></ul>
2. How do you address these challenges?	
3. Do these challenges influence what you need to develop as a professional teacher? HOW	To guide the teachers to reflect on their contextual challenges and their professional needs
4. How do you contribute to the CPD curriculum you receive?	Determine the voice of teachers in CPD activities; this will reveal whether or not the CPD is self-directed
5. What kind of CPD do you need to enhance teaching in ESL?	To establish reflective thinking in a community of practice and co-construct knowledge on the CPD they want

## **APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Justification</b>
1. Tell me about your classroom experience in teaching ESL?	To describe the participants teaching experience to understand their instructional practices and contextual experience
2. What do you understand the term teacher “continuous professional development” (CPD) to mean?	To explore the teachers’ knowledge and understanding of CPD
3. What strategies are in place to address your professional needs?	To establish the current professional development activities
4. If there are CPD activities in place, what informs the content of your CPD programmes?	To find out the source of the CPD content which teachers have gone through. This question will also help the researcher understand the participants’ experiences that shape their CPD needs
5. What are your specific individual needs?	To find out teachers’ personal CPD needs and what informed them.
6. How do these CPD activities fulfil your individual needs?	To examine whether their CPD needs are considered
7. How do you want your individual needs to be fulfilled?	To identify their idiosyncratic CPD needs solutions and interventions and how they want to be fulfilled
8. As an English for grade which areas do you think you need further CPD?	To explore which areas, do teachers needs CPD in and why?

## **APPENDIX C: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE**

<b>Component of the document</b>	<b>What are you going to look for while analysing each section of the CPD framework document and why?</b>
Purpose of the CPD framework	The importance and intended purpose of the CPD framework in Namibia
Steps for drafting the CPD curriculum	Guidelines for developing a CPD curriculum at school, circuit and regional level.
Steps of implementing the framework	Steps on how the CPD framework should be implemented at all levels with regard to the current status
Evaluation process of the CPD framework	How to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the framework and the channels to be followed when monitoring the process.
Expected outcome of the CPD framework	What is the envisaged outcome of the framework at school, circuit, regional and national level and the current status

## APPENDIX D: APPROVAL LETTER FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Rhodes University, Education Faculty  
Research Ethics Committee  
PO Box 94, Makhanda, 6140, South Africa  
Tel: +27 (0) 46 603 8393  
Fax: +27 (0) 46 603 8028  
email: [e.rosenberg@ru.ac.za](mailto:e.rosenberg@ru.ac.za)

<https://www.ru.ac.za/researchgateway/ethics/>

12 February 2023

Prof Nhlanhla Mpfu

Education Department

[Nhlanhla.Mpfu@ru.ac.za](mailto:Nhlanhla.Mpfu@ru.ac.za)

Dear Prof Nhlanhla Mpfu and Ms Hilma NM Amakutuwa

**Re:** Exploring the self-directed continuous professional development needs of English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools

APPLICATION NUMBER: 2022-5975-7278

This letter confirms that your research ethics application has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee (EF-REC). Your permission letter(s) where applicable have been received and you are free to proceed with your study.

Approval is granted for 1 year. An annual progress report is required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying you when the progress report is due.

Should any substantive change(s) be made during the research process, that may have ethical implications, you should notify the Education Faculty REC Chair via email. This includes changes in investigators. The REC Chair will advise as to whether a new application is necessary.

Do keep this clearance letter secure and accessible throughout your study and after its completion. It will be needed when a thesis is examined and when publications are submitted to journals.

Please also submit a brief report to the REC Chair on the completion of the research. This can be done via email. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully and whether any ethics-related matters arose that the committee should be aware of, in order to guide future studies.

Sincerely,



**Prof Eureka Rosenberg**

**Chair: Education Faculty Research Ethics Committee**

## **APPENDIX E: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY- DIRECTOR**

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**From: Ms Hilma Amakutuwa**  
**Cell: 0812738932**  
[hmoongela@gmail.com](mailto:hmoongela@gmail.com)  
**WINDHOEK**

**To: The Director of Education**  
Khomas Regional Office  
Private Bag  
Windhoek

**Date:**

**Subject: Request for permission to conduct an educational study at seven high schools in Khomas region as from February – March 2023.**

My name is Hilma NM Amakutuwa, currently a registered part-time MEd student (full thesis) in English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: **22A7152**) at Rhodes University. I work for the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture as a Chief Education Officer for English as a Second Language, Directorate of Programmes and Quality Assurance based at the Head Office.

I kindly ask for permission to conduct my project at seven different Secondary schools in Khomas Region during the period of February-March 2023. My research topic is: Exploring the self-directed continuous professional development needs of English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools. The purpose of my project is to explore the CPD needs of ESL in-service teachers according to their idiosyncratic needs and the contextual experiences that shape their CPD needs.

My project requires me to work with English Second Language (ESL) Grade 8-12 teachers. Firstly, I intend to meet with Grade 8-12 teachers for two 30-35 minutes interviews each (to be done separately) about their understanding of CPD and how their contextual and idiosyncratic experiences shape their CPD needs. Secondly, the ESL teachers will participate in a one focused group discussion where they will show how they reflect on their lessons to identify their CPD needs. Most importantly, both schools and teachers will be assured of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time. Teachers and learners who choose not to participate in the study will not be prejudiced in any way. I will adhere to all COVID-19 protocols during the data collection process. It is my presumption that the research findings from this study will make a credible contribution towards the significance of self-directed CPD in improving classroom practices for teachers and learners as well as inform Education officers to use qualitative ways to identify CPD needs of teachers in Namibia. My project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Nhlanhla Mpofu from Rhodes University. Her email is [nhlanhla.mpofu@ru.ac.za](mailto:nhlanhla.mpofu@ru.ac.za)

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on 081 2738932 or at [hmoongela@gmail.com](mailto:hmoongela@gmail.com). This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and has received ethical clearance. The Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted on [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) if any concerns arise during the data collection process.

Yours sincerely,  
**Ms Hilma Amakutuwa**

**APPENDIX F: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY- PRINCIPAL**

Ms Hilma Amakutuwa

Cell: 081 273 8932

P.O Box 2863

WINDHOEK

20 July 2023

**The Principal**

SCHOOL NAME.....

Windhoek

Namibia

**Subject: Request for permission to conduct an educational study at COSMOS HIGH SCHOOL**

My name is Hilma NM Amakutuwa, I am currently registered as a part-time MEd student (full thesis) English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: 22A7152) at Rhodes University. I work for the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture as a Chief Education Officer for English as a Second Language in the Directorate of Programmes and Quality Assurance at the head office.

I hereby request permission to conduct a research study at your school during the period of July to August 2023. The purpose of this project is to explore the self-directed continuous professional development (CPD) needs of ESL in-service teachers. The project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Nhlanhla Mpofu from Rhodes University. Her email is [nhlanhla.mpofu@ru.ac.za](mailto:nhlanhla.mpofu@ru.ac.za)

In participating in this study the ESL teachers will meet with me for a semi-structured interview about their understanding of CPD. Secondly, the ESL teachers will participate in one focus group discussion that will last for 45 minutes to reflect on the teaching experiences that shape their CPD needs. The semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion will be audio recorded as per the University guidelines, but I will not interact directly with the learners.

The teachers and the school are assured of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time. Teachers who choose not to participate in the study will not be prejudiced in any way. I will adhere to all COVID-19 protocols during the data collection process. It is our presumption that the research findings will make a credible contribution towards the significance of self-directed CPD in improving classroom practices for teachers and learners, as well as informing education officers about the use of qualitative ways to identify the CPD needs of teachers in Namibia.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on **081 273 8932** or at [hmoongela@gmail.com](mailto:hmoongela@gmail.com). This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and has received ethical clearance. The Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted on [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) if any concerns arise during the data collection process.

Yours sincerely,

Hilma Amakutuwa

[hmoongela@gmail.com](mailto:hmoongela@gmail.com)

Cell: 081 273 8932

## **APPENDIX G: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY- TEACHER**

**From: Ms Hilma Amakutuwa**

**Cell: 0812738932**

**P. O. Box 2863**

**WINDHOEK**

**Date**

**To: The Teacher**

---

**Subject: Invitation to participate in an educational research study**

My name is Hilma NM Amakutuwa, I am currently registered as a part-time MEd student (full thesis) English Language Teaching (ELT) (student number: **22A7152**) at Rhodes University. I work for the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture as a Chief Education Officer for ESL at the Head Office.

I hereby request permission from you to be involved in my research study to be conducted at your school during the period of March to July 2023. The purpose of this project is to explore the self-directed continuous professional development (CPD) needs of English Language teachers in selected Namibian secondary schools. The project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Nhlanhla Mpofu from Rhodes University. Her email is [nhlanhla.mpofu@ru.ac.za](mailto:nhlanhla.mpofu@ru.ac.za)

Your participation in this study will involve meeting with me for a one-on-one semi-structured interview about your CPD needs and experiences that shape your needs. It will also involve audio recording of focused group discussions as well as analysing your lesson plans to see how you reflect on your lessons to identify your professional needs. You are assured of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time. If you choose not to participate in the study, you will not be prejudiced in any way. If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the form below.

It is our belief that the research findings from this study will make a credible contribution towards the significance of self-directed CPD in improving classroom practices for teachers and learners as well as inform Education officers to use qualitative ways to identify CPD needs of teachers in Namibia.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact me on 081 2738932 or at [hmoongela@gmail.com](mailto:hmoongela@gmail.com). This study has met the standards laid down by Rhodes University and has received ethical clearance. The Rhodes University Research Office can be contacted on [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za) if any concerns arise during the data collection process.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms Hilma Amakutuwa**

**[hmoongela@gmail.com](mailto:hmoongela@gmail.com)**

**Cell: 0812738932**

**APPENDIX H: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name/pseudonym name can be used), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

Through this consent, I agree to be interviewed, for my lesson to be audio recorded and for my lesson plan to be analysed.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Full name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of researcher: \_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# **APPENDIX I: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY: DIRECTOR**



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL  
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: [09 264 61] 293 9411  
Fax: [09 264 61] 231 367/248 251

Private Bag 13236  
Windhoek

20 January 2023

**For Attention:** Ms. Hilma Amakutuwa

## **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE SELECTION SECONDARY SCHOOLS, WINDHOEK, KHOMAS REGION**

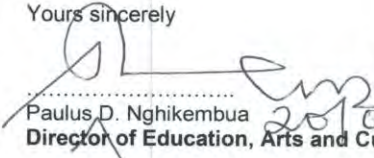
Your letter dated 16 January 2023 on the above topic is hereby acknowledged.

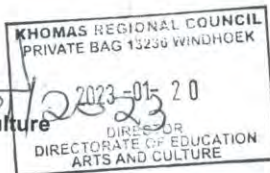
Permission is hereby granted to you to research "*Exploring the Self-Directed Continuous Professional Development Needs of English Language Teachers*" in Windhoek, Khomas Region under the following conditions:

- ❖ The Principal of the selected school to be visited must be contacted in advance and an agreement should be reached between you and the Principal.
- ❖ The school programme should not be interrupted.
- ❖ The teachers and learners who will take part in this exercise will do so voluntarily.
- ❖ The Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture should be provided with a copy of your thesis/ findings.

We wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely

  
Paulus D. Nghikembua  
Director of Education, Arts and Culture



**APPENDIX J: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE**

Enquiries: Mr. G. Munene  
Tel: +264 61 -293 3202  
Fax: +264 61- 293 3922  
Email: [Gibson.Munene@moe.gov.na](mailto:Gibson.Munene@moe.gov.na)  
File no: 13/2/9/1

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park  
Private Bag 13186  
Windhoek  
Namibia

Hilma Amakutuwa  
Tel Nr: +264 812738932  
Email Address: [hmoongela@gmail.com](mailto:hmoongela@gmail.com)

Dear Mrs Amakutuwa,

**SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN KHOMAS REGION**

The Ministry wishes to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 16 January 2023 seeking for permission to conduct academic research in the Khomas region for your Masters degree which is focusing on: *"Exploring the Self-Directed Continuous Professional Development Needs of English Language Teachers in selected Namibian Secondary Schools."*

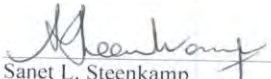
Permission has been granted to you. However, you have to seek for further clearance from the Khomas Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture to ensure that:

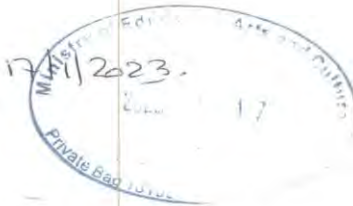
- staff members' normal work is not disrupted during your interviews;
- participation is voluntary;

Furthermore, you are kindly requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr G. Munene on the above provided contacts at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of your research findings at the above indicated details.

We wish you the best in conducting your research and the Ministry looks forward to hearing from you upon completion of your studies.

Yours sincerely,

  
Sanet L. Steenkamp  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



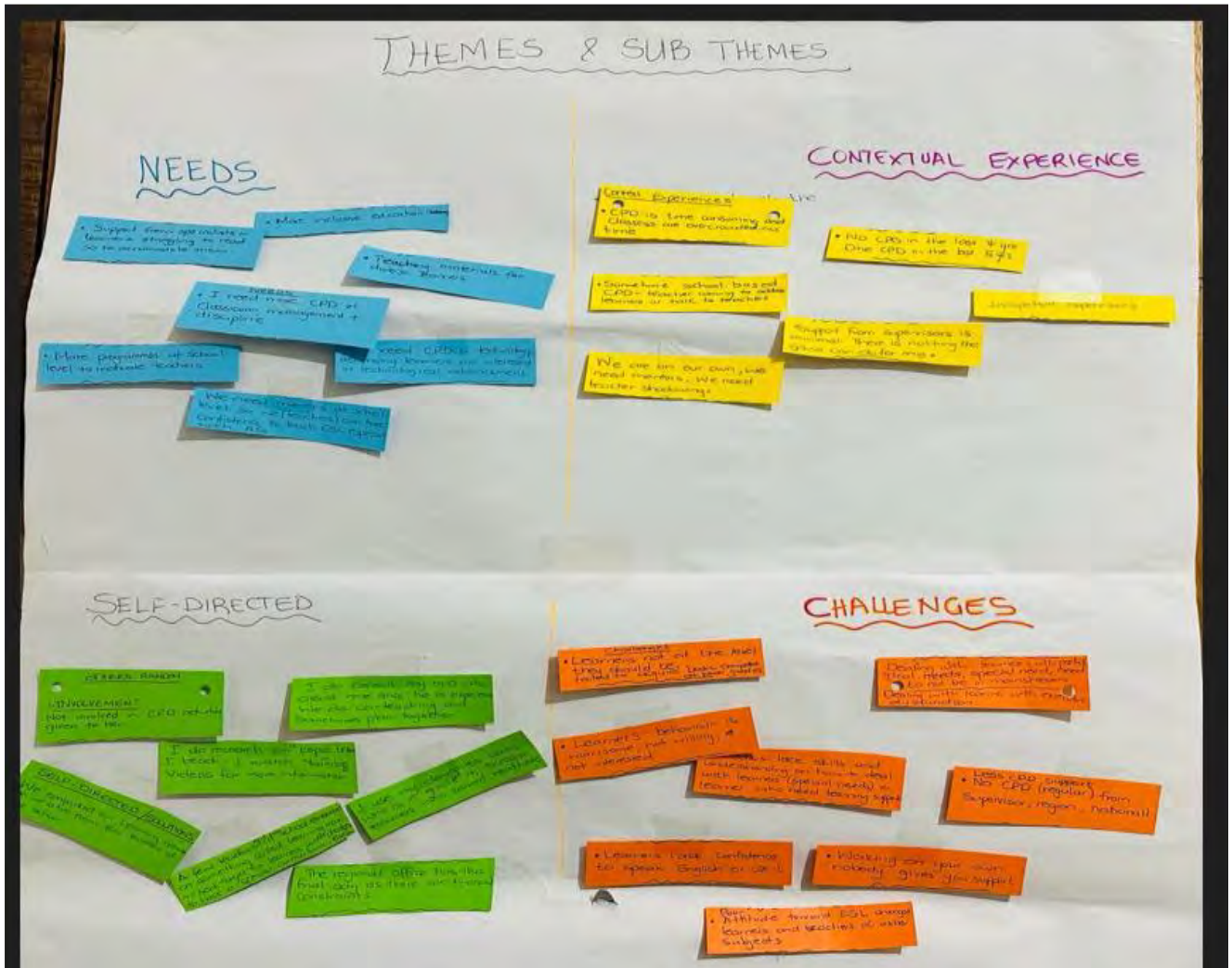
All official correspondence must be addressed to the Executive Director

Page 1 of 1

## APPENDIX K: DATA ANALYSIS EXCERPT

Coding from interview scripts	Common ideas/themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Learners are not at the grade level they should be</li> <li>✓ Learners lack basic language skills</li> <li>✓ Learners cannot read when entering High school</li> <li>✓ Learners with executive dysfunction</li> <li>✓ Get support from specialist to accommodate special learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills in assisting learners who can't read, who can't focus and those without interest (need for specialised skills and knowledge: learning support)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Support to come up with inclusive teaching material</li> <li>✓ Incompetent supervisors</li> <li>✓ We are on our own, need mentors or Shadowing</li> <li>✓ Nothing the school can do for me</li> <li>✓ My HOD need me more than I need her</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in isolation/ Support from supervisors/Schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ I didn't receive CPD training in the past 4 years, 5 years</li> <li>✓ During the 18 years of teaching, CPD is determined by the management of the school, Higher departments, your English language department, HODs, they are the ones running and determining the professional development</li> <li>✓ you don't have a voice in that, your opinion is not being considered and with the professional development the only thing that I've seen so far or that I've experienced, is like workshops.</li> <li>✓ they have the final say to decide whether you can carry it out or not, and many occasions they reject those</li> <li>✓ I receive CPD every year, regional CPD every semester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency and type of CPD programmes available</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Learners think the subject is easy yet still under perform</li> <li>✓ Learners are not interested in school, Learners do not read</li> <li>✓ Teachers of other subjects do not care to correct learners' language mistakes</li> <li>✓ Learners lack confidence to speak English</li> <li>✓ curriculum or syllabus packed with, oftentimes irrelevant things</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic/contextual challenges facing ESL teachers</li> <li>• Need for motivation for learners and teachers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ I do research, watch YouTube videos,</li> <li>✓ I consult other teachers at school</li> <li>✓ I try to use my daughters' books to assist my slow learners</li> <li>✓ I have enrolled to do my masters</li> <li>✓ I am demotivated, thinking leave the profession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' self-driven initiatives in improving ESL classroom experiences</li> <li>• ICT support and teaching resources needs</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX L: THEMATIC ANALYSIS PROCESS FLIPCHART**



## **APPENDIX M: EXCERPT FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS TRANSCRIPTS**

or just development as a person in general so that you grow in that profession. So, all these are relevant to the role which benefits both the short-term objectives and the long-term career objectives that you face, and it will be able to help both you and your learners. Like recently we've had the upgrade from the old curriculum to the new curriculum and there has been quite the shift, so one really needed better insight as to what this or what the differences are between these two systems, especially the AS level because the AS level is another thing. It's not only challenging for our learners, it's equally challenging for some of the teachers, so if one does not engage in some CPD, then you are likely not to really go anywhere in your profession at this particular juncture.

**00:19:12 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah. Thank you so much, Ms. Basimike.

**00:19:20 TE5**

Are we the only ones online? Ha-ha

**00:19:22 INTERVIEWER HM**

You are you are 5 online.

**00:19:27 TE5**

OK. I feel like everybody, I feel like my colleagues have said most of the things that need to be said, Uhmhm CPD is continued professional development, so just like they said it's the teachers continually engaging in learning, learning, that is geared towards improving the trade, the craft be it be in the subject that they teach, or the pedagogy, how to deliver it and also I guess the aspect of the learner, I don't know how to bring in the learner but perhaps keeping up with the latest trends like right now, there is a trend that is, I don't know if it's just emerging, but for me a trend of learners that are that are coming to high school that do not know how to read, that cannot focus, so it brings in some form of special aspect and so as a normal teacher who's just come from university who's not trained in the area of special education or not well versed in educational psychology, it would then entail . So just for an example, it would then entail such a teacher engaging in research like the colleague said earlier, can figure out how to cope in such an environment, and also how those kinds of learners can benefit from their teaching. So, adaptation for instance.

**00:22:10 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, you are right. I can imagine how much pressure the teachers sometimes are especially with the contexts that are changing in terms of learners like Mr. Absalom mentioned, learner's attitude towards learning, sometimes learners' special needs require the teachers also to be on top of their games in terms of how to address those issues.

OK, Hilma, what was the question again? The challenges and how we are dealing with those challenges and how it makes us reflect on what? on improving ourselves professionally, right?

**00:26:00 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah, you are correct. Like I mean when you teaching, obviously you come across different challenges in terms of how you deliver your lessons, so how to do those challenges make you reflect when you reflect on them, what comes out? What do you think about in terms of developing yourself?

**00:26:24 TG7**

OK. I think the challenges are not unique to one person. We are practically or we are all essentially dealing with the same challenges. I mean you are working with kids who are not even fit for mainstream school, and it looks like we don't have special schools in Namibia or special needs schools in Namibia, so all of these kids are literally packed in the mainstream and sometimes there's little you can really do to try and help these kids, but most of the things that we do is really just going beyond and doing your research, watching YouTube videos on how to help these kind of learners. Sometimes even going beyond to say let me maybe study further and understand how to teach and do your masters. For example, there are a lot of English teachers who are mastering now, those are the things that we are really just doing and that's the reflection to say, let me Google, watch YouTube, maybe even master on how to deliver English as a second language and all that, but really there's nothing beyond that from my side.

**00:27:49 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you.

**00:27:50 TG7**

All right.

**00:27:54 INTERVIEWER HM**

Anyone else?

**00:27:58 TE5**

Hilma, Yeah, like she rightfully said, the challenges are not unique to one person. We all have those challenges, that she mentioned. I also just want to add, I personally sometimes feel like we are left on our own, you know, as teachers in this country. It's as if we don't work under anyone like, we really need a lot of assistance that we don't get. For me, the whole thing of formality like we should just we should be done by, you hear that the talk is, be done with your CASS marks by \*\* time, but why are we so focused on assessing? Like, what are we assessing, really? Because we don't have enough time to teach, of course there will never be enough time to teach, but I just feel like

**00:33:28 TD4**

Like for me, I've been **teaching now for 18 years** and what I've seen **most of the time** is that it's **determined by the management of the school**, mostly management like your Higher departments, your English language department, HOD etcetera, etcetera and they are basically the ones running and determining the professional development of teachers in the field and they are running that system, the developmental part of the teachers. **And in the 18 years that I've been teaching, I've had very little say in** how I can professionally develop myself. **I feel like I don't have a voice like my colleague just said here we are just you know, there's other people flexing their muscle**, but we are working with the children 24/7, we are actually the ones knowing what they need and what I need to give them to improve their situation. It's like you don't have a voice, when there is challenges, when challenges need to be made, **you don't have a voice in that, your opinion is not being considered** and with the professional development the only thing that I've seen so far or that I've experienced, is like workshops. That's the only concrete example that I can think of, that I know of at this moment that I've experienced over the 18 years that I've been teaching, when there's a workshop and I can develop myself professionally through a workshop.

**00:35:28 INTERVIEWER HM**

And most of the time, things like workshops are known as what we call traditional CPD's, where teachers are brought together, and somebody externally comes and tells them what they need to know. While it should be able to be a different type of CPD, where teachers are the one who says this is, what we need, and this is what I need as an individual and therefore you have a say in what you are getting as professional development.

Any other experience in terms of how you as teachers contribute to CPD, the CPD that you receive, how involved are you? Maybe at a different school, you have a different experience because through the documents that I have read, there is something that is called CPD framework in Namibia, it was started back in the days in 2011 or something where every school is supposed to have a CPD committee that on a yearly basis get the teachers together and then they tell them what are their CPD needs and then the school finds a way to address those CPD needs at school level, and then the school is the one that feeds into the regional CPD's for the region to do a regional CPD, based on the school's needs. How is your experience in terms of that CPD framework? That is supposed to be happening in Namibia, but I'm not sure if it's really happening at school level, do you guys have CPD committees?

**00:37:13 TH8**

OK, Hilma, let me, I hope you can hear me. I let me just say something.

**00:37:17 INTERVIEWER HM**

We can hear you very well.

**00:37:20 TH8**

OK, somehow, OK for example, at my school we have a committee, but the challenges, for example you suggest to the regional office the programs you would like to have, but they have the final say to decide whether you can carry it out or not, and many occasions they reject those, they will say there's not enough money and things like that and also the school budget is limited. So, you find that at the end of the day, although there's that document, it's not really practical, it's not practical, so that is the one of the challenges. And I also want to mention, I think I'm taking you back, I am sorry I didn't mention this earlier.

**00:38:14 INTERVIEWER HM**

It's fine.

**00:38:16 TH8**

Then one of the challenges, you asked the previous question is that teachers, we also need mentors just as my colleague said earlier, mentors, you know at other schools, I attended one online seminar about education, they talk about senior teachers that are just there to assist every teacher, you have your mentor that will help you, but sometimes you find when we start teaching English as a second language, you know don't really have, apart from the HOD and the ceremonial subject heads, they don't really assist you practically. They are there of course, but in the practical sense, you don't really get help. And you find that a teacher will struggle a bit with all the many challenges and they were are not trained, you can't believe that even now in grade 12 (AS) Level, I have a student that struggle to write the word "their", you know, just to spell that word "their" instead of where to put the 'i' where to put the 'e', he just mix it up. You try right and there's some of those things you trace them back, it's not just that the child is, you know, can't do it, it could be psychological, and you have so many cases like that in the mainstream, but you can't do anything, you just have to accommodate them. You were not really trained to know how to help them, you can just see clearly see that this child has a problem, for example but you just try the best you can to help and hoping that the child eventually, I mean that is just a in fact a very a small case where child can write "their" or whatever, but you find that a lot of children in the mainstream, they suppose not really to be there, just like one of us already mentioned.

**00:40:37 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK, so it's only [REDACTED] school that has CPD committee at school level, any other school?

**00:40:53 TE5**

Hilma, at our school, we don't have that, I heard of it being mentioned at some point, but it was not implemented. I don't know if school managers are also maybe overwhelmed with their own load, but these things are not taken up. I know beginning of the year actually sometime last year, a few of us from school embarked on something that we call Learning maximized, but that was targeted towards learners, like what can we do for our learners, for our situation specifically, perhaps to have an internal curriculum, maybe that supplements the main one, because it is really necessary, the children are not going to benefit from the main curriculum. That's a fact. And of course, these children have to walk with tails between their legs, embarrassed, shy because they are labeled out there as non- performing learners, they don't know anything, they are dumb, but there is something that they know, there is something they can excel in, but the education system is not set up to accommodate them. I was surprised to hear from an Inspector of Education answering me that these children will never have a special world out there, so we cannot create a special curriculum for them. It's very sad to hear such from a leader. You know, there is a special place for everyone in the world, that's why some are doctors, some are nurses, some are athletes, others are artists. There is a special place for everyone in the world, but because somebody is narrow minded like that and this this is how we will end up with the streets full of criminals because what will they resort to? when they are done with school and they have nothing to do, they will grab our bags, they'll kill us. That's what they will resort to because it's easier.

**00:43:22 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, it's true. Thank you, XXXXXXXXXX for sharing.

**00:43:28 TE5**

So uhhh, I'm sorry I did not finish my point Hilma, I digressed. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I digressed. So it did not, let me just tell you we had that one meeting, like one meeting where we invited somebody to talk to us about how to deal with children who have executive dysfunction, children who are hyperactive, who are, I don't want to get into it. You can look it up yourself, executive dysfunction, that's what it's called. So that's where it ended, because there is also no time to, because it's supposed to be a research group, carry out research, consult maybe with universities and with the ministry like a collaborative effort, it has not yet yielded anything because there is no time. We have our own load to carry and of course there are these things that are nice that we can do, but we cannot do them, unfortunately.

**00:44:45 INTERVIEWER HM**

I understand.

**00:44:47 TE5**

**01:00:10 TE5**

Hmmm because sometimes we could be, we could be looking elsewhere, when we have the people we need in our schools already.

**01:00:18 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, they are really, they're actually there, it's a matter of just doing the research and saying which school is doing what and in which area and then which teachers are at those schools and what are they good in, then they can train other teachers because most of the time the knowledge is with us, the problem is the isolation. We are most of the time working in isolation. Because our teachers are really good, they are really, really good. We have good teachers in the system that can really contribute and help other schools as well. It's just a matter of coordination, which is part of my work as well, but yeah. We are working on that.

**01:00:58 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yes, there is hand Ms. PM.

**01:01:02 TC3**

Hilma, I wanted to share my experience of CPD. I have a slightly different experience from maybe many people because I was one of the fortunate people to have landed in the hands of a man who I regard as the biggest blessing in my career because he has literally taught me most of the things that I know about teaching English.

**01:01:32 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK.

**01:01:34 TC3**

For me management at my school, most management members, they don't really care what is happening in those classrooms. Why do I say so? Because they wouldn't even know how your learners have performed at, for example, a national level, because at my previous schools we would gather, analyze these results, and say no, this is your performance, this is how good you have done or how bad you have done it. From there we now derive mechanisms on how do we deal with it, if it was bad or what things do we do in order to keep it up. But of lately, it hasn't really been happening, but luckily as I said, my head of department is one of those very, very few people that would not miss a chance to teach you something, you would walk into his office to just ask him very simple question, that question will turn into a lecture. He has taught me most of the things because for him, he believes in constant teaching and he's not that selfish to keep the things that he knows to himself. And if any chance comes up for you to learn something, he will make sure

that you must take that chance, and in most cases, in most schools, people are even refused to go to workshops.

**01:03:03 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah. Yes.

**01:03:03 TC3**

The minute a chance comes up, he will tell you that you cannot go for that workshop. You can go. Right. And like lately I've seen like with the AS level one really needed to understand from you know, from the experts, but then we were not granted that opportunity to go learn in more schools, but then luckily because specific mentor and I see him as my mentor because he has so much experience that with or without the training from the AS level we've been doing, **we've been teaching AS level for the past three years now, but we have never really attended a single workshop on AS.** And because of **that mentorship** of his, I have somehow gained confidence in dealing with all the challenges that come, you know, towards me because he has equipped me with such, you know, to deal with everything that I encounter. And so, **we really need mentors, we need support because we do not have support.** As teachers, they won't have support and then I was supposed to speak when it was time of the challenges, **the attitude towards the English subject**, both with the learners and the teachers. Recently a colleague of mine, a management member actually said no, **English is easy and it's not that important.**

**01:04:33 INTERVIEWER HM**

They always say that.

**01:04:35 TC3**

**It's easy and it's not that important. The kids will always pass.** I kept quiet because I had so much to say, but I didn't feel the need of saying anything because they wouldn't understand either way. So, **we constantly need mentors** in order, because in this ever-changing world, one has to keep up, and if one does not get the exposure then you will not really get to navigate your way around it.

**01:05:00 INTERVIEWER HM**

It's true. Thank you for sharing,  yeah, the power of community of practice is really surreal and if we have people like your HOD, imagine if we have somebody like that in every school where even teachers come together and they share ideas or even sometimes say: "this topic I don't understand, can another teacher come to my class and teach it., this way you learn from each other and it's important because we have the solution ourselves, they don't have to come from somewhere else. OK. Thank you so much. Anyone else who wants to add in our final minutes?

**01:05:46 TA1**

## APPENDIX N: EXCERPT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

### **Teacher C3**

The very first challenge that I would talk about is the **lack of basic, just basic language skills**, reading, writing, speaking, listening. **Our learners lack the very basic skills**. Most of them, not even just few of them, it's most of them. We only have very few learners that have got those skills and when they have the skills, these skills need to be properly polished because the skills might exist, but they are nowhere closer to where it should be.

### **Interviewer**

..they need to be.

### **Teacher C3**

Yes, secondly, we have **the attitude towards the subject itself**, the learners think English is an easy language, **ironically, they do not know anything about it, they think it's easy**. Why I say they think it's easy is because they would tell you know, "no I'm not going to study for English". This year was even worse, my Grade 12 learners told me "I have always not studied for English, but I have always passed, therefore, it's very, very easy". So, the attitude is not only about the learners themselves, the attitude also lies in the teachers, **other teachers of other subjects**, because they also believe that English is easy to teach.

### **Interviewer**

yeah.

### **Teacher C3**

Therefore, when the learners go to those classes, they are made to feel as if it's not very important, therefore there's no need for you to pay attention to it, you will pass either way and it's that same attitude that these **teachers do not put in effort to correct even the simplest mistakes**, that they find in the learner's work.

### **Interviewer**

In the other subjects, Wow.

### **Teacher C3**

And then another thing is, **we have lack of resources. Lack of resources**. We try to improvise where we can, but we don't really receive much from the government as most things now require you to be up to date, especially with technology. **We can no longer be traditional teachers** where we just use the textbook and the chalk board. It doesn't help us because the world has moved from that space, we now need to constantly keep up with the latest trends and with the latest events so that we can help our learners learn better, which will now also because it's driven towards what they

Page | 4

are going to experience in the real world and that we have to constantly do so, those are some of the challenges that we experience.

**Interviewer**

Yeah. OK. That's very interesting, especially when it comes to CPD, as a teacher you also need to be updated in that area so that your learners' needs are met when you are teaching. **How do you reflect, what type of reflection do you get involved in to make sure that at least even** if you don't fully fulfill those needs, that you at least do a bit to fulfill your learners' need. What type of reflection do you do?

**Teacher C3**

**Reflection** is mostly done, like my own reflection I do it after presenting lessons or usually after marking, because mostly we measure ourselves with the marking, you go see whether what you have taught was really effective, through it, either the marking can be or the assessment rather, assessment can be verbal or you can choose to do like as in test and stuff. So after now you have seen what your learners can, the feedback that you get from the learners, that's where you reflect, whether you have really achieved what you wanted to achieve. **So, the reflection happens mostly after the presentation of the lessons through assessment.**

**Interviewer**

Through assessment, OK.

**Teacher C3**

Through assessment, and then the reflection is mostly we also reflect after the national exams. Then when I look at the performance of my learners and I see, did I achieve anything throughout the year? **The results are a true indication of whether something has really happened in the classroom.**

**Interviewer**

Once you see the learner's performance, has not impressed you the way you wanted. What do you do about it?

**Teacher C3**

I usually resort to either **remedial teaching**, to seek for remedies that can help better the situation, remedial teaching and also just a reinforcement as to what you have already done, then you go and reinforce and maybe also just try and reevaluate as to where the learners really didn't get it right, maybe you could also even **repeat the same lessons that you have taught.**

**Interviewer**

Uhhmm, very good and lastly, I just want to find out do you collaborate with other teachers in terms of sharing lessons or in terms of when planning for lessons for areas where you are challenged or areas where the learners are struggling?

**Teacher C3**

Yes, my Head of Department (HOD) is one person that is really helpful in doing this. We co-teach, where I find that, because he's more of an expert than I am. When I find that I am lacking in this area, I call him to my class and then he teaches my class for that specific thing. And while he's teaching, I also now learn from him. So we co-teach each and then the planning of the lessons and activities we also do that together, whatever I teach, he teaches.

**Interviewer**

OK.

**Teacher C3**

And if I find that I can't really, you know, maybe there's an area where I'm lacking, then I go to him again and just have a session with him so that he explains to me how to do that,

**Interviewer**

Yeah, so that you are equipped when you go to the class. OK, Ms. Mpinge, we have come to the end of our interview. I would just like to find out if you have anything else that you would like to add concerning professional development for teachers, either in general for Namibian teachers, the future, and anything else you want to add.

**Teacher C3**

Nothing, I think I've spoken enough ma'am.

**Interviewer**

OK.

**Teacher C3**

Thank you so much

**Interviewer**

Alright. Thank you very much.

**Teacher C3**

You are welcome.

You know, like this, this is what I have to teach. I have to go back there and teach that, because they do not understand, they don't know sounds, they don't know, even coming now to me as a secondary school teacher, I'm not experienced in that area, so it's challenging. So mostly with most of the topics I have to go down, down, down, but for them to be so that I can at least bring them to that level.

**Interviewer**

Given the background. What do you think causes that, did the kids maybe were not paying attention to in the in? I don't know, what is happening?

**Teacher B2**

For me ne, I think maybe it starts in primary school. Yeah, I think they failed to acquire the necessary skills there, now if they don't have that foundation of phonetics and so on, I don't think they will be able to make it here, they're still struggling there. For those ones who knows, you can see that at least there are those who have those skills, but there are most of them, more than 80% of the class, it's just a struggle.

**Interviewer**

Huh it's not easy. So, you said you mentioned that sometimes you go back, you are forced to go back to the lower level and it looks like that's already one of the strategies to improve you professionally, although you are trained to be teaching at secondary level, it seems like the content of the secondary level you cannot fully teach it because the learners in the class are the ones that determines what to teach them. So what strategies are in place at your school to help teachers that are facing the same dilemma as you, is there any support from the HOD's when you discuss these type of challenges, do they take you out to train you or anything, what are the strategies in place?

**Teacher B2**

Currently we had this teacher, she's a principal in the south, [REDACTED] she mostly comes every year to teach our learners, the basics, phonetics, both the teachers and the learners, mostly language teachers but all the teachers are supposed to be there because we are all experiencing that in all the languages. But, mostly it's the language teachers that attend and all the learners that we identify that are really struggling, so that is one of the initiatives that we have, and this one is just a new program that we started with, [REDACTED] where just colleagues we come together to try and find solution that will help each other on how we can help these learners and we also have a

For the past 4 years, you have not attended any CPD training? OK. Which area do you think you need further CPD? Which areas do you think you need further upgrading so that you are able to deal with the learners that you have?

**Teacher B2**

Mhhh Oh, I don't want to go out of topic, but

**Interviewer**

MMM, no, it's fine.

**Teacher B2**

For me I think, you know, with the type of learners that I have, I think it would be best, you know, learners, they're all diverse, so dealing with diverse learners in one class can be quite challenging. And of course, I need to upgrade myself, I need to get to know my own learners individually, and I need to read about how to deal with those diverse learners in one class, how I can meet their individual needs. Maybe getting support for me I think getting that support from specialists, someone at least who's more knowledgeable, for me I think that would really do.

**Interviewer**

To deal with the different learners that you find in your class?

**Teacher B2**

Yes, yes.

**Interviewer**

So, since you are saying they you have not attended any CPD training from the region, that means this CPD that you were supposed to get, does not serve has not been serving your needs yet. How do you air your needs? Do you talk to the principal, or you just sit with your needs without telling anyone of what you need? Have you engaged your HOD to tell them: guys organize, this is what we need, these are problems in the classroom.

**Teacher B2**

Yeah, we do. That's why we came up with those initiatives, the ones I spoke about, of the teachers I mean the principals and the teachers that are coming, and you know, sometimes it's just impossible, as a teacher, I have to figure it out myself how I must deal with it? There's nothing much that the school can do, so mostly it's up to me to figure out how to deal with my own challenges that I'm facing.

**Interviewer**

**TEACHER E5**

The other challenge would be, maybe material development in the sense of?

**INTERVIEWER**

OK. You want like teachers to be trained on how to come up with materials.

**TEACHER E5**

Yeah, especially so that one does not compromise on the standard because coming up with, for instance learning material is a challenge, really it is because of time constraints and I think just actual knowledge on how to do it.

**INTERVIEWER**

OK, the last question is on collaboration with other teachers. Is there any initiative at your school or that you are involved in where you collaborate with other teachers, maybe if finding another teacher in the school that is an expert in a certain topic that can come to your class and teach it instead of you or them coming to observe a certain topic that you are good at in your classes that they can model it. How is the collaboration between you and the teachers at your school or other English teachers in the second level or in the region?

**TEACHER E5**

Very minimal at my school, very minimal. On a personal level, I have met a teacher there who's a senior and she was really instrumental in helping me understand, for instance, how to mark, because it's not straightforward, there is particular standard I think that is required from external marking and she has been an external marker for years and yeah, she had been instrumental in that aspect for me, but that's now on a personal level because we co-taught grades for about two years and the sharing of materials and coming together to plan was really helpful, but I've never experienced that with other teachers. I think other teachers are not really open to that, I don't know what it is that makes teachers shy away from that collaboration.

**INTERVIEWER**

Yeah, OK.

**TEACHER E5**

But yeah, not all most...

**INTERVIEWER**

OK. So, the school does not have that system in place where it's just there that teachers should do that.

**TEACHER E5**

No.

The last time I did that was when I was in university, doing those modules that taught us teaching methodologies and all that but other than that I have not and I would really love to.

**INTERVIEWER**

Yeah, something like that. OK, tell me about **the challenges that you have faced** over the past six years that you've been teaching English in your classroom, what are the challenges that you have encountered?

**TEACHER G7**

I think the main challenge is **teaching methodologies**, applying different teaching methodologies in the same classroom. I think learning it from school and actually coming to apply it in the classroom is actually very challenging. And henceforth, if we could have **initiatives where we practically being at least trained on how to practically do apply different teaching methodologies**, because we are dealing with different learners with **different special needs**, and sometimes you tend to just focus on the method that even works for you, that is easier for you to apply forgetting that the classroom is dynamic. Yes, so I think **that has been the main challenge**. Yeah, and from the **learner's side**, I think it's just **the lack of interest**, especially they feel like English is easy. They have that belief that it's easy and not **something they study for**, like they can just wake up and come and write. And I think, yeah.

**INTERVIEWER**

How has that been for them? How has now the performance reflected their...?

**TEACHER G7**

No, no, no, no. No, they could have done way, way much better, because you could tell that when you go through their exam papers, they are missing out on the little things **that they would have actually studied**. Take your book and check the format, how to introduce, how to conclude. So right now, they are just winging it, because it's English you can just write, but the structure is not really there, so they actually need to take their books and study. So mostly it's that it's just lack of commitment and interest from their side, yeah.

**INTERVIEWER**

OK, would you say then that the CPD that you have received so far does not meet the current CPD needs that you have.

**TEACHER G7**

Definitely, we have quite a lot of needs in terms of CPD and...

**INTERVIEWER**

**TEACHER H8**

And then also it's a challenge to me as a teacher because I don't have so much experience how to teach the basic like a grade 1 and grade 2, sound the words and you also don't have time for that,

**INTERVIEWER**

Yeah, exactly.

**TEACHER H8**

You don't have, you don't have time for that, so it's a really big challenge. I don't know how...

**INTERVIEWER**

How it can be addressed, so in that case, what do you try to do as a teacher when you find yourself with a learner who cannot read or struggling to read, and they are already supposed to be even writing five essays by the time they're in grade 9 and they are already struggling to even put together sentences. What do you do as a teacher?

**TEACHER H8**

If I give you one example, there was this boy, I decided to or I started making copies of some of my daughter's grade four reading, you know. So because those are basic words, so you give a boy to read and then you will gain a little bit of confidence, because when you give them the materials for grade nine, they are challenging words there and they already they know they can't, but if you give them a kind of easier piece, they will develop a kind of confidence, a little bit, so I realized that it helped and there was also another boy that the handwriting is just terrible, couldn't write, so I went to the Internet and printed out this free download and handwriting those grade 2.

**INTERVIEWER**

Hmm Hmm the cursive and the way to write..

**TEACHER H8**

Yes, and how to write and to form the "m" and how, but the surprisingly, the boy was so excited saying "I improved"

**INTERVIEWER**

My handwriting

**TEACHER H8**

My handwriting is better, so sometimes it's very challenging because you don't know what to do, you are also just trying and also you are not going to give that child that material in front of others,

**INTERVIEWER**

**TEACHER H8**

OK. Continuous development is mostly, according to my observation, personally I will take it as a personal individual you know, effort that you have to make, of course there is Internet at school, there's a printer there, you can go search your things, you can make copies, those facilities are available. And we are grateful because there are some schools that don't have such facilities. And then the school also with the regional office, maybe the regional office organizes a workshop once in a while, that's also one of them.

**INTERVIEWER**

OK.

**TEACHER H8**

But mostly as an individual, you do self-reading, just to develop yourself.

**INTERVIEWER**

Umm, OK, now judging from your experience, your context where you teach, or your classrooms, then the experiences you have gained, what type of? CPD, do you think you need?

**TEACHER H8**

OK, we need actually CPD that especially in the era of technology, we need a CPD that will help us to know how to continue with our teaching even outside the classroom...

**INTERVIEWER**

OK, what do you mean you? Hmm.

**TEACHER H8**

Maybe online classes created, you know WhatsApp or how do they call this classroom..

**INTERVIEWER**

Online classroom?

**TEACHER H8**

Yes, maybe just to say for example, if your weekend or it's a midterm break, it's a long-term break, you want to give activities or you just want to...

**INTERVIEWER**

Those Google classrooms? Oh.

**TEACHER H8**

---

Exactly, yeah those kind of things. So because sometimes that also makes the learning process interesting because these kids are more on, you know, this gadget, just the fact that you are doing it online, on the phone. It's just, yeah.

you'll be surprised that the child at home is just an angel but the child comes to school because of influence, and so yeah mostly counselling and call in parents.

**INTERVIEWER**

Towards the end I would like to ask you about, how you co-construct knowledge with other teachers, as you are at school, you have other different English teachers, how do you collaborate with them to make your lessons or to grow professionally? Do you even consult each other, or everyone is just working in isolation?

**TEACHER H8**

Yes, we do have departmental meetings, where we, you know, especially at the beginning of the year, just encourage one another, and sometimes if one has either materials or find a way of how to pass across information for certain topic, we do that sometimes, or especially if you are sharing a grade, maybe two of you are teaching grade 11, you can share your mark schemes, and you can share the ideas. And I think one thing that is also lacking is we need mentors in schools, because we have a lot of new teachers, just graduate and it's like there's not really proper guidance what to do.

**INTERVIEWER**

So when they come from university, they just get thrown in there, "start teaching".

**TEACHER H8**

Exactly, exactly like this year at our school, we have a lot of new teachers because a number of teachers either resign, retire in the middle of the year, so now you just bring in whoever temporarily, new teacher, so they need a lot of guidance.

**INTERVIEWER**

Yeah, you can see that they are just doing their things on their own, OK, alright and finally, going back to your lessons, how do you reflect to see that here, I need to actually improve what type of activities do you do that you show that you are reflecting on your lessons for you to know that you need something.

**TEACHER H8**

OK, when I gave an activity after I listen and then I realized that, maybe half of the class, they didn't get that or they are not passing the activity, so it's an indication that not necessarily that these kids are not OK, it means the lesson was not clear, then you can do a revision, and also in the lesson plan, there is a reflection part so which I which I can write.

with different educational backgrounds, and different pronunciation. It can also expose at least learners to different teaching strategies. Another thing, even as a teacher, have also to watch those topics, and sometimes I have also to invite a colleague from another school at my own cost, and then I have to maybe because the kids today they don't just get it, they will see to it that it's very bored or get bored if you teach them the same way every day over and over and. We can also make use of the library facilities whereby you send them to go and at least find books on a specific topic.

**INTERVIEWER**

OK. How many CPD activities have you attended and which kind, especially the ones planned at the level of the ministry, maybe from the regional office or from the circuit office or at the national level, especially this year or in the past five?

**TEACHER F6**

Yeah, I attended twice workshops which were organized by regional office, especially the advisory services whereby we have to be, they normally give us the highlights on the previous year's examination or examiners report and then we have to get some new ideas and strategies on how to tackle different challenges when it comes to teaching.

**INTERVIEWER**

OK, how have these CPD activities organized by the region been helpful for you. Have they met your needs and if not, what kind of CPD do you want to receive from the regional office to assist you in order to equip yourself?

**TEACHER F6**

I'm not really say my challenges were met, but I rather say the government needs to give us more, especially when it comes to technology. That is the area that I think they are not really focusing on, we are still living in the past whereby you are just told these basic things. But what if we are we have to be to be given training or workshops on how to use different technological tools so that at least we can move from point A to point B.

**TEACHER F6**

**INTERVIEWER**

OK. Any other need that you feel you need, if not in conclusion, I just want to ask you if you use any collaboration method, you already mentioned that sometimes you use teachers from other schools to help you or to plan together so that your lessons can be active.

**TEACHER F6**

Yeah, when it comes to collaboration, I think the schools, our schools, especially at this cluster level I think there should be a program put in place where so that there will be an exchange of teachers from school to school, maybe once or twice per term so that our learners can be, because we have schools that are performing well there are also schools that are not performing well. What if we put this program so that at least we can get something from other teachers or our learners can benefit from those teachers.

**INTERVIEWER**

Okay I understand that completely. Thank you very much, ma'am. Thank you so much for taking part in the interview. I appreciate you and have a good day.

**TEACHER F6**

Same to you.

**INTERVIEWER**

Alright.