THE PRACTICE OF SELF-REFLECTION BY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE MANKWENG CIRCUIT, CAPRICORN DISTRICT

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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THE PRACTICE OF SELF-REFLECTION BY PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE MANKWENG CIRCUIT, CAPRICORN DISTRICT

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research topic "The practice of Self-Reflection by Primary School Teachers in the Mankweng Circuit, Capricorn District" hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Education in Curriculum studies. The work has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University; and the work is original version by me and all material used has been duly acknowledged.

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Mr K.S Malatji   Date

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigated the the practice of self-reflection by primary school teachers in the Mankweng Circuit, Capricorn District. The aim of the research was to investigate the practice of self-reflection by primary school teachers, in order to suggest and encourage them to use reflective models that will help them improve their practice. The literature revealed that the use reflective models can help teachers to realize their mistakes and improve their practice. Furthermore, the literature revealed that if teachers are exposed to multiple reflective models, they will be able to choose the best model that is appropriate to their practice.

The study also focused on the theory of Henderson's Ethical Model on Enquiry on Reflective Practice. The theory discusses what characterizes reflective practitioner. This theory explains that reflective teachers are experts who know their subject matter and are able to teach it well.

This study was conducted in order to gain a greater insight and comprehensive understanding of the research problem, that is, Self-reflection is expected to all teachers but is seldom enforced. In policy documents, self-reflection is stipulated but there are no formalised templates that guide, monitor and evaluate how teachers reflect on their own practice. This may also result in teachers not reflecting on their work at all and not regarding self-reflection as part of the teaching process; and treat it as a separate issue. The methodology used in this study was qualitative approach. Phenomenological research design was adopted; and in terms of data collection tools, open-ended questionnaires and interviews were used.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers in primary schools of Mankweng Circuit do not reflect on their practice because of the heavy work-load that they have. The study further revealed that teachers must be trained to use reflective models to improve their practice. Lastly, the study has recommended a new reflective model for a rural primary school context. The model is titled *Big four reflective model: critical thinker; resource allocator, problem solver and practice developer*. The model is recommended to be used in teaching in primary schools.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Reflective practice is a vehicle that allows teachers the ability to explore, contemplate, and analyse experiences in the classroom. Kolb (1999:46) emphasizes self-reflection experiences as cyclical process through the following stages: (1) observing oneself as a teacher, (2) thinking about the observed experience to gain understanding and meaning of what is happening, and (3) applying the insights gained to future teaching experiences. In other words, reflection helps individual teachers to improve their actions and professional practice. In addition, Zeichner and Liston (2005:19), emphasise that "reflection is also a means by which practitioners can develop a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance." This awareness of one's performance makes individual teachers to think about and mull over their experiences, classroom activities to improve their teaching practices. Therefore, teachers use reflection to facilitate their own teaching as well as for the facilitation of learners' learning.

Moreover, reflection requires the ability to analyse and prioritize issues, to use tacit and resource-based knowledge, and to develop a feasible plan of action. Clarke (1995:33) suggests that reflection is not about a single event in time, but occurs over time as teachers begin to construct meaning for themselves, which correlates with Dewey's point of view that reflective practitioners[1] take responsibility for their own practices (Dewey, 1933:45). In other words, reflective practitioners consider and accept the consequences of their decisions and the changes they make in teaching style, as well as the learning environment and the school culture. Certainly, reflective teachers are sincere and serious as they closely investigate their teaching (Dewey, 1933:59). They consider reflection as purposeful and exciting because it helps them to better

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[1] A 'reflective practitioner' is someone who, at regular intervals, looks back at the work they do, and the work process, and considers how they can improve. They 'reflect' on the work they have done.

understand who they are as teachers and how they can be more effective in their reflective practice. Reflective teachers are also interested in the subtleties of the art and science of teaching. They want to learn all they can about teaching from both theory and practice. They think deeply about their work and about how it should impact their teaching.

Internationally, researchers have defined reflective practice and the work of reflective practitioners as "the integration of theory and practice, a critical process in refining one's artistry or craft in a specific discipline and bringing to the conscious level of those practices that are implicit" Schon (1987:198). Schon further describes a reflective practitioner as not just skilful or competent, but a thoughtful, wise, and contemplative teacher. Schon's description of reflective practitioners relates to Kottkamp's two types of reflection which facilitate teachers' reflection: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action (Kottkamp, 1990). Reflection-in-action occurs during the activity; the activity is reshaped while in progress. Reflection-on-action occurs either following an activity or when an activity is interrupted; a retrospective thinking about an experience. This shows that reflection-on-action brings about an understanding of practice and is a way practitioners may learn from their experience.

On the other hand, Schon (1987:212) identifies three stages or levels of reflection: conscious reflection, criticism, and action. In subsequent research, Boud (1990:13) presented four stages of reflection: analyse, interpret information, prepare an evaluation report, and prepare an action plan. These four stages model focuses on the behaviours, ideas, and feelings that comprise experience. Later, Peters (1991:33) describes a four-step process called DATA: describe, analyse, theorize, and act. The first step describes the critical aspect of reflective practice, while the second step includes the identification of assumptions that supported practitioners' current approaches and underlying beliefs, rules, and motives of governing teaching and learning. In the third step, practitioners theorize alternative ways to approach learning theory developed from the previous step to create new theory. In the last step, the practitioner tests success and process of the new theory through additional thought and reflection.

2

From the early research emerged models of reflective theory. The reflective cycle by Rodgers (2002) encompassed Dewey's (1933) conception of reflective thought. Rodgers's (2002:23) model illustrates reflection as a cyclical process comprising of four phases: presence in experience (learning to see); description of experience (learning to describe and differentiate); analysis of experience (learning to think from multiple perspectives and form multiple explanations) and experimentation (learning to take intelligent action). According to Rodgers's model, practitioners move forward and backward through the reflective cycle, especially between description and analysis. This model shows that teachers reflect because they want to improve their teaching experiences and the learning experiences for learners.

A number of researchers state the importance of reflective practice. As a result of engaging in a reflective process, individuals acquire knowledge and understanding (James, 2007; Schon, 1987), learn from their experiences (Kolb, 1999; Schon, 1987), apply knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline (Schon, 1987), and explore assumptions they bring to the workplace (Du Plooy, 1997). As reflective practitioners, teachers gain a deeper understanding of their teaching approaches and they consider and accept responsibility for the consequences of the decisions they make in the learning environment. For instance, when discussing events teachers describe what has happened and this benefits the teacher being observed; and at the same time they examine their own experiences and check, reframe, and broaden their own theories of practice. In this situation, reflection within one's classroom is the first step of the reflection process but should not be the final step. When teachers discuss their experiences with others, the reflection process enhances their own individual practice (Gabriel, 2004:37). The present study investigated the practice of self-reflection by primary school teachers of Mankweng Circuit. In this context, a gap exists because self-reflection is embedded in policies, but there is no formalised templates that guide the teacher on how to apply self-reflection. The study also investigated this gap in order to recommend a model that will assist teachers to reflect on their practice.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Self-reflection is expected for all teachers but it is seldom enforced. In policy documents, self-reflection is stipulated but there are no formalised templates that guide, monitor and evaluate how teachers reflect on their own practice. This may also result in teachers not reflecting on their work at all and not regarding self-reflection as part of the teaching process; and treat it as a separate issue. Due to apparent lack of self-reflection, teachers are unable to correct their own practices (Kottkamp, 1990:33). This is a problem because when teachers do not reflect on their practice or reflect in a wrong way; they may not be effective in their teaching.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The study investigated the practices of self-reflection by primary school teachers in Mankweng Circuit, Capricorn District, Limpopo province in order to encourage the use of reflective models during teaching practice.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to achieve the aim of this study, the following objectives were formulated:

- ➢ To explore self-reflective practices of teachers at primary schools in Mankweng Circuit.

- ➢ To examine teachers' opinions about the use of self-reflection or reflective practice.

- ➢ To identify possible self-reflective models that teachers can employ in their teaching practice.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the aim of this study, the researcher developed the following research questions:

- ➢ What are the practices of teachers on self-reflection?

➢ What are teacher's opinions with regard to self-reflection?

➢ Which appropriate self-reflective models can assist teachers to reflect?

➢ How can self-reflective models assist teachers with self-reflection?

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this section was to discuss what the relevant literature says about self-reflective practices of teachers. This was done by defining the concepts; and reviewing the work of Fabian (2005), James (2007), Sam (2003) and, Zeichner and Liston (2005) to assist in understanding the present study. In reviewing these studies, the researcher examined how these studies were carried out, where they were conducted and the similarities and differences with the present study. Johnson (2000:44) revealed that reflection is formed on the basis of direct experience that tends to exert stronger influence on behaviour than those formed through hearsay. In examining the definition from a broader perspective, it was difficult to find a single definition of reflection in teaching.

James's (2007:12-33) article on practice of self-reflection showed the importance of choosing models of self-reflection. The study was conducted at primary schools in Japan (Region Two). The researcher wanted to understand what builds a positive attitude on self-study. In attempting to understand this, James (2007:33) interviewed both experienced and less experienced teachers in order to explain teacher's practice of self-reflection. The study revealed that teachers are not clear of what self-reflection is all about. In his analysis, James (2007) found that less experienced teachers are those who fully understand self-reflection. However, Sam (2003:331) differs. He revealed that teachers with less understanding of self-reflection are those with more than ten years teaching experience. Sam's (2003) study was based on positive attitudes and self-reflection. The present study examined practices of self-reflection and explained how teachers of Mankweng circuit practice self-reflection, and also the effect it has on their teaching.

The study of James (2007) and Sam (2003) was based on self-reflection of experienced teachers. The results of James's study represent experienced teachers only; so the present study focused on the practice of self-reflection at Mankweng Circuit, without checking first if the teachers were experienced or not. James (2007) concludes that life offers many possibilities to people to learn new skills, consolidate and restructure, and re-evaluate their goals, whereas Sam (2003: 339) pointed out that when teachers find themselves in changing situations, it is important to maintain structure and routine as this helps in keeping personal development.

In contrast to James (2007) and Sam (2003), Zeichner and Liston (2005:17-22) conducted a study in South Africa using qualitative methodology on teaching student-teachers how to reflect. The research was conducted at the University of Free State (School of Education). During data collection, the researchers also investigated if student-teachers are taught how to reflect on their studies or not. Zeichner and Liston (2005) found that student-teachers are not well exposed to self-reflective models during their training as teachers. They further mentioned that teachers were not sure if they were applying the right principles of self-reflection. Ringe's (2004:22) study in Cape Town supports Zeichner and Liston; that teachers need motivation for them to produce good results. He mentioned that better salaries and better working conditions can motivate teachers to reflect on their practice. In his conclusion, he discussed that most of the teachers in private schools reflect on their practice because of their working conditions and better salaries and incentives.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the theoretical framework, Henderson's (1992) *Ethically Based Model of Inquiry on Reflective Practice* was used. The theory is on reflective practice and it also discusses what characterizes reflective practice. It points out the kind of teacher a reflective practitioner should be. This theory is relevant to the present study, because the researcher looked at the characteristics of reflective practitioners in order to explain the practices of self-reflection by primary school teachers in the Mankweng Circuit.

Henderson's (1992) model indicates that the reflective practitioner should be problem solver, have a knowledge base and should have a love of teaching. The theory assisted the researcher to examine the kinds of teachers in primary schools of Mankweng Circuit in order to explain their practices on self-reflection. According to Henderson (1992), reflective teachers are expert teachers who know their subject matter and are able to teach it well. For instance, they must be experts in time management, discipline, psychology, instructional methods, interpersonal communication, and learning theory. They are receptive to new knowledge and regularly learn from their reflective experience (Henderson, 1992:55). Reflective teachers willingly embrace their decision-making responsibilities. They regularly reflect on the consequences of their actions.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study was qualitative approach. The purpose of qualitative research was to develop an understanding of individuals and events in their natural state, taking into account the relevant context (Leedy, 2001:91). Qualitative research is predicated on the assumption that each individual, each culture and each setting is unique. In qualitative research, interpretation of data is done by means of set exterior in order to determine deeper understanding of the findings (Kolb, 1999:3). Procedures are not strictly formalized, while the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode is adopted (Mouton & Marias, 1998:166). Therefore, this study was epitomized as qualitative research because:

- The study was conducted in a natural setting in which the educators were given open-ended questionnaires to answer based on self-reflection. Open-ended questionnaires were used because the researcher wanted to gather in-depth information about teachers' views; feelings and how they practice self-reflection.

- An important concern of qualitative researchers is the meaning of human behaviour and experience. In this study the researcher was interested in the practice of self-reflection in the primary schools,

- The data collected emanated from interviews; and did not follow numerical or statistical procedures. Thus the focus of the study was on understanding and meaning through verbal narratives rather than through numbers,

- The data gathered was analysed by qualitative methods; small groups are normally investigated in qualitative research (Van Der Westhuizen, 1999:127). In this particular study the participants consisted of 18 educators, and this was considered as a small group.

The researcher used the qualitative methodology because he required in-depth information in order to explain teacher's practices on self-reflection.

1.8.1. Research Design

According to Leedy (2001:91), a research design is a complete strategy of attack on the central research problem. In simpler terms, a research design is a plan. It involves the process of planning what and how data is to be collected (Kothari 1997:38). The research design used in this study was phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research design is the kind of research whereby the researcher forms part of the day to day life of his/her population, while gathering data (Criticos 2002:44). In this study, the researcher spent few days getting to know the staff of the relevant schools in order to gather information. The reason for choice of a phenomenological research design is that it enabled the researcher to be in a particular school, for a particular period in order to find out how teachers practice self-reflection.

1.8.2. Population and sampling

The population comprises teachers from three primary schools in the Mankweng Circuit. The total teacher population from these three schools is eighteen (18). Du Plooy (1997:48) refers to sampling as the rigorous procedures involved when selecting individuals from a large population. A sample is therefore a group of subjects chosen from the population using a particular sampling method. Purposive sampling was used to determine the number of respondents to fill in questionnaires and for interviews. Open-ended questionnaires were used in the first phase of data collection. For the open-ended questionnaire, the sample consists of eighteen (18) teachers, six from each

of the three schools selected. The interviews were used to gather information on how teachers practice sell-reflection in different phases (foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase). For the second phase of data collection, six teachers were interviewed from each school; two from foundation phase, two from intermediate (male and female) and two from the senior phase (male and female). The total number of respondents for the interview was eighteen (18).

1.8.3. Data collection

To carry out any type of research, data must be gathered. Many different methods and procedures have been developed to aid the collection of data. These procedures employ distinctive ways of collecting the data. Each is particularly appropriate for certain sources of data, yielding information of the kind and in the form that can be most effective (Kothari, 1997:207). The use of various techniques allowed the researcher to confirm the findings. For this study, two phases were undertaken; phase 1: open-ended questionnaires and phase 2: interviews to obtain data. The following were the reasons for using these two instruments:

> *Phase 1: open-ended questionnaire*

By using an open-ended questionnaire, in-depth collection of data is made possible. Open-ended questionnaires administered personally to individuals and have a number of advantages. They allowed respondents to qualify their responses, give opinions and explain their practice in greater detail. It also gave respondents the opportunity to reveal information that might otherwise not been offered. It also offered the researcher the opportunity to establish rapport, to explain the purpose of the study and to explain the meaning of items that were not clear.

> *Phase 2: interviews*

Interviews are an important part of any research project (especially in a study like this which adopted the qualitative approach) as they provide an opportunity for the researcher to investigate further and deeper. By using interviews to collect data, the practice of self-reflection was recorded in detail. The use of prompts and open-ended questions also made it possible to extract detailed data from the respondents.

1.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Davison (1997) stated that data analysis is the process of making sense out of data, which involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what has been said and what the researcher has seen and read. It is the process of understanding, making sense and meaning of the data. This understanding was organised into a descriptive account which was thematically analysed. Data collected from open-ended questionnaires was sorted and organised and speculated in order to develop meaning from it. This interpretation and understanding is organised in descriptive accounts in Chapter 4. In this study, the taped recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. After transcribing interviews, a sense of the whole was obtained by reading carefully with understanding and summarizing the salient aspects.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This concerns the importance of both accurately informing the respondents about the nature of the research and obtaining their written consent to participate (Babbie 2007:64). Coercion was not used to force participation and the respondents were allowed to terminate their involvement in the research at any time. Participation of the respondents was voluntary. The researcher assured the respondents that the information they provided is for research purposes only. Furthermore, the researcher promised that their names will not be disclosed for any reason and the questionnaires were answered in a private place with only the respondent and researcher. Lastly, the researcher showed respect for the well-being of the participants and the right to self-determination.

According to Kolb (1999:33), the validity of the instrument produces accurate results or information. In supporting Kolb's idea the researcher ensured validity of the instruments to collect data; by using both open-ended questionnaires and interviews in data collection. The researcher used these two data collecting instruments in order to ensure the validity of the results as the data collected from one instrument was corroborated with the data from the other. Reliability provides consistency of the information. The researcher first piloted the instruments, which according to Tailor (2008:34), is to test if the instrument will address the problem. The researcher administered a few

questionnaires to teachers from another school to confirm the reliability of it. Adjustments were made to the questionnaires thereafter.

The researcher requested permission from the Department of Education, by writing to the Head of Department (Limpopo Department of Education) of Capricorn district. Furthermore, the researcher requested permission from school principals and the teachers involved. In writing to the principal, the researcher also indicated that the research was not going to disturb the normal running of the school.

1.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter introduced the study by giving the background and overview of what the study is all about. It also outlined clearly, the aims and objectives of the study. Furthermore, it discussed what relevant literature says about self-reflective practices of teachers. This was done by defining reflective teaching and introducing key concepts connected to self-reflection. Moreover, the chapter explored the meaning of reflective teaching, and what a reflective teacher does. Research design and research methodology used in this study were also discussed in this chapter. Finally, the chapter also explained how data was collected and analysed; and what the population consists of. The next chapter discuss the literature reviewed to assist in understanding the problem.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A literature review is an evaluative report of information found in the literature related to the area of study. The review should describe, summarise, evaluate and clarify the research. It is also aimed at contributing towards clear understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified (Fouche & De Vos, 1988:64). As such the literature review stresses the impact of theory in every stage of the study from the problem statement through to the data collection, analysis and interpretation (Le Compte and Preissle, 1993:151). According to Tailor (2008:66), a literature review is an account of what has been published on a particular topic by scholars and researchers. In this literature review, the concept of reflection was explained in detail. Johnson (2000:44) discusses the definition from a broader perspective; and argues that self-reflection is the most important and for many people it is the hardest to do.

The purpose of this section in this study was to discuss what the relevant literature says about the self-reflective practices of teachers. This was done by firstly defining the concepts. Secondly, the work of Fabian (2005), James (2007), Sam (2003), and Zeichner and Liston (2005) are reviewed to assist in understanding the present study. In reviewing these studies, the researcher examined how these studies were carried out, where they were conducted and the similarities and differences with the present study.

2.2 DEFINITIONS AND AIMS OF SELF-REFLECTION

Reflection has many definitions in the context of teacher cognition. Reflective teaching means looking at what you do in the classroom, thinking about why you do it, and thinking about how it works through a process of self-observation and self-evaluation. Self-reflection also takes place when teachers collect information about what goes on in classrooms, and by analysing and evaluating this information, they identify and explore their own practices and underlying beliefs. This process may lead to changes and improvements in teaching, although this process has many challenges and it involves many things.

Reflection involves a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, or mental difficulty, in which thinking originates. This uncertainty is followed by the act of searching to find materials that will resolve this doubt and settle the perplexity (Dewey, 1933:34). Reflection, however, is more than just thinking hard about what you do (Bullough & Gitlin, 1995:16). Reflective practitioners give careful attention to their experiences and how meaning is made and justified. They analyse the influence of context and how they shape human behaviour. Teachers need to reflect on their practice in a very critical way and also to make sure that whatever they do is the right thing.

Critical reflection goes beyond the technical aspects of an experience to the personal, ethical, and political dimensions of teaching. Reflection is about social justice, equity, and change. Reflection is inquiry into pedagogy and curriculum, the underlying assumptions and consequences of these actions, and the moral implications of these actions in the structure of schooling (Zeichner & Liston, 2005:19). The present study motivates teachers to regard self-reflection as part of their daily activity so that this will encourage them to reflect on their practice positively. Clarke (1995:21) suggests that reflection is not about a single event in time, but occurs over time as teachers begin to construct meaning from their reflections. Reflection requires the ability to analyse and prioritize issues, to use tacit and resource-based knowledge, and to develop a feasible plan of action.

Reflection can also be explained as a vehicle that allows teacher's ability to explore, contemplate, and analyse experiences in the classroom. Reflecting on experiences helps individuals to improve their actions and professional practice (Kolb, 1999; Schon, 1987). According to Kottkamp (1990:19), "reflective practice is a means by which practitioners can develop a greater level of self-awareness about the nature and impact of their performance". This awareness of one's performance makes individuals think about and mull over their experiences, classroom activities, and assignments, leading to improved practice. In this situation, both learners and teachers' activities need to be facilitated.

Teachers use self-reflection to facilitate their own learning as well as students' learning. When teachers reflect on their studies; both learners and teachers benefit. During the

reflective process a teacher will look or focus on areas where he/she needs to improve and as a result, this will benefit learners. The main focus of the present study was to investigate how teachers reflect on their teaching; in order to assist them to find suitable models that will improve their practice. According to Schon (1987:44), reflective practice is the integration of theory and practice, a critical process in refining one's artistry or craft in a specific discipline and bringing to the conscious level of those practices that are implicit. During the reflective process, the teacher needs to look at the kind of materials used to prepare the lesson and how she/he presented the lesson in order to improve professionally.

According to Schon (1987:49), the main aim of self-reflection is for professional growth[2], which rectifies the mistakes that already happened during the teaching process. This motivated the researcher to carry out the present study (to investigate the practice of teacher's self-reflection) in order to find ways of helping teachers. Schon (1987:54) further describes the reflective practitioner as not just skilful or competent, but thoughtful, wise, and contemplative. A teacher might be skilful or competent but that does not make the teacher a successful self-reflective practitioner. As a reflective practitioner, teachers need to be thoughtful about their teaching; the result of this process will allow them to grow professionally.

The theme identified in Schon's (1987:58) definition is *self-reflection as form of professional growth*. Teachers need to reflect on their practice in order for them to grow in their profession. The present study investigates how teachers reflect on their studies, in order to suggest possible models that could assist them to improve their reflective practice. The researcher reviews different literature that can help teachers to understand self-reflection; and the present study also suggests some suitable models that can help teachers to facilitate and improve their practice.

Schon (1987:63) suggests two types of reflection that facilitate professional learning: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action occurs during the activity wherein the activity is reshaped while in progress. Reflection-on-action occurs

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[2] Professional growth is activities that contribute to a credential holder's competence performance or effectiveness in the profession of education.

either following an activity or when an activity is interrupted for a retrospective thinking about an experience. According to Kottkamp (1990:54), reflection-on-action takes place after an activity and an analysis with the potential assistance of others. Reflection-on-action brings about an understanding of practice and is a way practitioners may learn from their experience (Clarke, 1995, James, 2007, and Kelly, 1996:11). Teachers should familiarize themselves with different stages and levels of reflection. The present study can assist teachers by suggesting better ways and models of reflecting on their practice; by looking at different stages and levels of self-reflection and come up with the best model for their practice.

Schon (1987:67) identified three stages or levels of reflection: conscious reflection, criticism, and action. Boud (1990:15) presented a four-stage model of reflection: analyse, interpret information, prepare an evaluation report, and prepare an action plan. Boud's (1990) four-stage model of reflection is relevant to the present study as during reflection teachers need to analyse, interpret, evaluate their practice and prepare an action plan after reflective process. The four-stage model focused on the behaviours, ideas, and feelings that comprise experience. Atkins and Murphy (1993:33) conducted a literature review of educational theorists that analysed processes of reflection. Based on the commonalities of the authors cited, they developed three-stages of reflective process that included awareness, critical analysis, and reflection. Looking at Atkins and Murphy's literature, the present study has identified "critical analysis" as a theme in their literature. Teachers need to use critical analysis when reflecting on their practice and they should regard self-reflection as a process that they should go through as reflective practitioners.

On the other hand, Peters (1991:38) described a four-step process called DATA: describe, analyse, theorize and act. The first step is described as the critical aspect of practice, while the second step included the identification of assumptions that supported practitioners' current approaches and underlying beliefs, rules, and motives governing teaching and learning. In the third step, practitioners theorize alternative ways to approach learning by taking theory developed from the previous step, and create a new theory. In the fourth step, the practitioner tests the success of the new theory through additional thought and reflection. Looking at all these stages; one will realize that for

teachers to successfully reflect on their practice they have to pass through all these stages. Peter's four-steps of reflection will be helpful to the present study because the researcher examines the reflective process, thereby, identifying the most appropriate model that teachers may use in their reflective practice.

2.3 WHAT CONSTITUTES EVIDENCE OF SELF- REFLECTION?

According to most recent work by Leitch and Day (2011:19), being an effective 'reflective practitioner' is more than just improving practice and developing additional competence. Most definitions of reflective teaching in the literature are based on Dewey's concepts (as cited in Wedman, 2004:33). The rise of reflective practice coincided with the popularity of qualitative research based on ethnography. The present study emphasizes to teachers that self-reflection requires self-motivation, passionate, responsibility and hard work from the teacher; rather than just improving on their practice. The present study also encourages teachers to regard self-reflection as part of their daily activity, in order for novice teachers to become successful, they require the tools necessary for coping with challenges they encounter. Numerous authors have put forth the proposition that critical reflection[3] is a viable tool to help teachers cope with problems that occur in classroom settings (Dewey, 1933; Schon, 1987; Van Manen, 1977). Teachers at education programmes strongly influence the extent to which novice teachers are able to think and solve problems. There has been a promising research study that suggests that novice teachers will use critical reflection as a problem-solving tool and for evidence of their own practice (Bailey, Hans and Shaw, 2001:12).

Sydney (1999:23) also conducted a research based on evidence of reflection. Although his project began with a review of literature about reflection in teacher education, in particular with a focus upon studies which purported to investigate its actual development in students, the researcher found that this material provided only broad guidelines for beginning to specify more sharply criteria against which evidence of reflection as defined might be evaluated. From on-going arguments and discussions based upon the reading and rereading of written reports, an operational framework

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[3] Critical reflection is the process of analysing, reconsidering and questioning experiences within a broad context of issues.

emerged through a process which illustrates the essential dynamic relationship between data and theory that is characteristic of research dealing with phenomena such as reflection (Smith and Hope, 1992).

The result of this process was the identification of four types of writing, which were characterised as: descriptive writing, descriptive reflection, dialogic reflection and critical reflection. In essence, the first is not reflective at all, but merely reports events or literature. The second, descriptive, reflection does attempt to provide reasons based often on personal judgment or on students' reading of literature. The third form, dialogic, is a form of discourse with one's self, an exploration of possible reasons. The fourth, critical, is defined as involving reason given for decisions or events which takes account of the broader historical, social and/or political contexts.

The theme identified in Sydney's (1999:78) study is reflection as "[4]personal judgement" which is related to the present study. The present study also emphasises the issue of personal judgement in order to have a fair and effective self-reflection. Using the theme (personal judgement), teachers were also encouraged to reflect on their practice. Furthermore, teachers need to regard personal judgement as part of the important aspect or process of self-reflection. Moreover, they should also regard personal judgement as part of the stages of self-reflection; since there is a need for teachers to judge themselves if they want to carryout self-reflection effectively.

2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF A REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

All reflective practitioners share the same characteristics. They are deliberative, open-minded, responsible, and sincere; they have a spirit of enquiry. Reflection helps teachers to make rational decisions about teaching and learning. It also helps them to assume responsibility for the results of those choices in the classroom. In other words, the teacher needs to be critical when making choices during reflective processes. Reflective practitioners are open-minded (Dewey, 1933:79). They are willing to question their own views of and reactions to their teaching practices and the school culture. Reflective practitioners view situations from multiple perspectives, search for alternative

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[4] Personal judgement is a judgement rendered against an individual.

explanations from multiple perspectives, search for alternative explanations for classroom events, and use evidence to support or evaluate a decision or position.

The theme identified in Dewey's characteristics is 'open-minded and responsible' which is very relevant to the present study. During the reflective process, teachers need to be open-minded and responsible for their practice or teaching. It takes a responsible teacher to reflect on their practice and during the process of reflection; they need to open their minds in a way that they are not bias, in order for successful reflective practice.

Reflective practitioners take responsibility (Dewey, 1933:80). Dewey further argues that these practitioners consider and accept the consequences of their decisions and the changes they make in teaching style, in the learning environment, or in the school culture. Furthermore, reflective teachers are sincere as they closely investigate their teaching (Dewey, 1933:84). They take reflection seriously and make sure that their reflection is purposeful and exciting to help them understand who they are as teachers and how they can be more effective. Dewey's study assisted the researcher in the present study because reflection helps teachers to understand themselves better and take reflection seriously.

Dewey's (1933:90) thoughts to teaching further identified seven key characteristics of the meaning of reflective practice: reflective teaching implies an active concern with aims and consequences, as well as means and technical efficiency. Therefore, a teacher is not only responsible for his/her own classroom practice but should be an active participant in providing a critical feedback on educational policy of a state. Moreover, reflective teaching is applied in a cyclical or spiralling process, in which teachers monitor, evaluate and revise their own practice continuously. This means that a teacher should take responsibility for working on his/her development to ensure that the need for a change in his/her practice is emerging from his/her self-reflection. Besides that, reflective teaching requires competence in methods of evidence-based classroom enquiry to support the progressive development of higher standards of teaching. In this instance, a teacher should be familiar with methods that enable him/her to collect information, analyse and evaluate it. Moreover, reflective teaching requires

attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness (three characteristics of reflective teaching stated by Dewey) based on teacher judgment, informed by evidence-based enquiry and insights from other research. Teachers are the ones who make constant decisions and judgments in interaction with their learners and situations in schools and classrooms; however, they should not neglect the contributions of teachers and researchers. Reflective teaching, professional learning and personal fulfilment are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues. Reflective teaching enables teachers to creatively mediate externally developed frameworks for teaching and learning.

2.5 BENEFITS OF REFLECTING ON TEACHING

Scholars have suggested that a number of personal and institutional benefits of self-reflection might be realized from teachers' participation in the formative peer evaluation of teaching. These include improvement of teaching, teachers' morale, collegiality and student learning. Most articles in the literature trace the origins of reflective practice to John Dewey (1933) and his influential book: *How we think: a re-statement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educational process*; and to Schon (1987:89). Dewey brought forward the discussion of treating professional actions as experimental and reflective upon actions and their consequences. However, his work was inspired by much earlier Eastern and Western philosophers and educators, including Buddha, Plato and Lao-tzu.

Reflection may sound like a lot of work but persevering teachers' report that they value and benefit from reflecting on teaching (Richert, 1990:44). Reflection holds both immediate and long-term benefits for teachers as reflective practitioners. Reflection can enhance teacher's learning about teaching and increase their ability to analyse classroom events. When they are teaching, reflective thinking can improve their classroom life, enable them to monitor themselves, and stimulate their personal and professional growth. Perhaps the most important benefit to reflection as they prepare to teach is that it enhances their learning about teaching. According to learning psychologists, reflectivity plays a central role in learning from teacher's course work and from their field or school experiences (Han, 1995; Jadalla, 1996). To learn the most from these experiences, teachers need four things. Firstly, they must have a concrete

learning experience by recapturing and evaluating them. So, after marking assignments, they might think back on the distribution of marks, consider the nature of the homework, assignment and how learners benefited from them, and even challenge why teachers assign homework to learners. They might conclude that while good students did well on their homework, less able students did poorly. As a result, they might decide that homework assignments must be individualized to provide a meaningful learning experience for all learners. The use self-reflection can result in teachers taking fair decisions about their teaching and it also provides an opportunity to rectify their mistakes and improve their practice. The last step in the learning process is to integrate reflections with what the teacher already knows and believes about teaching and learning. This leads to recognize new ways of doing things, resolving problems, or clarifying issues (Boud, 1990; Keogh and Walker, 1985:66).

Reflection enables teachers to examine and analyse classroom events rather than simply observe them. Reflective teachers are better able to ask themselves basic questions about teaching. They are more analytical and less judgemental when they consider their teaching and that of others. Reflection leads teachers to consider the underlying assumptions about, beliefs about, and implications of the practices they are using and how these practices affect student as they learn (Cruickshank, 2008:77). In short, reflective teachers understand what teaching and learning are all about. The present study encourages teachers to reflect on their practice so that they gain full understanding about teaching and learning; and these will help them to grow professionally.

2.6 SELF-REFLECTION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In the USA, Dewey (1933), who himself drew on the ideas of many earlier educators such as Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Solomon and Buddha (Houston, 1988:12), is acknowledged as a key originator in the twentieth century of the concept of reflection. He considered it to be a special form of problem solving, thinking to resolve an issue which involved active chaining, and a careful ordering of ideas linking each with its predecessors. Within the process, consideration is to be given to any form of knowledge or belief involved and the grounds for its support, (Adler, 1991; Cutler, Cook and Young, 1989; Calderhead, 1989; Gilson, 1989; Farrah, 1988). His basic ideas are seminal, and

indicate that reflection may be seen as an active and deliberative cognitive process[5], 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. The theme identified in this literature is reflection as a cognitive process. Teachers need to arrange their teaching experience in a sequential manner that will enable them to reflect on their practice in an effective manner.

Four key issues with regard to reflection emerge from Dewey's original work and its subsequent interpretation. The first is whether reflection is limited to thought processes about action, or is more inextricably bound up in action (Noffke & Brennan, 1988). The second relates to the time frames within which reflection takes place, and whether it is relatively immediate and short term, or rather more extended and systematic, as Dewey seems to imply, (Farrah, 1988; Schon, 1987). The third has to do with whether reflection is by its very nature problem-centred or not (Adler, 1991; Calderhead, 1989; Schon, 1987). The present study addressed Calderhead and Schon's question by investigating the practice of self-reflection and by being able to answer questions and challenges that arise from self-reflection. Finally, the fourth issue is concerned with how consciously the teacher takes account of wider historic, cultural and political values or beliefs in framing and reframing practical problems to which solutions are being sought, a process which has been identified as `critical reflection' (Smyth, 1989; Noordhoff and Kleinfeld, 1988). Critical reflection has to do with deeper thinking and actions.

In relation to reflective thinking versus reflective action, there seems to be wide agreement that reflection is a special form of thought, (Sparks-Langer and Colton, 1991; McNamara, 1990; Kremer-Hayon, 1988; Waxman, 1988). However, Dewey himself also spoke of `reflective action' presumably addressing the implementation of solutions once problems had been thought through, and it is clear that most writers are concerned with the complete cycle of professional `doing' coupled with reflection which then leads to modified action (Noffke and Brennan, 1988). It may be useful to contrast this cyclical idea with routine action, which derives from impulse tradition or authority. Reflective

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[5] Cognitive process is a is a group of mental processes that includes attention, memory, producing and understanding language, learning, reasoning, problem solving, and decision making.

action is bound up with persistent and careful consideration of practice in the light of knowledge and beliefs, showing attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility, and wholeheartedness (Noffke and Brennan, 1988:45). The present study encourages teachers to use reflective thinking first and later reflective action. Teachers need to think about their practice regularly; and they should also act on it. By so doing they will be reflecting on their practice. Teachers should also realize that the more reflection they do, the more changes and improvements will be seen in their teaching.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that shapes this study is Henderson's (1992) Ethically Based Model of Inquiry on Reflective Practice. The theory is about reflective practice and it also discusses what characterizes reflective practice. It points out the kind of teacher a reflective practitioner should be. This theory is relevant to the present study because the researcher reviewed and discussed the characteristics of reflective practitioners in order to explain the practices of self-reflection by primary school teachers in Mankweng Circuit.

Henderson's (1992:37) model indicates that the reflective practitioner should be a problem solver, have a knowledge base and should also have a love of teaching. The theory assists the researcher to examine teachers in primary schools of Mankweng Circuit in order to explain their practices on self-reflection. According to Henderson (1992:45), reflective teachers are expert teachers who know their subject matter. In particular, they must be experts in time management, discipline, psychology, instructional methods, interpersonal communication, and learning theory. Reflective teachers willingly embrace their decision-making responsibilities. They are also receptive to new knowledge and regularly learn from their reflective experience (Henderson, 1992:55). They regularly reflect on the consequences of their actions.

2.8 THE REFLECTIVE APPROACH

This section firstly defined reflective teaching and introduced key terms connected with it, secondly, it explored the meaning of reflective teaching, and thirdly, it looks at what a reflective teacher does. Bailey (2001:36) divide the approach of reflective teaching from

two different points of view where some authors view reflection more as an individual process, emphasizing "a rather solitary process of introspection and retrospection focusing specifically on a teacher's action and thoughts before, during, and after lessons" while other authors "take a broader stance and embed the concept of reflection within the social and political contexts of programs, schools, and communities". Richard (1998:18) represents the first view when focusing on the teaching process of the individual teacher in the classroom. He claims that in reflective teaching "teachers and student teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching" . The second, more complex view is expressed by Zeichner and Liston (2005) in Bailey (2001:36) who say that reflective teaching involves "a recognition, examination, and rumination over the implications of one's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and values as well as the opportunities and constraints provided by the social conditions in which the teacher works". Both approaches are interconnected by Bartlett (1990:88) who sees reflection as "the relationship between an individual's thought and action and the relationship between an individual teacher and his or her membership in a larger collective called society" (Bailey, 2001:37).

Naturally, teachers are a part of a school and each school is a part of a community so even if individual teachers concentrate basically only on their teaching and their reflections, the effects of this can primarily influence learners in the class and secondarily the school and the society, in which, both learners and the teachers are part of. Reflection can also be considered in terms of "reflection-in-action" (in the course of teaching) and "reflection-on-action" (before and after the lesson), terms introduced by Schon (1987) in Bailey (2001:28). Both forms are important in the reflective process. As Russel and Munby (1991) in Bailey (2001:37) explain, reflection-on-action is more conscious and well known compared to reflection-in-action which teachers perform promptly during their teaching.

2.9 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON SELF-REFLECTION

There are a few empirical studies in teacher development focusing on reflection. Recently, reflection has come to be regarded as an important teacher-related factor in the field of education by researchers especially empiricists (Goodwill, 2011:22). McCollum (1997:33) investigated the effect of providing teachers with a framework for reflection. The results of the study showed that there is a need for teachers to be provided with a framework on how self-reflection is done. Furthermore, the results revealed that teachers do not reflect on their practice not because they do not want; but because they are not sure of how to do it. McCollum's study was based on providing teachers with a framework for reflection. The present study uses this as a starting point to investigate the practice of self-reflection by teachers; in order to suggest the best model or framework that teachers may use to reflect on their practice. Other researchers also investigated different contributions that can be employed by teachers' thinking.

Gimenez's (1999:31) study discusses the contribution of teacher thinking to the notion of reflection. The findings of this study revealed teachers' thinking as central when reflecting on their practice. In other words, good reflective practice starts with good critical thinking about the teaching and learning process. Gimenez (1999:39) also stresses the need for teachers to think more systematically about their teaching practice. In other words, they should make their own beliefs about the learning process which is derived from a dialectical relationship between knowledge generated by personal experience and external research. Gimenez's (1999:45) study emphasized that teachers should move in a reflective cycle in which they think forward and backward about their teaching experiences.

Similar to Gimenez's study; the reflective cycle by Rodgers (2002) encompassed Dewey's (1933) conception of reflective thought. The findings of Rodger's (2002:67) study illustrate reflection as a cyclical process comprising of four phases: presence in experience (learning to see); description of experience (learning to describe and differentiate); analysis of experience (learning to think from multiple perspectives and form multiple explanations); and lastly experimentation (learning to take intelligent

action). According to Rodgers (2002:84), practitioners move forward and backward through the reflective cycle, especially between description and analysis. Looking at Rodgers' cycle, the present study uses all these steps to help teachers to suggest the best way of reflecting on their practice. According to this cycle, teachers need to take their teaching experiences as core when dealing with self-reflection. By so doing, they will be able to analyse their teaching experience and find the best method for their practice. Teachers should also have passion for reflecting on their practice; and this will benefit both teachers and learners.

Based on teacher-learner's benefits, Clarke's (1995:22) study was about reflection in a classroom that benefits both teachers and learners. The findings of Clarke's study shows that teachers reflect because they want to improve their teaching experiences and the learning experiences of learners. Both the teacher and the learner benefit from self-reflection, since the knowledge acquired by the teachers during the reflective process will be passed from the teacher to the learner. As a result of engaging in a reflective process, individuals acquire knowledge and understanding (Schon, 1987:89), learn from their experiences (Kolb, 1999:11), and apply knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline, and explore assumptions they bring to the workplace (Brookfield, 1995:54). As reflective practitioners, teachers gain a deeper understanding of their teaching approaches and effectiveness as teachers. The present study has identified 'knowledge and understanding' as a theme from Clarke's study. This theme is very important and relevant to the present study because during self-reflection, knowledge and understanding is crucial. This means that teachers need to have knowledge and understanding of what they want to reflect about; and this will help them to know and understand exactly what they are doing. Knowledge and understanding of learning area (subject) may also help teachers to reflect on their teaching in an effective manner.

Farrell's (1998:66) study about reflection of English first language teachers revealed that reflection can help English first language (EFL) teachers in different ways. Firstly, teacher's reflection on what they do in the English classroom help them go beyond routine method-based behaviour. Secondly, it helps teachers to prepare for every session and thus takes away any anxiety by relaxing them. Also, reflection as a sign of

intelligent action is an asset that makes teachers into professionals who are both capable of practicing existing theories effectively and forming theories of their own. Although, Farrell's study was based only on English first language teachers, it is similar to the present study because this study also suggested that teachers should formulate their own theories of reflection that suite them. So, the present study focused on the practice of self-reflection by primary school teachers in order to suggest the best methods and models of reflecting on their practice.

Bruner (1990:34) conducted a study about critical reflection and peer observation. According to Bruner's study, the critical self-reflection of teachers would be enhanced by peer observation and reflection. The results of this study revealed that conducting observations on peer classes and engaging in critical conversations is another important tool in promoting self-reflection. This means that teachers need to come together regularly and discuss their practice in finding suitable models that can suite their teaching. When discussing events, colleagues describe what has happened to benefit the teacher being observed; and at the same time they examine their own experiences and check, reframe, and broaden their own theories of practice. Bruner concluded his findings by emphasizing that reflection within one's classroom is the first step of the reflective process but should not be the final step (Bruner, 1990:55). This means that when teachers discuss their experiences with others, the reflection process enhances their own individual practice.

Looking at Bruner's literature, the present study identified '*examine one's own experience*' as a theme from this literature. During the self-reflective process this theme becomes a key because it appears that for teachers to have proper reflective practice, they need to examine their own teaching. This theme may also help teachers to reflect on their practice while they teach and even to examine their practice after teaching has taken place. Teachers can also use summative evaluation to examine their own experience and to reflect truly on their practice.

According to Johnson's (2000:90) self-reflective study, "self-reflection helps us to gain an understanding of who we are as individuals and beyond who we are as leaders."

To be truly effective at leading others, we need to be effective at 'leading' ourselves and if we are unable to really know ourselves, we are only being deluded into thinking that we can lead others. The findings of this study also revealed that self-reflection allows people to recognize their core values, not just by naming what they value, but why those things are most important to them. This means that, along with values, by taking the time to reflect on the self, people can start to clarify their own personal vision of what it is that they want to be, do and have in their lives and most importantly how they want to feel as they go through life. Furthermore, the study shows that self-reflection also allows people to identify and 'own' their traits, both their personality traits and their leadership traits. When people are able to recognize their traits, as they reflect they are able to monitor their interactions with others. Both from the standpoint of why they are feeling the way they do and the actions that result from those feelings (Johnson, 2000:74).

The findings of Noblit's (1993) study based on critical reflection emphasised the importance of links between cognition and critical reflection. Furthermore, the study suggested that teacher education still reinforces a cultural view of teaching which calls for technical rationality and individualism to establish the political or problematic nature of schooling. The study concluded that teachers need to develop scaffold interaction as a means for modelling the skills of self-monitoring essential to critical reflection. Other authors (Stout, 1989; Wedman, 2004; Mahlios & Whitfield, 1989) came to similar conclusion about the need to consciously counter socialisation processes at work in teacher reflection. Noblit's study helps the teacher to understand that self-monitoring is essential, especially if they want to become critical self-reflectors, although, the nature of reflection depends on the teacher's individual thinking.

Wellington (1991:33) argues that individual nature of reflective thinking and the uniqueness of each teacher's reflection, reflective practice has been referred to as inquiry-oriented teaching. This process of inquiry leads teachers to become 'student of teaching. The findings of Willington's study revealed that it is more important for future teachers to learn to think about their work than it is to master specific techniques of teaching and classroom management. Willington's study made the researcher realize that good reflective practitioners start from the training of teachers; therefore the present study encourages initial teachers to reflect on their practice during their initial stage as

teachers. They should therefore look at their daily practice and try to improve (self-reflection).

Bailey (2001:88) conducted a study in the private schools of Thailand and the findings of the study revealed that a reflective approach to teaching involves changes in the way we usually perceive teaching and our role in the process of teaching. Like other forms of self-inquiry, reflective teaching is not without its risks, since journal writing, self-reporting or making recordings of lessons can be time-consuming. However, the result of the study further show that teachers engaged in reflective analysis of their own teaching and report it as valuable tool for self-evaluation and professional growth. Reflective teaching suggests that experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but that experience coupled with reflection can be a powerful impetus for teacher development. Teachers should use reflection to solve problems that arises in classroom situations.

Zeichner and Liston (2005:67) suggest that a reflective teacher examines, frames, and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice; is aware of and questions the assumptions and values they bring to teaching. He/she is also attentive to the institutional and cultural contexts in which they teach; takes part in curriculum development and is involved in school change efforts; takes responsibility for their own professional development. Furthermore, Zeichner and Liston add that a reflective teacher also has to be able to reflect even on unplanned and unpredictable events in teaching because "teaching, even under the best conditions, always involves unintended as well as intended outcomes". In summing up his findings, he mentioned that reflective teaching views a teacher as an active initiator and executor of improvements and changes in his/her classroom who at the same time feels responsibility for his/her role within the context of the school and society. This study is relevant to the present study as it encourages teachers to take responsibility for their own teaching; and regard self-reflection as an important part of the teaching process. Furthermore, the present study examined if teachers in primary schools of Mankweng Circuit are able to identify dilemmas in their classroom and solve them. Therefore, the present study identifies the best model that can help teachers to reflect on their practice.

Kyriacou (1996:20) conducted a study in Japan focusing on the topic of self-reflection. The results of this study revealed that the areas a teacher wants to concentrate on in his/her self-reflection can be chosen in many different ways. Kyriacou (1996:140) refers to research which show that most teachers usually start their exploration from a problem that they confront in their practice rather than trying to evaluate their teaching as a whole. As the next possible starting point of self-reflection, he gives an example of filling in pre-prepared questionnaires or scales focused either on a particular topic or evaluating the teaching generally, which can help teachers to identify an area that they want to work on. The last suggestion for finding the right source of themes to evaluate and develop, Kyriacou (1996:34), together with Švec (2005:84) propose using the list of key competences as "a scaffolding, support for self-reflective inventory".

Lockart (1996:37) conducted a similar study to Kyriacou, based on studies of reflective teaching. The findings of the study revealed that once a teacher decides what he/she is going to explore about his/her teaching, it should be followed by the choice of a technique suitable for collecting the data. Nevertheless, according to Lockart (1996:44), choosing the right technique does not necessarily mean proceeding in professional development. The researcher also mentioned that the information collected through teachers is usually descriptive in the first place and only further work and analysis of them can be regarded as reflection possibly leading to teacher development and growth. The study by Lockart (1996) is very similar to the present study because his study encourages teachers to choose the right technique suitable for them to collect data about their teaching. The present study also looked at all these techniques in order to find the best model that teachers may use in their practice. Even though, a comparison will be drawn between these two studies, if teachers need to reflect on their practice correctly, they need to observe their teaching carefully.

Observation generally means attending somebody else's class in order to observe different features of teaching. Wedman (2004:1) views observation mainly as a "a multi-faceted tool for learning" and "a skill that can be learned and improved with practice" and she adds that "being in the classroom as an observer opens up a range of experiences and processes which can become part of the raw material of a teacher's professional growth". Observation should not mean mere coming into a classroom,

pulling out a sheet of blank paper and filling it with chaotic notes. As Wedman (2004:13) argues, observation should also involve a phase of preparation where the aim, method and focus of the observation will be made clear. This means that teachers need to prepare themselves for self-reflection, and this will help them to realize the effect of observation in their practice.

Dorothy (2006: 55) conducted a study on the effect of observation during self-reflective practice. The results of the study outlined that observation can be used by different people for different purposes. For instance, a teacher trainee can observe an experienced teacher for the purpose of learning teaching; a teacher trainer can watch a teacher trainee to guide and help the trainee in the first teaching attempts; two teacher trainees can observe each other to support themselves in the training; a supervisor can visit a teacher's lesson to evaluate his/her teaching; and finally, the situation which is being focused on here, two teachers or a group of teachers can agree on attending one another's lessons to work on their professional development.

Observation of people of the same professional status (teacher-teacher, trainee) is called peer observation. Although, it is not a common practice in schools, as Richard's (1998:147) explains "because of its evaluation element and logistical difficulties in arranging such activities within the context of teachers' timetables", it hides a great potential for teacher reflection. Besides peer observation as a tool for self-reflection, Richard (1998:144) argues as well the possibility of a student teacher observing an experienced teacher as his/her assistant in the process of development. He emphasized that such a cooperation can be enriching for both sides: it is quite demanding for a teacher to collect information about his/her teaching alone so a teacher trainee can help with that and the teacher can then use the data as the basis for critical reflection; on the other hand, the observer can undergo the observation experience as a part of his/her preparatory course.

Nevertheless, in both peer and teacher-teacher trainee observations, observers are not expected to evaluate what they see, their task is to collect information. In order to make observation an effective tool for self-reflection, Wedman (2004:16) emphasizes that observation skill is not only an intuitive process, it can be learned. Having an observer in

a lesson is generally not a very welcoming experience by many teachers since observing is associated with reflection. It is therefore necessary to introduce basic principles for observing to avoid misunderstandings and ambiguous feelings about its purpose.

There are many benefits of self-observation methods. Farrell (1998:37) points out that self-observation allows the teacher to make a record of teaching which can be used for various purposes to provide an objective account of one's teaching. It can also help teachers to better understand their own instructional practices and make decisions about the practices which they are not aware of and might wish to change. It is regarded as teacher initiated endeavour. Richard's study compliments the present study as it encourages teachers to record their teaching and be able to understand their practice.

Farrell (1998:34) focuses on self-reflection by examining self-observation or self-monitoring. The results of the study revealed that this method belongs to a situation where the teacher him/herself is the key person of investigation and further analysis of his/her teaching, no extra help of other people is required. Farrel's study helps teachers to realize that they become central when it comes to reflecting on their own practice. This means that they are key people who must lead their own reflection. The present study can help teachers to identify the best model that will help them to improve their own practice.

Richard (1998:44) conducted a study about written reports as a way of doing self-reflection. Richard (1998:64) mentioned that the teacher can collect information about his/her teaching through writing lesson reports or making audio or video recordings and what he/she finds out can be either kept private or shared with other colleagues or supervisors. The findings of this study revealed that if teachers decide to keep the information to themselves, they then "shift the responsibility for initiating improvement in teaching practices from an outsider, such as a supervisor, to the teacher" (Farrell, 1998:37). As Richard (1998:37) stated, the records documenting the teaching help the teacher to become aware of his/her "current knowledge, skills and attitudes and use such information as a basis for self-appraisal" which can be considered to be a starting point of teacher development. Both Richard's study and the present study concentrate

on finding ways that will improve self-reflection; as better reflection will result in professional development. The present study used self-reflection as a key for professional development. The results of these two studies are compared with the intention of coming up with the best reflective approaches that will suit primary teachers of Mankweng Circuit.

Records of reflections are usually stored in portfolios. Different authors provide slightly different lists of possible items that can make up a reflective portfolio. Bailey (2001:227-228) suggest three main thematic categories that a portfolio should have: (a) documents related to teacher's actual teaching duties; (b) to his/her professional development; (c) and to his/her administrative responsibilities. Further, they offer a list of examples of particular items that fall into the categories: teacher's teaching philosophy, details of courses taught, peer observation notes and journal entries, as examples of learner's work, teaching materials produced, any professional items a teacher has written, teaching/learning presentations, conferences attended, and lesson reports. A lesson report is a "structured inventory or list which enables teachers to describe their recollections of the main features of a lesson" (Lockart, 1996:9). Lockhart (1996:27) argued that in a lesson report a teacher describes what happened during a lesson, it is usually done shortly after the lesson which means that the account cannot be precise. Farrell (1998:39-41) supports the idea of Lockhart as he suggested three ways of capturing the course of the lesson: either in the form of a written narrative or a checklist or a questionnaire. Lockhart's study is relevant to the present study, as it encourages teachers to record their lesson in order to have constructive reflective practice. This constructive feedback can be recorded in portfolios.

A portfolio can also be used as a tool for self-reflection. Portfolios generally have been associated mainly with artists presenting their work, recently though, portfolios have become an important part of language learning, teacher training and teaching. Evans (1995:98) gives a general definition of a portfolio: a professional portfolio is an evolving collection of carefully selected or composed professional thoughts, goals, and experiences that are threaded with reflection and self-assessment. It represents who you are, what you do, why you do it, where you have been, where you are, where you want to go, and how you plan on getting there (cited in Richard, 1998:98). A teaching

portfolio is a collection of various documents presenting and informing about different aspects of teachers' work. "[It] provides the opportunity to undertake a holistic assessment of one's teaching" (Farrell, 1998:102). The present study also encourages teachers to use portfolios to record their teaching as this will help them to become effective reflective practitioners.

The specific reasons for compiling a portfolio may differ, the main one, though, is reflection of a teacher's work. As Bailey (2001:225) say, in contrast with the "snapshot" of information gained from observations for example, portfolios "present the "big picture" of teachers' professionalism. As the main benefits, Richard and Farrell (1998:98) point out that portfolios, firstly, demonstrate teacher's approach to his/her work and "present evidence of the teacher's thinking, creativity, resourcefulness, and effectiveness". Secondly, they are "source of review and reflection"; and thirdly, they can encourage cooperation with other teachers. On the other hand, some difficulties could be faced when compiling portfolios. Richard and Farrell (1998:102) warn that the process of creating a portfolio is quite time demanding and it is an on-going process; new items could be added when needed for a long period of time. Different levels of self-reflection need to be recorded in teacher's portfolios.

According to Goodman's (2009:76) study on levels of reflection, in order to make reflection a tool for improvement, it is important to recognize three developmental levels of reflection. He categorized these levels as technical, contextual, and critical (Goodman, 2009:66). The findings of the study showed that at 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 students. For reflection at the contextual level, the study revealed that it 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 students, but also include the broader classroom, programme, and school or community context. Lastly, Goodman (2009:17) discussed that at critical level, reflection goes deeper and broader (outside the individual) and may focus on such things as commitment to social justice. It appears that these levels are developmental, and not everyone will progress through these levels to reach critical reflection. Goodman's

(2009) study can assist teachers go through all these levels of reflection and can guide them to know what to do exactly in each level. In the present study, in order to find a suitable model that will suite teachers in their practice, they were encouraged to go through all these levels in their reflective practice.

Storrs' (1998:77) study revealed that, "As one engages in interactive professionalism it is essential that development and change are grounded in some inner reflection and processing". An examination of the literature for this study revealed a general assumption that reflection in professional behaviour is desirable but very little guidance exists on how to confidently determine reflective behaviour. This shows that reflection is identified as being an essential part of learning which itself is under-researched. The theme identified in Storrs' (1998)'s literature is '*identifying reflection as essential part of teaching'*. Storrs' study can assist teachers to regard self-reflection as an essential part of teaching that will help them to improve their practice. The relevancy of Storrs' study to the present study is that it is also aimed at finding out how teachers reflect on their practice, in order to alert them that they should regard reflection as essential part of learning. The present study also suggests to teachers some best practice and the importance of practicing self-reflection.

Lovat and Smith (1990:77) conducted a study which draws attention to the importance of teachers engaging in self-reflection about their curriculum practice. The findings of this study show that teacher's planning is an extremely important element of teaching practice. Lovat and Smith (1990:86), further argue that a descriptive approach which details the ways teachers plan, design and implement curriculum holds the most potential for self-reflection and teacher professional growth. Lovat and Smith's findings on teacher curriculum planning includes the following: plans give teachers a sense of direction, confidence and security, and thus feelings of increased control; teacher planning is complex; beginning the planning process by specifying objectives might make teachers less aware and less sensitive to the needs of the learners. In other words, teachers undertake their planning within an operational space of possibilities that they perceptually define the tasks in which the learners are engaged with to be the central focus of teachers' curriculum planning. Looking at Lovat and Smith's (1990) study, it appears that teachers need to reflect on their planning in order to check if their

plan has been successful or not. In this context, reflection benefits both teachers and learners.

According to Ross' (2009:44) study, reflection enables teachers to examine and analyse classroom events rather than simply observe them. The findings of the study revealed that reflective teachers are better able to ask themselves basic questions about teaching. They are more analytical and less judgemental when they consider their teaching and that of others. This means that reflection leads teachers to consider the underlying assumptions about beliefs, and implications of the practices they are using and how these practices affect learners as they learn. In short, reflective teachers understand what teaching and learning are all about. The present study encourages teachers to reflect on their practice so that they gain full understanding about teaching and learning; and these will help them to think critically about their teaching and also to grow professionally.

Cruickshank, (2008:77) conducted a study on using critical thinking as an important aspect of self-reflection. The teachers and administrators in the study were asked to consider the personal and professional benefits of higher-level thinking, including reflection, support reflection as part of critical thinking. The results of this study revealed that teachers with good thinking abilities and habits are usually more sensitive, accepting and empathic, tolerant and open-minded, flexible, wise, reasoning, resourceful, creative, informed, objective, observant, aware, and self-understanding (Cruickshank, 2008:29). The present study suggested to teachers to apply Cruickshank's findings by applying all the above principles when reflecting in their practice as they have the potential to improve their practice and learner's performance.

Critiques of reflection (Gore, 1987; Pearson & Smith, 1985) often make use of the hierarchy outlined by Van Manen (1977) in Nigeria, who proposed three levels derived from Habermas (1973:55). The results of the study discussed three levels of reflection: the first level, *technical reflection*, is concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of means to achieve certain ends, which they are not open to criticism or modification. The second, *practical reflection*, allows for open examination not only of means, but also of goals, the assumptions upon which these are based, and the actual outcomes. This

kind of reflection is in contrast to the technical form which recognises that meanings are not absolute, but are embedded in, and negotiated through language. The third level, *critical reflection,* as well as including emphasis from the previous two, also calls for considerations involving moral and ethical criteria (Adler, 1991) to make judgements about whether professional activity is equitable, just and respectful of persons or not. In addition, critical reflection locates any analysis of personal action within wider socio-historical and politico-cultural contexts (Smith & Hope, 1992; Noffke & Brennan, 1988; Zeichner & Liston, 2005).

Gore, Pearson and Smith's model is based on three levels of reflection which provided avenues for exploration in the present study in order to identify the best level or method of self-reflection for primary school teachers. The model also assisted teachers in the sense that they could go through all these levels to find the best level that is suitable for their practice. Reflective teachers have different characteristics, since teachers' reflections depend on the school surrounding (context) which is also influenced by other teachers working within this setting. Schon's (1987:66) study examined the characteristics of a reflective practitioner. According to Schon, reflective teachers are interested in the subtleties of the art and science of teaching. The findings of this study revealed that reflective teachers want to learn all they can about teaching from both theory and practice. They think deeply about their work and about how it should impact their teaching. The study further discussed that inquiring teachers learn by studying, teaching, observing other teachers; and by analysing and reflecting on the practice of others (Schon, 1987:78). This means that they continue to learn when they practice and subsequently analyse their own teaching skills. Teachers need to analyse their own practice; because it is through critical reflection that teachers can look back on their practice and improve.

Wellington's, (1991:44) study argued that because of the individual nature of reflective thinking and the uniqueness of each teacher's reflection, reflective practice has been referred to as inquiry-oriented teaching. The findings of this study revealed that this process of inquiry leads teachers to become "student of teaching". Willington (1991:88) contends that is more important for future teachers to learn to think about their work than to master specific techniques of teaching and classroom management.

Dewey, (1933:23) further explained that teachers are sincerely interested in the fine points of the art and science of teaching, and they want to learn all they can about teaching. Dewey found that reflective teachers are open-minded and willing to consider why they teach as they do. This means that they take responsibility for the consequences of their teaching. They deliberate on their teaching, and as a result of this reflection they improve their effectiveness as teachers. This study concluded by saying that self-reflection is about taking the time to find out who we are, both as individuals and as leaders. It requires teachers to stop and take a look at who they really are; what makes them tick. It includes looking at what they care about most, as well as how and why they feel and act the way they do in given situations. The theme identified in the literature of Dewey (1933:97) is self-knowledge and self-responsibility. During the process of self-reflection, self-knowledge and self-responsibility are important. Self-responsibility helps teachers to become responsible for their own actions and this encourages them to seek information about self-knowledge (getting to know themselves) in order for them to become effective practitioners.

Henderson's (1992:44) study on stages of self-reflection mention that many different approaches can be employed if one wishes to become a critical reflective teacher, which includes observation of oneself and others, team teaching, and exploring one's view of teaching through writing. The findings of this study revealed three stages of self-reflection namely: Stage 1 (the event itself), whereby the teacher starts the process of reflection; Stage 2 (recollection of the event) when the teacher thinks deeply about what happened; and Stage 3 (review and response to the event) whereby the teacher examines an experience as an account of what happened without explanation or evaluation. Henderson's study can assist teachers in their reflective process since teachers are going to look all the stages of reflection and apply them in their reflective practice. They can also ask themselves questions about their teaching that can help them to improve their practice.

Robertson's (2002:45) study which was conducted in Nigeria is about self-reflective questions. The findings of this study show that teachers usually start by asking themselves the questions that is on their minds, the questions that expresses an inner conflict. This means that by asking a good question you give your brain something to

work on. It will try to find a good explanation to it, starting the process of self-reflection. So it is crucial to ask the right question, the one that expresses the topic. Good questions are always the ones that bring the topic to the point by asking "How can I …". Usually questions starting with "Why" are not very effective. By asking why-questions you will get answers why it is that way. However, the purpose is to improve practice, that's why a how-question is more solution-oriented and usually much more empowering. Robertson's (2002) study can help teachers to make sure that they ask themselves useful questions that will help them to improve their reflective practice and the teaching profession as a whole. Even though self-reflection is not an easy thing, problems of self-reflection are clarified by Bennson (1999).

Bennson, (1999:23) conducted a research in Lesotho based on problems associated with reflection. Bennson's (1999:45) study revealed that there are number of barriers which hinder the achievement of reflective approaches. These include existing preconceptions about teaching as a profession, the essential preconditions which allow student teachers to develop reflective capacities, their possible responses to being required to undertake reflection, and the structural and ideological programme milieu within which various kinds of reflection are being encouraged. The present study investigated the practice of self-reflection of teachers in order to identify some barriers which hinder teachers to reflect on their practice. Teachers need to identify barriers to their teaching, and find ways of solving them. This process ultimately results in professional development.

Christopher's (2002:33) paper considers the place of reflection within the professional development of teachers in the 1990s. The results of this study revealed that much 'lip service' is paid to the need for teachers to reflect upon their worth, but that was not enough to understand the benefits of opportunities and challenges for reflection of different levels. Furthermore, the results outlined that legislation in the US which has led to the decentralization of budgetary management of schools provided opportunities for a greater number of teachers to engage in reflection.

Kang's (2004:27) study investigated in-service teachers' learning through reflection. The findings of this study revealed that reflection assisted teachers to take more control of their teaching actions, and to find justification for their teaching actions. Furthermore, the results of this study viewed reflection as a way of changing their teaching practice. Kang's study can assist teachers to realize that after self-reflection has taken place, some changes also have to be done. In supporting Kang's idea, Valencia (2009:18) conducted a qualitative, descriptive-interpretative study to describe the way the knowledge of five in-service teachers had been constructed with regard to self-reflection. The results of the study showed that teachers' knowledge base is the result of life experience and educational processes: the components of knowledge about their role, reflection and their teaching context. The findings of the study indicated that the knowledge base of teacher education should merely be based on the knowledge provided during professional training. It should also be understood against the background of teachers' which also determine the teacher's reflection. Valencia's (2009) study can assist teachers to look at their different backgrounds in order to find suitable reflective models that can help them to reflect on their practice.

Researchers in Africa have researched about the use of reflection in different ways. In Zimbabwe, Mulwambo (2008:76) conducted a study on the use of teacher-diaries to reflect. The results of the study showed that the use of a teacher-diary is the easiest way to begin a process of reflection since it is purely personal. Furthermore, Mulwambo (2008:86) also suggested that after each lesson, a teacher may write in a notebook what happened during the lesson. These reflections may also describe their reactions and feelings and those they observed on the part of the learners. They are likely to begin to pose questions about what they have observed. According to Mulwambo, diary writing does require a certain discipline in taking the time to do it on a regular basis. Mulwambo's study can assist teachers to regard teacher-diary as important aspect of the reflective process. The use of a diary can also help teachers to record detailed information about their teaching, so that they can later reflect on it.

In Lesotho, Hanry (2009:88) conducted a study about the use of teacher's peer observation to reflect on their practice. The results of the study suggested that teachers must invite other colleagues to come into their classes to collect information about their

lessons. This may be with a simple observation task or through note taking. The use of peer observation can help teachers to relate back to the area they have identified to reflect upon. Hanry's study can also help teachers to have reliable and consistent results about their reflection.

In Botswana, Thomson (2010:38) conducted a study on the use of recorded lessons as a way to do self-reflection. Thomson's study shared similar characteristics to Harry's. The results of this study revealed that video or audio recordings of lessons can provide very useful information for reflection. Audio recordings can be useful for considering aspects of teacher talk. The use of recorded lessons can help teachers to reflect on how much they talked and if their instructions and explanations were clear. Through the use of recorded lessons, the teacher can also reflect on the time allocated for the lesson and how students responded. Thomson's study can also help teachers to record their teaching in a way that they can later look back on and reflect.

In relation to the use of recorded lessons as a way to reflect, Nomsa, (2009:66) conducted the study in Namibia on the use of student feedback as a way of reflecting on teacher's practice. The results of Nomsa's (2009) study suggested that teachers may ask their students what they think about what goes on in the classroom. Their opinions and perceptions can add a different and valuable perspective. Nomsa's study therefore adds value to the present study, since the researcher examines learner's feedback in order to discuss the practice of teacher's reflection. Reflection takes place through different stages that outlined by Davis (2006: 44).

Peters (1991:78) conducted a study based on reflective inquiry in Ghana. The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe how novice teachers used their own teaching practice as a focus of reflective inquiry. Four major themes were identified: the corporation, charting the classroom territory, relationships, and pedagogy. The results of this study demonstrate that through reflection, the teachers could decipher their teaching in an environment that is hectic, changeable, and isolated from peers. Peter's study enables teachers to understand that whatever environment teachers may find themselves in; they have the responsibility to change such an environment. In Mozambique, the work of Noddings (1988:53) underscored the importance of

developing the skill of reflective practice as a method for examining and assessing the complexities of one's teaching and far promoting self-directed professional development.

Davis's (2006:29) stages of how self-reflection takes place assisted the present study to explain the practice of self-reflection by teachers in their classrooms. Henderson's approach to self-reflection started with the event itself, where the actual teaching takes place. The present study aimed to establish whether teachers do reflect throughout their teaching. The second stage of Henderson's self-reflection is recollection of events. This stage enabled the present study to determine if teachers do remember how teaching took place in order for them to improve in future. The last stage of Henderson's self-reflection is review and response to the event. The present study aimed at determining if teachers are in a position to review all the learning processes in order for them to improve their teaching.

Calderhead (1989:98) conducted a study on technical reflection as an essential aspect of initial student teacher development and a precursor to other kinds of reflection. Calderhead's reflective teaching involves the use of microteaching to assist in developing student teacher competence. While claims about the benefits of this approach have been asserted, little research evidence was presented, and any reflection involved seems to be fairly superficial, confined to whether ends have been achieved. Nonetheless, it may constitute a basis for providing tools which will enable other forms of reflection to develop. Johnson (2000:66) thinks of self-reflection as more.

Reflection is also facilitated through study groups. Peters (1991:87) supports Johnson's idea that study groups provide teachers with an excellent opportunity to reflect upon their practice, learn about developments in their field, and share experiences and strategies. If it represents a radical change, the study group can be established incrementally. The findings of this study revealed that teachers can meet every two weeks (or even once a month) for an hour, read a manageable article about an academic area of concern, and share one new insight or concept they are committed to trying out in their classrooms. As a result, these professional learning communities are also an ideal venue for sharing strategies and insights from workshops that teachers

have attended. The leadership skills of the group's members are further developed when the jobs of facilitating the discussion and selecting the texts to be read are rotated. Peter's study provides useful insights especially as it encourages teachers to meet as a group to identify some problems they encounter, this can help them to become effective reflective practitioners.

Irvine's (1990:23) study on the importance of self-reflection revealed that self-reflection assisted teachers in identifying and understanding the key concepts that affect their teaching, delivery, and learning process. Furthermore, the researcher argued that conversations between the teachers and their seniors promoted a reflective dialogue where expert feedback assisted them to improve their practice. Irvine (1990:44) concluded the study by raising attention to the benefits of alternative teaching strategies such as cooperative teaching to be used to improve self-reflective practice. The theme identified from Irvin's (1990) study is using cooperative teaching as a way of reflecting on their practice. This has relevance to the primary teachers of Mankweng Circuit in this study, because they considered that working together cooperatively helps them to improve their reflective practice.

Simpson (2005:43) conducted a study in the special schools of Limpopo province about the use self-reflection as a tool to solve problems. The results of the study revealed that teachers begin the process of reflection in response to a particular problem that has risen with their classes, or simply as a way of finding out more about their teaching. According to Simpson's (2005) study, it appears that teachers in the special schools of Limpopo province reflect on their practice only if they face problems throughout their teaching journey. Simpson's (2005) study makes teachers aware that they should not reflect on their practice only if they have problems; but on a daily basis.

Moje (1996:21) study about reflection in a classroom is in support of Simpson's idea. Moje defined self-reflection as "deliberate thinking about action with a view to its improvement". The study was designed to investigate the nature of reflection in teaching, to define specific forms of reflection, and to evaluate the strategies that result to self-reflection. The theme identified in this study is fostering of self-reflection, which is related to the present study. In order to find ways that can be used to foster self-

reflection; it is important to find out how teachers practice their self-reflection. The present study investigated teacher's practice of self-reflection and later identified some ways that can foster reflective practice and positive attitude of primary teachers.

James's (2007:12-33) article on a positive attitude on self-reflection revealed the importance of choosing one's attitude towards self-reflection. The study revealed that teachers have a negative attitude towards self-reflection. In his analysis, James found that less experienced teachers are those with a positive attitude towards self-reflection. However, Sam (2003:331) found that teachers with positive attitudes are those with more than ten years teaching experience. Sam's study was based on positive attitudes and self-reflection. The present study adds to these studies by examining reflective practices of teachers in order to explain the effect it has on their teaching. Both James (2007) and Sam's (2003) studies were based on attitude of teachers towards teaching. These studies indicate that a positive attitude will help teachers become more effective on their teaching practice. From James's (2007:89) analysis, he concludes that life offers many possibilities for people to learn new skills, consolidate and restructure, and re-evaluate their goals. However, Sam's (2003:145) study pointed out that when teachers found themselves in changing situations, it is important to maintain structure and routine as this helps in keeping a positive attitude (Sam 2003:339).

In contrast to James (2007) and Sam (2003), Zeichner and Liston (2005:17-22) conducted a study in South Africa using qualitative methodology on teaching student-teachers to reflect. The research was conducted at University of Free State (School of Education). Zeichner and Liston (2005:30) found that teachers are not well exposed to self-reflective models. They concluded that teachers are not sure if they are applying the right principles of self-reflection and these develop negative attitude towards self-reflection. Ringe's (2004:22) study in Cape Town supports Zeichner and Liston that teachers need motivation for them to produce good results. The results of this study points out that better salaries and better working conditions can motivate teachers to reflect on their practice. The study further revealed that most of the teachers in private schools reflect on their practice because of things such as better salaries and better working conditions. In Limpopo, Gabriel (2004:11) revealed that teaching is an art and quality of teaching which depends on love, dedication and devotion of the teacher

towards the subject. Gabriel's study is similar to the present study since they are both on teachers' practices in self-reflection. Although Gabriel's study was conducted in colleges and the present study was conducted at the primary schools of Mankweng Circuit, comparisons can still be made between the two.

2.10 CONCLUSION

Reflection is by nature an excellent tool for primary school teachers' professional development. A number of researchers have recommended that reflection be included in teacher education programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers. This chapter has examined self-reflection of teachers from many different perspectives both locally and abroad. Many studies conducted on this topic indicate that self-reflection is considered critical to any teacher's professional development. This study added another dimension to the literature on self-reflection, that is, self-reflection in a rural, primary school context. The next chapter is research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focused on the research methodology and design that has been used to undertake the study. This includes the research approach, the research strategy, data analysis, the role of literature and data collection techniques used in this study and the credibility of this study. In this chapter, the researcher explored the methodology used in this study and the relevance of the methodology to this study.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach used in this study was qualitative approach, and can be specified as exploratory, descriptive and contextualising. The purpose of qualitative research is to develop an understanding of individuals and events in their natural state, taking into account the relevant context (Leedy, 2001:91). In this study, teachers' views or feelings about the process of reflection were investigated. The aim of descriptive research was to accurately examine events or phenomena (Le Compte & Preissle, 1993:39). Thus descriptions were given precisely and completely as possible. In this study the researcher described the experiences of the teachers in the self-reflective process.

By using the qualitative approach, the researcher's role was to gain a holistic overview of the context under study. Events cannot be isolated from their context. In this regard, the study is contextually based as it looked at teacher's reflection on their practice within a particular setting (primary schools in Mankweng Circuit). Qualitative research was predicated on the assumption that each individual, each culture and each setting is unique. In qualitative research, interpretation of data is done by means of set exterior in order to determine an amount of quality to the understanding of findings (Kolb, 1999:3). Procedures are not strictly formalized, scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode is adopted (Mouton & Marias, 1998:166). Therefore, this study is epitomized as qualitative research.

The researcher used the qualitative methodology because he required in-depth information in order to explain teacher's practices on self-reflection. The purpose of qualitative research is to develop understanding of individual and events in their natural state, taking into account the relevant context (Borg and Gall, 1993:26). Qualitative studies can produce thick description of an interesting phenomenon, discover relevant variables and generate hypothesis about the cause effect relationship between them. Producers are not strictly formalised, scope is more likely to be undefined, and more philosophical mode is adopted (Mouton and Marias, 1998:166).

Advocates of qualitative research argue that their methods are particularly appropriate for the study of education because they are derived from social sciences and concerned with the study of human behaviour and thinking in various settings. The present study fits the category of qualitative research because interviews are characterized by qualitative research approach (Vockelsen and Asher, 1995:196) and this is one of the data collection methods the researcher used in this study.

Advocates of qualitative research observe that educational practitioners find it easy to read reports of qualitative research and relate to the findings of their own situation (Vockelsen & Asher, 1995). The data collected emanated from an open-ended questionnaire and interviews did not follow numerical or statistical procedures. Thus, the focus of the study was on understanding and meaning through verbal narratives and interviews rather than through numbers.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is, "a reflection of the researcher's plan of how he/she is going to proceed with the research" (Bogdan & Bikien, 1998:4). It provides the overall framework for collecting data. The researcher adopts a certain strategy in the research. According to Leedy (2001:91) a research design is a complete strategy of attack on the central research problem. In simpler terms, a research design is a plan. It involves the process of planning what and how data is to be collected (Kothari 1997:38). The design used in this study is phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research design is the kind of research whereby the researcher forms part of the day to day life of his/her population, while gathering data (Criticos 2002:44). In this study, the researcher spent a

few days getting to know the staff of the relevant schools in order to gather information. The reason for choice of a phenomenological research design was that it enabled the researcher to be in a particular school, for a particular period in order to find out how teachers practice self-reflection.

The researcher formed part of the staff, and engaged in daily activities of teachers in these schools. This enabled teachers or members of staff to behave in a normal manner while at the same time they were able to provide valuable data about their practice of self-reflection. The most important thing in this stage was for teachers not to be biased when providing information because sometimes when teachers are too conscious of the researcher; they might provide information just to please the researcher, however, if they are comfortable with the researcher and have developed a good rapport with the researcher, the data gathering process is made easier.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population comprises teachers from three primary schools in the Mankweng Circuit. The total teacher population from these three schools is eighteen. Du Plooy (1997:48) refers to sampling as the rigorous procedures involved when selecting individuals from a large population. A sample is therefore a group of subjects chosen from the population using a particular sampling method. In the first phase of data collection, an open-ended questionnaire was used. The reason for starting with the open-ended questionnaire in the first place was to compare information from these questionnaires with the information from the interviews in order to get reliable results. The researcher examined the responses from the questionnaires and compared them with responses from the interviews.

For the open-ended questionnaire, the sample also consisted of eighteen (18) teachers, six from each of the three schools selected. Thereafter, purposive sampling was used to determine the number of respondents who were to be interviewed. The interviews were used to gather information on how teachers practice self-reflection in different phases (foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase). The researcher wanted to determine how teachers view the process of self-reflection in different phases. These enabled the researcher to have information on how self-reflection is practiced in the

foundation, intermediate and senior phases; in order to identify some self-reflective models that can assist them to improve their practice of self-reflection irrespective of their phases or grades.

For the second phase of data collection, six teachers were interviewed from each school (total of three schools); two from foundation phase, two from intermediate (male and female) and two from the senior phase (male and female). The researcher used interviews, because during interview sessions, teachers felt free to express their feelings or their views about self-reflection. In each phase, the researcher decided to interview males and females, because males and females view the process of self-reflection in a different ways. The researcher tried to create a gender balance in order for findings of the study to represent both genders. The researcher was also aware that most teachers in the foundation phase are female teachers; so in the case where there were no male teachers in foundation phase, both female teachers were interviewed. The total number of respondents for the interview was eighteen.

Selection of the sample was purposefully chosen. Patton (1990:169) states that "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research". Consequently, in an attempt to find out about the teacher's practices of self-reflection, interviews were held with purposefully selected teachers in different phases (foundation, intermediate and senior phase).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

To carry out any type of research investigation, data must be gathered. Many different methods and procedures have been developed to aid in the collection of data. These procedures employ distinctive ways of collecting data. According to Kothari (1997:207), "Each [method] is particularly appropriate for certain sources of data, yielding information of the kind, and in the form that can be most effective". The use of various techniques allows the researcher to confirm the findings. For this study two phases were undertaken; phase 1 comprised of open-ended questionnaires and phase 2 interviews were conducted to obtain data.

To collect data, the following data collection instruments were used: open-ended questionnaires and interviews (unstructured face to face interviews). The researcher distributed six questionnaires to each of the three primary schools in the Mankweng Circuit. The researcher requested a private room so that the respondents could fill in the questionnaires. Each teacher was given enough time to explore deeper levels of their understanding of the questions. In order to ensure that the respondent answered freely, the researcher informed the respondent that the information provided is for research purposes only. Thereafter, six teachers from each school were interviewed (the total of eighteen).

The following are the reasons for using these two instruments:

➢ *Phase 1: open-ended questionnaire*

The researcher used open-ended questionnaires because it allows respondents freedom to express their views. The researcher did not set time limits for responding to the questionnaires, duration for responding depended on the individual respondent. By using an open-ended questionnaire, in-depth collection of data was made possible. Open-ended questionnaires administered personally to individuals have a number of advantages. They allow respondents to qualify their responses, give opinions and explain their practice in greater detail. It gives respondents the opportunity to reveal information that might otherwise not be offered. This is also supported by Johnson (2000:44) in the literature review that teacher's opinions are based on direct experience that tends to exert stronger influence on behaviour than those formed through hearsay. It also offers the researcher the opportunity to establish rapport, to explain the purpose of the study and to explain the meaning of items that may not be clear.

The researcher was also aware that some respondents feel free when writing rather when talking; the researcher tried to cater for such respondents' in the open-ended questionnaire. During this process, the researcher did not only give respondents a chance to answer the structured questions, but also to give other comments on self-reflection that they deemed appropriate. As the result, the respondents were granted enough opportunity to express their thoughts in depth and also their feelings about self-reflection.

Phase 2: Interviews

Interviews are an important part of any research project as they provide the opportunity for the researcher to investigate further, to solve problems and to gather data (Cunningham, 1993:93). The aim of the interview in this study was to collect information regarding the practice of self-reflection in primary schools of Mankweng Circuit. The interviews were tape-recorded. The following procedures were followed in conducting interviews:

> ➢ *The unstructured one to one interview*

Unstructured one to one interviews, also sometimes referred as the in-depth interviews, merely extend and formalises conversation. The researcher chose to use this kind of data collection tool because he wanted to find in-depth information about how teachers practice their self-reflection. It is referred to as a 'conversation with purpose'. The purpose was not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses and not to 'evaluate' in the usual sense of the term. At the root of the unstructured interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. This kind of data collection tool is focused and discursive and allows the researcher and participants to explore issues (Collin, 1998). In this study the practice of self-reflection was explored in depth.

According to Collin (1998), unstructured one to one interviews are used to determine individuals' perceptions, opinions, facts and forecasts, and their reactions to initial findings and potential solutions. Josselson, (in Collins, 1998:8) mentions that the events recounted and experiences described are made more substantial, more real, through being recorded and written down. The unstructured interview is often dismissed as lacking 'objective data'. It is, nevertheless, a type of interview which the researcher uses to elicit information in order to achieve understanding of the participant's point of view or situation. The researcher in this study tried to understand how participants (teachers) view the process of self-reflection. Denzil (quoted in Collin, 1998:1) adds to this by referring to the interview as an interactional situation. Interviews are social interactions in which meaning is necessarily negotiated between the researcher and the participant (Collin, 1998:3, 5). The relationship between the researcher and participant is fluid and

changing, but is always jointly constructed. In this study, the researcher built a very strong relationship with participants in order to develop a trust between two parties (the researcher and participants).

The researcher in this study, was neither objective nor detached, but was rather engaged in the process of data collection. Engagement implies willingness on the part of the researcher to understand the participant's responses to a question in the wider context of the interview as a whole. Marshall and Rossman, (1995:80) state that the participant's perspectives on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it. The information should be analysed as it is, without changing participant's point of view. In other words' during data analysis, the researcher ensured that he analysed what the teachers said and not what his personal feelings as a researcher were.

The participants overtly control the information they give out (Goffman, quoted in Collin, 1998:12). A challenge in interviewing is that it has to do with achieving and maintaining a balance between flexibility and consistency in data collection. Flexibility is essential for discovery and for eliciting the participant's story. However, some consistency was also essential in the types of questions asked, the depth and detail, and the amount of exploration versus confirmation. Thus an important challenge is maintaining enough flexibility to elicit individual stories, while at the same time gathering information with enough consistency to allow for comparison between and among subjects (May, in Morse, 1991:192).

Prepared questions for unstructured interviews

Prior to interviewing, the researcher defined the information required. The information supplied by the interviews clearly related to specific questions that the researcher sought to answer. All the unstructured interviews require a format and follow a process. The question or questions to be answered were prepared and reviewed with experts in the field and even with other teachers. Rubin and Rubin, (1995:145) mention that an interview is built up of three kinds of questions prior to talking to the participants:

- *Main questions.* The researcher prepares a handful of main questions with which to begin and guide conversation.

- *Probe.* When responses lack sufficient details, depth or clarity, the interviewer puts out a probe to complete or clarify the answer, or to request further example or evidence.

- *Follow-up questions.* These pursue the implications of answers to the main questions.

Field and Morse (1994:66) further mention that it is important to minimise the 'dross rate', or the amount of irrelevant information in the interview. The best strategy for minimising the dross rate is to prepare several open-ended questions before the interviews. In the present study, open-ended questionnaires were used before actually starting of the interviews. Field and Morse (1994:67) further mention that there is an overall trend from unstructured to more focused interviews as the investigator gains knowledge about the participant's worldview.

Interview setting

Participants were prepared for the unstructured interviews. This was done by arranging the time and place ahead of time. This was followed by a reminder in writing, which was confirmed closer to the date. A quiet environment, where no interruptions occurred helped facilitate the process. The interview was conducted in a professional environment, agreed upon by both parties. The researcher selected a setting that provided privacy, was comfortable, was a non-threatening environment and was easily accessible. The researcher also arranged a seating arrangement that encouraged involvement and interaction.

Conducting an unstructured interview

The introduction to an interview is something of a signpost to guide active participants through the open terrain of their experience. It may suggest that relevant ways of thinking about linking experience, as well as bringing alternative resources into play (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995:42). After the researcher made introductory pleasantries, he also confirmed once again the general purpose of the research, the role that interviews plays in the research, the approximate time required, and the fact that information would be treated confidentially. The researcher also explained the manner in which he would be recording responses and obtained permission for tape-recording. Lastly, the researcher finalised the signing of voluntary consent forms and informed the participants that if they wish to withdraw at any time, they were free to do so.

Field and Morse (1994:66) report that the participant will be sizing up the researcher and making a silent decision about whether or not the researcher is agreeable and can be trusted. During the interviewing process the goal of the researcher is to get the person to express his/her ideas about particular issues. The researcher sees the interviews as an art. During the interviews the researcher tried to get participant to: open up and express ideas, express ideas clearly, explain and elaborate on ideas and focus on issues at hand than wander onto unrelated topics. As barriers are removed, the interaction became more intimate; the information obtained was more valid and more meaningful.

The researcher also allowed participants to finish what they were saying and allowed them to proceed at their own rate of thinking and speaking. This type of interview involved asking open-ended questions, which were used in this study. It is essential to listen for implicit and explicit meanings in the explanations and descriptions provided by the participants. According to Field and Morse (1994:67), the researcher should be able to recognise 'thin' areas and probe for additional information, to remember all that has developed in previous interviews, to make associations and verify assumptions, and to "get inside participant's skin" so that the topic may be understood from the participant's perspective.

The above mentioned information shows that interviews are important part of any research project (especially in a study like this which adopted the qualitative approach) as they provided an opportunity for the researcher to investigate further and deeper. By using interviews to collect data, the practice of self-reflection was recorded in detail. The use of prompts and open-ended questions also made it possible to extract detailed data from the respondents. Interviews were also relevant in this study, since most teachers are generally good speakers by virtue of their chosen profession. They feel comfortable when talking instead of writing since talking is part of their daily activities. During the interviews, the researcher did not select specific data, but recorded everything. The interviews took place in a private place, where only the researcher and respondent were present.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The research broke down the data in to basic units which were then broken down thematically into specific units which were later combined to give an overall view of the findings. With analysis the unique characteristics and structure of the data were uncovered so that they could be described, explained and interpreted to make sense of the data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000:148). The interviews were transcribed providing a complete record of each encounter. Interviews were then analysed to find trends. This was done by identifying contributions that re-appeared in each of the interviews. Krueger, (1988:109) suggests that content analysis begins with a comparison of the discussions. This suggestion was used as a guideline in discussing the findings; however, the dominant strategy used in the data analysis was thematic analysis.

At this stage the researcher did data reduction, presentation and interpretation (Sarantakos, 2000:210). The problems experienced with data analysis depend mainly on the degree of structure given to the research process. The making of field notes can be made easier if standardized forms of report writing are available. Such forms should never, however, stand in the way of unexpected events that might crop up from time to time.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In this study trustworthiness is defined as a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for, and behavioural expectations of, the most correct conduct towards teachers. The researcher also established strong interpersonal relationship with participants. The advantage of a strong interpersonal relationship between researcher and participants is that it neutralizes initial distrust. If the participant trusts the interviewer, there is no longer any need for any kind of role playing (Mouton, 1996: 158). According to De Vos, (2007:69), important issues that are explored are that no harm should come to experimental subjects and/or participants; therefore, prospective participants should give their informed consent; and they should not be deceived in any way. The researcher should be competent, respecting, honest and responsible. Nachmias and Nachmias (1990) suggest that informed consent is particularly important if participants are going to be exposed to any stress, pain, invasion of privacy, or if they are going to lose control over what happens (e.g. in drug research); such informed consent requires full information about the possible consequences. The principle of informed consent arises from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The chapter was based on research methodology, whereby the approach used in this study was outlined. The chapter also presented the research design for the study, the overall framework of data collection and research design used in this study. Furthermore, the chapter also presented what the population consisted of; and how sampling was selected from the whole population. For any research, data has to be collected; the chapter also explained how data was collected. The issue of trustworthiness is important in research like this, whereby teachers were expected to respond honestly about their actual practice of self-reflection; therefore the chapter also explained how the researcher maintained the issue of trustworthiness and their informed consent. The next chapter is based on presentation and analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Data from the open-ended questionnaires and interviews are presented and analysed in this chapter.

The researcher first obtained permission from the Department of Education (DoE) and principals of schools to conduct this study. During the discussion with principals, they were asked to provide the researcher with a list of teachers from each school who teach foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase. The teachers were then addressed by the researcher outlining the purpose of the study and were asked to sign the consent forms. The researcher distributed open-ended questionnaires to the teachers to complete before the interview session. Participants were also asked to answer the question: "Would you also like to take part in an interview which discusses self-reflection in greater depth?" After obtaining the necessary permission, the researcher asked participants to participate in the interview which was conducted in a quiet classroom.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

4.2.1 Phase 1: Open-ended Questionnaire

Data to be analysed was categorized into three phases namely: foundation, intermediate and senior. The data was analysed under the following themes: definition and process of reflection, importance of self-reflection, timing of reflective practice, value of self-reflection, use of self-reflection by teachers, and challenges of self-reflection. Under each of these themes, a summary of common responses is first stated followed by discussion of findings in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases. This means that responses from the questionnaires were not treated individually but rather they were grouped into themes (Fabian, 2005)

4.2.1.1 Definition and process of self-reflection

In the first question, teachers were asked to define self-reflection and how they view the process of self-reflection.

The researcher identified the following pertinent responses to the first question:

- *Self-reflection is a process of asking yourself questions about your teaching;*
- *Self-reflection is improvement of your weaknesses;*
- *Self-reflection is looking back on your teaching;*
- *Self-reflection is questioning the subject matter for deeper understanding;*
- *Self-reflection is a process to analyse the teaching and learning process;*
- *Self-reflection is examining yourself;*
- *Self-reflection is a way of looking into your achievements and failures;*
- *Self-reflection is a process of identifying barriers for learning;*
- *Self-reflection is a process of judging yourself.*
- *Self-reflection is examining the impact of personal values;*
- *Self-reflection is self-awareness; and*
- *Self-reflection is self-observation.*

Foundation phase teachers in Mankweng Circuit define self-reflection as a process of asking themselves questions about their teaching. This means that teachers need to look at their own practice and ask themselves questions about their own teaching. This will enable teachers to identify their mistakes and improve their teaching. When viewing the process of self-reflection, foundation phase teachers mentioned that during self-reflection teachers should look back on their teaching and improve their weaknesses. Self-reflection provides teachers with the opportunity to ask questions about their subject matter in order to develop a better understanding about their discipline. During this process, teachers should make sure that they analyse the teaching and learning process. This was supported by Sam, (2003) in the literature review that self-reflection is based on positive attitude of teachers.

Intermediate phase teachers define and view the process of self-reflection differently from foundation phase teachers; they define and view reflection as a process of self-

examination. In this regard, they view self-reflection as a process whereby teachers need to examine their own teaching. They emphasised that during the process of self-reflection, teachers should look into their achievement and failures. This shows that teachers should work on their failures and make sure that they improve for future purposes. They should do so by identifying the barriers to teaching and make sure that they are not bias when judging their teaching; this will help them to improve their practice. This was supported by Schon (1987:49) in the literature review that the main of self-reflection is for professional growth.

On the other hand, senior phase teachers added some views about self-reflection, as they defined reflection as a process of examining the impact of personal values. They mentioned that for teachers to practice self-reflection; they should do their self-observation in a way that it will assist them to reach their self-awareness. In other words, teachers should know and understand themselves in order for them to become reflective practitioners. Knowing themselves involves the process of asking critical questions about their teaching (Cruickshank, 2008: 77).

When teachers were asked how is self-reflection was practiced in their schools, teachers from different phases responded in different ways. The researcher identified the following responses from teachers in order to discuss their views on reflective practice in their schools:

- Discuss challenges that hinders teaching and learning;
- Setting a meeting after each lesson;
- Noting all the challenges in the diary;
- Discuss learner's understanding;
- Through learner's performance(assessment);
- Through thoughts;
- Subject teachers meeting.

Foundation phase teachers practice self-reflection by discussing challenges that hinder their teaching. Teachers in the foundation phase set meetings after lessons where they discussed all the challenges they come across during their practice. They also noted all the challenges in their diary; so that they can reflect and discuss them during subjects

meetings. It appears that teachers in the foundation phase do not reflect on their practice on the daily basis; because they record their challenges in their diary in order to discuss them in the coming subject meetings (Dewey, 1933).

During the subjects meetings; they also make sure they discuss learner's understanding in order to identify the kind of reflective models that will suite them during their teaching. It is important for teachers to find out how their learners learn, in order for them to come up with a reflective-model that will suite both the teacher and the learner. This means that during the reflective process, teachers need to reflect on how learners learn and discuss learner's understanding in a way that will help learners to improve their learning. Self-reflection itself helps both teachers and learners to improve their practice; therefore teachers need to encourage reflecting on their practice because it is through self-reflection that they can identify their loopholes and improve them.

Different from foundation phase teachers, intermediate phase teachers reflect on their practice by looking at the performance of learners. This means that they do their self-reflection by checking learner's results and think of ways that could improve such results. They also look at the overall results for a particular assessment and try to talk about the performance and their teaching as a whole. As a result, it appears that intermediate phase teachers reflect on their practice only if learners fail. Since they reflect after assessment; the results further reveals that they do not reflect on their teaching on a daily basis since formal assessment may not be done daily. Henderson's (1992:37) reflective model also support that teachers should be experts of their subject matter.

While intermediate phase teachers regard assessment as central for them to reflect on their practice, senior phase teachers practice it differently. In contrast to intermediate and foundation phase teachers; they reflect on their practice through thoughts. After lessons, they meet together and think deeply about their teaching and how they can improve. They reflect on every step of their lesson presentation and afterwards they set a subject meeting. This shows that they do self-reflection on a daily basis because after lessons they meet together to discuss the experiences they came across in their practice. This is quite time consuming. Often it is done informally. Teachers were also

asked if they know of any reflection models. In responding to this question, 50% of foundation phase teachers responded that they do not know of any reflective models; while 50% of teachers know about self-reflective models. This indicates that there is still a lot to be done in the foundation phase, since foundation phase teachers need to be aware of different reflective models because such models serve as important tools that enable them to improve their practice.

When teachers were asked to suggest the best way that self-reflection can be done, foundation phase teachers suggested that the use of video and audio recordings can also be used in self-reflection. This means that teachers record the lessons while they teach and later listen to every step of teaching with the aim of reflecting on the approach they adopted. This is impractical as it involves time, is very costly and cumbersome. Some teachers in this phase suggested that teachers should reflect on their practice while they teach and also to reflect after the lesson use. This type of reflection was proposed by Gibb's reflective model and the constructive model. Noffke and Brennan, (1988) also mentioned in the literature review that teachers should have open minds in their practice.

In the intermediate phase, the situation is different since only 20% of teachers know about self-reflective models while 80% do not know of any reflective model. Therefore, it appears that teachers in the intermediate phase do not reflect because they were not engaged in any particular form of self-reflection that pointed to the use of any model of reflective practice. Teachers in this phase have suggested that reflection should be done through whole class discussion method. In this case learners will also be given a chance to reflect on the teaching that has taken place and these will help teachers to know and understand their weakness and be able to find a way to improve. Intermediate phase teachers also mentioned that teachers should also be allocated time for self-reflection. They further suggested that each lesson plan should have a part for self-reflection since teachers are only given a chance to reflect about the lesson, not to reflect on their practice.

In contrast to intermediate phase teachers; the findings for senior phase teachers are similar to those of foundation phase since 50% of these teachers also know about self-

reflection while 50% do not know of it. The results indicate that teachers need some form of training on the importance of self-reflection as this will help them to regard self-reflection as central in their practice. Teachers need to be trained to choose the best model that suites their practice. This is especially important in primary schools because reflection by teachers may indicate if learners are learning. Self-reflection can help teachers to look at their practice and identify some obstacles that hinder teaching (Noffke and Brennan: 1988).

4.2.1.2 Importance of Self-Reflection

Teachers were also asked why it is important for them to reflect on their practice. When teachers responded to this question, the researcher has identified the following relevant responses: they reflect because they want to:

- *Plan together;*
- *For improvement;*
- *To have direction;*
- *To find a suitable teaching method;*
- *To identify their weaknesses;*
- *Help teachers to make informed decisions;*
- *To link prior learning with future learning;*

Foundation phase teachers find self-reflection as an important tool because it helps them to improve their practice. This shows that teachers need to reflect on their practice if they want to improve their teaching. Reflection gives teachers the opportunity to identify loopholes and be able to close them. For teachers to identify their loopholes, they need to be fair enough when judging their own practice and this will help them to improve their teaching. Clarke, (1995:22) in the literature has also mentioned that reflection in a classroom benefits both teachers and learners.

Intermediate phase teachers also shared the same view as foundation phase teachers as they also find the use of self-reflection important, as it helps them to identify their weaknesses and be able to improve their practice. It is also important to ensure that action must be taken after each self-reflective process. When teachers identify their

weaknesses, they should also find some ways of solving them. The practice of self-reflection should open opportunity for teachers to grow professionally.

Intermediate phase teachers also stated that they use self-reflection to make informed decisions about their practice. This means that after identifying their weaknesses they consult relevant people who could help them to make a decision (informed decision) that will help them to improve their practice. The main aim of self-reflection is to find a way of improving their practice, so it is important for teachers to make decisions that will result in the improvement of their teaching (Clarke, 1995).

Teachers in this phase (intermediate) further mentioned that self-reflection is important as it gives them an opportunity to link prior teaching with future teaching. Therefore they should be able learn from their mistakes by reflecting on their prior teaching and think about some ways that will help them to improve in future. This shows that self-reflection helps teachers not to repeat the same mistakes, since after each reflective process action must be taken. Self-reflection helps teachers to understand themselves and their practice better. Teachers need to give themselves time to sit down and think about their previous practice; and this will help them to identify their weaknesses in the past and identify how they can deal with such incidences in future (Brookfield, 1995).

4.2.1.3 Timing of Self-Reflective practice

When teachers were asked when they reflect on their practice, they responded differently according to their phases; and the following responses were given:

Some teachers reflect:

- *At the end of every lesson;*
- *After a problem has arisen;*
- *During the lesson;*
- *After school hours;*
- *After assessment.*

Foundation phase teachers responded by saying that they reflect on their practice after the lesson. It appears that teachers in this phase may not reflect on their practice while

they teach, but only after the lesson. This reveals that if teachers are applying or using the wrong method that is not suitable for the lesson, they will continue to do so until the next meeting, since they only reflect at the end. Suggesting a model that will help these teachers reflect while they teach or even at the end of the lesson will be useful in this instance. Teachers in this phase further stated that they reflect only if a problem has risen. This shows that teachers reflect only after the 'damage has been done'. When the researcher further investigated the kind of problem that may lead these teachers to reflect on their practice; they responded that in most cases they reflect when learners failed. The intention of this study is to help these teachers to view self-reflection as a process that goes along with their teaching practice. Teachers need to reflect on their practice on a daily basis, without waiting for a problem to happen first (Richard, 1998).

In general, intermediate phase teachers practice self-reflection during their teaching. The kind of reflective model they use was identified by Schon (1987:33) as one in which teachers should reflect on action while the actual teaching is in progress. The advantage of this approach is that teachers have a chance to identify their mistakes while they teach and are able to address them immediately. This study will examine this model in order to come up with a model that accommodates primary teachers of Mankweng Circuit. Intermediate teachers further stated that they also reflect on their practice after school. This means that teachers set meetings after school hours, where they meet with colleagues and discuss the challenges they encounter during their practice and they discuss how best they can overcome them.

Senior phase teachers reflect differently from intermediate phase teachers, but are similar to foundation phase teachers. They reflect on their practice after assessment has been given to learners. This means that the results of the assessment determine the kind of reflection that takes place. The kind of reflection that takes place after most learners have passed differs from the reflection that occurs when most learners have failed. It appears that teachers in this phase do not regard self-reflection as a process but as a final product. Poor reflective practice can result into poor results; therefore, it is advisable for teachers to focus on specific reflective model appropriate for their practice rather than the final product of reflective practice which is assessment results. Self-reflection helps teacher to improve their practice in many ways and is not confined to

summative assessment only. Nomsa (2009) has also mentioned in the literature review that the use of student feedback is also important way of doing self-reflection.

4.2.1.4 Value of Self-Reflection

Teachers were also asked if self-reflection helps them as teachers; and the responses from the different phases are as follows:

Different phase teachers mentioned that self-reflection give teachers a chance to:

- *Check what disturbs the teaching process;*
- *Open their minds and think about learning and teaching process;*
- *Check learner's progress;*
- *To check relevant resources to be used in their practice;*
- *How teaching and learning can be improved;*
- *Set achievable goals in their teaching;*
- *To know learners much better;*
- *Boost teacher's confidence;*
- *To identify their strengths and weaknesses;*
- *To check if they improve in their teaching.*

Self-reflection helps foundation phase teachers to identify things that disturb them during the teaching process. It is important for teachers to identify hindering factors during their teaching; as this can help them to know and improve in their practice. For instance, workload of teachers among others is one of the problems. Teachers must find ways of addressing whatever factors hinder their teaching. This can be done by setting subject meetings and phase meeting to discuss the challenges they come across in their practice. Teachers need to think critically about their teaching and need to open their mind in solving obstacles that disturb their teaching. Reflective practitioners are critical thinkers who always strive to find ways of improving their practice; self-reflection assists in identifying these many ways of improving practice (Peter, 1991: 71).

According to Cruickhank, (2008:77) educators should be critical thinkers. Self-reflection also helps teachers to open their minds to think about the learning and teaching

process. The teaching process involves how the teacher presents lessons and how learners learn, so a good reflective practitioner will take learners into consideration when reflecting on his or her practice. The practice of self-reflection therefore provides teachers with opportunities to think about how learners learn, and how best they can improve self-reflection in order to improve their practice. Teachers also use self-reflection to monitor learners' progress. By monitoring learners' progress, the teacher is able to explain the kind of teaching that has taken place. There is a close relationship between learners' progress and self-reflective practice. A good practice of self-reflection results in positive results of learners.

Foundation phase teachers also mentioned that they use self-reflection to determine relevant resources to be used in their practice, such as charts and pictures to stimulate learners' interest and attention. Teachers use different resources when teaching; so they need to know how to select them for different lessons. Foundation phase teachers use self-reflection to determine the relevancy of resources in their practice. Teachers need to reflect on the resources they use in their teaching, to establish if the resources are helping them to improve their practice or not. Teachers also use self-reflection to establish ways in which self-reflection can be improved. In essence, this means that self-reflection is there for teachers to improve their practice. Teachers need to realize that the improvement of their practice is an on-going process; it does not have a limit (Wedman, 2004: 16). As a result, for every lesson they present, they should also reflect and think of ways in which they can improve their lesson presentation.

Intermediate phase teachers view the importance of self-reflection as a way of helping them to set achievable goals in their practice. Teachers need to set goals in order to become effective reflective practitioners. Through the use of self-reflection, teachers may check their goals they set and see if they are achievable. Furthermore, the use of self-reflection helps teachers to analyse the goals they set, if they are achievable under the environment they find themselves in. Different environments result in different approaches of self-reflection; therefore the present study identifies primary teachers of Mankweng Circuit in order to discuss their practices and identify a model that suite their rural environment.

Self-reflection also helps teachers to know their learners much better, since it gives teachers the opportunity to think deeply about their practice. This helps them to understand the kind of learners they teach and how best they can teach them. Teachers also use self-reflection to boost their confidence, because during self-reflection teachers identify their weaknesses and are able to deal with them and this enables them to have more confidence. Self-reflection helps teachers to be sure of what they are doing; because it enables them to monitor their practice and see if they are still on the right track. In the literature review, Richard (1998: 44) mentioned that when teachers collect information about their teaching, it helps them to understand what they are doing.

Senior phase teachers mentioned that self-reflection gives them a chance to learn from their mistakes and helps them to correct their mistakes. Teachers are human and do make mistakes. In some instances, teachers make mistakes by choosing the wrong method of teaching or the wrong resources to be used in their practice. The use of self-reflective practice helps teachers to identify the kind of mistakes they have committed and establish how best they can rectify them. Senior phase teachers further stated that self-reflection helps them to be responsible for their practice. Responsible teachers ensure that they monitor their growth as professional teachers; and it is through self-reflection that teachers can be made responsible for their practice. They need to be responsible for both teaching and learning; so responsible teachers often assess how learners learn and teaching is taking place. A responsible teacher will also look for ways that will improve his/her practice. Henderson's (1992) Ethical Based Model of Inquiry on reflective practice also explain reflective teachers as responsible someone.

4.2.1.5 Use of Self-Reflection by teachers

Teachers were also asked if other teachers in their schools find the use of self-reflection useful. From the responses, the following comments are of relevance:

Different phase teachers mentioned that self-reflection give teachers a chance to:

- *Improve their level of teaching;*
- *Identify some other methods of teaching;*
- *Keep their work up to date all the time;*

- *Monitors their progress;*
- *Acquire knowledge about their own practice;*
- *Learn how to manage their teaching practice.*
- *To become lifelong learners;*
- *Deal with stressful situations in their teaching;*
- *Discuss their problems with colleagues;*
- *Rectify their mistakes.*

During the process of data collection, teachers were also asked if other teachers find the use of self-reflection useful in their school. Foundation phase teachers responded by saying that other teachers use self-reflection to improve their level of teaching. This means that they also reflect on their practice in order to improve their practice, therefore they should always think of ways that will help them to improve their practice. Teachers in this phase further stated that other teachers find the use of self-reflection useful as it helps them to identify other methods of teaching. Teachers should also reflect on the method they use to present their lessons, and thereafter they should also think of other appropriate methods of teaching. Teachers use different methods to teach, and the kind of method used depends on the context teachers find themselves in. It is through self-reflection that teachers can look at the method used and reflect if it is the best method for the lesson. Teachers in foundation phase also use self-reflection to keep their work up to date. This means that teachers use self-reflection to check the pace of their work, if they are moving along at the same pace as other teachers. The use of self-reflection in this instance will help them to keep their work up to date (Zeichner and Liston, 2005).

Intermediate phase teachers also find the use of self-reflection useful as it helps them to monitor their progress. Teachers should monitor their progress continuously, as this helps them to determine if they are making any progress in their practice. It is through the use of self-reflection that teachers may monitor their progress by identifying their strengths and weaknesses in order to work on the weaknesses for them to improve and make progress in their practice. Intermediate teachers also use self-reflection to acquire knowledge about their own practice. Teachers should acquire knowledge about their practice in order to know themselves better. If teachers want to improve in their practice, firstly they need know exactly what they want to improve. Self-reflection helps them to

identify areas in their practice that need to be improved. Teachers need to acquire as much information as possible about their practice, and this helps them to know how best they can deal with their weaknesses. After acquiring information about their practice, teachers may set subject meetings where they discuss their challenges and are able to solve them as a team. In cases where they cannot find a solution for a particular problem, external help may also be requested. Furthermore, intermediate teachers stated that self-reflection helps them to learn how to manage their teaching practice. During the teaching process, teachers need to manage their resources and activities. It is through self-reflection that teachers are able to manage their teaching. They can do so by reflecting on the kind of resources that should be used and the kind of activities that should be given (Farrel, 1998).

Senior phase teachers view the process of self-reflection differently to that of foundation and intermediate phase teachers. They feel the use of self-reflection is important because it helps them to become lifelong learners. A lifelong learner means reading or advancing in knowledge within a particular field. Teachers should use self-reflection to identify some ways that can help them to improve their practice within their related fields. Teachers may also use self-reflection to identify areas where they lack knowledge and thereafter read related articles that add to their existing knowledge; this will assist them in becoming lifelong learners (Richard, 1998).

Senior phase teachers also use self-reflection to deal with stressful situations. Stressful situation in this context refers to barriers of teaching. Teaching can be stressful at times, especially if teachers are not sure of what to do. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to identify areas where they struggle in their teaching so that they can find ways to deal with those stressful situations. Teachers need to understand their practice better, and they need to give themselves time to reflect on their practice, so that they know exactly the kind of help they need.

It is also important that teachers discuss their challenges with other colleagues. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to note all the challenges they come across in their practice and discuss them during subject meetings. Teachers need to set subject meetings often so that they can discuss their challenges. Senior phase teachers also

stated that they use self-reflection to improve their practice. This means that if they want to improve their practice they need to care about their practice. In other words, they need to be responsible for all actions during their practice. Self-reflection then becomes central to their practice, for as long as they want to grow in their profession (Goodman, 2007).

4.2.1.6 Challenges of Self-Reflection

When teachers were asked questions about the challenges that they experience with regard to self-reflection, teachers from the different phases responded differently. When teachers answered this question, the following responses were given:

Teachers are not able to reflect on their practice fairly, because they are:

- *Unable to judge themselves fairly;*
- *Unable to identify all negative things about their teaching;*
- *Unable to identify the reflective model that will suit their teaching;*
- *Unable to overcome challenges identified;*
- *Do not having enough time to reflect on their practice.*

During self-reflection, teachers need to judge themselves and their practice. Foundation phase teachers find it difficult to judge their practice; as a result they find this as a difficult challenge to overcome. Teachers need to understand that self-reflection done in a correct way is accompanied by positive results. In other words, teachers need to reflect on their practice in order to grow as professionals. The present study encourages teachers to fairly judge their practice so that they can grow professionally.

Foundation phase teachers also find the use of self-reflection as a challenge because they are unable to identify negative aspects of their teaching. The use of self-reflection is not only for negative things although teachers are encouraged to identify negative aspects in their practice so that they can deal with them. For teachers to identify their weaknesses, they need to be fair in their judgement. Most teachers, when they reflect on their practice, they only focus on the positive things about their practice; as a result, their reflection tend to please their seniors to show that they are good teachers, rather helping them to grow in their profession. During self-reflection, teachers should see the

central role of a teacher as a lifelong learner. Reflective practice should be done on a continuous basis so teachers can strive to know more about their profession. They should always look back on their practice and try to close the gap where they missed something. Both positive and negative aspects of teaching need to be reflected upon. Reflective practitioners always ask themselves how best they can improve their practice and they identify effective models that they can use in their practice (Storrs, 1998: 77).

Teachers need to understand their practice better, so that they can understand the approach they can use in their reflective practice. Foundation phase teachers find it difficult to identify the reflective model that will suit their teaching. Teachers need to reflect on their practice using correct ways of reflecting, since different contexts will require different approaches to self-reflection. This means that teachers need to identify the best model that suits their own practice; and this will help them to overcome the challenges they come across.

Intermediate phase teachers also experienced some challenges when it comes to self-reflection. One of the challenges they come across is that they are unable to overcome challenges they encountered in their practice. After self-reflection, teachers should have a way forward. It is possible that after self-reflection, some challenges will be identified; so teachers need to find a way of addressing these challenges in an effective manner.

Furthermore, intermediate teachers find it difficult to reflect on their practice because they mentioned that they do not have enough time to reflect on their practice. Self-reflection should be done on a daily basis, since teaching is based on daily practice of teachers. Teachers need to create time to do self-reflection, since self-reflection is not allocated time on the school time-table. Teachers are allocated space in the lesson plans where they reflect on the lesson that has taken place; but there is no space where teachers are given a chance to personally reflect on their practice.

Senior phase teachers indicated that they experience a challenge when reflecting on their practice, since they are unable to select the best teaching strategies for their practice. One of the purposes of the education system is that the teacher should be able to interpret and implement learning programmes; therefore they should be in a position where they are able to identify the best teaching strategy that will suit their practice. In

this regard, self-reflection becomes important because teachers need to reflect on the kind of learners they are teaching. Reflection on the kind of learners that teachers teach will help them to know the kind of learners they teach, and the teaching strategy that suits them (Lovat and Smith, 1990: 77).

After teachers have discussed different dimensions on self-reflection, they commented that self-reflection is good as it provides them with an opportunity to look at and adjust their mistakes. Self-reflection also encourages teachers to become critical thinkers in solving problems they encounter in their practice. Teachers further described self-reflection as central in their teaching because it gives them direction of what they must do and it also encourages them to open their minds widely when thinking about their practice. Self-reflection also provides teachers with an opportunity to learn more about their experiences and find ways in which they can improve. Primary school teachers also mentioned that self-reflection makes the teaching profession enjoyable and satisfying. Goodman (2009) has also presented some levels of reflection in the literature review that teachers may use to improve their practice.

Through self-reflection, teachers may identify their barriers to teaching and how they can overcome them. What is important is that after identifying barriers to teaching, teachers need to find some solutions. Self-reflection can also be done while a teacher is teaching in order to establish if they are still on the right track. The process of self-reflection itself reveals the best way of doing things. Primary school teachers of Mankweng Circuit also commented that if the self-reflective process is properly followed; it can lead effective teaching. Self-reflection can also lead teachers towards making informed decisions on a number of professional issues.

4.2.2 Phase 2: Interviews

In this phase of data collection, teachers were asked questions and they responded verbally. The researcher transcribed the data obtained from the voice recorder. From the information transcribed, the researcher analysed the responses.

4.2.2.1 Knowledge of self-reflection

Teachers were asked if they heard of self-reflection before, and how they understood the process of self-reflection. When teachers responded to this question, the researcher realized that some respondents responded in a similar way, these responses were merged in the analysis. The researcher also categorized responses according to the phases that respondents are teaching. When foundation phase teachers responded to this question, the researcher found that most of the foundation phase teachers heard of self-reflection before.

Furthermore, teachers were also asked how they understand self-reflection, and foundation phase teachers responded as follows: *"self-reflection is when you impart something to the learners and you later check where you can improve".* Other teachers in the foundation phase also responded that they heard of self-reflection before and that they understand self-reflection to be all work to be re-checked after teaching lessons. In continuing with how foundation phase teachers understand self-reflection, teachers further responded that they understand self-reflection as the performance of the teacher, how the teacher teaches; and the performance of both teacher and the learner (Richard, 1998: 44).

Self-reflection of teachers is important, not only after teaching but also before teaching. In terms of reflecting before teaching, teachers may reflect on their lesson preparation, the resources to be used, and the method of presenting the lesson. This will help teachers to anticipate if the lesson will be successful or not. Teachers should also reflect after presenting their lesson. In reflecting after presenting their lesson, they reflect on the presentation of the lesson, if the time allocated for the lesson was appropriate, the method/s used to deliver the lesson, and also if the resources used were appropriate. During this reflective process, teachers can also reflect on the way learners responded to the lesson, the level of understanding, in order for a teacher to come up with a way that will help them to learn better. Teachers can reflect on their practice by looking at the performance of learners, this works better when the teacher checks the results after a particular assessment and ask themselves questions why

learners performed in a particular way. Nomsa (2009) also discussed the importance of student feedback during the process of self-reflection.

Another response was: *self-reflection is when teachers check the kind of learners they teach since in order for them to understand learners before selecting a teaching approach that is suitable for the grade.* Similar responses were given by other teachers as well. Some teachers responded that they understand self-reflection as a process of analysing themselves for the strengths and weaknesses of their practices so that they can get help in terms of their weaknesses.

When teachers reflect on the kind of learners they teach, this helps them to select suitable teaching approaches for a particular grade. There is a need for teachers to have knowledge on how to approach the teaching of different phases or grades. The use of self-reflective practice helps teachers to identify which method is suitable for a particular grade; and how best the lesson can be presented.

In contrast to foundation phase teachers, intermediate phase teachers responded that they heard about self-reflection, but they have little information about it. Some teachers used their general view to define the process of self-reflection. One teacher in this phase responded that: *self-reflection is when we check how learners respond to teachers' work and self-reflection also helps teachers to identify difficulties in their teaching practice*. Other responses received were categorised as being similar to the above response. This unfolded when one teacher responded that he heard of self-reflection before and that he used self-reflection to evaluate his practice. He further emphasised that self-reflection helps him to check what went wrong in his lesson and also to check if the lesson was presented well (Nodding, 1988).

The use self-reflection is important in teaching; teachers may use this process to check the difficulties they come across in their teaching practice. It is very difficult for teachers to identify their weak points, but the use of self-reflection makes it easy for them to identify such difficulties. Furthermore, the use of self-reflection helps teachers to identify what went wrong in their lessons and also to check if the lesson was presented well. It takes committed teachers to take their time and look at the way they present their lessons and to decide how best they can improve for future presentations (Irvine, 1990).

Although the majority of teachers in the foundation and intermediate phase appear to understand what self-reflection is; in the senior phase, the researcher captured a different perspective. Some teachers responded that they never heard of self-reflection before, while other teachers mentioned that they have little information about self-reflection. For those who have little information, one teacher responded that: *self-reflection is when the teacher reflects after each lesson and must devise a means of checking if the lesson was fruitful or not, and to see if learners have understand or not.* Another teacher in this phase further stated that *self-reflection is when teachers reflect on activities given to the learners, and the work done. During self-reflection the teacher checks how the lesson was presented.* For the teachers who never heard of self-reflection, they responded to the question using their general knowledge; and responded that they understand self-reflection to be a tool that helps teachers to assess the work done. Some teachers also responded that they never heard of self-reflection, and that they just understand self-reflection from a dictionary perspective.

The main aim of teaching is to develop learners by equipping them with relevant knowledge; and during the teaching process understanding becomes central in this regard. This means that teachers must make sure that learners understand what they are teaching. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to review the whole process of teaching and learning, and determine if learners understand the topic. For constant grasp of the topic, teachers need to make sure that learners completely understand them. Lovat and Smith (1990:77) mentioned in the literature review that plaaning is an extremely important element of teaching practice.

4.2.2.2 Is self-reflection necessary?

When teachers were asked if they think other teachers should reflect on their practice; they responded as follows:

Foundation phase teachers responded that:

Teachers cannot just teach without making follow up of what they have taught and to check where they can improve in their practice.

If teachers do not reflect, they will never know if they are doing the right thing, and where they can improve.

There is a need for teachers to reflect on their practice in order to monitor their progress.

Teachers in foundation phase emphasized that:

Every teacher should reflect on their practice, since teachers are always blaming learners without checking if they are teaching correctly.

Self-reflection helps to prepare my lesson and to relate my preparation with policy documents.

Self-reflection also helps me to check the level of delivering my lesson and the method used - if is relevant or not.

I can also use self-reflection to check if the outcomes set are achieved in order to integrate my lesson with the assessment used.

Self-reflection helps me to check learners who understand and those who did not understand.

When teaching there is a need for teachers to do some kind of follow-up to check what they taught and how it was received. In most cases the kind of follow-up that is done by teachers is when they ask learners questions about the lesson presented. This is actually a process of self-reflection because the main aim of asking these questions is to determine if learners understand what is being taught. Even though self-reflection goes beyond that; teachers need to sit down and ask themselves questions about the lesson presented. Successful teachers always make sure that they are neutral when reflecting on their practice. The use of self-reflection in this case helps teachers to follow the teaching and learning process. Teachers reflect on their practice with the intention of improving their practice (Goodman, 2009).

According to Ross' (2009) if teachers do not reflect on their practice, it is unlikely that they will improve in their practice. In most cases, teachers who reflect on their practice are those who are very passionate about their profession, as a result, self-reflection

helps them to improve their practice. The process of self-reflection always provides opportunities for improvement. Teachers need to make sure that they strive for perfection in their practice. Reflective practice appears to be a vibrant tool for teachers to use so that they improve in their practice. Teachers need to familiarize themselves with different kinds of reflective models that will help them to do self-reflection in a highly productive manner. Most teachers, who use self-reflection in a correct way, do not blame anyone or any situation for their failure; but they look deeply on the teaching that has taken place and some possible ways to address the challenges that arise.

Good performance of learners depends on the performance of teachers. In most cases teachers are likely to blame learners without checking how they practice their teaching. The process of self-reflection helps teachers to view and analyse different situations without shifting blame to anyone. The results of self-reflection need to be analysed in a very professional manner that will benefit both learners and teachers. In some cases, teachers engage themselves in self-reflection without being aware that they are doing reflection. After each assessment, in the case when learners fail, the first question that teachers are likely to ask themselves, is: "what makes these learners to fail?" This is the first stage or process of self-reflection. As a result, teachers need to ask themselves questions on how teaching took place, how learners responded to the lesson and their level of participation. Teachers who use self-reflection correctly are likely not to shift the blame to learners but face their circumstances and improve their practice (Willington, 1999).

Henderson (1992:22) in the literature review presented different stages of self-reflection. Methods of teaching and how the lesson presented is important for teaching practice. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to review the methods they used to present their lessons, their approach and level of presenting the lesson. Self-reflection helps teachers to choose the teaching method that is suitable to the lesson by reflecting on how learners responded to the lesson. When teaching learners it is always important to adjust the level of teaching appropriately to the grade and level that is being taught. Some teachers use higher standard of teaching that is not suitable for the grade. As a result, learners fail because they are unable to cope with the standard used. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to choose the standard suitable to different grades. If

suitable standards of teaching are correctly identified by teachers; this will result in learners understanding and performing better.

It is important for teachers to make sure that learners understand what has been taught. When teaching, the focus is not only on fast learners; but the teachers should also accommodate slow learners. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to identify learners who do not understand and also to come up with strategies that will help them to understand better. During self-reflection it is important for teachers to understand how learners learn, and this will help teachers to address learners with barriers to learning. Self-reflection can also assist teachers to categorize learners in terms of their level of understanding and provide the necessary support (Bennson, 1992: 23).

Intermediate phase teachers responded that:

Teachers should reflect on their practice because it helps them to check if they met the outcomes and self-reflection also helps teachers to identify their challenges in their practice.

Teachers should reflect, as it also helps them to identify their strong and weak points in order to work on those weak points.

Self-reflection is very important; if you do self-reflection you will be able to help learners.

It will also help teachers to know and understand their teaching practice. Self-reflection also gives teachers' opportunity to devise means of solving their problems.

According to Peter, (1991: 78) when teaching, it is important for teachers to set targets of what they want to achieve at the end of the day. A good reflective teacher will always make sure that they come up with strategies on how they can improve the results for future assessments and practice. In teaching there is no perfection, after every lesson there is a room for improvement. This means that after every lesson teachers need to ask themselves questions that will help them to improve their practice. Improvement in teaching depends on the practice of self-reflection. It makes sense that if self-reflection is properly done, good results will follow.

Senior phase teachers mentioned that:

It is important for teachers to reflect on their practice as you may sometimes blame the learner while the problem lies with you as a teacher.

Self-reflection helps teachers to identify the gap between learners who understand and those who do not understand, so that those who do not understand can be assisted.

When teaching, teachers need to understand that learners are different and that they learn at a different pace. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to identify the gap between learners who understand and those who do not understand, so that those who do not understand can be assisted. During teaching practice, teachers need to reflect on how teaching and learning takes place. The pace of how learners learn is also important for teachers to accommodate all learners in the classroom. It is through the use of self-reflection that teachers may reflect on how learners learn in order to strive for a balance between those who learn faster and those who learn at a slower pace. Teachers are always encouraged to know and understand their learners and how they learn. Furthermore, self-reflection helps teachers to identify the teaching approaches suitable for learners who learn at a slower pace and those who learn at faster pace (Calderhead, 1989).

4.2.2.3 Timing of reflection

When teachers were asked about when they reflect on their practice, they responded as follows:

Foundation phase teachers responded that:

Sometimes when I teach learners something, I look what I taught learners previously and try to modify how they can improve.

I reflect on their practice after a week, by assessing learners and check if learners understand.

I reflect on my practice after delivering a lesson, by asking questions that will help them to explain learning that took place.

Simpson (2005) mentioned in the literature review that during teaching and learning, self-reflection becomes important to teachers in a way that teachers should directly reflect on the way they teach in order to change where necessary. This should not be the end process of self-reflection, but they should also reflect at the end of the teaching process. Successful teachers always make sure that they look at what they taught and try to modify that. This process will result in improvement of their practice. Reflective practitioners always ask themselves questions about their practice to look for ways to improve their practice. Asking learners questions can be an important process that helps teachers to judge themselves and reflect on how the lesson unfolded.

Teachers should always think about their practice and how best they can improve their teaching. Self-reflection provides teachers with the opportunity to think about their practice, and to engage different stakeholders who can help them to improve their practice. Therefore, it becomes important for teachers to seek help on how they can improve their practice in a professional manner. Some teachers become afraid that if they disclose or fairly reflect on their practice; people will judge them that they do not know certain things. This is one of the common problems that most teachers encounter in their practice. If teachers understand self-reflection and its purpose, they will then reflect in way that it helps them to improve their practice, and this will be of benefit to learners as well.

Intermediate phase teachers reflected on their practice after school. They sat down in the staffroom and checked the lessons taught. They did this because they felt that at home there are many things that disturb them. Other teachers in this phase reflected on their practice after presenting their lessons, they did that by writing down how their teaching took place and challenges encountered.

For teachers to reflect after school hours has some advantages and disadvantages. The advantage of reflecting after school is that teachers have enough time to reflect on their practice without time constraints. Another advantage of reflecting after school is that teachers may also seek other opinions from other colleagues, and this helps them to understand how other people view their practice. This is very important for teachers who find it difficult to judge themselves fairly. In contrast to this, the disadvantage of

reflecting after school is that reflection is done when no immediate remediation of teaching can be done. This is found when teachers prepare/plan for a lesson and decide to change or deviate from what they have prepared while they teach (self-reflection while you teach). When teachers plan a lesson, they expect certain responses from learners and it becomes important for teachers to check/reflect if everything goes according to the way they prepared (Moje, 1996: 21).

Senior phase teachers responded as follows:

I don't have enough time to reflect on my practice.

I reflect on my practice on a daily basis, since teaching takes place on a daily basis.

I reflect on my practice after my lessons and learning activities.

Self-reflection guides me to understand the learners' progress

I write down my reflection in order to have a record of teaching practice.

One of the common challenges faced by public schools teachers in South Africa is the issue of under-staffing. Most teachers interviewed in the senior phase mentioned the issue of time as a challenge for self-reflection. They stated that they do not reflect on their practice because they do not have time to do self-reflection. What resulted in such a response is the fact that teachers are expected to cover a certain scope within a fixed period; and due to their heavy work load that they are having, they tend to teach to just cover what is expected of them without reflecting on their practice. This points to another very crucial factor in the reflection process, the fact that self-reflection of teachers depend on the work-load faced by the individual teacher (Calderhead, 1989).

Some teachers in this phase do reflect on their lessons after the lesson is being taught and they give learners some activities to be done in order to compensate for the shortcomings discovered during their teaching. Teachers should make sure that they reflect or ask themselves questions after giving learners teaching and learning activities. The results of activities should challenge teachers to think new ways of teaching. Self-reflection guides teachers to understand their progress; and they also write down their reflection in order to have a record of their own learning during the process of self-

reflection. Valencia (2009) also mentioned that it is important to record the process of self-reflection, as it helps teachers to trace if they are moving towards the right direction of their practice.

4.2.2.4 Ways of self-reflecting

Teachers were also asked to suggest ways in which they think self-reflection should be done. Teachers responded to this question as follows:

Foundation phase teachers suggested the following:

The best way to do self-reflection is after every teaching. This can be done by asking some questions to check if learners are following the lesson.

Having your peers to share challenges is the best way of reflecting on my practice.

Self-reflection can be done by disclosing my weak points for other teachers to help me.

Intermediate phase teachers suggested:

Every time after teaching, teachers should reflect on their practice; not after a long time, it must be continuous thing

Before presenting the lesson teachers must reflect on their practice based on the achievement/outcomes of learners/lesson.

When teachers were asked the question on how best self-reflection should be done, foundation phase teachers believe that self-reflection should be done at the end of the lesson. They further emphasised that the best way to do self-reflection is to ask learners questions about teaching that took place. Asking learners some questions is the simplest method of doing self-reflection, as it provides teachers with direct and reliable responses. Most teachers use self-reflection to check if learners understand the lesson by asking learners questions that help them to establish whether learners understand (Hanry, 2009). Another self-reflective method revealed by foundation phase teachers is to set a reflective meeting with other teachers and share challenges. This process can also help teachers to solicit other views on how to approach the process of self-

reflection. Teachers in this phase also suggested that teachers should disclose their weak-points, in order for other teachers to support and help them.

Intermediate phase teachers suggested that after teaching, teachers should reflect on their practice; it should not be after a long time, it must be a continuous act. Reflecting on teachers' practice should be continuous because it helps teachers to trace their progress and learners' progress. Teachers should bear in mind that during the self-reflective process, both the progress of teachers and learners is important. In most cases, the improvement of the teacher's practice results in the improvement of the learners' performance. Senior phase teachers suggested that before presenting the lesson, teachers must think about the lesson based on the outcomes planned for the lesson. It is important for teachers to reflect on their preparation before the actual practice, and this will also help them to check if the method/s selected is suitable for the lesson (Mulwambo, 2008).

4.2.2.5 Using self-reflection to improve practice

Teachers were also asked how self-reflection helped them to improve their practice; and they responded as follows:

Foundation phase teachers responded that:

Self-reflection helps me to check if the lesson is suitable for the learners.

I use it to re-check my preparation; as a result, it helps me to identify relevant resources for their lessons.

I use self-reflection to check the performance of learners and the standard used to teach them.

Self-reflection also helps me to check the kind of communication used, if is suitable to the level of learners.

I use self-reflection to learn from my mistakes; as it gives me opportunity to check where I did not do well in order to improve my practice.

Self-reflection helps foundation phase teachers to check if the lesson is suitable for learners. It is important for teachers to reflect on lessons prepared in order to determine the level of difficulty for the learners. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that they teach learners according to the required level, and self-reflection provides them with opportunities to monitor how they practice their teaching. Teachers may also use self-reflection to select relevant resources that can help them present their lessons in a professional manner. Furthermore, teachers use self-reflection to monitor the performance of learners. Successful teaching is accompanied by daily assessment; therefore, self-reflection helps teachers to look at the learner's performance in order to assess them, and to assess the teaching that has taken place (Goodman, 2009).

Communication is also a key in teaching and learning. The use of self-reflection provides teachers with opportunities to examine the kind of communication used during teaching and learning. For second language learners, most learners who fail have a problem of language or English as medium of instruction. Therefore, it becomes important for teachers to consider the issue of language when doing self-reflection. The vocabulary used in lessons should be understood by the learners and it is important for the teacher to 'pick up' when learners are having a problem with the language of instruction. Self-reflection can assist the teacher in determining hindering factors in the language and to find ways of correcting it.

Self-reflection also assisted intermediate phase teachers as follows:

To improve my practice, as it gives me the opportunity to identify the mistakes done in the previous lesson, unlike reflecting quarterly whereby a teacher will only realise the mistakes after a long time.

Self-reflection also helps me to check the method I use to teach and change it if there is a need for that.

Self-reflection is also useful in terms of improving my performance; as it provides an opportunity for me to compare my performance with the performance of other best teachers.

Teachers need to understand that each teaching practice (lesson) is accompanied by its unique challenges; therefore it is important that they identify those challenges and talk about them. Talking about challenges faced in the previous lesson is important because it assists teachers not to repeat the same mistakes. Teachers may also record their results after reflecting on their practice, and talk about them during subjects and phase meeting. Recording the results of their self-reflection will also help them to compare how they do their self-reflection with those of other teachers. As a result, those who poorly reflect on their practice will learn from successful reflective practitioners (Kang, 2004).

Senior phase teachers expressed their feelings as follows:

Self-reflection is important in improving teacher's practice. Self-reflection helps me to understand learners better, and to estimate the amount of time to be allocated for a particular lesson.

I use self-reflection to check the level of my practice or the quality of practice I am offering.

If teachers are not using teaching aids during their presentations, self-reflection can help them to identify the best resources suitable for their practice.

The use of self-reflection also helps me to change my teaching strategy; and it guides me to change the way I assess learners; if it was not done in a proper manner before.

When learners enter the school premises, it becomes the responsibility of teachers to ensure that learners are safe. By interacting with learners, teachers understand them better. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to understand learners and how they can handle them. Teachers may also use reflective practice to check the quality of teaching they are offering. The use of teaching aids help teachers to teach successfully, therefore teachers who use self-reflection are able to reflect on teaching aids used in order to select suitable resources for the lesson. Robertson's (2002) mentioned in the literature that teachers should start by asking themselves questions before actual teaching practice.

Reflexive competency[6] of teachers ensures that during the teaching process teachers are able to reflect on their practice and adjust their teaching strategies. Reflective practitioners are always alert during their practice, and they try to ensure that the lesson goes according to the plan. Assessment is very important in all teaching, without assessment teachers may not know if learners understand. Therefore, teachers should also reflect on the assessment they give to learners; and reflect if it is suitable to their level. It is also important for teachers to set assessment at the level of learners (Christopher's (2002).

4.2.2.6 Overall use of self-reflection

Respondents were also asked if other teachers in their schools find the use of self-reflection useful, and they responded as follows:

This question was not easy for teachers to respond to, since some of the teachers responded by just saying: "I think so". Other teachers responded as follows:

Some teachers do not find the use of self-reflection helpful; as they have never sat down and reflected on their practice other than blaming learners for being lazy.

Only few teachers view the process of self-reflection as important. Some schools do reflect on their practice when they give themselves time to analyse the results of their assessments.

Some teachers do not want to reflect because they do not want people to know their weak-points.

In some instances teachers meet often as subject teachers to discuss the challenges they encounter and how they can overcome them.

Most teachers are not hard workers; as a result they don't find self-reflection important.

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[6] Reflexive competence is a person's ability to integrate actions with the understanding of the action so that she/ (he) learn from those actions and adapts to the changes as and when required.

Self-reflection is crucial in the life of any teacher. Even though teachers responded that some teachers do not find self-reflection useful. It appears that teachers who do not find self-reflection useful are those who are not passionate about their profession. Teachers who regard their profession as a calling, are likely to reflect on their practice, because they always strive for better achievement and best practice. Therefore, teachers need to be encouraged to treat their profession with love and passion, and this will result in them reflecting on their practice. Teachers' motivation to reflect on their practice may be in the form of incentives and promotions. Teachers want promotions and incentives, as a motivation to encourage them to reflect on their practice. However, there are disadvantages associated with 'reflection for reward'. Most of teachers who are teaching in private schools reflect on their practice since their system is designed to produce quality teaching and teachers are remunerated well for their services (Hanry, 2009).

Learners' performance and results point to the quality of the teacher. Teachers who do not reflect on their practice, do not give themselves time to think about their practice, instead they always blame learners for poor performance. Some learners could potentially fail because teachers did not use the right teaching approach or method. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to reflect on the approach used in order to improve. Some teachers do not want to reflect because they do not want people to know their weaknesses. Teachers should be taught to regard self-reflection as an on-going process that is aimed to improve their practice. Through the use of self-reflection, teachers may identify some problems they encounter in their practice and be able to improve on them.

4.2.2.7 Is teaching viable without self-reflection?

Respondents were also asked if teachers can survive in their practice without using self-reflection. Their responses are grouped and categorised according to their phases.

Foundation phase teachers responded to this question as follows:

Teachers will suffer in their practice without using self-reflection.

If you teach, you must also do follow-up if you are doing the right thing, and this will help teachers to improve their practice.

The use of self-reflection is important as it help teachers to check if learners understand them.

When teaching, one has to check if he/she is making a progress.

Self-reflection of teachers is very important in a way that teachers may not survive in their practice if they neglect the use of self-reflection. Self-reflection helps teachers to understand their practice better. The main purpose of self-reflection is for teachers to improve their practice and for learners to benefit from this process. Teachers need to assess if they are making progress as they teach. The use of self-reflection helps them to review the process of teaching and how learners learn on a continuous basis (Moje, 1996).

Intermediate phase teachers also support foundation phase teachers that teachers cannot continue in their practice without self-reflection. They mentioned the following:

If teachers do not reflect on their practice; they will be teaching without direction because the use of self-reflection guides teachers to check if they are still on a right track.

Teachers should reflect after self-reflection, as there is always a need for improvement.

Intermediate phase teachers also had the same kind of thinking that teachers' survival as professionals depends on self-reflection. In most cases, it appears that teachers who did not reflect on their practice teach without having proper direction. Teaching without direction in this regard means that they teach without reflecting on whether what they are teaching is correct or not. Therefore, the use of self-reflection results in certain improvements in teaching. Teachers should therefore be encouraged to regard self-reflection as part of their daily teaching activities.

Senior phase teachers also feel that self-reflection is at the heart of what teachers do and without it teachers cannot survive as professionals. According to teachers in this phase, if teachers do not reflect on their practice; they will just teach without having any idea if they are progressing or not. If teachers do not reflect, it becomes difficult for them to understand the kind of learners they are teaching. It is important for teachers to

reflect on the kind of learners they teach, as this will help them to adjust their practice to suit their learners. According to the roles of an educator, emphasis is on the need for teachers to be the best in their practice, they should understand the kind of learners that they teach, and this helps them how to deal with such learners.

4.2.2.8 Opportunities to self-reflect

Teachers were asked if their principals give them enough opportunities to reflect on their practice. They responded as follows:

My principal encourages us to reflect on our teaching.

The principal always encourages us to check our work, our lesson plans and how we personally deliver our lessons.

My principal encourages teachers to meet as a group and discuss our practice.

During IQMS, my principal also created time for teachers to judge their work and that of their peers.

In our school, which is a primary school, teachers are provided with 30 minutes each day for self-reflection

There is no allocated time for self-reflection; teachers create time for their work.

Teachers should also be involved in the process of encouraging peers to reflect on their practice. The success of any school lies in the hands of the principal and teachers. Therefore it becomes important for principals to encourage teachers to know and understand the importance of using self-reflection. Principals should also be able to create time for teachers to get into groups and talk about challenges they face in their teaching practice. Teachers may also use their spare time or free periods to reflect on their practice. This will help them to have more focus on their practice. Having focus on their practice means they should have full knowledge about their experiences and use these experiences to shape future teaching (James, 2007).

Some teachers responded that time is a barrier in terms of self-reflection, and that the work load they are facing limit them to do self-reflection in a proper manner. In some

schools respondents mentioned that the principal does not interfere much in their teaching, then is up to a teacher to carryout self-reflective practice.

The issue of work-overload is one of the challenges facing public school teachers. Many teachers who have heavy workloads fail to reflect on their practice due to the time factor. When teachers were interviewed in this regard, most teachers mentioned that they do not reflect on their practice because they do not have time to do so. It is up to teachers to ensure that they reflect on their practice. Since this responsibility is passed to teachers, many of them ignore it totally. The issue of work overload should not be the reason for teachers not to reflect on their practice. Teachers can also reflect on their practice after school hours and during teaching as previously discussed. Reflecting after school hours also has an advantage of giving teachers enough time to reflect on their practice (Simpson, 2005).

4.2.2.9 General views on self-reflection

In concluding the interview sessions, teachers were asked to give additional comments on self-reflection. They responded as follows:

It is very important for teachers to reflect on their practice, and that it also benefits learners.

Enough time should be provided to teachers to reflect on their practice.

It takes individuals to commit themselves to their work and reflect on their practice.

Teachers should not go for long periods without reflecting on their practice

Teachers should regard self-reflection as a daily practice.

I enjoy self-reflection because it provides me with room for improvement in my practice.

Self-reflection is a right thing to do as it helps teachers to know if they are doing the right thing or not.

Self-reflection always helps teachers to improve and become better teachers for their country.

Teachers need to be responsible enough to take self-reflection seriously.

Teachers who enjoy the use self-reflection are likely to produce better results. The use of self-reflection helps teachers to understand exactly what they are doing and how they should do things.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented how data was analysed in this study. Two data collection phases were presented. Firstly open-ended questionnaires were thematically analysed during phase 1 of data analysis, while phase 2 of data analysis consisted of interviews. Themes were also identified and discussed in this phase (interviews). The next chapter is based on conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

The study investigated the practice of self-reflection by primary school teachers in the Mankweng circuit, Capricorn district, Limpopo province. The study also encouraged teachers to use reflective models during teaching. The main purpose of self-reflection is for teachers to reflect on their practice, in order to improve their teaching. In the literature review, the study explored how different countries and researchers view the process of self-reflection. Related literature was also reviewed in order to help the researcher to understand the process of self-reflection better and also to respond to research questions.

In investigating self-reflective practices, teachers were asked how they practice self-reflection during their teaching. The results revealed that not all primary school teachers reflect on their practice. Some reasons for teachers not to reflect on their practice are issues related to work-load. In terms of workload, the study has revealed that teachers do not reflect on their practice because they do not have time to do so due to the heavy work-load that they have. The study also revealed that it takes a passionate and dedicated teacher to reflect on their practice. As a result, teachers who reflect on their

practice are teachers who are passionate about their profession and those who always strive for improvement.

Self-reflection is about helping teachers to improve their practice; and teachers should always give themselves time to think about their practice. The research also examined teachers' opinions about the use of self-reflection. From the findings, the study revealed that even though not all teachers reflect on their practice; teachers know and understand the importance of using self-reflection in their practice. For example, the teachers were asked if they may succeed in their practice without using self-reflection. The results revealed that teachers could experience difficulty in their practice if they do not use self-reflection. It is important for teachers to reflect on their practice and they should also identify some self-reflective models that may help them in their practice. The study found that very few teachers know of different models of self-reflection.

Among the objectives of this study, the study also identified some possible self-reflective models that teachers can employ in their teaching practice. The study found that teachers besides not knowing of reflective models that are available to help them in their practice, teachers are not aware of how these models can assist them. In terms of self-reflective models; the study investigated how reflective models are useful to the process of self-reflection. The study revealed that reflective models help teachers to have knowledge of different approaches of doing self-reflection. Multiple exposures to self-reflective models help teachers to choose the reflective models that are suitable to their context. Different schools require different approaches to self-reflection; since schools are situated in different contexts. It becomes the duty of teachers to study the kind of environment that they are working in, and choose the reflective model that will be suitable to their environment or context.

Self-reflection helps teachers to improve their teaching. The use of self-reflection helps individual teachers to prioritise areas of their teaching. In this regard, teachers should always understand what comes first. For example, the study encourages teachers to reflect on each step or stage of their practice. The practice of self-reflection should start during the preparation stage until the implementation stage. This means that after preparation of the lesson, teachers should reflect on the lesson plan and see if it will be

suitable for the class or grade. Furthermore, the study also revealed that teachers should also reflect while they teach. This means that teachers should monitor while they are teaching if the lesson is going as planned; and if it is not going accordingly, they should adjust the lesson without affecting the outcome of the lesson. The study also found that teachers need to be equipped with knowledge or skills of doing self-reflection in a professional manner that will contribute towards the improvement of their practice.

Self-reflection of teachers should be compulsory for all teachers; the study revealed that not all teachers reflect on their practice. Some teachers in schools do not reflect on their practice due to some contextual factors. Teachers were asked to give their opinion with regard to the practice of self-reflection; the results revealed that there is a lack of motivation in schools that encourage the practice of self-reflection. Lack of motivation appears to be on the side of principals; and some teachers do not reflect on their practice due to lack of incentives, which could encourage them to reflect on their practice. The results of the study also show that some principals do not give teachers close supervision with regard to the practice of self-reflection; as a result teachers take advantage of this by not reflecting. Teachers need to take the practice of self-reflection seriously and make it a part of their daily teaching activities. In other words, as long teaching and learning takes place; self-reflection should take place as well.

Teaching that is accompanied by self-reflection has positive results. The results of the study show that teachers who reflect on their practice are likely to improve their teaching. The study further revealed that it takes a passionate teacher to reflect on their practice. This means that teachers who value self-reflection are teachers who want to lift their profession to the highest level. If self-reflection can be valued enough, the quality of education can improve in primary schools.

The study further revealed that there is a relationship between self-reflection and better results. In terms of self-reflection and better results, the study found that the way teachers practice self-reflection affect the results they produce. After each self-reflective process, there is a need for improvement (teaching improvement), and if teachers improve the way they practice their teaching; this will also result in improvement of results. The study finally found that teachers who reflect on their practice have the

opportunity to rectify their mistakes and improve. This shows that teachers who reflect on their practice are likely to produce better results.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study revealed that self-reflection is important in the practice of teaching. Therefore, this study recommends that teachers need to be trained and work-shopped on issues around self-reflection. In this regard, teachers need to have knowledge on different approaches of self-reflection and they should also be trained about different models that may help them to improve their practice. Teaching practice takes place on a daily basis, therefore the study recommends that the Department of Basic Education should make the practice of self-reflection compulsory for all teachers; and that it should be done on a daily basis.

The study also found that teachers in different phases view the process of self-reflection differently; as a result, they practice it differently, depending on the surrounding they find themselves in. Therefore, the study recommends that schools should have uniform/one framework on how self-reflection should be practiced in a particular school context. A common understanding of self-reflection has an advantage of teachers working together and helping each other to achieve a common goal. Teachers should talk about the practice of self-reflection just as they discuss other challenges they face in their teaching practice. Teachers should view the practice of self-reflection seriously.

Looking at the way self-reflection is presently practiced in primary schools, self-reflection appears not to be compulsory for all teachers. The study recommends that on the lesson plan, teachers should be given a chance for both reflecting on the lesson and themselves. Some benefits of reflecting on the lesson and teacher's self-reflection is that it gives the reflector (teacher) a chance to view teaching that has taken place in a broader view. This will help teachers to assess if their teaching methods are inappropriate or learners failed to cope with the approach used. Among the aspects covered in a lesson plan, the study recommends that the final aspect on the lesson plan should be self-reflection of the teacher. This will ensure that teachers engage in the process of self-reflection as part of their day to day activities and it helps with monitoring of teaching as well.

In terms of monitoring self-reflection, the study has revealed that self-reflection is not monitored, and as a result teachers do not reflect on their practice. The study recommends that principals need to take responsibility and create opportunities to ensure that teachers reflect on their practice regularly. The study also revealed the ignorance of primary teachers in a rural context; and due to this ignorance there is a need for monitoring. Monitoring of self-reflection also helps teachers who are not sure of what they are teaching. This means that principals should make sure that they guide and direct teachers during self-reflection. Lastly, monitoring may include encouraging teachers to continue to practice self-reflection in their teaching.

Besides monitoring, there are other factors that cause teachers not to reflect on their practice. One of the common factors identified in this study is lack of time to reflect due to the over-load of work of the teachers. Therefore, the study recommends that there should be enough teachers at school; and this will help each teacher to have a manageable workload in which they have enough time for self-reflection. Teachers need time to do self-reflection; and if teachers are facing overload in their work, they tend to focus on the curriculum that they are expected to complete instead of reflecting on their practice.

It is also recommended that the government should make self-reflection compulsory in all public schools; and that time for self-reflection should also be allocated on the time-table.

5.2.1 Recommendation of a new self-reflective model

The study recommends a new reflective model for a rural primary school context. The model is titled *Big four reflective model: critical thinker; resource allocator, problem solver and practice developer*. The model is recommended to be used in teaching in primary schools.

In terms of critical thinker; the models states that teachers should think critically about their practice before they attempt any self-reflective practice. This means that teachers should give themselves time to think about the overall situation of their environment. Firstly, teachers need to think about the class that they are going to teach; the kind of

learners they are going to teach; the behaviour of learners, and the amount of time available for them to present the lesson. Secondly, teachers need to think about the kind of resources available at their schools, and how they can make means to improvise concerning the types of resources that they use in their lessons. In terms of environment, teachers must consider the contextual factors that affect their teaching, and how to deal with them. A reflective practitioner as a critical thinker should always plan for option B, in the case where plans have to be changed or altered due to unforeseen circumstances. Lastly, a reflective practitioner as a critical thinker does spend time thinking about negative things in their practice; but always thinks of ways that will help them to grow professionally.

A reflective practitioner needs to understand that the use of learning and teaching resources are essential in the practice of teaching. A reflective practitioner understands that it is the responsibility of a teacher to allocate resources for the lesson. Furthermore, a reflective practitioner understands and knows how to turn natural resources into learning resources. Primary schools learners learn better by seeing and touching; therefore the reflective practitioner should always make sure that the resources allocated are the ones suitable for a lesson. Lastly, the reflective practitioner ensures that he/she uses technology to allocate some of the resources.

In terms of problem solver, reflective practitioners ensure that they solve problems that arise during their teaching practice. Reflective practitioners always make sure that they prioritise issues/problems; this means that they understand problems that need immediate attention and those that are not urgent. Reflective practitioners should also identify learners who experience problems at home and be able to assist in this regard. This means that teachers as reflective practitioners should be a friend to learners, that makes learners to feel free to share problems and challenges they come across inside and outside of the school context. Reflective practitioners should be in position to solve different problems. Furthermore, they should also reflect on their own practice and solve problems that make them to produce better results during teaching. The *Big four reflective model* emphasizes that a reflective practitioner always strives for improvement by solving problems that arise during their teaching.

The last dimension of the *Big four reflective model* is practice developer. In terms of practice developer, teaching is about making decisions in order to develop the teaching profession. The model emphasizes that teachers need to think about their own teaching practice in order to develop their own practice. Teacher's professional practice (what they do in the classroom) is therefore embedded in a whole way of thinking, feeling and seeing that enables them to give meaning to their experience. However, although their perspective allows them to see and operate in the world in certain ways, it also prevents them from seeing and operating in the world in other ways. As they gain experience about teaching practice, they also need to reflect if they are making progress in terms of developing their practice.

Further research is recommended in this area to investigate if poor reflective practice is as a result of heavy workload of primary teachers or not.

5.3 OVERALL REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH

Throughout the process of writing and conducting this research, the journey was not easy, it has been challenging, interesting and very informative. It was a great pleasure to be granted an opportunity to expand my knowledge and experience in research in this area. Throughout this research, different models, theories and literature were consulted in order to access as many qualitative empirical studies as possible. This study has granted the researcher the opportunity to gain knowledge for future self-reflective practice as a primary school teacher in Limpopo Province. Furthermore, the study helped the researcher to understand the challenges faced by primary school teachers when it comes to the practice of self-reflection. Rather than being the transmitter of knowledge, the researcher prefers to become the developer of knowledge. A knowledge developer is an essential element of any teacher. To this end, the study has also developed the self-reflective model that is suitable to the rural primary school context. The model can assist primary school teachers in a rural context to reflect on their practice and contribute to the strengthening of the teaching profession.

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APPENDIX A

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking your time to fill in this questionnaire. Please feel free to answer the questions and to the best of your knowledge. The information provided is for research purposes only and will be treated with confidentiality. The respondent has a right to remain anonymous. Remember, honesty is first chapter of the book of wisdom-Thomas Jefferson.

1. Define the term 'self-reflection'.
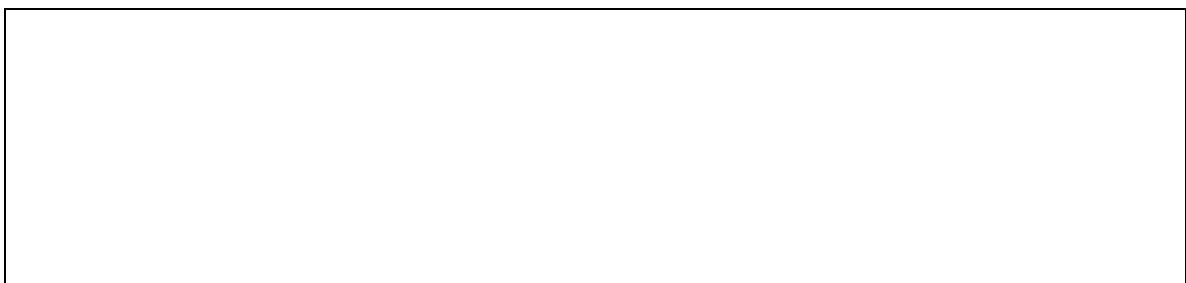
2. How is self-reflection practiced in your school? Give full details.
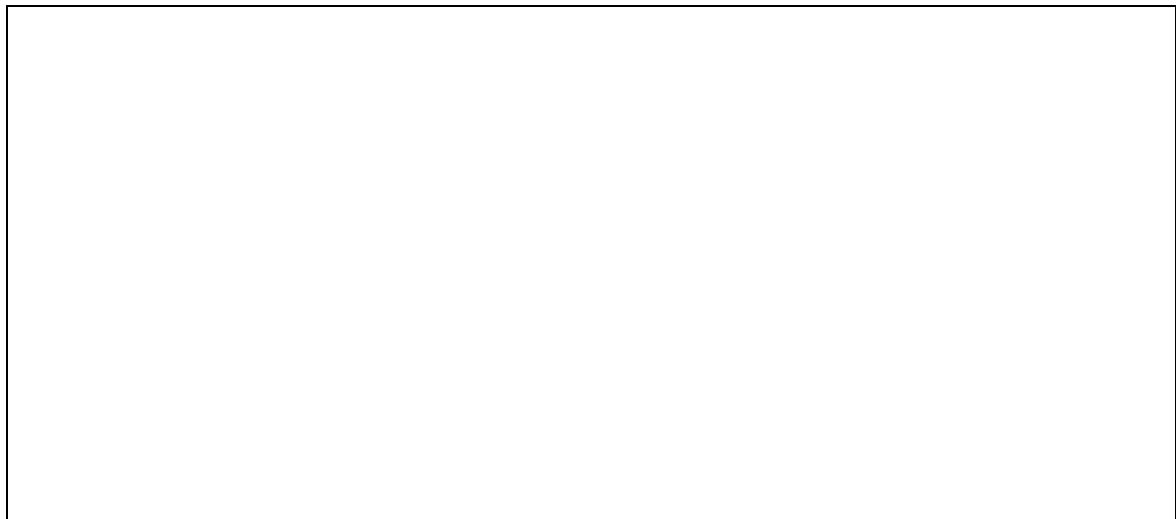
3. What reflective models do you use in your practice?
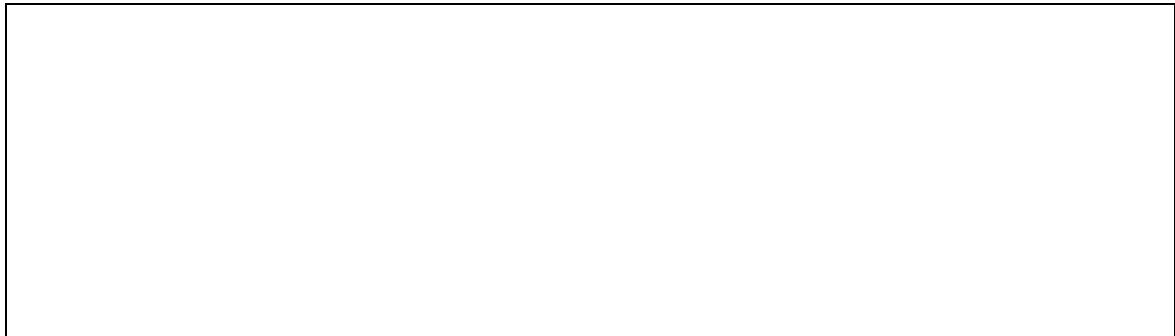
4. Why is it important for teachers to reflect on their practice?
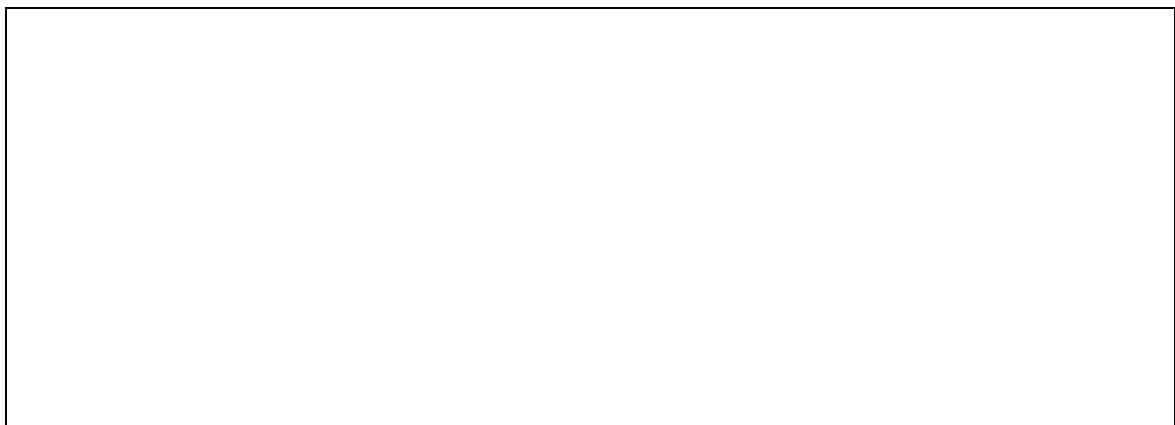
5. Did self-reflection help you as a teacher? Please explain.
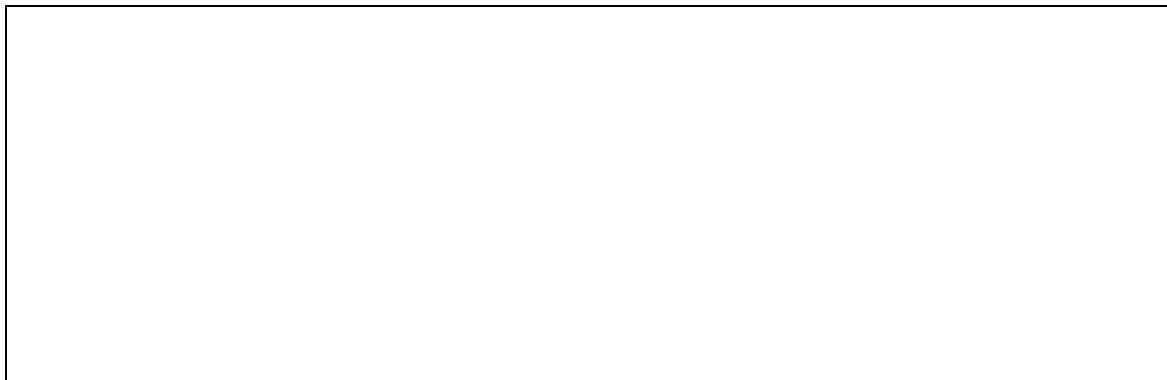
6. Do other teachers find the use of self-reflection useful in your school?

7. Additional comments on self-reflection?
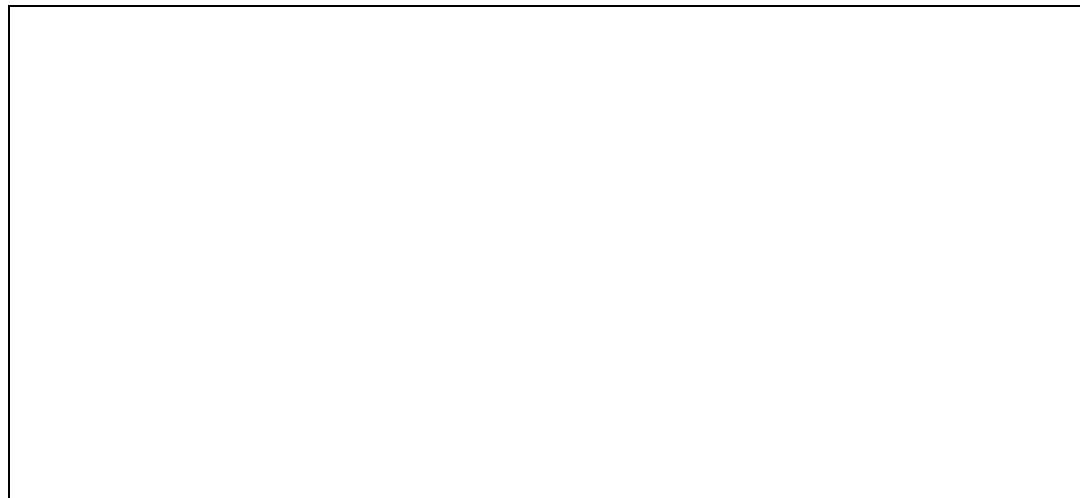
The goal of education is the advancement of knowledge and the dissemination of truth (John Fitzgerald Kennedy). "There are two choices of life: to accept conditions as they exist, or accept the responsibility for changing them". Thank you for your time, wish you success in your teaching profession. God bless you.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE

MAIN/CENTRAL QUESTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS	POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTION
How do primary schools teachers practice self-reflection and what models do they use in their practice?	➤ What are your practices on self-reflection?	• What is self-reflection? • When do you reflect on your teaching? • How do you reflect on your practice? • How do other teachers in your school reflect on their teaching?
	➤ What are your opinions with regard to self-reflection?	• Do you think it is important to reflect on your teaching? Give reasons. • How do other teachers in your school view the process of self-reflection? (Do they view it positively/negatively so?)
	➤ Which relevant self-reflective model can assist you to reflect?	• Do you know any of the reflective models? • How do these models affect your reflective processes? • Did you find the use of reflective models useful in your reflection?

		• Do you think the use of self-reflection can improve your teaching?

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

I_____ a teacher at_____ give a consent that I agree to participate in the research under the title: The practice of self-reflection by primary school teachers in the Mankweng Circuit, Capricorn district.

➢ I understand that my participation in this research is not obliged; that I have a right not to answer certain questions, and that I can withdraw from the study/participation any time.

➢ I understand the purpose of this study and know about the benefits that this research entails.

➢ I understand that the information provided will be treated with confidentiality.

➢ I understand that the study involves the actual practice of teacher's self-reflection; therefore with respect to publication, communication, and dissemination of results/performance of teachers my participation will remain anonymous.

I have studied all the above information and understand my participation in this regard. I therefore freely consent and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

Name (printed): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

APPENDIX D

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Enquires: Mnisi V   Telephone: 015 290 7680   Fax: 015 290 9416

P O Box 2428

SOVENGA

0727

Tel: 073 1314 054

Dear Sir/Madam

<u>Application for permission to conduct Research Study in schools at Mankweng Circuit</u>

1. The above matters refers:
2. The Limpopo Department of Education acknowledge receipt of your letter.
3. We therefore grant you permission to conducting a study in schools at Mankweng circuit in the purpose of practice of self reflection by primary school teachers.
4. After the completion of the study, we will appreciate a copy of your research which will serve as resource for the department.

Regards

2012/05/04

M.J Thamaga   Date
Head of Department

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