

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON REFLECTIVE PRACTICE  
IN TEACHING AT DAWID BEZUIDENHOUT HIGH SCHOOL**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION**

**OF**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA**

**BY**

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**MARCH 2013**

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## APPROVAL PAGE

This research has been examined and is approved as meeting the required standards for partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Education.

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## DECLARATION

I, Limbo Enock Simasiku, hereby declare that Teachers' perceptions on reflective practice in teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to:

My daughter

Mia Maria Simasiku

My mother

Chipebula Maria Simasiku

My father

Eckson Simasiku

For their patience, support, motivation and understanding for the time I stole from them as I was carrying out this research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank God for giving me the courage to continue working towards the attainment of this Master degree in Education. I also thank God for keeping me healthy throughout the masters program. I would not have managed to accomplish the program if God had allowed me to fall sick.

My second vote of thanks goes to Dr. C. Villet and Dr. H. Kapenda. This thesis could not have been written without Dr. Villet (the main supervisor) and Dr. Kapenda (the co-supervisor) who not only served as my supervisors but also encouraged and challenged me throughout this academic program. I whole heartedly thank them for their tireless efforts in helping me to successfully complete this thesis.

My third vote of thanks goes out to all other faculty members and fellow students who guided me during seminars through their contributions in encouraging and helping me to put my best efforts toward completing this thesis. I want to thank Mr. Mudabeti, Ms. Hess and Mr. Matengu in particular for always being available to edit my work. I want to thank my parents and my daughter for always being there for me and giving the belief that I am the best at whatever I do.

Fourthly, I want to thank the management of Dawid Bezuidenhout High School and all the teachers who participated in this research for allowing me to conduct the research at this school. Without their approval participation, I simply would not have managed to collect the data that was needed in order to write this thesis.

Finally, I thank the Ministry of education, the director of the khomas region for allowing me to conduct this research at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study was carried out in order to investigate the perceptions of teachers on reflective practice and teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School and how their perceptions may impact on teaching and learning. The following were the main objectives of the research: To investigate the views of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice in teaching; to examine the application of reflective practice in teaching (by teachers) at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School and to establish the overall engagement of teachers in reflective teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School in order to recommend improvements where necessary.

A qualitative approach to conducting research was used in this study and fourteen teachers were purposefully selected to participate in the study. Three types of data tools were used to gather information. These tools were; the lesson observation schedule, the interview schedule and an open ended questionnaire.

The findings of the research revealed that most teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School are familiar with the concept of reflective practice. It was further found that some teachers were engaged in the process of reflective practice, which they viewed as a necessity to improve their teaching. The data also revealed that most teachers, who applied reflective practice in their teaching, used reflective journaling and reflective supervision. It was found that a certain number of teachers were not engaged in reflective practice. One of the participants stated that “there is no time to do reflections on the lesson presented because the syllabus is extensive and the time needs to be used to finish the syllabus”.

In this study, the following are some of the major recommendations proposed: The Ministry of Education and other relevant structures should enforce reflective practice in schools and in all teacher training institutions in order to encourage critical thinking in teachers. Prior to the official introduction of reflective practice in all schools, the researcher would like to recommend that; the management of Dawid Bezuidenhout High School should hire a specialist in reflective practice to conduct a workshop on reflective practice at the beginning of the year 2013 when the schools re-open. This would equip teachers with the skills necessary to engage in reflective practice. The researcher further recommends that universities and teaching colleges in Namibia and the world at large should consider introducing or emphasizing the inclusion of reflective practice in the teachers training programs. This would encourage professional growth in teachers. It is also recommended that, further research should be carried out in order to investigate the teachers training programs in order to find out how they prepare teachers to become critical thinkers, lastly to investigate the perceptions of teachers in any region in Namibia about reflective practice and teaching as well as how their perceptions affect teaching and learning. This would be necessary as it would provide a broader view of teachers' perception on reflective practice.

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## ACRONYMS

<b>BETD</b>	Basic Education Teacher Diploma
<b>DBHS</b>	Dawid Bezuidenhout High School
<b>HOD</b>	Head of Department
<b>MBEC</b>	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
<b>MHEVTST</b>	Ministry of Higher Education Vocational Training Science and Technology
<b>NIED</b>	National Institute for Education Development
<b>OHP</b>	Overhead Projector
<b>UNAM</b>	University of Namibia

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Defining reflective practice**

Self-reflection is much like the process of orienting, where an individual uses both a map and a compass to navigate through unfamiliar territory. Educators equipped with learning theories and pedagogy, are asked to manoeuvre through ever changing circumstances of the classroom (in terms of learners' behaviour, teaching strategies, curricular changes, etc) and successfully execute teaching. Professional reflectivity aids in the reorientation of cognitive, behavioural and affective responses to the contextual demands of teaching (Schon, 1996). This is further supported by Dewey (1910) who defined reflective practice as persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends. The reflective educator is able to take note of his/her surroundings, and hone-in on alternative pathways to reach a desirable destination (Ferraro, 2000). In other words, a reflective teacher should deconstruct and then reconstruct the events, emotions, and accomplishments of a teaching experience. The following subtitles will be covered in chapter 1; background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the research, significance of the study, limitations of the study, scope of the study and the definition of terms. Chapter 2 covers the following subtitles; theoretical framework, models of reflective practice, levels of reflective practice, application of reflective practice and factors that may influence teachers' perception on reflective practice and teaching. Chapter 3 will cover the following subtitles; research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, pilot study, data collection procedures, data presentation and analysis, ethical considerations, triangulations of the information generated through the three tools used in the

study. Chapter 4 covers the following subtitles; presentation, analysis and discussion of the data collected through questionnaires, models of reflective practice in use at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School, levels of reflective practice at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School, application of reflective practice at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School, teachers' views on the necessity of reflective practice in teaching, strategies used to foster learners' understanding, presentation, analysis and discussion of data collected, lesson observation forms and lastly, presentation, analysis and discussion of data collected through individual interviews. Chapter 5 covers the following; recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research in reflective practice.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

Prior to independence, education in Namibia was characterized by segregation based on racial boundaries and ethnic groupings. The education system was further characterized by irrelevant curricula and teacher education programmes (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, MBEC & Ministry of High Education and Vocational Training Science and Technology, MHEVTST, 1998). After independence, the government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Ministry of Education engaged in the process of improving the quality of education in Namibia. According to a research study carried out on the quality of education in Namibia by Shaningwa (2005), the quality of education has been a major concern in Namibia since independence in 1990.

Teacher education was considered one of the most important areas of educational reform at independence. It played a very important role in the teachers' strategic role in the reform efforts. Fullan (1991) holds the view that educational change depends on what teachers do and think. One of the best ways by which teachers may consistently monitor and improve their ability to

teach effectively is through self reflection on teaching (Clift; Houston and Pach, 1990; Evans, 2002).

In relation to the tertiary education institutions in Namibia, the Ministry of Education (then called Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture), through the National Institution for Educational Development (NIED) recommended a new teachers education training programme called Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD). The main aim of the programme was to develop professional expertise and competencies for teachers and to enable them to be fully involved in promoting change in education in Namibia (MEC, 1998; MBEC& MHEVST, 1998). Among others, the new programme for trainee teachers called BETD implemented in January 1993 (Swarts, 1998) stressed the importance of the development of reflective, analytical and critical thinking skills in teachers. The Ministry opted for a reflective approach in teacher development as it stressed the construction of concepts and principles in learners using the conceptual structures they already have and drawing upon their experiences. This approach is supportive of the philosophy of learner-centered education, which became one of the pillars in the transformation of the system (Swarts, 1998). In the BETD programme the focus was on the kind of reflection in action through which practitioners could make new sense of uncertain, unique and conflicting situations of practice. The above mentioned developments in education clearly show that the Ministry of Education was and is encouraging teachers to engage in self reflection for the purpose of equipping themselves with skills necessary to critically look back at how they teach and what they could do in order to improve their quality of teaching.

Most of the teachers in Namibia rarely engaged with each other to discuss their teaching practices (Swarts, 1998). In most cases, teachers seldom engaged in self-reflection.

Without engaging in reflective practice, teachers may not be able to identify certain areas of concern within their teaching profession. Due to the declining levels of performance of learners prevalent in Namibia (Evans, 2002) and at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School in particular, the researcher felt it necessary to conduct a study on reflective practice with the overall intention of finding out the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School (DBHS) on reflective practice and teaching. This was done in order to draw relevant conclusions on how their perceptions impact on teaching and learning. The perceptions of teachers on reflective practice could ultimately affect the performance of learners throughout the year, but in particular at the final examinations. This is in line with Pollard & Tann (1993), who stated that, a lack of self reflection in teaching could lead to outdated practices in classrooms and a lack of professional growth, which could ultimately account for poor performances in the results of learners during final examinations.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The performance of Grade 10 learners in the final year examinations is a major concern both nationally, in the Khomas region and in particular at DBHS. This is because each year the number of learners who pass the junior secondary final year examinations is increasingly declining (Sasman, 2008). As practitioners we are confronted with the question of what is causing this decline in the performance of Grade 10 learners. Could it be the complexity of the recent examinations or is it because of a lack of reflectivity on planning and presentation of lessons by teachers? These are some of the questions asked by the educators. Answering these questions require a holistic investigation into the different factors that influence the performance of learners. Literature consulted suggest that, the teacher's ability to engage in self-reflection

effectively is certainly one of the factors that may directly or indirectly influence the teaching-learning interaction in the classroom, which later on affects the performance of learners at the final year examinations. Literature reveals that teacher's reflectivity influences the performance of learners. Therefore, this study will investigate teachers' perceptions at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice and how it can affect learners' performance.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

This study intends to focus on the following objectives:

1. To investigate the views of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice in teaching.
2. To examine the application of reflective practice in teaching (by teachers) at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School.
3. To establish the overall engagement of teachers in reflective teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School.

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This section seeks to explain the importance of this research in improving teaching practice. As outlined above, reflective teaching is a tool for the teacher's professional growth and development. A powerful education system requires that teachers and principals be able to analyse and reflect on their practices (Evans, 2002). Individually and collectively, they need to assess the effects of their work, and to refine and improve their practice. The significance of reflective practice is deeply rooted in its importance for professional growth and efficacy.

This study was important in that, it gave an understanding about the views of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on the concept of reflective practice. A good understanding of the perceptions of teachers at DBHS on reflective teaching will serve as a baseline measure for fostering or shaping a culture of reflectivity with the overall intention of improving the quality of teaching.

The study helped teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School to develop a rationale for practice. This was achieved through understanding the importance of reflective practice in teaching. Based on the results of this study, a new lesson preparation form was introduced (see appendix 6). The new lesson preparation form was designed as a result of understanding the need for teachers to do reflection of every lesson taught. A critical reflective teacher can communicate to learners and colleagues the rationale behind her or his practice. A reflective teacher is informed through self reflection, and he or she knows why and what to do because decisions are a reflection of his or her core beliefs (Swarts, 1998 and Pollard & Tann, 1993).

This study was also important because it contributed to teacher's empowerment and emancipation. Bennett (1995) maintains that the work of education cannot simply be reduced to mere technical concerns, but that teachers must engage with important moral issues and therefore they need to reflect on their activities. This is in agreement with Zeichner, (1996) who proposed that teachers who engage in reflective practice are able to examine their ideologies critically and consider the value of their own practice.

The study has helped to establish whether or not teachers at DBHS usually take informed actions in teaching. Informed actions are those that can be explained to others. The absence of reflections on lessons taught by some teachers has been taken as evidence of lack of informed

actions in teaching. This is mainly because; teachers who take actions in teaching without reflections may not be aware of problems that need to be attended to in teaching. It is through informed decision that teachers' actions have a chance of achieving the desired results (Bookfield, 1995). The study contributed and will continue contributing to the growth and professional knowledge of teachers as reflective practitioners to become aware of their own actions; become more skilled in the use of evidence; acquire wisdom both in teaching and more able to identify and analyse the consequences of their actions. Reflective practice incorporates the development of problem solving and reflecting on events to improve decision-making and judgment. This is an important aspect in the teaching profession as Bennett (1995, p. 79) clearly states "Teaching as a profession requires the teacher to go beyond the exercise of craft skills to diagnose problems, evaluate possible responses and adopt a chosen course of action". Teachers should consistently research ways of how to teach learners how to think. This is in line with Dewey's (1933) teaching that, the aim of education is to teach learners how to think, not what to think. This is further supported by Schon (1996) who claims that the problems of the real world do not present themselves to practitioners on well-formed structures; they present themselves as messy, indeterminate situations.

This study provided basic information on reflective practice that may be used to determine the flexibility, rigorous analysis and social awareness of teachers at DBHS. Reflective practice allows teachers to avoid self-laceration (Bookfield, 1995). Teachers who take their work seriously tend to blame themselves if learners are not learning. Critically reflective teachers realise that sometimes resistance to learning has nothing to do with their abilities as teachers. They learn to stop blaming themselves and turn their attention to understanding the resistance (Bookfield, 1995). This could be related to the education scenario in Namibia at present, where

there is a blame game between the different stakeholders in education. Where there is a problem prevalent, it is natural for people to seek solutions to the problem. However, it takes critical diagnosis of the situation in order to reach for the most appropriate solution to the problem. Reflective practice is thought to be the right way to follow if teachers are to solve instructional problems in their classrooms.

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

This study was faced by a number of limitations. These include the following:

- a) One of the major objectives of this study was to investigate the views of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice. One would not have been able to collect valid and accurate responses because it is impossible to be sure that the participants say what they truly believe. The researcher overcame this limitation by explaining the need to supply genuine answers as the research aimed at improving teaching and learning at that school. The researcher further ensured reliability and validity of responses using three types of data collection techniques by using (questionnaires, lesson observation and interview) for all participants in order to triangulate the data.
- b) The other objective of this study was to examine the application of reflective practice in teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. As stated by many authors e.g. Stenhouse, 1975., Kolb, 1984 & Dewey, 1933, reflective practice has different levels and methods of application. Teachers did not seem to know the different levels and ways of applying reflective practice and as such, it was not easy for the researcher to examine teachers'

application of reflective practice in teaching. The researcher devised a lesson observation schedule that made it easier to observe the presence or absence of reflectivity in teaching.

- c) This study only covered perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice and teaching. This means that the findings may not be generalizable to other schools as their views may differ.
- d) Since the researcher is an employee at the same school where the research was carried out, some of the participants were not comfortable being observed and interviewed by the researcher. At the beginning of the study, senior teachers were a bit unhappy being observed and interviewed by the researcher; junior teachers felt intimidated when observed and interviewed by the researcher. The researcher adequately addressed this situation by maintaining rapport.
- e) Some of the information collected in this study was of a self-report nature, which may be prone to some inaccuracy as a result of less than accurate recall, lack of information, or discomfort with self-disclosure. The researcher maintained objectivity in order to reduce the effect of the researchers' silent voice in the presentation, analysis and synthesis of data.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

The study was conducted at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. The target population of this study was the forty three teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. A sample of fourteen teachers was selected in order to carry out the study in a convenient manner.

## 1.8 Definition of terms

A number of terms that have been used in this study may not have a clear meaning to the reader. These terms are defined as follows.

**Critical inquiry:** Implies the acceptance of a particular ideology, along with its accompanying assumptions and epistemology (Zeichner, 1996). In this study, critical inquiry means asking serious questions about the process by which outcomes are reached. The teacher need to ask why, how, where, when and what about the situation at hand and then find the most appropriate solution to the situation.

**Reflective practitioner:** A professional who is capable of designing the process wherein he or she must frame and reframe problems, design and evaluate solutions using reflective thinking (Schon, 1996). In this study, reflective practitioner refers to a teacher who usually reflects on his/her teaching activity. A reflective practitioner here is a teacher who is capable of designing the process wherein he or she must frame and reframe problems in teaching, design and evaluate solutions using reflective thinking.

**Reflective teaching:** The kind of teaching based on teacher's judgment which is informed partly by self-reflection and partly by insights from educational disciplines (Pollard & Tann, 1993). In this study, reflective teaching means teaching that involves diagnosis of lesson presentation. The teacher needs to use a checklist to find out whether all sections of the lesson plan have been accomplished successfully.

**Reflection-in-action:** This is the kind of reflection that occurs whilst a problem is being addressed, in what Schon calls the ‘action-present’ (Schon, 1996). In this study reflection in action means confronting the problem immediately when the problem is encountered. Diagnosing the cause or source of the problem and then seeking solutions to the problem immediately.

**Reflection-on-action:** This is reflection after the event. Consciously undertaken, and often documented (Schon, 1996). In this study, it means confronting the problem later after encountering the problem. It provides the practitioner with enough time to gather all relevant information in order to come up with a sound solution to the problem.

**Time management:** Time management in this research refers to the way in which the teacher utilizes the time allocated to a specific lesson.

## **Summary**

In this chapter the background of the study presented an insight into the educational context of Namibia. Before independence, education in Namibia was segregatory in nature because it was not meant to address the needs of all the members of society; rather it was made to enhance ethnicity and racial segregation. The education system before independence did not incorporate components of reflective practice in education, hence depriving its graduates of high order thinking in form of critical enquiry and reflectivity. After independence the government of the Republic of Namibia, through the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders, decided to rectify this education dilemma. This resulted in the introduction of the Basic Teachers Diploma

(BETD) in the colleges of education and in Basic Education in order to equip teachers with knowledge and expertise in teaching and learning.

This chapter also introduces the statement of the problem. The study investigated the perceptions of teachers on reflective practice and teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. It also examined the application as well as the overall engagement of teachers in reflective practice. The chapter covered the significance of this study. This study was significant in the following ways: It gave the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on the concept of reflective practice and teaching, it helped the researcher to develop a rationale for practice, it contributed to the empowerment and emancipation of the researcher, the researcher gained knowledge about the different models of reflective practice, the different levels of reflective practice, how to engage in reflective practice. The study further contributed to the growth and professional knowledge of the researcher as a reflective practitioner to become aware of his own actions while teaching.

The chapter also presents some of the limitations of the study. The study was faced with a number of limitations as discussed in the preceding pages. The chapter also presented the scope of the study, which are the teachers of Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. In conclusion, the chapter also presented definitions of terms used in this study, these terms are: critical inquiry, reflective practitioner, reflective teaching, reflection in action, reflection on action.

The next chapter presents the literature consulted and seeks to identify the gap in knowledge between the information in the consulted literature and the objectives of this study.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

#### *2.1.1 The origin of reflective practice*

The findings of previous research carried out both locally and abroad on reflective practice were used as a platform and directory for this study. It is reported that the Westernised concept of reflective practice was born out of the work of John Dewey (1859-1952), an American who took the notion of reflection from philosophy and introduced it into the fields of psychology and pedagogy. Dewey allied reflection with thinking and described it as the kind of thinking that consists of turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious thought (Moon, 1999). Dewey indicated that reflection may be seen as an active and deliberate cognitive process involving sequences of interconnected ideas which take account of underlying beliefs and knowledge. Reflective thinking generally addresses practical problems, allowing for doubt and perplexity before possible solutions are reached (Edwards, 1999). In essence, Dewey created a greater sense of valuing practice in ways that went beyond any superficial sense of just thinking about practice. Through the notion of reflection, practice could be seen as being more informed (Dewey, 1933). By being more informed, a practitioner could be regarded as being particularly skilful and therefore possess important knowledge of practice. In this sense, reflection rings true to many professions as a concept because it raises thinking about practice to a position from which it can be viewed as a specialised form, and therefore has important ramifications in relation to knowledge of practice (Loughran, 1996). Consequently, since its inception, the term *reflective practice* has been widely examined with authors building on the ideas of Dewey and others (e.g., Habermas, 1971) who are thought to have given currency to the way in which the

term is viewed. In light of this, Loughran (2002) highlighted that, “reflection has developed a variety of meanings as the bandwagon has travelled through the world of practice” (p. 33).

### *2.1.2 Orientation of reflective practice*

Reflective practice is often seen as representing a choice for practitioners to be reflective or not about their work, but in reality, all practitioners engage in reflection about the professional service they provide (Bright, 1993). What passes for reflection, however, is often not representative of reflective practice. For example, contemplating an experience or event is not always purposeful and does not necessarily lead to new ways of thinking or behaving in practice, which is the crux of effective reflective activity (Andrews, Gidman, & Humphreys, 1998). This implies that in order to engage in reflective practice the process must be *purposeful* and result in *change* to beliefs, values, understanding and/or behaviour and thus support Dewey’s contention that reflective practice must be deliberate. Other commonalities that appear to exist in definitions of reflective practice are that it involves the self and that it is triggered by the questioning of actions, values and beliefs. For example, Boyd and Fales (1983) suggested that reflection is, “The process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self and results in a changed conceptual perspective” (p. 100). This definition, along with those of other authors (e.g., Barnett & O’Mahoney, 2006; Daudelin, 1996), suggest that the process is initiated when individuals become aware of or concerned with an incident or problem. However, although reflecting on problems is important it should not be done at the expense of other aspects of our working lives, such as reflecting on experiences where behaviour has been effective (Loughran, 2006).

Daudelin's (1996) definition of reflective practice may therefore offer a more comprehensive understanding: The practice of periodically stepping back to ponder the meaning of what has recently transpired to us and to others in our environment. It illuminates what the self and others have experienced, providing a basis for future action. Particularly, it privileges the process of inquiry, leading to an understanding of experiences that may have been overlooked in practice.

In contrast to Dewey, Ghaye & Lillyman (2000) outlined that reflective practice is not just an intellectual endeavour but a complex process involving the whole person, including their emotions, thus making a simple definition elusive. In attempts to understand the concept of reflective practice more comprehensively and thus frame reflection within the practice of teaching it may therefore be more valuable to consider the principles associated with reflective practice. Indeed, Ghaye and Lillyman (2000) acknowledged that it is beneficial to see reflective practice holistically and subsequently outlined twelve principles that are proposed to define the "landscape of reflective practice". These are presented in a framework in Figure 1 on page 17. Themes within this framework represent common ideas emanating from other holistic approaches to defining reflective practice (Johns, 2000). Such themes include: recognising the nature of the workplace as self-focused and context specific; stressing improvements to self; generating practice-specific knowledge; and recognising the psychological processes utilised by the practitioner during reflective practice. Although the landscape map conceptualisation of reflective practice was originally developed within health care, it is deemed viable for consideration within teaching due to the similarities in activities and practice goals between the professions. The twelve principles of Ghaye and Lillyman, (2000) should be questioned in terms of what they actually mean for teaching practice but in essence provide a more inclusive insight into the concept.

### 2.1.3 Reflection in Professional Practice

The work of Schön (1983) has particular relevance to the field of education as it examines the way in which professionals go about their daily practices. Schön's contributions also afford greater understanding of the design and implementation of reflective practice. Ghaye and Lillyman, (2000) developed an emerging landscape of reflective practice showing the twelve principles of reflection based on the theories of Schön.

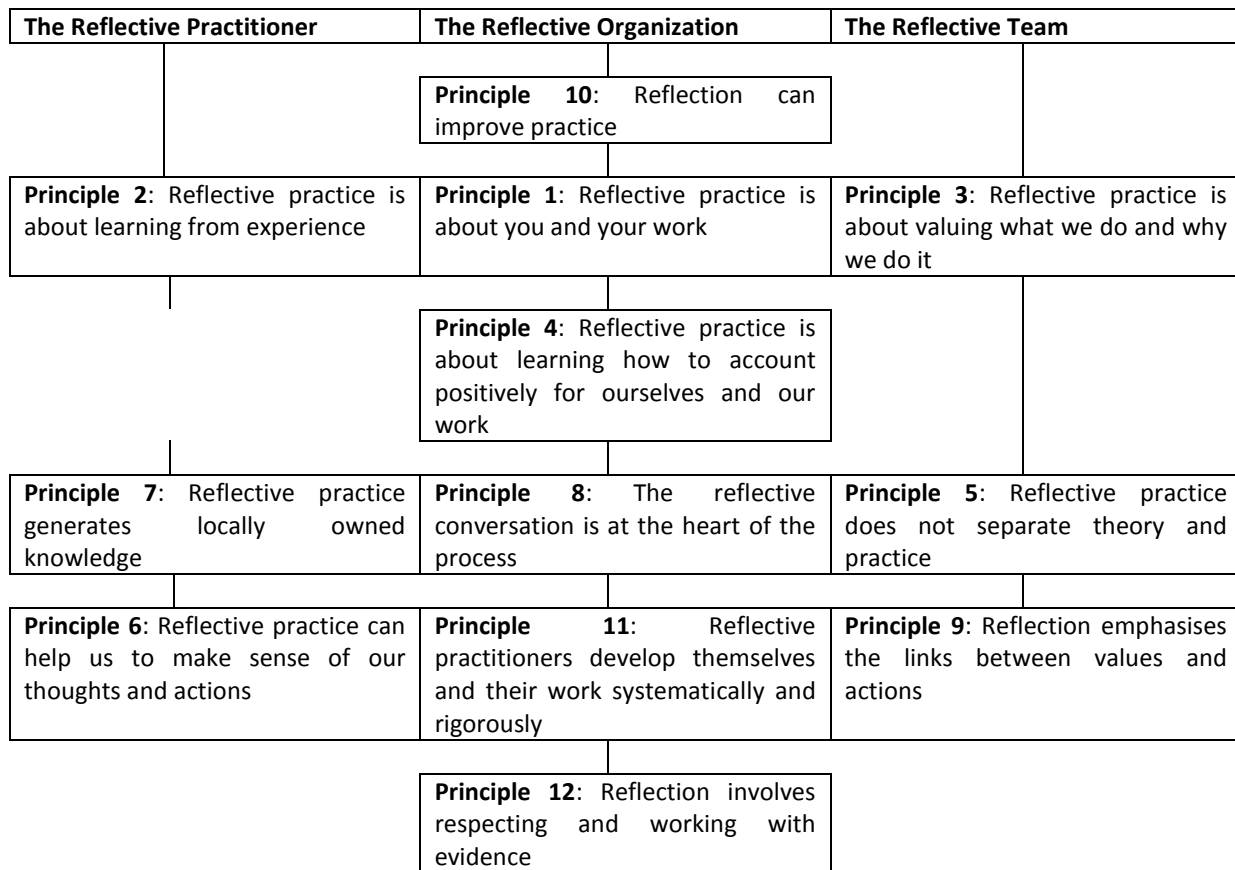


Figure 1. An emerging landscape of reflective practice showing the twelve principles of reflection (adapted from Ghaye and Lillyman, 2000, p. 120).

Although a full discussion of Schön's theories go beyond the scope of this review, some elements thought to be intertwined in the practice and development of reflective teaching are considered briefly and these are: technical rationality, knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action. Technical rationality is linked to the idea of practice being separated from theory, and of the practitioner being seen as a "technician" who simply applies theoretical knowledge (developed in educational establishments) to their own practice. Indeed, within reflective practice and other professions, professional knowledge has traditionally been defined in terms of a positivistic framework (Martens, 1987 & Schön, 1983). Schön argued that within this framework, practitioners are seen as instrumental problem solvers who extract solutions by applying theory and techniques derived from systematic scientific knowledge. This application of theory to practice may be suitable for well-defined and recognisable problems (Romer, 2003). However, within reflective teaching, problems rarely present themselves in easily definable and resolvable form, thus making the neat application of theory to practice difficult (Anderson, Knowles, Gilbourne, 2004). In support of this, the findings of Tod, Marchant, & Andersen (2007) indicated that graduates and students of Master's programmes devalued learning research and theory as in some cases it was not applicable to clients and practical situations, and "too textbook", reducing its relevance to real-life practice (p. 327). Technical rationality is therefore thought to devalue the knowledge which practitioners develop about and through their work (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998). Subsequently, Schön (1983) turned the view of technical rationality around and considered how reflective practice can help us to frame problems, as well as how we should value and use the type of knowledge that is embedded within our workplaces. Such knowledge is thought to be generated by our practice experiences and is considered as tacit *knowing-in-action* (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998).

*Knowing-in-action*; in a different view of theory than technical rationality, Schön (1983) discussed the use of knowledge-in-action as core to the artistry of professional practice. He suggested that, “Artistry is an exercise of intelligence, a kind of knowing, though different in respects from our standard model of professional knowledge”. It is not inherently mysterious; it is rigorous in its own terms; and we can learn a great deal about it” (p. 13). Knowledge-in-action has also been labelled as craft knowledge (Knowles, Gilbourne, Borrie, & Neville, 2001) and tacit knowledge, (Martens, 1987) and is suggested to consist of two parts. First is that, improving practice and professional development begins with reflecting on what we actually do, on our own experience. This reflection generates a rich and detailed knowledge base derived from practice (Ghaye & Lillyman, 2000). Second, this knowledge is used by practitioners in their work and thus becomes our *knowing-in-action*. Much of this knowing is often difficult to make verbally explicit but it manifests itself in the practitioner’s behaviour (Schön, 1983). Accordingly, knowing-in-action is a view that professional practice is no longer to be understood as a mechanical application of scientifically based rules, but the function of personally tailored theories about what does and does not work in practice. Schön recognises the importance of making these theories explicit and the value of reflection in linking our espoused theories (e.g., what we say or claim we do) with our theories-in-use (e.g., what actually happens in practice). Hence, using reflection to examine not just the research based knowledge that influences our practice but also hands on knowledge-in-action, we will be in a better position to identify good practice and take steps to learn from it. Importantly, Johns (1995) suggested that reflective tacit knowledge-in action should be seen as, “The most substantive form of knowledge and should properly constitute the body of knowledge of a practice discipline” (p. 25).

*Reflection-in-action*: this is described by Schön (1983) as, “An epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive processes which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict” (p. 49). Reflection-in-action occurs during the work of a practitioner and concerns thinking about how to reshape and adjust what we are doing whilst it is underway (Ghaye & Lillyman, 2000). Schön argued that it is central to the art by which professionals handle and resolve their difficulties and concerns about practice, whilst actually in practice. This has particular links with the delivery of teaching services because in many instances practitioners are required to think on their explanations and display intuitive action in order to deal with the problems and issues that arise out of the misconceptions in lesson presentations. With teaching practitioners now becoming increasingly engaged in humanistic approaches and counselling-based activities (Holt & Streat, 2001) it is likely that their ability to reflect-in-action will be a determinant of the effectiveness of their practice due to the client in such approaches and activities having a major role in directing interventions (Hill, 2001). Critics of the notion of reflection-in-action, however, question whether practitioners have the time to reflect during action. Indeed, Van Manen (1991) described reflection-in-action more as a process of making a decision. Nevertheless, in contrast, Larrivee (2008) actually defines reflective practice as, “On the job performance resulting from using a reflective process for daily decision making and problem-solving” (p. 342). Despite the potential value of reflection-in-action in both aiding practice and better understanding how reflective practitioners work it is a confusing phenomenon that requires more research to better appreciate it.

*Reflection-on-action*: Reflection-on-action is the form of reflection that occurs after action and relates, via verbalised or non-verbalised thought, to the action that the practitioner has taken (Moon, 1999). It is a deliberate and conscious activity that can be conducted privately or publicly

in order to improve future action (Ghaye & Lillyman, 2000). Thus, it is reminiscent of the definitions of reflective practice stated earlier. Reflection-on-action is thought to allow practitioners to access and make sense of their knowledge-in-action and subsequently allows practitioners to make more informed decisions in practice based on the knowledge generated from previous experience.

## **2.2. Theoretical framework that guides research in reflective teaching**

Reflective practice is classified under the theory of constructivism (Falk, 1996). Constructivism is basically a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn (Bruner, 1996). It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When people encounter something new, they have to reconcile it with their previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what they believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, people are active creators of their own knowledge. To do this, they must ask questions, explore, and assess what they know.

In the classroom, the constructivist view of learning can point towards a number of different teaching practices. In the most general sense, it usually means encouraging learners to use active techniques (experiments, real-world problem solving) to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing.

The teacher makes sure she or he understands the learners' pre-existing conceptions, and guides the activity to address them and then build on them.

Constructivist teachers encourage learners to constantly assess how the activity is helping them to gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, learners in the constructivist classroom ideally become "expert learners." This gives them ever-broadening tools to keep learning. With a well-planned classroom environment, the learners learn how to learn. Reflective practice is an element of constructivism because it is aimed at using information gathered through previous experience in order to enhance current and future practice.

According to Swartz (1998), reflective practice has become a standard concept in teachers' education programmes. One of the models of conducting reflective practice is the collaborative model of reflective practices in which a colleague may pair up with another colleague with the purpose of enriching personal effectiveness of their work and provide suggestions on how to refine their teaching practices (Syrjala, 1996 & Bookfield, 1995). Reflective practice can be defined as a response to past experience(s) and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience(s) as a basis for evaluation, decision-making, planning and acting (Syrjala, 1996).

## **2.3 Models of reflective practice**

### *2.3.1 The collaborative model of reflective practice*

Under the collaborative model of reflective practice, two colleagues are supposed to engage in observation of each other's ways of conducting duties (teaching) with the ultimate purpose of identifying and improving weaknesses in their teaching. This allows the two professionals (teachers) to critically look at each other's ways of teaching and analyse their teaching with the purpose of improving efficacy (Syrjala, 1996). Syrjala further contends that the reflective teacher simply analyses lessons in order to increase teacher control over variables that affect learning. This is further supported by Bookfield (1995) who contends that, to see practice from the perspective of a colleague, a colleague observes the practitioner and provides critical feedback and engages in critical conversations with the practitioner. This shows that reflective practice is much like action research in that the practitioner selects a problem to study, collects the necessary data and analyses their data to improve their performance by directly studying their work. The collaborative model of reflective practice is used in this study in conjunction with another model (Stenhouse model of reflective practice) that can be used in the process of reflective teaching as proposed by Stenhouse (1975). The two models have been used in order to increase the chances of collecting more information on teachers overall application of reflective practice in teaching.

### *2.3.2 Lawrence Stenhouse's model of reflective practice*

This model refers to the process of reflective teaching and provides a dynamic basis for teacher actions. Teachers should act as researchers of their own practice and should develop the curriculum through practical enquiry (Stenhouse, 1975). Teachers are principally expected to

plan, to make provisions and to act. Reflective teachers also need to monitor, observe and collect data on their own and the learners' intentions, actions and feelings. This evidence needs to be critically analysed and evaluated so that it can be shared, judgments made and decisions taken (Stenhouse, 1975; Kolb, 1984 & Dewey, 1933).

Stenhouse states that, reflective practice is a dynamic process which is intended to lead through successive cycles, or through a spiraling process towards higher-quality teaching. This model is in line with the notion of reflective teaching, as described by Dewey, and provides an essential clarification of the procedures for reflective practice.

## **2.4 Levels of reflective practice**

According to an article titled “Reflection in educational practice”

(<http://orgonstate.edu/instruct/ed555/zone1/reflect.htm.9/9/2008.11:23>), there are three levels of reflectivity namely; technical rationality, practical plan and critical reflection.

### *2.4.1 Level one: Technical rationality*

Under this level, the teacher considers only the technical application of educational knowledge and basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining the desired objectives. Here the teacher ignores the effects of the community, school, classroom and the entire society on learning. This level is called the “empirical paradigm” and is considered to be the lower level of reflection. At the Technical Level, reflection focuses on what you are doing. It may address the quality of practice independent of its effects, though often what prompts reflection about practice is the effect, or lack of effects on learners. For example, “I thought that those adaptations I made

for my learners in the math materials for today's lesson were exactly what they needed...I wonder why they didn't work very well”

<http://orgonstate.edu/instruct/ed555/zone1/reflect.htm.9/9/2008.11:23>).

#### *2.4.2 Level two: Practical plan*

At this level, the teacher becomes concerned with clarifying assumptions and predisposition's underlying competing pedagogical goals while assessing the educational consequences towards which a teaching action leads. In this level, the teachers analyse the lesson to see how the objectives of the lesson are met.

Reflection at the practical level concentrates on the relationship between some situations and the actions of the teacher and others. That is, cause and effect relationships that include the teacher and learners, but also include the broader classroom, programme, and school or community context. For example, “my response to learner X's behaviour was effective yesterday. I know that today's behaviour had the same underlying cause, but I did not respond well today. I wonder what else was going on that made the difference?”

<http://orgonstate.edu/instruct/ed555/zone1/reflect.htm.9/9/2008.11:23>).

#### *2.4.3 Level three: Critical reflection*

At this level the educators are concerned with the worth of knowledge and social circumstances useful to learners without distortions or personal bias. Critical reflection is viewed as a non-defensive stance in remaining open-minded to moral and ethical considerations to educational processes. At the Critical Level, reflection goes deeper and broader - outside the individual - and

may focus on such things as commitment to social justice. These levels are developmental, and not everyone will progress through the levels to reach critical reflection. At the critical level of reflection, the following reflective questions need to be addressed in order to aid the teacher about self evaluation (<http://orgonstate.edu/instruct/ed555/zone1/reflect.htm.9/9/2008.11:23>):

1. What were the essential strengths of the lesson? In the collaborative model of reflective practice, it is especially necessary for the colleague who is observing the other colleague's lesson presentation in order to establish the strength of the presentation and to ensure effective teaching.
2. What, if anything, would you change about the lesson? This question is crucial in the process of reflective practice; the practitioner always wants to find out better ways of presenting the task such that is easier for everyone to comprehend.
3. Do you think the lesson was successful? Why? The success of the lesson is measured by the extent to which the desired objectives of the lesson are attained. If the objectives of the lesson are partially achieved, the teacher needs to be critically analytical in the diagnosis of the potential variables that may have hampered the total attainment of the desired lesson objectives.
4. Which conditions were important to the outcome? During the diagnosis of the variables that may have hindered the total attainment of the lesson objectives, the teacher should also determine the condition that would have been necessary to accomplish the lesson objectives successfully.
5. What, if any unanticipated learning outcomes resulted from the lesson? The teacher should be well prepared to deal with misconceptions, be vigilant about unanticipated outcomes in order to have more control towards the achievement of the desired objectives.

6. Can you think of another way you might have taught this lesson? A reflective teacher should always think about different ways of teaching the lesson in order to appeal to wide variety of abilities of learners.
7. Can you think of other pedagogical approaches to teaching this lesson that might improve the learning process? The main idea is to improve teaching and learning. The teacher should consistently upgrade pedagogies in order to teach effectively.
8. Do you think the content covered was important to learners? Why? The content delivered in every lesson should be of significant importance to learners. If the lesson taught holds no significant value in the learner's life, the learner may be reluctant to learn.
9. What moral or ethical concerns occurred as a result of the lesson? Learning should address the three main domains of learning; the psychomotor, the cognitive and the affective domain. Morals and ethical concerns fall under the affective domain. Reflective teachers should creatively find and incorporate morals and ethics in their lessons.

Level three (critical reflection) is said to be the highest level of reflection. The questions above need to be considered by the person engaging in reflective practice at the critical level in order to aid effective self evaluation.

## **2.5 Application of reflective practice**

There are numerous ways of engaging in reflective practice. It is also important to note the difference between "Reflection-in-action and Reflection-on-action".

According to Schon (1996), Reflection-in-action is the kind of reflection that occurs whilst a problem is being addressed, in what Schon calls the ‘action-present’. It is a response to a surprise, where the expected outcome is outside of our knowing-in-action. The reflective process is at least to some degree conscious, but may not be verbalised. Reflection-in-action is about challenging our assumptions (because knowing-in-action forms the basis of assumption). It is about thinking again in a new way about a problem we have encountered. Reflection-on-action is reflection after the event, it is consciously undertaken, and often documented (Schon, 1996). Reflection on action is basically the type of reflection that most people engage in after being involved in a particular experience. It might be equated to the concept of post diagnosis of experiences or events.

The different ways of engaging in reflective practice can be categorized into three broad categories namely: Journaling, Reflective supervision and Action research.

(<http://orgonstate.edu/instruct/ed555/zone1/reflect.htm>.9/9/2008.11:23).

### *2.5.1 Reflective Journaling*

In this form of reflective practice, the teacher seeks to reflect out of confusion, frustrations, questions, intentions, hypothesis and assumptions pertaining to a student or classroom event. The journal is informal and is not the retelling of the events and content but a summary and reflection of thinking and awareness of self-talk.

### *2.5.2 Reflective Supervision*

Under this form of reflective practice, there is a need for a supervisory relationship in order to review beliefs and base assumptions surrounding a disorienting professional event that can aid in

clarifying patterns and themes necessary for learning and professional growth. An example that can be given here is when the lecturer monitors and evaluates student teachers during their teaching practice. The lecturer carefully observes the student teacher as he or she engages in teaching and later on, provides guidance or corrective feedback about lesson presentation.

### *2.5.3 Action Research*

Action research is viewed as a form of research aimed at enhancing professional practice (Swarts, 1998 and Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Hopkins and Antes (1990) have defined reflective practice as a form of action research. Action research, in turn is defined as a tool of curriculum development consisting of continuous feedback that targets specific problems in particular school settings (Hopkins and Antes, 1990). There are two main ways to use research to aid in making decisions as an educator. The first is to review literature and apply the relevant findings to your classroom. The second is to do action research of your own.

## **2.6 Factors that may influence teachers' perception on reflective practice and teaching**

The following factors may have an influence on the perceptions of teachers on reflective practice and teaching:

a) Reflective practice was a new concept in teacher training immediately after independence in Namibia (Swarts, 1998). Teachers who were trained in the pre-colonial era may not be familiar with reflective practice. Departure from old norms and models of teacher training to new images of what, when and how teachers learn is necessary for professional development, which may support reflective practice (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1996). Teachers who were trained

in the pre-colonial era may question or resist reflective practice because it was not included in their training.

b) Discrepancies between how the concept of reflective practice is understood and practiced in the academic community and how it is understood and practiced in the professional community (Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1996). Levels of understanding about the application of reflective practice in teaching have a major influence on the perceptions of teachers towards reflective teaching.

c) Slow adaptation of teachers and their educators to new practices. The willingness and eagerness of teachers to participate in reflective practice activities that challenge them and promote professional development may influence their perception of reflective practice on teaching (Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1996). Teachers who find it challenging to engage in reflection of their teaching style tend to neglect the importance of reflective practice in teaching.

d) Understanding of how human beings engage in learning (Falk, 1996). Teachers who have a better understanding of how humans learn tend to be advocates of reflective practice, because they understand that reflective practice aids in discovering better ways of teaching learners.

## **Summary**

Reflective practice is a very important tool towards personal and academic development because it helps to diagnose deficiencies in the personal and professional capacity. It naturally stimulates curiosity to improve on self knowledge, skills and application of new ideas in order to enhance productivity. It should not be viewed as a threat or a stumbling block in the day to day activities. There are different models of conducting reflective practice. For the purpose of this study, a

collaborative model of reflective practice together with Lawrence Stenhouse's model of reflective practice has been chosen as the most convenient ways of engaging in reflective practice. Under these models of reflectivity, a colleague may pair up with another colleague with the purpose of enriching personal reflection of work effectiveness and efficiency in order to provide suggestions on how to refine their teaching practices. Under the collaborative model of reflective practice, the two colleagues engage in observation of each other's ways of conducting duties (teaching) with the ultimate purpose of identifying and improving weaknesses in their teaching. This model of reflective practice allows the two professionals to critically look at the different aspects of teaching with the ultimate purpose of improving efficacy. Reflective practice has different levels namely; Technical rationality, Practical plan and Critical reflection. There are numerous ways of engaging in reflective practice namely: Journaling, reflective supervision and action research.

In the next chapter the research methodologies will be discussed in details.

## **CHAPTER3: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the different methods and procedures that were followed in the process of collecting and analyzing the data. Therefore, this chapter deals with the research design, the population of the study, the sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design is a detailed plan that outlines how the researcher intends to conduct the research process. For this study, a qualitative research design was used. The qualitative research design was chosen because it is the right approach to research in which the researcher seeks to elicit participant responses that would help in gaining in-depth understanding about the perceptions of teachers on reflective practice in teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School (DBHS). The researcher wanted to collect data at DBHS in order to be able to deduce from the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice in teaching. Qualitative research is a systematic empirical inquiry into meaning (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1995). Qualitative research relies on the skills of the researcher as an interviewer or observer in the gathering of data (Clark, Riley, Wilkie & Wood 1998). A case study was the best way to conduct the study because the intention of the research was to acquire an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on the issue of reflective practice in teaching. This is in line with Leedy & Ormrod (2005) and LaBoskey (1994) who stated that in a case study, a particular individual, programme or event is studied in depth

for a defined period of time. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2005), a case study may be especially suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation.

The researcher used a combination of tools in data collection (questionnaires, interviews and observations) in order to gain in-depth understanding and correlation between what teachers say about reflective practice and what they do in classes, in relation to literature on reflective practice. The study focused only on teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School because the researcher believed that little was known about the perceptions of teachers at this school on reflective practice in teaching. A case study design was appropriate to use here because the research was conducted at one school. In addition case studies are ideal for gathering views, opinions, perspectives and beliefs of people on a specified issue (reflective practice and teaching). This is line with Leedy & Ormrod (2005) who state that, case studies are conducted in order to understand people's perspectives or opinions about events, actions, programme, practice, settings, artifacts and life styles.

### **3.3 Population**

In research, the word population refers to any group of variables that are of interest to the research. According to Fowler, Cohen & Jarvis (1998), in statistics the term population is extended to mean any collection of individual items or units which are the subject of investigation. In this study, the target population was the teachers of Dawid Bezuidenout High School. There were forty three (43) teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School (management included) at the time of collecting data for this study.

The population of forty three teachers at DBHS was of interest to the researcher because of the following reasons: it was at this school where the researcher observed a decline in performance of learners in the final year examinations; the population had a wide spread distribution of age amongst teachers (hence allowing the researcher to investigate the influence of pre independence trained teachers and post independence trained teachers on reflective practice). Finally, it was convenient for the researcher to carry out research with this population because the population was easily available to the researcher. The population works at the same duty station as the researcher.

### **3.4 Sample and sampling techniques**

A sample of fourteen teachers was selected and used to investigate teachers' perceptions on reflective practice in teaching. Dawid Bezuidenhout High School provides education from grades ranging from grade eight to grade twelve. The participants were grade eight teachers to grade twelve teachers. Using the entire staff of Dawid Bezuidenhout High School in this study would be inconvenient in that it would take more time to gaining in-depth understanding about the perceptions of all teachers on reflective practice in teaching. That is why only a sample of fourteen teachers was considered. The fourteen teachers were selected by means of comprehensive sampling. Comprehensive sampling is generally used in case studies. According to McMillam and Schumacher (1997) the procedures followed in comprehensive sampling, allows representation of participants from different groups of the population. It is the preferred method of sampling when the population is heterogeneous in certain aspects of interest to the study.

In this study, comprehensive sampling was appropriate to use because there are two major groups of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School namely; those who received teacher training before independence and those who received teacher training after independence. These two groups of teachers received different types of training in teaching. The researcher identified the two groups of teachers mentioned above, so that a random sample of seven participants could be drawn from each of the two groups. Comprehensive sampling also allowed the researcher to select participants based on their age, gender as well as teaching experiences which is part of the issues that could impact on reflective practice. This helped to yield representative information about the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice and teaching.

### **3.5 Research instruments**

The researcher collected data using questionnaires, observations and interviews. Questionnaires were used to collect biographical data like age, gender, qualifications and views of teachers on reflective practice in teaching. Observation schedules were used by the researcher to collect data that was needed to determine the extent to which teachers practically engaged in reflections on their teaching process. Interviews were used as a follow up tool to clarify certain areas that may not have been clearly stated in the questionnaire or observations. Interviews provided the researcher with the opportunity to directly interact with the participants in order to probe or to simply clarify certain assumptions in areas of confusion.

According to Leedy & Ormrod (2005), a multitude of information may be gathered by direct questioning of individuals. Questionnaires, observations and interviews are effective methods of generating data in qualitative research. In this study, the researcher collected extensive data on

the individual(s) and event(s) on which the investigation was focused. The researcher acted as a research instrument in that, he observed, recorded information and then at the end of the lessons asked the teachers to do self-evaluation in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of their lessons.

### *3.5.1 Questionnaires*

The researcher administered the questionnaires at the beginning of the data collection session in order to obtain responses about teachers' perceptions on reflective practice in teaching without the influence of the interview and class observations. The researcher administered questionnaires to fourteen teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School in order to obtain information about their age, gender, qualifications, teaching experience and perceptions on reflective practice in teaching. The questionnaire consisted of open ended and closed ended questions. Open ended questions were included in order to allow teachers to explain or support certain concepts. The questionnaire was composed of questions that elicited opinions, feelings, behaviour, and knowledge about reflective practice and teaching.

### *3.5.2 Lesson Observation schedule*

Bookfield (1995) contends that to see the practice from the perspective of a colleague, one has to observe the practitioner (colleague) and provide critical feedback and engage in critical conversations with the practitioner. The researcher conducted lesson observation sessions with each of the fourteen research participants. For each of the fourteen research participants where lesson observations were done, a follow up discussion about the lesson presented, was done. This is in line with the collaborative model of reflective practice in which two colleagues engage in

observations and discussion of their lessons. The observation schedule consisted of statements that assessed the application of reflective practice in teaching.

### *3.5.3 Interview Schedule*

The collection of data was concluded by means of an individual interview with the fourteen participants at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School in order to probe certain issues that were not clearly understood or not well answered on the questionnaire or during lesson observation and discussions. The interview was used as a follow up to see whether there were differences in the perceptions of teachers on reflective practice in teaching. The interview was carried out at the end of the lesson observations. This was important in order to find answers to the main objectives of the study.

## **3.6 Pilot Study**

### *3.6.1 Data collection*

A pilot study was done with two teachers from a different school (Hochland High School) before the actual data collection process started in order to find out whether the research instruments were clearly understood by the participants. The pilot study was done on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010. This helped the researcher to know whether the questions asked were relevant and inclusive. The pilot study further helped to find out whether the type of data obtained could be meaningfully analysed and provide answers to the research questions. The researcher chose a sample of two teachers using convenient sampling techniques. A sample of only two teachers for piloting purposes was chosen because it was easy to manage and it provided the researcher with an

opportunity to check the clarity and the efficiency of all the three tentative tools of the research (questionnaire, lesson observation and interview).

### 3.6.2 *Preliminary data analysis*

It was discovered that certain questions needed to be revised in order to enable capturing of more detailed information that would enable the researcher to write a comprehensive report. For the questionnaire, questions were re-structured in such a way that they were organized around certain themes of reflective practice learned from the literature. In Section A, under the background details, the original statement about the qualification obtained read as follows: “*Qualification held*”, when the tool was piloted, the participants seemed to be uncertain whether they should list all qualifications held or only list the highest qualification held. This statement was revised and re-written as follow; “*highest qualification*”. It became obvious for the participants to only write down their highest qualification. In Section C, Question 1, under subtopic “Teacher’s views on reflective practice and teaching” the piloted question read “Have you ever heard about reflective teaching”: yes [ ] no [ ]. This question was modified in order to ask for an explanation in situations where the participants indicated that they have heard about reflective practice.

In the piloted questionnaire, questions were not thematically structured. This proved a bit challenging to analyse, hence the researcher organized questions on the questionnaire into themes. Links between the three different tools used for data collection were drawn in order to enhance validity and reliability of the data collected (triangulation of data).

The interview schedule was also modified in the sense that an introductory statement was included before the actual interview questions. Additional probing questions were added after the pilot study, in order to investigate how teachers would want to make reflective practice more part of teaching.

The other tool that was modified as well was the observation schedule. The piloted observation schedule did not have a statement on the objectives of the lesson. The researcher modified the tool by including a statement on the objectives of the lesson.

The tools were not completely changed. They were simply modified before the actual data collection process started. This was sufficient to ensure more effective data collection and analysis.

### **3.7 Data collection procedures**

Permission was obtained from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education, and then a letter was sent to the Director of the Khomas Education region seeking permission for this study to be conducted at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School (see Appendix 1). This letter explained the purpose and importance of the research study. Another letter was directed to the school principal and the teachers in order to acquire permission to conduct the research at the school and to seek their participation (see Appendix 2). The procedures followed are discussed in 3.9 (research instrument) for each of the research tools used.

### 3.8 Data presentation and analysis procedures

In this study, common trends in the data collected were analysed by adapting the steps developed by Creswell (1998) in data analysis. These data analysis steps proposed by Creswell were adapted to this study as follow:

1. Organisation of details about the case. The specific views of teachers on reflective practice and teaching were arranged orderly (pros and cons) grouped accordingly. This made it easy to induce themes and possible theories from the data collected.
2. Categorization of data. The researcher then categorised the gathered responses into the three main categories, namely: *reflective orientation*, for the participants whose perceptions advocate reflective practice. *Unreflective orientation*, for the participants who do not support reflective practice and *intermediate orientation*, for the participants who partially support and partially reject reflective practice (Creswell, 1998).
3. Interpretation of single instances. Specific responses that deviated from the common responses were examined for the specific meaning they might have in relation to the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice and teaching.
4. Identification of patterns. The perceptions of teachers on reflective practice and teaching were scrutinized for underlying themes and other patterns that characterize their perceptions on reflective practice and teaching more broadly than a single piece of information can reveal.

5. Analysed data according to age, gender, teaching experience, training received and to see if a pattern emerged around these issues.
6. Synthesis and generalisation. The overall portrait of the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice and teaching were constructed. Conclusions were drawn that could have implications beyond the specific perceptions of teachers on reflective practice and teaching that has been studied.

### **3. 9. Triangulation of the information generated through the three tools used in the study**

The researcher ensured validity and reliability of the information obtained through the three tools used to collect data in this study by asking questions which are similar in intent but different in structure and format. The researcher used the three tools under the main themes of this study in order to look for commonalities and differences within the collected data.

### **3. 10 Ethical considerations**

The principal together with the teachers were both assured that, the information obtained from them was to be used for the purposes of the research only, and their personal opinions would be kept confidential. The research was not conducted to harm teachers; rather it was done in order to discover ways in which teachers could understand their own practices so that recommendations can be made to improve practice. There was no use of names or identifiable information revealed on any of the study participants.

## **Summary**

This chapter explained the type of this research, the design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments used, reasons for piloting the study, data collection procedures, data presentation and analysis procedures. The chapter further looked at how information gathered through the three tools that were used to collect data in this study was triangulated. The last part of this chapter discussed ethical principles in research that were followed in this research.

The next chapter discusses the findings of this study which were unveiled by means of analyzing and discussing the data collected in each of the research tool used to collect data in this study.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher presents analysis of the data and discusses the findings of this research. The data is analysed and discussed to clarify the meaning behind the collected data. The findings are presented according to the three tools used to collect data in this study. The researcher drew conclusions from the data collected through each of the data collection tools. The conclusion drawn from the data collected were used as solutions to the three objectives of this study. The findings analysed and discussed as follows:

Questionnaire data: under the questionnaire the following information was analysed and discussed: background details of the participants, models of reflective practice being followed at Dawid Bezuidenhout High, levels of reflective practice and finally, views of teachers' at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on the necessity of reflective practice in teaching.

Lesson observation data: under the lesson observations, the researcher analysed and discussed findings under the following stages of the lesson presentation: The introductory phase, the presentation phase and conclusive phase of the lesson, the relevant indicators in the above mentioned stages of the lesson plan were used to establish the models of reflective practice in use at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School and the application of reflective practice.

Interview data: interviews were held in order to seek answers about the views of teachers on the place of reflective practice in teaching. The following are some of the major points that were analysed and discussed during the interview. What do you think reflective practice is all about? The necessity of introducing reflective practice in all teacher training programs, engagement of

teachers in reflective practice, reinforcement of reflective practice at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School and finally strategies used to foster learners' understanding.

## 4.2 Questionnaire data

### 4.2.1 Background details of the participants

According to the data that was collected through the questionnaires, nine out of fourteen research participants were males. The remaining sample of five participants was made up of females. Within the male participants, collected data revealed that two of the male research participants were in possession of honors' degrees, two of them were in possession of bachelor's degrees and five of them were holders of teaching diplomas. For the five female research participants, data revealed that three of them were in possession of a bachelor's degree in education, while the other two were in possession of teaching diplomas.

Collected data further indicated the universities and colleges from which the research participants obtained their qualifications.

Table 1: Number of research participants who obtained their qualifications from the different institutions.

University	University of Namibia	University of The Western Cape	University of Zimbabwe	Belvedere Technical Teacher's College (in Zimbabwe)	North West University
Number of participants	5	4	2	2	1

As can be seen in Table 1(previous page), the participants in this research obtained their teaching qualifications from five different universities. The University of Namibia and the University of Western Cape had the highest number of graduates, nine of the participants either studied at the University of Namibia or at the University of Western Cape. The remaining five participants obtained their teaching qualifications at the following Universities: University of Zimbabwe, two participants, Belvedere Technical Teacher’s College (in Zimbabwe), two participants and North West University, one participant.

The data collected also revealed that six of the participants had teaching experience before they were appointed as teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. Eight of the participants gained their teaching experience at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School as they had no teaching experience when they were appointed at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. It was also discovered that at the point of data collection for this research, the total teaching experience for the individual participants ranged from a single year of teaching experience to twenty five years.

Table 2: Gender, teaching experience and academic qualifications of the participants

Research participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Gender	F	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	M	M	F	F	M	F
Qualification	B. Ed	B. Ed	BA LTD	B. Ed	Dip. Ed	Hon. Econ	B. Ed hon	PGD. Ed	Dip. Ed	B E T D	H ED	STD PG	Dip. Ed	B. Ed
Teaching experience	3	21	10	5	1	10	25	5	4	1	24	25	2	4

#### *4.2.2 Models of reflective practice being followed at Dawid Bezuidenhout High*

The literature consulted states that there are three distinctive models of reflective practice namely; reflective journaling, reflective supervision and action research. The responses of teachers on reflective practice have been used to draw conclusions about the models of reflective practice used by the participating teachers.

The participants were unfamiliar with the distinctive models of reflective practice. Three of the research participants who indicated that they were aware of models of reflective practice were further asked to describe any model they knew. The following were the answers given by the three research participants; “*learner centered teaching approach, tests, worksheets and self evaluation forms*”. As can be seen in the literature of this study, none of the answers provided by the three research participants above was an example of any model of reflective practice. This implies that, in general the research participants were not familiar with the models of reflective practice. However, after the analysis of data collected from the participants through the questionnaire, it was apparent that the models of reflective practice that are being implemented at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School are mainly reflective journaling, a combination of reflective journaling and reflective supervision.

##### *4.2.2.1 Reflective journaling*

The data collected through the questionnaire has shown that, nine of the research participants were following reflective journaling in the pursuit to apply reflective practice. This was deduced from the list of options on page- 3 of the questionnaire subtitle (application of reflective practice), where participants were asked to choose ways in which they were applying reflective

practice in teaching. Nine of the participants indicated that they usually took note of what goes on in their classes during teaching and worked on possible improvements on weaknesses identified. Reflective journaling is important in order to rectify mistakes observed in previous lessons or find alternatives for future teaching.

#### *4.2.2.2 A combination of Reflective journaling and Reflective supervision*

Data analysis revealed that a few number of the participants (two) indicated that a combination of two models of reflective practice namely; reflective journaling and reflective supervision were being followed. Reflective supervision was implemented through the visits of the heads of departments who conducted lesson observations and held discussions with the teacher as a form of feedback to the teacher at the end of the lesson.

#### *4.2.2.3 Other models of reflective practice that emerged from the study*

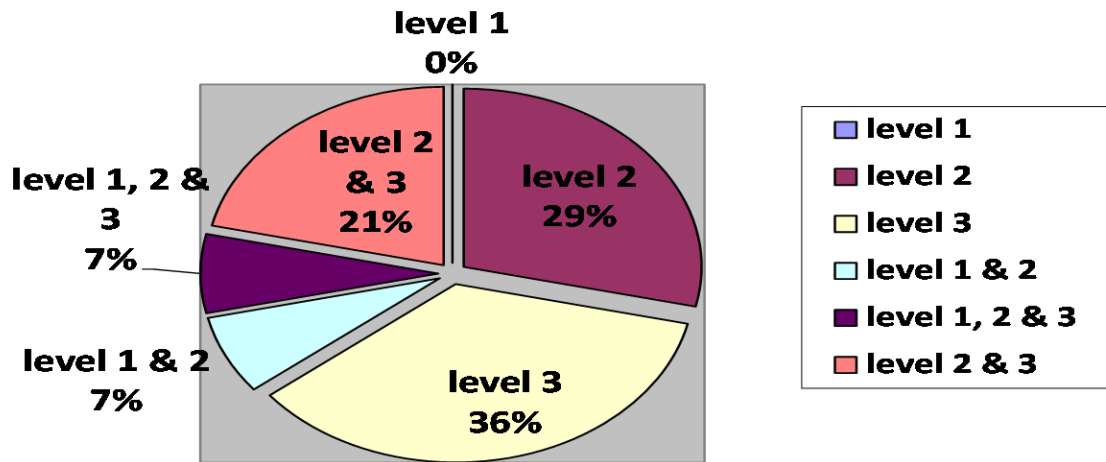
Three participants indicated that they engaged in reflective practice using other models that the researcher could not fit in either of the models of reflective practice cited in the literature of this study. These participants indicated that they engaged in reflective practice by asking learners to evaluate their teaching and give feedback. Others indicated that they drew reflections of their teaching quality by reading the facial expressions of the learners. They also indicated that they would try different methods of teaching the same lesson if they saw signs of confusion or lack of comprehension from their learners.

#### *4.2.3 Levels of reflective practice at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School*

When teachers engage in reflective practice, their level of engagement in the process can be determined under three levels (arranged from basic level to the more complex level of reflection)

namely; level one: (Technical rationality), level two: Practical plan and level three: critical reflection (<http://orgonstate.edu/instruct/ed555/zone1/reflect.htm.9/9/2008.11:23>).

Fig 2: A pie chart indicating the percentages of teachers who engaged in reflective practice at different levels.



#### 4.2.3.1 Level 1: Technical Rationality

The data collected indicated that all teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School were engaging in reflective practice at different levels. The data revealed that none of the teachers was engaged in reflective practice at level one (technical rationality) only. Teachers engaged in reflective practice at level one (technical rationality) in conjunction with other levels of engagement in reflective practice. That means, teachers were not only considering the technical application of educational knowledge and basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining the desired objectives. Teachers were rather considering the technical application of educational knowledge and basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining the desired objectives in conjunction with other variables that could hinder learning from successfully taking place. Teachers who only engaged in reflective practice at level one were less likely to improve learning, because they

do not consider the effect of society and other learning obstacles on learning. This level is considered to be the lowest level of engaging in reflective practice, therefore it has a little impact on improving teaching (<http://orgonstate.edu/instruct/ed555/zone1/reflect.htm.9/9/2008.11:23>). This meant that none of the research participants were engaging in reflective practice at the lowest level.

#### *4.2.3.2 Level 2: Practical Plan*

This level of reflective practice had the second highest percentage of (29%) teachers engaging in reflective practice. That means twenty nine percent of the teachers concentrated on the relationship between some situation and the actions of the teacher and learners that could influence the achievement of the desired objectives of a lesson. In addition to that, the teachers also considered the effect of the broader classroom, and school or community in learning. At this level, the teachers were concerned with clarifying assumptions and predispositions underlying competing pedagogical goals while assessing the educational consequences towards which a teaching action leads. This is the intermediate level of reflective practice.

#### *4.2.3.3 A combination of level 1 & 2 (Technical Rationality and Practical Plan)*

From the data that was collected, it was discovered that some teachers engaged in reflective practice at both the first level of reflective practice (technical rationality) and at the second level of reflective practice (practical plan). A total percentage of seven represented the number of teachers who engaged in reflective practice at both the technical rationality level (level one) and the practical plan level (level two). This means that, such teachers were considering the technical application of educational knowledge and basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining

the desired objectives in conjunction with considerations about the relationship between some situations and the actions of the teacher and learners that could influence the achievement of the desired objectives of a lesson.

#### *4.2.3.4 A combination of level 1, 2 &3 (Technical Rationality, Practical Plan and Critical Reflection)*

In addition to considerations discussed above, seven percent of the teachers also considered level three (critical reflection) as they engaged in reflective practice. That means, in addition to technical rationality and practical plan levels of engaging in reflective practice, such teachers reflected deeper and broader - outside the individual - and focused on such things as commitment to social justice.

#### *4.2.3.5 A combination of level 2 & 3 (Practical Plan and Critical Reflection)*

Data collected revealed that twenty one percent of the teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School engaged in reflective practice at the practical plan and critical reflection levels of reflective practice. This implies that such teachers were ignorant of considering the technical application of educational knowledge and basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining the desired objectives.

#### *4.2.3.6 Level 3: critical reflection*

Critical reflection is the highest level of engagement in reflective practice. According to an article obtained from (<http://orgonstate.edu/instruct/ed555/zone1/reflect.htm.9/9/2008.11:23>), “levels of reflective practice are developmental, and not everyone will progress through the levels to reach critical reflection”. Collected data revealed that, thirty six percent (see fig 2 on

page 47) of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School engaged in reflective practice at the critical level of reflection. This was the highest number of teachers who engaged in reflective practice at any other level. Critical reflection is viewed as a non-defensive stance in remaining open-minded to moral and ethical considerations to educational processes. That means, most teachers reflected deeper and broader, outside the individual and focused on such things as commitment to social justice. This means that most of the teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School were engaging in reflective practice at the highest level.

*4.2.4 Views of teachers at Dawid Dezuidehouth High School on the importance of reflective practice in teaching.*

The researcher assessed the participant’s basic understanding about the importance of reflective practice by asking them a series of questions in the questionnaire. One of the questions asked participants to whether or not they ever heard about reflective practice.

Table 3: Responses of the participants to question 1, Section C on the questionnaire: Have you ever heard about reflective practice?

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Teachers	10	4

The table above a clearly shows that a high number, ten out of fourteen teachers have heard about reflective practice in relation to those who have never heard about reflective practice. In order to investigate the basic understanding of teachers who indicated that they have heard about

the concept of reflective practice, teachers were given open lines / spaces to write a brief definition of what they thought reflective practice was all about (see appendices 3, section C, number 1). A variety of definitions were given. The most important point evident in the definitions given referred to the core of reflective practice which is; Reflective practice can be defined as a response to past experience(s) and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience(s) as a basis for evaluation, decision-making, planning and acting (Syrjala, 1996). Here are some of the definitions given by the participants; “reflective practice is all about evaluating your work to see if what you taught was well understood”, “it is all about confirming whether what was taught was understood and to see if the objectives were obtained”, it is all about self evaluation and evaluation of learners’ progress in the subject”, “it is about checking the success or failure in teaching in order to know how to improve in order to help the situation in future”. As can be seen from the definitions provided afore, the research participants demonstrated understanding that reflective practice was about evaluating the situation at hand with the ultimate intent of making improvements to the prevailing situation. One of the definitions provided by one of the participants reads as follows “reflective practice is about looking back at your teaching practice in order to try and identify areas which need improvement and work on them”. This is in line with what was stated by Stenhouse (1975) who said that, teachers should act as researchers of their own practice and should develop the curriculum through practical enquiry. Teachers are principally expected to plan, to make provisions and to act. Reflective teachers also need to monitor, observe and collect data about themselves, the children’s intentions, actions and feelings. This evidence needs to be critically analysed and evaluated so that it can be shared, judgments made and decisions taken (Stenhouse, 1975., Kolb, 1984 & Dewey, 1933).

A small number of teachers indicated that they have never heard about reflective practice. The concern that emanated from their situation was, how do these teachers make time to look back at their ways of teaching in order to make improvements? After thorough probing, these participants indicated that they rely on the outcomes of tests and examinations as the basis for reflection on teaching and learning in their classrooms. By implication, such teachers could be continuously repeating the same kind of mistakes in teaching which are detrimental to the understanding of learners in their specific subject areas.

After establishing the participants' understanding about the importance of reflective practice in teaching, the next sub question on the questionnaire probed the teachers to clarify why they thought reflective practice was important in teaching. The most frequent response was that, "it is important in order to identify mistakes and then make an effort to address these mistakes". Surprisingly, even those who stated that they never heard about reflective practice in the questionnaire, they were able to give their views on the importance of reflective practice in teaching after probing them through the interview. One of the participants who indicated that he/she never heard about reflective practice said "*reflective practice is important because it helps the teacher to improve on their weakness and keep up their strength*".

In order to be able to gather the views of teachers about the necessity of reflective practice in teaching, the questionnaire was used. Most of the teachers indicated that they were aware of reflective practice. Ten out of fourteen teachers indicated that they strongly agreed that a reflective teacher is one who observes and reflects on his/her own teaching and uses reflection as a way of bringing about change in his/her teaching (see appendix 3, section C number 2).

Table 4: Responses of participants to point number 2, Section C on the questionnaire

A reflective teacher is one who observes and reflects on his or her own teaching, and uses observations and reflection as a way of bringing about change in his or her teaching and learning.			
Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	10	0	0

Ideally, this means that teachers accepted that reflective practice is an integral aspect of teaching. A successful reflective teacher should be able to identify his/her strengths and weaknesses in the lesson presentation in order to find alternative ways to overcome the weaknesses and to be able to keep up with the strengths of his/her lesson presentation.

From the data collected, the researcher deduced that the understanding of teachers about the teaching profession usually changes when they officially join the teaching fraternity. Reasons for change in the teachers' understanding of the teaching fraternity after joining the profession vary from the ideological conception of ideal classrooms to the pragmatic classroom situations. Some of the frequently cited changes that take place includes: change in the teaching methodologies, teachers tend to adapt their teaching approach to the stream of learners in a particular class; change in the subject content understanding through experience; change in the ability to be more accommodative and more tolerant to the slow learners; change in ways of reaching out to their learners. A few other changes to the teachers' understanding about the teaching profession after joining were cited but the ones mentioned above were the most frequently cited by the participants. This signifies reflective practice at work, because it takes reflection to ponder about

what goes around in the classroom followed by discovering the ideal solutions necessary to handle the situation in the classroom.

The participants in this research were asked to indicate some of the ways in which they usually made time to reflect on their teaching (think and re-think about their teaching). The most prevalent form of reflection from their responses was a form of reflection that may be classified as summative reflection. This is mainly because the teachers indicated that they tend to rely on the feedback obtained from the results of learners at the end of term or end of year examinations. Teachers also indicated some form of formative reflection in that they also used learners' responses during lessons to determine the extent to which they have successfully managed to reach the desired objectives in their particular lessons. Other teachers indicated that they engaged in self-reflection at the end of each lesson, they looked at their weaknesses and strengths and then they worked out strategies to overcome their weaknesses. The researcher felt that, relying on the results of learners as a way of self-reflection may not be the best way to engage in self-reflection for the following reasons: it might be too late to wait until the end of year or end term's results to determine one's weaknesses in order to impact change in teaching. The second reason is that results obtained by a learner at the end of the year or end of the term may be influenced by many other factors, not necessarily related to the teacher's ability to teach.

One of the participants responded as follows on the questionnaire "*I do not do self-reflection because it is time consuming, I am only concerned about finishing the syllabi*". The researcher followed up on this statement by asking this particular participant about his views on the aspect of rushing to merely finish the syllabi as opposite to accomplish the objectives of the syllabi. Accomplishing the objectives of the syllabi, according the researcher entails finding better ways

to enhance content delivery, to investigate ways of reaching out to all learners, to successfully facilitate learning. This particular participant simply insisted that there was not enough time for reflecting on teaching. He further questioned “which of the two situations is better, to focus on reflection and trying new strategies in teaching so that you are eventually unable to finish the syllabi or to teach without reflections and finish the syllabi. It is important to note that finishing the syllabi may not mean anything if learning did not take place”.

The researcher further investigated the views of teachers about why they thought it was important to do self-reflection in teaching. A variety of answers were given, which included; “*to improve results through correcting mistakes discovered after reflections are done, to keep learning because a good teacher never stops learning, to be better teachers, to determine the extent to which the lesson objectives are being achieved and finally for professional development*”. This clearly shows that teachers, (including those who do not do self-reflection) were aware of the benefits of self-reflection in teaching.

In summary, it can be deduced that most teachers are aware of reflective practice and to an extent they apply it in their teaching. There is however a small number of teachers who do not seem to recognize the importance of reflective practice in teaching. These teachers tend to look at reflective practice as a waste of time because the syllabi needs more time to finish.

#### **4.3 Lesson Observation data**

In order to determine the application of reflective practice in teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School, the researcher included indicators of reflectivity in the lesson observation schedule (Appendix 4). The lesson observation schedule was used to check the aspects of reflective

practice that needed to be displayed during teaching. In order to have the overall idea about the application of reflective teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School, the researcher observed lesson presentations in classes of the fourteen participants. A lesson observation schedule was used as a tool to gather data about the application of reflective practice in teaching.

When teachers apply reflective practice in their teaching, the following attributes of reflectivity are inevitable. Such attributes include: a proper introduction of the topic; followed by an adequate statement of objectives; continuous observation/awareness of learner's activities during lesson presentation and ultimately, a brief reflection on the topic discussed in class to conclude the lessons. This could be done by asking learners to give a brief summary about what was learned in that particular lesson.

#### *4.3.1 The introductory phase of the lesson*

Stating the lesson objectives at the beginning of the lesson is a necessity for all reflective teachers. This is mainly because objectives of a lesson help to guide the attention of both the learners and the teacher. It helps to facilitate the evaluation of attainment of progress of learners in all subjects. During the lesson observation period, the researcher found that only eight teachers out of fourteen teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School introduced the objectives of the lesson at the beginning of the lesson. The data collected revealed that the objectives were well stated and appealed to the thinking level of learners. The stated objectives in the classes observed were realistic; hence they were accomplished during the time allocated to the specific period. The researcher also observed that about six teachers out of fourteen did not introduce the objectives of the lesson; they rather jumped into the presentation of the lesson and proceeded with the lesson to the end. Those teachers who did not introduce the objectives of the lesson did

not ask learners to reflect on the topic at the end of the lesson. They did not give opportunities to learners to summarise or to state any aspects learned during the lesson.

After introducing the objectives of the lesson, a reflective teacher is expected to find a method or means to massage his way into the lesson (Swarts, 1998). Lessons which were properly introduced caught and kept the focus of learners' attention the longest in class. Swarts (1998), further states that the introduction of any lesson should be relevant to the topic to be taught and may also be linked to the previous day's topic.

In most classes observed, teachers creatively introduced the content of the lesson by narrating a short story, asking a series of questions about the previous day's work and a few questions relating to the new topic. Furthermore, the researcher observed a few classes where the teacher simply jumped into middle of the lesson without a good introduction of the lesson. It was evident that in classes where an introduction of objectives was made, learners were attentive and focused, where as in the classes where the teacher started teaching without stating the objectives of the lesson learners paid less attention and focus.

In one of the classrooms, the teacher handed back test papers to learners. The learners performed poorly and the teacher did not make any effort to motivate learners to perform better in future before discussing the correct answers of the test paper.

The results were poor (about seventy percent of the learners got marks lower than fifty percent) and the teacher was expected to do a bit of reflection on factors that may have hampered comprehension of the topic on which the test was based. Most learners did not look worried or concerned about their low marks; the teacher was expected to remind learners about the effects

of poor performance on their academic achievement and future life in general. The teacher simply started discussing the correct responses to the questions on the test paper. Some learners did not even bother to do corrections and the teacher did not seem to notice that some learners were not doing corrections.

Based on the data collected above, it can be concluded that a lesson without proper introduction of its objectives does not commit learners to pay attention or remain focused. It can be further suggested that a lesson without the introduction of the learning objectives does not provide learners with guidelines on important areas to focus on hence making it impossible for the teacher to do any reflections about the success of the lesson.

#### *4.3.2 The presentation phase of the lesson*

After introducing the topic, the next phase was the presentation of the lesson. In this phase the teacher was expected to clarify the content of the topic so that eventually the objectives of the lesson are realized. Learners should understand the content of the lesson during this phase. During the observations, the researcher observed the abilities of some teachers to incorporate learning aids into their teaching in order to facilitate understanding of the topic by learners. The researcher noted the creative use of the chalk board and how the teachers switched from illustrating simple drawings on the chalk board to displaying complex drawings on the overhead projector (OHP). In some classes however, teachers did not use any extra learning aids. The chalkboard was solely used in teaching the entire period. According to Swarts, (1998) a reflective teacher should be creative and inventive. He/she should be able to create an environment where learners construct their understanding under his/her auspices. The learners should be more engaged in learning and the teacher should facilitate the process, hence the

concept of learner centered approach. Learner centered approach to teaching is an integral aspect of reflective teaching (Swarts, 1998).

During lesson presentation, it was very important to logically present the content of the lesson to the learners. Learning had to take place sequentially. Learning sequence might be defined as a step by step process by which learning took place during lesson presentation (Darling-Hamond & Bransford, 2005). The content of the lesson should have horizontal and vertical dimensions. According to MEC, (1998) horizontal dimension refers to the interconnection or the connectivism within the different subjects in a school curriculum, while the vertical dimension refers to the depth of content covered by the teacher in a specific topic of a particular subject.

The researcher discovered that, in some classes teachers treated their lessons as a separate entity from other subjects and even as a separate entity from other topics in the same subject. This was mainly evident in the fact that the teachers did not make any effort to link the topic either to the previous topic done in class or to other subjects done by the learners. Such tendencies in teaching may lead to fragmented learning; fragmented learning may result in inadequate comprehension and ultimately lead to poor performance in certain subjects at the final examinations (Shaningwa, 2005 & Larrivee, 2008). Five of the observed participants did not relate their new lesson to the previous lessons or to any other subject. This might have created gaps in the learners' knowledge because a lack of continuity (connectivism) in learning may hamper the comprehension of learners in a particular subject. The other participants linked their new lessons to previous lessons and to a certain extent a few teachers connected the topic of the day to other subjects done by the learners. Teachers mainly related their new lesson to the previous lessons by asking questions based on the previous day's topic then creatively introduced the new topic in the

process. In other words, teachers used what is already known by the learners as a starting point towards teaching what may not be known by the learners.

As the data collected reveals, a considerable number of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School were applying reflective practice in teaching; however, the researcher felt that they lacked proper knowledge on how to apply reflective practice in teaching. This could be the same reason that accounts for the absence of reflective practice in the classrooms of other teachers observed, who indicated that they were not familiar with reflective practice.

#### *4.3.2.1 Time management*

The objectives of all lessons should be set in reconciliation with the time allocated for the specific lesson. A creative and effective teacher should ensure that all aspects of the lesson (introduction, presentation, reinforcement and homework) fit within the lesson period. Time was effectively managed in most classes, especially in the classes where the lesson objectives were clearly stated.

#### *4.3.2.2 Communication*

Communication is an integral aspect of day to day teaching. An effective teacher should be articulate, eloquent and a good listener. Communication in classes should be both ways. According to Swarts, (1998) the teacher should properly communicate the expected lesson outcomes to the learners. During the observation of lessons, the researcher observed that most of the teachers communicated well with their learners. Ten out of fourteen teachers kept a good tone, steady pace and most of the teachers were loud enough for all learners to hear. During lesson presentation, the researcher noticed that most teachers varied their tone. The alteration of

the tone was used for different reasons. The tone was altered to caution noise makers or it was sometimes altered to attract learners' attention. Altering the tone helped to guide the level of concentration of learners in class. There was a mutual two way communication between the teachers and the learners. Learners responded to the questions asked by their teachers, and at times learners asked questions in order to seek clarifications. The teachers listened very well to the questions of learners and responded with their best level of subject knowledge.

#### *4.3.3 Conclusive phase of the lesson*

The conclusive phase of the lesson is the last phase in lesson presentation. At this phase, the teacher seeks to consolidate all aspects of the lesson in order to foster a universal understanding of the lesson. From the observations made during data collection, this area of lesson presentation was of a major concern. About five out of fourteen teachers did not make provisions for opportunities for learners to summarise the lesson. When learners are not given opportunities to reflect on the topic taught, the teacher may assume that there are no misconceptions or confusion in learners. A reflective teacher would therefore, constantly make time to allow learners to participate in class and at the end of the lesson and should make provision to ask learners to summarise the content of the lesson for the particular day (Swarts, 1998 & Schon, 1996).

When learners are given a chance to summarise the content of the lesson, a reflective teacher will carefully listen to the responses of learners and use the information as a basis of reflection on the extent to which the presentation was successful. The researcher therefore, would explain the lack of opportunities by learners for summarizing lesson content in certain classes observed was a result of lack of understanding on the importance of allowing learners to do a summary of the topic learned in every lesson.

#### *4.3.4 Models of reflective practice in use at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School*

During the lesson observations, the researcher had an opportunity see how the participants keep records of their classroom activities. Most teachers kept records of their daily teaching activities in the lesson preparation file. At the end of the lesson, the researcher held a discussion with each of the participants. Nine teachers indicated that they kept records of their lesson proceedings in order to conduct a lesson fault diagnosis process. One of the participants indicated that lesson fault diagnosis was important for improving the quality of teaching. The other three teachers did not seem to take record of their classes apart from the lesson plans in their lesson planning files. This means that nine teachers were following reflective journaling as a model of reflective practice.

The researcher observed two classes in which there were heads of departments conducting class visits. This immediately indicated that reflective supervision was taking place. At the end of the lesson the head of department discussed the lesson observed with the teacher. Participants were unfamiliar with the distinctive models of reflective practice therefore, the way in which the lessons were delivered, activities they conducted during the lesson and the way they handled classroom management were used to place the participants in to the right model of reflective practice.

#### *4.3.5. Application of reflective practice at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School*

The participants were not familiar with the concept of reflective practice but the study revealed that most teachers were engaging in reflective practice. This was significant in that, eight out of the fourteen participants introduced the objectives of their lessons before engaging in the

delivery phase of the lesson content. These eight participants who introduced the lesson objectives concluded the lesson by asking learners to summarise the content of the lesson. This is a good indicator of a reflective teacher. The feedback provided by the learners in their endeavor to summarise the content of the lesson is a crucial bench mark in reflecting on the success of the lesson (Swarts, 1998). The participants also involved learners during the lesson. Learner centered education is an integral component of reflective teaching (Swarts, 1998). Most teachers managed time effectively, especially in the classes where the objectives of the lesson were introduced. Time management is important in reflective practice because the practitioner needs to do reflections after completing a task within the given time frame.

#### **4.4 Interview data**

A series of questions were asked during the interview in order to clarify the responses of teachers on the questionnaire and the observations made during classroom lessons presentation. The responses of participant were discussed under the respective sub-questions of the interview as follows:

##### *4.4.1 What do you think reflective practice is all about?*

Teachers were asked to give their view about what they thought reflective practice was all about. A variety of views were given to question one (see appendices, interview schedule). The most important point evident in the different views from the participants referred to the core of reflective practice which is; Reflective practice can be viewed as a response to past experience(s) and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience(s) as a basis for evaluation, decision-making, planning and acting (Syrjala, 1996). Here are some of the views given by the

participants; “reflective practice is all about evaluating your work to see if what you taught was well understood”, “it is all about confirming whether what was taught was understood and to see if the objectives were obtained”, “ it is all about self evaluation and evaluation of learners’ progress in the subject”, “it is about checking the success or failure in teaching in order to know how to improve in order to help the situation in future”. As can be seen from the definitions provided afore, the participants demonstrated understanding that reflective practice was about evaluating the situation at hand with the ultimate intent of making improvements to the prevailing situation. One of the views provided by one of the participants reads as follows “reflective practice is about looking back at your teaching practice in order to try and identify areas which need improvement and work on them”. This is in line with what was stated by Stenhouse (1975) who said that, teachers should act as researchers of their own practice and should develop the curriculum through practical enquiry.

#### *4.4.2 The need to introduce reflective practice in all teacher training programs*

The second question on the interview schedule asked the participant to state whether or not it was necessary to introduce reflective practice in all teachers training programs. Thirteen teachers indicated that it was very important to include reflective practice in all teacher training programs. They argued that, without the knowledge of reflective practice, teachers would not be able to find out their deficiencies in teaching and as such, they would not be able to improve their quality of teaching. The participants further suggested that the knowledge of reflective practice would help teachers to better understand how to apply reflective practice appropriately in teaching.

One participant out of fourteen held a different view about the inclusion of reflective practice in teacher training programs. This individual was quoted as saying “*reflective practice is not so important. It does not have to be included in the teacher training program because it will divert attention of the teachers away from teaching, which is the key aspect of the teaching profession*”. This participant was more concerned about teaching to finish the syllabi without really minding the quality of teaching taking place.

#### *4.4.3 Engagement of teachers in reflective practice at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School*

In order to find out the overall engagement of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School in reflective practice, an individual interview was held with the fourteen participants at separate occasions. From the interviews conducted, it was clear that teachers had mixed feelings about whether or not reflectivity is in practice at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School.

There were three categories of responses to the question: how do you think teachers at the school do reflection on their teaching? The categories are as follow: we do not think that reflective practice is taking place at our school; yes, reflective practice is taking place at our school and; we are not sure if reflective practice is taking place. About four out of fourteen teachers indicated that they do not think that reflective practice was taking place at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. In the next category, about seven out of fourteen teachers indicated that reflective practice was taking place. While in the third category, about three out of fourteen teachers seemed to be unsure whether reflective practice was taking place at the school or not.

The teachers, who indicated that reflective practice was taking place at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School, were further asked to explain how it was taking place. They indicated that

reflectivity was being done in different ways. Some of the ways in which reflectivity was being done included: lesson observations by the head of departments, which were concluded by a discussion of the lesson at the end, in most occasions teachers used tests and exams as a basis of reflectivity in teaching. If the performance of learners was poor in a specific subject, it was evident of inadequacies in teaching. The teacher would therefore be required to reflect on him/herself in order to improve on teaching. In most cases teachers who had poor performances in their subjects, addressed the situation by giving more time for remedial teaching. Remedial teaching was done in the form of afternoon classes.

#### *4.4.4 Reinforcement of reflective practice at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School*

The researcher wanted to find out whether teachers were encouraged to engage in reflective practice in any way at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. In order to establish this, the researcher asked the following question to the participants: How do you think reflective practice is encouraged at your school? From the gathered information, different responses were eminent. One of the responses was that the management usually asks teachers to do proper planning for every lesson in order to get good results at the end of the year. According to the participants, this encouraged teachers to critically analyse their lesson plans in order to execute teaching efficiently. In contrast to the statement above, the researcher was less impressed by the fact that a high number of the participants indicated that reflective practice was not necessarily encouraged. Six teachers indicated that reflective practice was not encouraged at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School.

The application of reflective practice depended on the individual teacher whether to do reflection or not. This was not impressive because without reflection teachers may be professionally

stunted, they may not be able to do reorientation of cognitive, behavioral and affective responses to the contextual demands of teaching (Scons, 1996). Ultimately that would lead to outdated practices in classrooms which could result in poor performances of learners at the end of year examinations.

Participants were further asked to shed their views on how they think engaging in reflective practice in teaching could influence the performance of learners at the end of year examinations. Most participants indicated that reflecting on daily experiences in classrooms is the starting point for better performance. The participants supported their answer by stating that reflecting on daily experiences in classrooms helps the teacher to identify any weaknesses so that remedial action can be taken. The participants also indicated that daily reflections also provide good opportunities for self-appraisal and professional growth.

Considering the overall importance of reflective practice in teaching, the researcher asked the participants to give suggestions about how to make reflective practice a greater part of teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. Some participants advocated for reinforcement of the learner centered approach as the key to the realization of reflective teaching. Other participants felt that it was necessary to introduce lesson plan forms with a section for self-reflection. They suggested that these lesson plans should therefore be introduced officially as the recommended lesson plans at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. This would ensure that all teachers do self-reflection for each lesson taught. The participants further recommended regular visits by HOD's to classrooms in order to observe lessons and write recommendations for areas of weakness identified during observations. It was also suggested that on departmental level, the head of departments should introduce internal policies that require teachers to do reflections either

individually or collectively. Other participants were of the idea that teachers should acquaint themselves with the appropriate steps necessary to carry out proper reflections of one self. This is a crucial idea because teachers need to know how to reflect in order to be able to engage in reflective practice. One of the participants indicated a lack of idea about any suggestion on how to make reflective practice more part of teaching.

#### *4.4.5 Strategies used to foster learners' understanding.*

From the data collected, it was eminent that most of the participants had strategies in place that they used to ensure that each of the learners in their class understood the content of the lesson taught. However, two of the participants out of fourteen did not respond to this question on the questionnaire. This left the researcher speculating as to whether it meant that such participants had no strategies at all or what the reason may be for their non-response. Therefore, during the individual interview, the researcher took the opportunity to ask the participants who did not indicate the strategies used in their lessons to foster understanding to clarify how they reinforced the subject knowledge into the learners. These participants simply indicated that they were not aware of any strategy. The following were some of the strategies cited by the teachers who indicated that they had strategies that they used to foster learning; “*posing a number of questions to learners in different ways through proper facilitation (learner centered approach); testing and retesting; using peer teaching; group discussions; clearly stating the objectives of each lesson from the beginning; through motivation of the importance of each topic before teaching the topic; ensuring silence during lesson presentation and catching learners' attention to the lessons all the time through recap / reflections at the end of each lesson*”. A differentiated combination of the strategies mentioned above could greatly enhance the understanding of learners in all

classrooms. This was evident to the point that teachers are working hard in seeking alternative ways that could help them to reach out to their learners.

Teachers were also asked to state a few things (if any) they wish they could change about themselves in order to be able to teach to their full potential. The following are some of the cited issues that teachers thought if they could change them, they could teach to their full potential: *‘impatience; being disorganized at times; procrastination; time management; their age; availability of resources in their respective subjects; time to attend to individual differences; control of self-temper; tolerance to slow learners; awareness of learners levels of understanding; increased revision time; proper tone and pace control; being more practical in science subjects; through conducting more practical work and providing in-depth knowledge about the subject content’*. If teachers really want to enhance their ability to engage in reflective practice, they ought to avoid being pessimistic about other factors that are regarded as stumbling blocks to the process of reflective practice. According to Darling-Hammon and Bransford (2005), if teachers are to apply reflective effectively in their classrooms, they need to develop flexibility for experimentation and innovation in their classrooms, thus becoming “adaptive experts” who continuously add to their knowledge, skill and professional commitment throughout their career.

## **Summary**

In this chapter the researcher presented findings and discussion of the data collected through the three tools (questionnaire, lesson observations and interviews) used to the gather data for this study. The discussion of the data was organized according to the tools used to collect data. The first discussions of findings were based on the data collected through questionnaires, secondly by

lesson observation and finally the discussion of interview data. The data collected through the questionnaire, lesson observations and interviews provided answers to the three main objectives of this study. The participants were not familiar with the concept of reflective practice. One participant was quoted as asking “what is reflective practice”. After a thorough clarification of the concept of reflective practice by the researcher, data collected revealed that most participants viewed reflective practice as a crucial aspect of teaching.

Data further revealed that most the teachers were engaging in reflective practice. The most common model of reflective practice that was used at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School is reflective journaling, followed by reflective supervision. According to the data collected, there was no action research (as a model of reflective practice) taking place at the school. The data further revealed that teachers were engaged in reflective practice at different levels, it showed that 36% of the teachers are engaged in reflective practice at level three (the critical level of reflection). The remaining percentage of teachers engaged in reflective practice at level one, level two or a combination of different levels.

The next chapter discusses the recommendation that emerged from the findings of this study. The finding will be discussed under two sub titles namely: recommendations for practice and recommendations for future research in reflective practice and teaching.

## **CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher presents a summary of the results of the findings, the conclusions based on the findings of the study and finally the recommendations. Recommendations are presented in two categories namely: recommendations to the Ministerial department of Education (the Regional Office of Education) and recommendations for future research in reflective practice and teaching.

### **5.2 Summary of the results of this study**

Results of this study have revealed that most participants viewed reflective practice as a crucial aspect of teaching. However, it appeared that teachers were not well equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge that is necessary to engage in proper reflective practice.

Though teachers were not equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge in applying reflective practice, data further revealed that most of the teachers were engaging in reflective practice. The most common model of reflective practice that was used at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School is reflective journaling, followed by reflective supervision. According to the data collected, there was no teacher using action research as a model of reflective practice. The data further revealed that teachers were engaged in reflective practice at different levels. Data has shown that 36% of the teachers of the school engaged in reflective practice at level three (the critical level of reflection). The remaining percentage of teachers engaged in reflective practice at level one, level two or a combination of different levels.

### **5.3 Conclusions (based on the results of the findings)**

In this study, the researcher concluded that there was a bit of confusion about reflective practice and the possibility of its application in teaching. Though the majority of the participants indicated to be aware of reflective practice, there was a lack of understanding in terms of applying the process of reflective practice in teaching. Literature and data collected in this research have shown that teaching and reflective practice are inseparable.

The data collected in this research has revealed that, a high number of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School are familiar with the process of reflective practice; however, they were less familiar with the concept of reflective practice itself. This was evident in the fact that most of the teachers indicated that they usually took time to think and re-think the teaching and learning process in their classrooms. The researcher also observed that in as much as the teachers were trying to do reflections about teaching and learning, there were deficiencies in skills and knowledge about the application of effective reflective practice. This is evident in some of the responses provided by the participants in the questionnaire where some participants indicated that they usually do reflections at the end of the term or end of the year. This happens when they use the examination results of learners as a judgment tool on how effective teaching and learning took place. Most teachers indicated that there is a need for reflective practice to be applied in teaching.

A reasonable number of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School were applying reflective practice in teaching; however the problem was that reflective practice was not done accordingly, hence there was no direct evidence that could be used to indicate that a certain model of reflective practice was followed. The researcher had to relate the teaching approaches of teachers

to the aspects of a specific model of reflective practice in order to place the particular teacher under a particular model of reflective practice.

For teachers to be able to engage in reflective practice properly there is a need for them to have knowledge on reflective practice. The researcher assumed that some teachers were not engaging in the process because they simply did not know how to effectively engage in the process. This situation is mainly because teacher training institutions do not offer or put adequate emphasis in reflective practice as stated by Swarts (1998).

Based on the situation above, the researcher recommends that teacher training institutions should include reflective practice in their teacher training programs. This would clarify the importance of reflective practice to teachers and would also equip the teachers with the techniques necessary to apply the process of reflective practice in teaching. That would help teachers to be flexible and innovative in adjusting to new circumstances in their classrooms in order to be able to teach successfully. The researcher would also like to encourage more research to be done in the area of teacher training programs and how they prepare teachers to become critical thinkers.

This study led to the introduction of a new lesson planning form (Appendix 6) which was recommended by the school management for use by every teacher at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School. This form provides room for reflections on the presentation of the lesson.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for practice**

As stated in this research, reflective practice and teaching are almost inseparable. In the data collected, it appeared that teachers were not well equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge that is necessary to engage in proper reflective practice. The researcher would

therefore like to recommend that universities and teaching colleges in Namibia and the world at large should consider introducing or emphasizing the inclusion of reflective practice in the teachers training programs. This would encourage professional growth in teachers. It also appeared as though reflective practice was not enforced at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School and in many other schools. The researcher would therefore recommend that the Ministry of Education through the relevant structures like advisory services, planning and inspectorate should enforce reflective practice in all teacher training institutions and in all schools.

All teachers training institutions should offer reflective practice as one of subject core. In schools it could be done by introducing compulsory reflection of lesson presentation once every week, using the collaborative method of reflective practice. This could help teachers to grow professionally and to widen their abilities to engage in critical thinking about their actions in class. The researcher believes that this would empower teachers to take reasonable decisions aimed at improving teaching and learning in the classroom.

The researcher would like to recommend that, the management of Dawid Bezuidenhout High School should take the initiative to introduce and reinforce the implementation of reflective practice in all classes. This would help teachers to find alternative ways of solving problems in their classrooms thereby increasing productivity and efficiency in teaching and learning. Here are suggested ways in which the management at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School could introduce reflective practice: introduce collaborative teaching, devise a system where learners rate or comment on teaching and learning experiences in different subjects (at the end of each term or year), design a uniform lesson preparation form that has a section for reflections and make it compulsory for all teachers to use. Reflective practice may not be very simple to apply in

daily teaching. It requires thorough understanding in order to be able to apply it successfully. The researcher would therefore recommend that at the beginning of the year, the management at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School should hire a specialist in the field of reflective practice to present a workshop in this regard so as to properly equip teachers with skills and knowledge on how to properly engage in reflective practice.

### **5.5 Recommendations for future research in reflective practice and teaching**

This section is directed to all researchers who may deem it necessary to conduct research in reflective practice and teaching. The following areas may be interesting to investigate: the training of teacher programs and how they prepare teachers to become critical thinkers, to investigate the perceptions of teachers in any region in Namibia about reflective practice and teaching, as well as how their perceptions affect teaching and learning. This would be necessary as it would provide a broader view of teachers' perception on reflective practice.

### **Summary**

This chapter presented a summary of the results of this study, conclusions (based on the results of the findings) and finally the recommendation made by the researcher based on the findings of the study. The recommendations were organized into two main categories namely: recommendations for practice and recommendations for further research in reflective practice. Under recommendation for practice, the researcher recommended that all teacher training programs should include reflective practice in their program. This is important because teachers need to know how to engage in reflective practice in order to be able to adapt to ever changing classroom environment and be able to provide quality teaching to their learners.

The second recommendation (recommendation for future research in reflective practice and teaching), the researcher encouraged future researchers to undertake research that would seek to expose how teacher training programs can prepare teachers to become critical thinkers. Critical thinking is an integral component of reflective practice.

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## APPENDICES:

### Appendix 1: A letter requesting permission from the director (Khomas region)

Box 4117  
Windhoek  
25 January 2010

The Director (Khomas education region)  
Ministry of education  
P/Bag

Dear Sir

Re: Request for permission to carry out a research study at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School

I am a young determined upcoming education researcher, currently teaching at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School.

I am in my final year for the Masters of Education Degree at the University of Namibia (Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Studies). As a requirement for partial fulfilment of the degree of master of education at the University of Namibia, I am interested in investigating the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice in teaching.

Reflective practice can be defined as a response to past experience(s) and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience(s) as a basis for evaluation, decision-making, planning and acting (Bartlett, 1990).

I therefore, seek to ask for your permission to allow me to collect the data that is necessary to accomplish this study. Only 14 teachers will be required to participate in this study. The research will not negatively interfere or affect teaching and learning, because the researcher intends to collect most of the data from teachers during their free time. Data will be collected over a period of one week only.

Attached is the summary of the study.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully

---

Simasiku Enock L (081 2925 902)

## Appendix 2: A letter requesting permission from the Principal

Box 4117  
Windhoek  
25 January 2010

The principal  
Dawid Bezuidenhout High School  
P/Bag  
Khomasdal  
Windhoek

Dear Sir

Re: Request for permission to carry out a research study at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School

I am a young determined upcoming education researcher, a member of your teaching personnel Dawid Bezuidenhout High School.

I am in my final year for the Masters of Education Degree at the University of Namibia (Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Studies). As a requirement for partial fulfillment of the degree of master of education at the University of Namibia, I am interested in investigating the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice in teaching.

Reflective practice can be defined as a response to past experience(s) and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience(s) as a basis for evaluation, decision-making, planning and acting (Bartlett, 1990).

I therefore, seek to ask for your permission to allow me to collect the data that is necessary to accomplish this study. Only 14 teachers will be required to participate in this study. The research will not negatively interfere or affect teaching and learning, because the researcher intends to collect most of the data from teachers during their free time. Data will be collected over a period of one week only.

Attached is the summary of the study.

Thanking you in anticipation

Yours faithfully

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Simasiku Enock L (081 2925 902)

### **Appendix 3: An individualised self completion questionnaire to the research participants**

#### **SELF- COMPLETION RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am a final year Masters of Education Degree student at the University of Namibia. As a requirement for partial fulfillment of the Degree of Masters of Education at the University of Namibia, I am interested in investigating the perceptions of teachers at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School on reflective practice.

Reflective practice can be defined as a response to past experience(s) and involves conscious recall and examination of the experience(s) as a basis for evaluation, decision-making, planning and acting (Syrjala, 1996).

The information provided by you in this study will be kept confidential and in writing up discussions of the data, none of it will be traceable back to you. Thank you for your time, willingness and openness.

#### **Section A**

##### **Instructions**

Use a cross (x) in the appropriate boxes where applicable. Fill in details in the spaces provided.

Background details

Male [  ]          Female [  ]

Highest qualification held: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the college / center where the qualification was obtained: \_\_\_\_\_

Year in which the qualification was obtained: \_\_\_\_\_

In which year were you appointed as a teacher at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you having any teaching experience when you got appointed at Dawid Bezuidenhout High School? Yes [  ] No [  ]

Years of teaching experience \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section B**

### **Models of reflective practice**

Are you aware of any models of reflective practice? Yes [  ] No [  ]. If yes, describe the model you know.

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I usually reflect on my teaching in the following ways:

- [  ] I do reflection of my teaching with a colleague, where we engage in observation of each other's ways of conducting duties (teaching) with the ultimate purpose of identifying and improving weaknesses in our teaching.
- [  ] I do reflection by monitoring, observing and collecting data on children's intentions, actions and feelings.

### **Levels of reflective practice**

When I reflect on my teaching, I especially pay attention to the following:

- [  ] I consider only the technical application of educational knowledge and basic curriculum principles for the purpose of attaining the desired objectives.
- [  ] I analyse the lesson to see how the objectives of the lesson are met.
- [  ] I ask critical questions about my teaching in order to aid about self evaluation.
- [  ] Any other, (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Application of reflective practice**

I engage in reflective practice in the following ways:

- [  ] I take notes of what goes on in my class during teaching and work on possible improvements on weakness identified (reflection of thinking and awareness of self-talk)
- [  ] My H.O.D usually observe my lessons and provide feedback afterwards.
- [  ] I do research aimed at enhancing my professional practice.

[ ] Any other, (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Section C**

**Teacher's view on reflective practice and teaching**

1. Have you ever heard about reflective teaching: yes [ ] no [ ]

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. A reflective teacher is one who observes and reflects on his or her own teaching and uses observations as well as the reflections as a way of bringing about change in their teaching and learning.

Agree [ ]      Strongly agree [ ]      Disagree [ ]      Strongly disagree [ ]

Support your answer to question 2 above \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. In which way do you think your understanding of teaching has changed since you started teaching.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. How do you make time to think and rethink about your teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Why do you think it is important to do self reflection in teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What strategies do you have in place to foster learners understanding while you are teaching?

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7. State a few things about yourself (if any) that you wish you could change so that you could teach to full potential.

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8. What would you consider to be the characteristics of a reflective teacher?

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9. How do think teachers should actively engage in reflective teaching?

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This is the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you

**Appendix 4: A lesson observation schedule**

**LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

**Teacher’s reflectivity**

Reflective teachers should be able to demonstrate application of the following aspects of reflective teaching in the process of teaching.

Subject	Number of learners	Date of observations
<p><b>A. Introductory phase</b></p> <p>* Objectives are attainable and challenging</p> <p>- Objectives are well stated:</p> <p>No ( )</p> <p>Yes ( )</p> <p>- Objectives appeal to the thinking capacity of learners:</p> <p>No ( )</p> <p>Yes ( )</p> <p>- Objectives can be attained within Stipulated:</p> <p>No ( )</p> <p>Yes ( )</p>	Comments	

\* Creative introduction

- The teacher uses a story or questions to gain the immediate attention of learners:

No ( )

Yes ( )

- The teacher has appropriate teaching

Aids:

No ( )

Yes ( )

- Objectives, learning

activities and resources are appropriate for the pupil's age and are well directed to them:

No ( )

Yes ( )

**B. Presentation Phase**

\* Teacher gained immediate interest

- All learners are paying attention:

No ( )

Yes ( )

<p>* Effective learning sequence takes place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The teacher relates the lesson content to the learners existing knowledge (starts with the known and then continues to the unknown): No ( ) Yes ( )</li><li>- Resources (chalk board, Textbooks others) are used properly: No ( ) Yes ( )</li><li>- Continuous interaction between teacher and learners: No ( ) Yes ( )</li><li>- The teacher included open/ higher level questions: No( ) Yes ( )</li></ul>	
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<p>* Positive Reinforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teacher puts emphasis on key areas, by changing the tone, repetition or other ways:  No (    )  Yes (    )</li> <li>- Opportunities exist to assess learners' progress:  No (    )  Yes (    )</li> <li>- The teacher probes learners thinking by asking follow up questions:  No (    )  Yes(    )</li> <li>- The teacher uses learners as resource persons by proving relevant stimuli to recall of relevant information:  No (    )  Yes(    )</li> <li>- The teacher provides immediate corrections to learners responses:  No (    )  Yes(    )</li> <li>- Time is effectively managed:  No (    )  Yes (    )</li> </ul>	
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\* Communication skills

- The teacher spoke clearly with a good tone:

No ( )

Yes ( )

- The teacher patiently listens to learners:

No ( )

Yes ( )

- The teacher communicate with all sectors of the class:

No ( )

Yes ( )

**C. Conclusive phase**

\* Appropriate questions are asked at the end of the lesson, e.g. what did you learn in today's lesson?

- Learners are given a chance to reflect on the content of the lesson (summarising):

No ( )

Yes ( )

<p>- Lesson is concluded with an activity or home work :</p> <p>No ( )</p> <p>Yes ( )</p> <p>- The teacher attends to a problem immediately it is discovered:</p> <p>No ( )</p> <p>Yes ( )</p> <p>- The teacher attends to the problem way after it is encountered:</p> <p>No ( )</p> <p>Yes ( )</p>	
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## **Appendix 5: An individual interview schedule**

### **Interview Schedule**

Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

Venue \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Introductory statement**

Thank you for allowing me time to carry out this interview with you. This interview is held as a follow up tool to the other tools of research used (Questionnaire and lesson observation schedule). Your responses will be treated confidentially.

1. What do you think reflective practice is all about?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. In the process of transforming teacher's education after independence, the Ministry of Education together with the relevant stake holders in formulation and implementation of education policies, introduced the concept of reflective practice in BETD program since 1990 when the program started.

a) Why do you think it was necessary to introduce reflective practice in all teachers training programs?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) How do you think teachers at your School do reflection in their teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_

c) How do you think reflective practice is encouraged at your School?

\_\_\_\_\_

d) In which ways do you think reflective practice can improve learning at your School

\_\_\_\_\_

e) What suggestions do you have, to make to make reflective practice more part of teaching?

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time

**Appendix 6: THE NEW LESSON PREPARATION FORM: DAWID BEZUIDENHOUT HIGH SCHOOL**

TEACHER	MR SIMASIKU E. L	Date: 24 -25/01/12
SUBJECT	BIOLOGY	
THEME AND TOPIC	The respiratory system	
TEACHING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES TO BE USED	CHALKBOARD [X], OHP [X ], DP [ ], TEXTBOOK [X], POSTER[], OTHERS[] (SPECIFY) _____	
LESSON OBJECTIVES: LEARNERS WILL:	Be able to demonstrate understanding about the respiratory system and its functions	
<b>BASIC COMPETENCIES (REFER TO THE SYLLABUS) LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain why we need the respiratory system</li> <li>2. Know the differences in composition between inspired (inhaled) and expired (exhaled) air</li> <li>3. Know the gross structure of organs associated with gaseous exchange</li> </ol>		
<b>PRESENTATION OF THE LESSON:</b>		
1. Monitoring of homework done		
2. An appropriate introduction	The respiratory system is responsible for the exchange of gases. Its common organs are: the nose and the lungs	

<p><b>3. Presentation of subject matter and learning activities:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss the need for having a respiratory system</li> <li>- Explain the differences in the comparison of inhaled and exhaled air in term of Carbon dioxide %, Oxygen %, moisture and temperature</li> <li>- Present and discuss the gross structure of organs associated with gaseous exchange</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Consolidation</b></p>	<p>Consolidation done through questioning the learners at the end of the lesson. What would happen if the respiratory system was to cease functioning? Why are there differences between inhaled and exhaled air.</p>
<p><b>5. Assessment/Homework/tasks/ Exercise</b></p>	<p>Learners given a worksheet</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP LEARNERS ENGLISH READING AND WRITING SKILLS IN THE SUBJECT</b></p>	
<p><b>Reading activities</b></p>	<p>Learners given a chance to read in class</p>
<p><b>Writing activities</b></p>	<p>Key notes / points given</p>
<p><b>Learning support teaching</b></p>	<p>Close monitoring of learner, checking on slow learners and giving the explanations where necessary</p>
<p><b>Reflection</b></p>	<p>Major objectives achieved within the stipulated period of time.</p> <p>The lesson was a success</p>