Transforming Foundation Phase Life Skills Teachers' Use of Learning and Teaching Support Materials Towards Sustainable Development of Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on transforming Foundation Phase teachers' use of learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs) to sustain teaching and learning in Life Skills classrooms. This paper aimed to comprehend teachers' perspectives on how they could transform their practices using LTSMs to improve their teaching and learner performance to contribute towards the sustainable development of teaching. The National Policy and Guidelines for LTSM stipulate that teachers must be teaching mediators. The study was informed by an analytical framework for studying classroom practices along the Activity Theory (AT) dimensions through teachers' and learners' interactions. The case study design was qualitative with an interpretive paradigm. Purposive sampling gathered information from three Grade 3 Life Skills teachers through semi-structured interviews, structured observations, and document analysis. Data were analysed, and themes emerged from the questions. Findings revealed that LTSMs are ineffective in improving teaching and learner performance due to shortages, overcrowded classrooms, and lack of professional development. We recommend that the Department of Education should provide more classrooms to assist teachers in their practices. Also, there should be more professional development activities for teachers to transform their practices for sustainable development.

KEYWORDS

Learning and teaching support materials; life skills; foundation phase; transformation; sustainable.

INTRODUCTION

This paper sought to understand teachers' perspectives on how their practices in using learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs) could be transformed to improve their teaching and learner performance towards sustainable development of teaching. The study was carried out in rural schools in the Dutywa District in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The belief that teachers should utilize LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning in their classrooms is what motivated the research project. According to González-Salamanca, Agudelo, and Salinas (2020), LTSMs aim to improve learners' performance for sustainable growth by changing teachers' conventional methods. The question examined how Foundation Phase Life Skills teachers could change the usage of Learning and Teaching Support Materials toward sustainable teaching growth to fulfill the study's goal, articulated in the opening statement.

In schools and colleges, the shift toward a sustainable future is not yet evident, according to (UNESCO, 2020). LTSMs can mediate a critical teaching approach and establish sustainable living when it is firmly devoted to transformative learning, emancipatory transformation in the context which is explicitly refers to planetary consciousness, societal change, and individual transformation all of which are essential components of sustainable development.

Using learning-teaching support materials (LTSMs) is essential to providing quality education in schools to transform teachers for sustainable development of teaching (Etesike, 2017). For schools to provide high-quality instruction, learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs) must be accessible and readily available for use and mediate learning and teaching. Learners generally remember twenty percent (20%) of what they hear, thirty percent (30%) of what they see, fifty percent (50%) of what they see and hear, and ninety percent (90%) of what they see and do, claims (Etesike, 2017). This claim exemplifies and demonstrates the necessity of LTSMs utilisation during the teaching and learning process.

Additionally, using learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) to change teachers' habits for sustainable development is a hot topic right now. This is in line with the World Bank (2015) and UNESCO (2016) new policy papers that highlight the potential of LTSMs to transform teachers for sustainable development and raise student performance. However, the data on how LTSMS can help and provide such enhanced results is conflicting, as the usage of LTSMs has been found to have a good influence on students with higher socioeconomic but limited the disadvantaged students (Nguyen & Dang, 2020). According to UNESCO (2016), not enough attention is often paid to how teachers and students utilise LTSMs in the classroom. The research has also shown a propensity for LTSM availability to be exploited as a substitute for textbook use. Therefore, to effectively use LTSMs for sustainable growth, teachers must change the way they work.

The South African province of the Eastern Cape also experiences many difficulties in its educational system, including high poverty levels, a lack of teachers, and low student accomplishment (Gumede & Mestry, 2019). Numerous things, such as a lack of proper funding, shoddy construction, and ineffective management, have been blamed for these difficulties

(Nguyen & Dang, 2020). Educational leaders have come under fire in the Eastern Cape for not showing enough compassion for their employees and children (Higgs & Van der Westhuizen, 2016).

The author of this paper discusses how LTSMs can facilitate operative teaching and learning in a variety of classroom scenarios in response to these worries. I contend that such research is crucial for underprivileged teachers, especially those who cannot use LTSMs because overcrowded classrooms and lack of professional development hinder them from transforming their practices towards sustainable development of teaching. Using significant information from the study in which the author took part, I determined the factors that encouraged and hindered the adoption of LTSMs in a few Eastern Cape South African schools. A framework for using LTSMs is presented in the discussion and conclusions, which focus on how teachers use resources to create positive learning environments and improved learning outcomes.

Next, the literature addressing the use of LTSMs to transform Foundation Phase teachers for sustainable development of teaching was reviewed, and the findings are discussed based on this literature. This paper is believed to open possibilities and opportunities for all stakeholders, including the Department of Basic Education, to guide ongoing efforts towards transforming FP Life Skills teachers' practices to improve their teaching and learner performance in Grade 3 classrooms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSMs) are not a new concept; for instance, before 1994, in Outcomes Based Education (OBE), they were known as teaching aids (Romiszowski 1998). Teaching Aids can be described as constructed objects that represent reality (Romiszowski, 1998, Duminy and Stein, 1987). According to Jonassen (2019), LTSMs are instruments that facilitate the use of cognitive resources as well as the right selection and incorporation of educational resources. This highlights the importance of the educator in choosing and utilizing the optimal learning support resources for the specific grade and circumstance. Learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs), are a key component of effective classroom instruction because they simplify learning, improve instructor effectiveness, and accelerate student learning.

South Africa has undergone significant changes since the introduction of democracy. Since winning its independence, South Africa has experienced substantial development. The field of education has been at the forefront of these significant changes. For example, in South African education, there have been modifications to the curriculums of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), Curriculum 2005 (C2005), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Students are now better prepared for life and transformation thanks to these changes. However, there have been challenges for teachers in putting these ideas into practice in the classroom. To facilitate a smooth transition from the country's previous curricula to the

current one, namely CAPS, and ensure that effective and high-quality teaching and learning occurs in classrooms, the Department of Education (DoE) provided funding that was specifically allocated for the provision of relevant learning and teaching support material (LTSM) to all public schools.

The way that monies are distributed to schools has changed because of the transformation of education in South Africa. The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (as amended) and the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) demonstrate that the funding of schools was carried out to properly resource the formerly underprivileged schools and to correct historical imbalances. Since resources are essential to the operation of schools and the delivery of high-quality instruction in the classroom, schools in quintiles 1 and 2 were able to purchase sufficient and high-quality LTSM for effective curriculum delivery.

The Norms and Standards for Educators (2019) further state that the educator should be able to decipher, modify, and create educational programs. This necessitates the use of teachers or educators who are "mediators of materials," also known as curriculum mediators, and who are required to raise the standard of instruction in classrooms Department of Education (DoE, 2019). It is also stated that competent LTSMs are necessary to operate an educational system (DoE, 2018) efficiently. They are a crucial component of curriculum development and support effective teaching and learning.

The Generic Guidelines for the Development of LTSMs suggest that teachers are responsible for creating and utilizing LTSMs, with much of the professional development concentrated on doing so (DoE, 2019). The DoE (2019) went on to say that LTSMs are essential educational resources that everyone must use for efficient teaching and learning in every subject, including Life Skills, to raise the bar for instruction. Therefore, LTSMs should be developed to support learning activities, as doing so will promote learning for sustainable development and alter teaching. Therefore, from the above definitions and the nature of LTSMs the author of this paper is not specific on which materials should be used in classrooms as they are used to mediate teaching and learning.

For schools to provide high-quality instruction, learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs) must be accessible, readily available, and effectively used to improve teacher and learner performance (Etesike, 2017). LTSMs are essential for a successful curriculum presentation since they are integral to teaching and learning in the classroom. For this reason, the availability of relevant tools or resources (LTSMs) is critical to the effectiveness of a Life Skills session, for example (Sedibe, 2016). Without question, LTSMs are essential for delivering content effectively. They are viewed as the resources that help teachers provide curriculum and create a syllabus (Milligan, Koornhof, Sapire, and Tikly, 2018). LTSMs facilitate communication between educators and students to raise student achievement.

Life Skills is the area that concentrates on students' emotional behavior and intrinsic motivation for sustainable growth (Roy, 2020). As one of the three courses in the Foundation Phase, Life Skills helps students develop relationships with others and the environment, which

will help them make informed and ethically responsible decisions regarding the environment. Learning is more relevant in learners' local settings, according to the Department of Basic Education (2011). The learners' natural environment, which is closely tied to place, may be referred to as the local context. Environmental health is a topic covered in this course, which will help students get the knowledge and abilities necessary to improve their local

Changing the way Life Skills Foundation uses learning support materials To support teacher development and ensure that students acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and values, as well as to allow learners to make their meaning and understanding instead of relying on prefabricated knowledge from the teacher using a single textbook, phase teachers toward sustainable development of teaching requires a variety of resources (Tabe, 2023). Each teacher employs LTSM differently, and their views and values influence the choice of LTSM they employ.

Teachers must be cautious when using learning and teaching support materials to replace the curriculum because they are intended to enhance learning, teaching, and evaluation in the classroom (DoE, 2020). This means LTSMs can never replace the teacher. The effectiveness of these resources depends on how well the teacher integrates them into the learning environment. A learning activity's inclusion of learning and teaching support materials does not imply that those materials will be effective teaching aids (DoE, 2019). To be effective, teachers should use them to transform their practices and engage learners to improve their learning.

According to UNESCO (2020), teacher assistance and capacity building (e.g., standards for the design and evaluation of resources, techniques for knowledge sharing among local teachers, and facilitators) can help drive curriculum transformation. According to Lotz-Sisitka (2021), instructors need to have their ability built in three areas: 1) learning and teaching support material development; 2) assessment technique and standard selection; and 3) lesson plan preparation for possibilities for environmental learning. According to her, educators must become knowledgeable about the various facets including environmental literacy, systems thinking abilities, and a range of comprehensive learner-centered teaching and learning strategies that are based on sustainable practices and meet the needs of all students.

Also, LTSMs can be used as a classroom management tool in addition to delivering material, assigning tasks and activities, providing the framework for assessment, and supporting teachers by providing instructions on teaching (Madlala, 2022). Since teachers are unable to conduct practical demonstrations or change their teaching methods or strategies to facilitate learning, the absence of LTSMs for successful teaching and learning implies poor quality delivery. Furthermore, Mkhasibe, Khumatake, Olaniran, and Maphalala (2020) noted that where LTSMs are not effectively employed, a culture of teaching and learning may suffer since students will only have access to teachers' knowledge, which is insufficient for them. LTSMs' overarching objective is to establish the framework for what students can learn and what teachers should teach (Etesike, 2017). Therefore, LTSMS must be used properly to support

pupils' successful performance and transform teachers' practices toward sustainable development of teaching.

However, the effect of shortage and overcrowded classrooms, as well as professional development, has grown to be widespread issues in many schools around the world, including South Africa, that hinder teachers from using LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning for sustainable development of teaching (Goel and Vishnoi, 2022). These problems are especially severe in developing nations and underdeveloped areas, but they also continue to provide significant challenges for educators and decision-makers in affluent countries. These problems continue to be a substantial concern for teachers and politicians, particularly in developing nations and poor communities. Due to its impact on educational quality and people's and communities' prospects, classroom shortages and overcrowded classroom crises affect not only students and teachers but also the larger society as teachers are unable to successfully use their teaching practices (Muthanna, Almahfali, and Haider, 2022).

In addition, inadequate space, a lack of natural light, excessive noise levels in professional development, and a shortage of classrooms all contribute to unfavorable learning environments, making it difficult for students to concentrate or even feel overwhelmed (Van Wyk, 2018). This happens even though public elementary schools are not allowed to have a Learner Educator Ratio (LER) of greater than 40:1 according to the 1998 admission criteria for the National Education Act 27 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Teachers find it difficult to use LTSMs properly and transform their methods for the sustainable development of education because of an overabundance of numbers (Kambeyo, 2021). This is the primary reason why instructors of the Life Skills Foundation Phase are now unable to use LTSMs to change their behaviors in a way that promotes sustainable growth. Not only are Life Skills Foundation Phase teachers impacted, but all subject teachers, regardless of grade level, are as well.

Aminpour (2023) contended that most working conditions in Malawian schools were appalling, with dilapidated buildings and classrooms. Due to crowded classrooms, teachers were unable to use LTSMs to effectively mediate teaching in their classes, which contributed to their dissatisfaction with their jobs. This resulted in the teachers' low morale, which might interfere with their performance, ultimately impacting how any curricular subject, including life skills, is taught. Thus, teachers need to be transformed towards sustainable development. Aminpour (2023) added that classes with more than 60 students impair both teachers' and students' capacity for learning. Large classes were contrary to the recommendation of the World Bank (2019), which stated that Sub-Saharan African elementary schools should limit class sizes to 40. This recommendation by the World Bank could have been aimed at facilitating effectively and improving both teacher's and learners' conditions. In contrast, Lowe (2017) discovered that the average class size was 68 in the four schools that were sampled.

In South Africa, a teacher who took part in Prinsloo's study on the implementation of Life Orientation said that reaching 40 or more students at once in a short amount of time is a

challenging undertaking. This response revealed that teachers believed they were not always able to establish a climate of personal trust with each student in their classrooms, which also had an impact on their working settings. Teachers in this study referred to 40 learners, but Lowe's (2017) study has shown that the average class was 68 learners. Prinsloo (2021) stated that using LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning in classrooms is a solution to the problem of overcrowding in classrooms acting as a barrier to the process of teaching curriculum subjects.

Additionally, because of overcrowding, teachers find it challenging to address each student's unique needs, such as learning difficulties. Willows (2018) supports this notion by pointing out that there are frequently too many students for a teacher to directly attend, which prevents many from receiving the education they are entitled to. That suggests that if the classroom is crowded, it becomes difficult for many students to quickly form bonds with the teacher in Life Skills, employing LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning.

Also, it was noted that all types of LTSMs are supposed to be used, including electronic materials, irrespective of space as they play a part in teaching and learning environments to improve learners' performance and quality teaching (Dolati, 2021). For example, using computer-assisted learning in the classroom improved students' language learning abilities. Additionally, it made note of how technology-enhanced, holistic instruction that gave students power over their classroom learning addressed many types of intelligence. Classrooms with electronic materials are more conducive to teaching and learning as they allow demonstrations that may enhance learning and inspire learners.

Lack of professional development remains a significant problem for some teachers, especially those unfamiliar with the use of new LTSMs, including technologies that make them refuse to adapt to how they conduct their lessons (Han, 2020). Some educators may be reluctant to change the way they use LTSMs by introducing new technology into the classroom. This could be due, in part, to the fact that these educators have successfully trained students and shared important information without the use of technology for decades (Han, 2020). As a result, they might not think that changing their methods will lead to better outcomes in terms of teaching and learning sustainable development. Professional development may help teachers become better and more effective educators by helping them to provide relevant and personalized course materials for today's students (Han, 2020). Research from the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences indicates that teacher participation in deliberate professional development initiatives can boost student achievement.

Some of it may be viewed as required due to the importance put on the knowledge and skills that professional development programs aim to transform instructors' teaching practices for sustained development of teaching (Alexandrou, 2023). In rare cases, participating in these activities may even be required to earn a teaching credential, which would inspire them. Using professional judgment to choose and engage in the learning opportunities that they feel would best serve their students can also be very important for instructors (Harvard, 2022). A system

where a large portion of professional development is mandated can be more closely regulated and provide teachers less flexibility in terms of choosing the courses they want to attend.

However, when teachers receive new teaching strategies through professional development, they may be able to transform the classrooms and alter their curricula and lecture styles to better meet the needs of their students. This is because their ability to use LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning in Life Skills classrooms may be limited as a result (Nqabeni & Cishe, 2023). However, because these instructional strategies are often used gradually, it is difficult to analyse the changes. He continues by saying that professional development for instructors makes them more proficient presenters and course assessors by exposing them to fresh methods of record-keeping, evaluation, and delivery. Professional development is vital because it helps teachers improve their practices. This calls for effective training activities which we believe would help teachers transform their practices in using LTSMs to improve learning for sustainable development (Nqabeni & Cishe, 2023).

Another important form of assistance for teachers' development that should be implemented is the implementation of rules and procedures in schools to help new teachers (OECD, 2005). According to the OECD's study on teacher policies, the top challenges faced by new teachers globally are motivating them to teach, upholding classroom order, and assessing students' work (OECD, 2005). Early career leavers from the teaching profession may be prevented and these challenges may be overcome with the help of programs for induction and mentorship of new teachers.

Ferreira (2016) stated that traditional in-service education programs are typically provided as workshops, seminars, conferences, or courses to assist teachers in transforming their practices toward sustainable development of teaching. Numerous scholars have criticised these initiatives as quick, fragmented, incoherent interactions that are removed from their context and taken from the context of actual classroom settings (Odell, Molthan-Hill, Martin, and Sterling, 2020). According to them, traditional teacher professional development methods have a lower likelihood of enhancing instruction. It was then recommended that workshops should be organised to equip them with content knowledge about the role and use of resources in classrooms to mediate teaching and learning for quality education. Doing so, we argue, would transform their practices towards sustainable development of teaching (Odell, Molthan-Hill, Martin, and Sterling, 2020).

Lack of professional development of teachers could limit their ability to use LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning in Life Skills classrooms as some schools' purchase or receive donations of costly LTSMs that are used minimally or never used at all (Odell, Molthan-Hill, Martin, and Sterling, 2020). They pointed out that teachers had much greater agency over their teaching and were able to constantly test their new teaching in a situation that required them to use multiple modes of connection. Therefore, the availability of LTSMs allow them to practice their own teaching, so if they are not provided that may hinder some not to transform their practices for sustainable development. This calls for effective training activities which I believe

would help teachers transform their practices in using LTSMs to improve learning for sustainable development.

Despite all the efforts done by the Department of Education, for example, in providing all schools with LTSMs, especially textbooks, there is still a tendency, in some schools, of teachers not to use LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning in their classrooms. Some teachers are struggling to transform their practices towards sustainable teaching development as they lack professional development and because of the lack of LTSMs. The situation is worse today since some schools are using both face-to-face and online platforms. This was shown by the performance of learners in rural areas which had always been lower than that of urban learners (Sumida and Kawata, 2021). This may be caused by the fact that some teachers resist change and prefer to use traditional methods, affecting the sustainable development of teaching.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) informed the paper to collect, analyse, and explain the data (Engestrom, 1987; 2001; Roth, 2010). I found the second generation of CHAT, also known as Activity Theory (AT) relevant, as a methodological framework to think about and the process of making meaning and learning in a social context. CHAT was therefore used in this paper to understand how actions are mediated by a 'complex network' of socio-historical activities. I recognised that many people, such as teachers and students, interact during Life Skills topic activities in Grade 3 classrooms, and that tools are utilized to support individual interactions during an activity. The goal of changing the way Foundation Phase teachers use learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs) to promote sustainable development in Life Skills classrooms also had an impact on that. Also, to answer the aim and objective of the study which is to understand teachers' perspectives on how their practices in using learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs) could be transformed to improve their teaching and learner performance towards sustainable development of teaching.

In this context, CHAT was informed by the 3 learning theories, namely, behaviourism, cognitivist and socio-cultural learning theories. While it might seem at first best to select only one learning theory, for instance, socio-cultural theory of learning, especially given the Vygotskian origins of this activity framework, I chose to use 3 learning theories available for possible use in the data collection and analysis for the following reasons. Experience of the real world of South African (SA) classrooms point to the almost inevitability of finding teachers using the practicing classic behaviourist methods, that was the known legacy of our past. So, that seemed sensible to go into the project armed with the tools and categories to be able to recognize such if present. Similarly, while not prejudging what I would encounter, it was very possible that some of the teachers in the sample could adopt a cognitive learning theory approach to elements of their teaching and philosophy in transforming their practices towards sustainable development of teaching. It is known that the new SA curriculum was informed by constructivism and social learning theories and thus one would expect to see all kinds of

examples of teaching efforts that purported to use social-cultural learning theories. Thus, one option was to scan all the observed lessons, behaviours and views using each of these lenses to see what each uncovered, the nature of that mix would only be known once one actually entered those classrooms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to extract meaning from the data and avoid drawing conclusions, this study used a descriptive and interpretative case research strategy (Wenn & Zammit, 2020). Consequently, interactions between Life Skills teachers were watched, and in-person interviews were done and documented. The premise that reality is socially constructed, and dynamic is the foundation of interpretivism, according to Wenn and Zammit (2020). Thus, I employed the interpretative method to better understand teachers' perspectives on changing their LTSM methods and enhancing their instruction and students' performance in Grade 3 Life Skills classrooms. South Africa's Dutywa District is home to the schools where the study was carried out.

Population and sample

A population is a set of individuals, events or objects that share a common characteristic and represent the whole or some total of cases involved in a study (Bozkus, 2021). In this study, population refers to the Grade 3 Life Skills teachers of 3 schools that were purposively selected from the Dutywa District. Sampling can be defined as a process used to study a response to an intervention in a smaller population that can be applied to a larger population (Silverman, 2019). Three Grade 3 Life Skills teachers from 3 juniour secondary schools were purposively selected with specific purpose in mind of understanding teachers' perspectives on how they could change their practices in using LTSMs to enhance teaching and learning performance and support sustainable development (Bozkus, 2021).

Data Collection

To better understand teachers' perspectives on how they could change their practices in using LTSMs to enhance teaching and learning performance and support sustainable development, data collection methods in classrooms included semi-structured interviews, structured observation, and document analysis (Silverman, 2019). Semi-structured interview is a method that involves asking open-ended questions, listening to and recording the answers, discussions and interactions between the teacher and the learner and learner and the tool (Wenn & Zammit, 2020). Semi structured were used to interview three Grade 3 Life Skills teachers from three schools, identified as P1, P2 and P3 and was conducted in a classroom in two forms, twenty-five minutes before the teacher started teaching and twenty minutes after presentation. The intentions were to correlate what the teacher had said to what has been doing during presentation. Structured observations were used as another technique in this study to validate data generated through the interviews (Bozkus, 2021). I was specifically always observing the interactions of both the teacher and learners' practices during Life Skills lesson presentation for sustainable, Document analysis refers to the technique of making inferences by objectively and

systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages in documents (Wenn & Zammit, 2020). I targerted documents that were ordinarily used as tools in teaching and learning and specific documents that provide curriculum guidelines as rules for example, Life Skills policy document, lesson plan, workbook and classworkbook. I needed to gain an understanding and knowledge on what documents are provided and how these documents are supposed to be used for a particular activity. The focus was specifically looking on how documents were linked with lesson outcomes, how they offered the teacher opportunities to interpret and access information to develop activities for learners. From the documents, I also explored whether Life Skills Grade 3 teachers used those documents accordingly to achieve the requirements of the current curriculum for sustainable development of teaching. Lastly, the relevant criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were considered to ensure the paper was trustworthy.

Data Analysis

The study's data came from organized observations, interviews with the participants and document analysis from 3 Life Skills teachers at different schools. I analysed their responses in order to construct the teachers' experiences on the role and use of LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning in their classrooms. In the process of data analysis, I tried to retain the voice and sense of originality to ensure the reliability of data analysis. I was consistently ensure data is collected across different time periods and conditions and cross check data multiple sources to verify accuracy (Bozkus, 2021), I analysed the responses of three Grade 3 Life Skills teachers in order to construct the teachers' experiences transforming Foundation Phase Life Skills Teachers' Use of Learning and Teaching Support Materials Towards Sustainable Development of TeachingIn the process of data analysis, I tried to retain the voice and sense of originality. The collected data was grouped into themes and sub-themes and coded for easy referencing (Wenn and Zammit (2020). Therefore, making sense out of data answered each of the research questions and led to the findings of this study. The analysed date was in the form of organised descriptive accounts and categories that cut across the data. For this research, as data was collected, I first categorised the collected data which would have been transcribed and in print format (Silverman, 2019). I started by reading video clips and interview transcripts, field notes and documents, for example, the policy documents, workbooks, notebooks, teachers' lesson plan and learners' workbooks and checklist was used as a tool. My goal was to summarise what I have seen or heard like common words, phrases, themes or patterns that would add understanding and interpretation of what was emerging.

According to Mkhasibe, Khumatake, Olaniran, and. Maphalala (2020), thematic analysis is a method for locating, analysing, and summarizing patterns (themes) within data. The aim of thematic analysis is to find themes like data patterns that are essential to comprehending the phenomenon being studied. Topic selection, coding, classification, contrast, synthesis, and interpretation. Following are the themes that emerged and are discussed in this paper:

- Shortage of and overcrowded classrooms

- Lack of professional development.

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings are presented according to the two themes outlined above.

Shortage of and overcrowded classrooms

The findings revealed that teachers could not transform their practices as they could not use LTSMs effectively in overcrowded classrooms. The observations revealed that instructors' interactions with all students in their crowded classes were not always characterized by a climate of personal trust, which also had an impact on how well they interacted with them. As a result, they ended up not giving attention to individual learners and could not monitor their work. This is in line with Aminpour's (2023) view that the working environment in overcrowded and large classrooms is disgraceful. This view is further elaborated on by Yangambi (2021) who argued that teachers could not monitor learners when they were writing in their notebooks and workbooks in overcrowded classrooms.

It is not easy to teach thoroughly in an overcrowded classroom because of space, it is worse as this impact one's practices and interactions (P1).

An overcrowded classroom makes me feel shame as I am even unable to pay attention to individual students. The use of LTSMs is not effectively good as sometimes you cannot monitor and demonstrate the lesson because of space(P2).

The overcrowding of classrooms becomes worse especially when you want to divide your students and there is no other class for that (P3).

Lack of professional development

The participants revealed that their limited time to attend departmental training sessions caused them not to teach the subject effectively. The Department of Basic Education was reported to have failed in organising the workshops, because teachers attended workshops that were conducted by cluster co-ordinators only. Teachers were fully aware that they had to attend all the organized workshops to have more knowledge on Life Skills subject content. It looked like all the participants were dissatisfied with the knowledge and experiences they gained from these training sessions. One teacher indicated that she needed more time to attend the workshops while the other felt that what was done in the workshops was a repetition of what they already knew and did not see a need to attend them. The implication was that workshops did not help them transform their practices towards sustainable development of teaching. The view about the workshop sessions corroborates with in-service education programs that are offered through workshops, seminars, conferences, or courses (Odell, Molthan-Hill, Martin, and Sterling, 2020). According to them, the seminars were criticised as being removed from actual classroom scenarios and having quick, disjointed, and nonsensical meetings. Further, it highlighted a need for teachers to be developed by their curriculum specialists in all respective areas, including LTSMs, for quality teaching and learning. Although the workshops were widely criticised, Odell, Molthan-Hill, Martin, and Sterling (2020) emphasised the importance of

training teachers in available LTSMs as they could transform their current practices towards sustainable development of teaching more especially during this time of using both face-face and online platforms.

Also, it was transpired from other teachers that if the Department of Education could provide all schools with materials that outlines the information with clear guidelines on how are supposed to develop themselves things could be better to understand the use of LTSMs for sustainable development of teaching and learning. Yangambi (2021) stated that teachers could not monitor learners when they were writing in their notebooks and workbooks if materials are not provided. It was also suggested that the Department should train at least one teacher from each school to become mentoring others to minimse the issue of few workshops organised, The issue of technology use was also mentioned as hindering factor on the use of LTSMs since the instructors were demanding presentation that result others to afraid of exposing themselves that they are not yet transformed enough resist change. One participant even suggested that it would be better if workshops can be carried quarterly since technology seems to the one factor that hinders the use of LTSMs to transform for sustainable development of teaching and learning the Life Skills subject. Odell, Molthan-Hill, Martin, and Sterling (2020) argued that training teachers in available LTSMs including technology could transform their current practices towards sustainable development of teaching.

I would prefer to have experts working with and assisting us, as we are unfamiliar to teach online. It is important for our Department to organise more workshops to develop us on how we could transform our practices towards sustainable development of teaching (P1).

If we can be able to attend more training, I would manage to transform my teaching practices and not to resist change because I will gain more different ways and approaches of mediating with LTSMs towards sustainable developments of teaching (P2).

To attend more workshops makes me feel better although the Department is always tasking subject advisors which sometimes repeating the previous lessons. For us to improve the quality of teaching and learning we need to be equipped with more knowledge (P3).

The Department of Education should provide us with enough materials with clear guidelnes that are specifically assisting us towards understanding proper use of LTSMs. Infact, I can understand better the use of materials for sustainable development of teaching and learning. Also, the Department should select at least one teacher from each school who could be trained so that he/she become mentoring others to overcome the issue of limited workshops (P1).

For me, I found it difficult to use materials that need technology as I am in a learning process because of my age. I t is not easy to understand what the instructor is saying, as a result I depend on the group that I am working with when attending workshops (P2).

I am afraid to attend workshops because the instructors ask everyone to present. I appreciate that sometimes there are some workshops organised but the fact that I have to expose myself that I do not understand it makes me hesitant to attend (P3).

Lack of professional development workshops could result me to resist change. Sometimes you find that the organised workshops are clashing with other activities (P1).
The schedule for the organised workshops should be made available earlier to all schools on time so that we can be made aware of all the materials needed(P2).
I suggest workshops should be carried quarterly so that we can get enough training more especially on technology(P3),

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the constant intervention by the Department of Education, teachers still cannot transform their practices in using LTSMs to improve learner performance in classrooms. The fact that most teachers are struggling to use them to mediate teaching and learning in their classrooms could be attributed to the lack of effective use of LTSMs to improve teaching as well as the lack of intensive training. Intensive training is needed to transform Life Skills teachers' practices in using LTSMs to improve FP learners' performance for sustainable development. Goal 4 of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda states that everyone should have access to high-quality education, opportunities for lifelong learning, and inclusive and equitable equity. The findings have revealed that teachers may not transform their practices because they operate in overcrowded classrooms with no resources and are not developed to use them in such environments. Classroom shortages and overcrowding are significant problems that can have negative effects on both teachers and students. That resulted in requests for more training, especially in the use of the equipment. For them, it was a disgrace that they were unable to use computers successfully, whereas they were aware that the present curriculum needed someone who was computer literate. That means a lot should be corrected in schools so that teachers can transform their practices to improve teaching and learning for sustainable development.

In addition, professional development is very important as it capacitates teachers to know the basics, methods, and strategies to change their negative attitudes of using LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning in classrooms. As the department emphasised in the policy statement that teachers should pay attention to all learners in their classrooms, it was not the case in the observed classrooms in this paper because classes were overcrowded, and teachers were unable to successfully use LTSMs. Due to this circumstance, teachers resulted to ignore students who required assistance and only worked with those who could understand subjects more readily. This suggests that to accommodate those students who have difficulties, instructional approaches must be modified. This was an observed practice in all the Life Skills lessons visited. This backs up Willows' (2012) claim that there are typically too many students for a teacher to directly attend to, depriving too many of the instruction they need. If the 2012 argument is still valid, as this study demonstrates, then teaching and learning practices have not transformed towards sustainable development of teaching. As a result, teaching and learning quality and performance cannot improve. It also transpired that teachers relied on traditional methods that were teacher-centred due to the shortage of resources.

However, teachers suggested that it could be better if the Department of Education train one teacher from each school who will assist others and mentoring towards understa the use of LTSMs especially technological materials as it the most hindering factor to transform towards sustainable development of teaching, Sometimes teachers regarded as resist change because they do not want to expose themselves during workshop presentations because they rely on working with others, It was also suggested that if workshops could be carried quarterly teachers would understand better and schools provided with enough materials with proper and outlined information. Although one of the roles of the Department of Education is to develop staff training programmes for teachers, it transpired that this was not the case in this study. Teachers complained of not being well oriented with current Life Skills issues and that caused them to have a limited scope in using LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers should be equipped in using LTSMs towards transforming sustainable development of teaching for quality education.

While these may be caused by a variety of factors, recommendations such as:

In order to mitigate the issue, the Department of Education should construct adequate structures to house new classrooms. Flexible scheduling can also be implemented. Professional development should be provided to teachers to provide them the tools they need to employ LTSMs in the classroom and change their methods to promote teaching that is sustainable. Despite the obstacles presented by overcrowding and a lack of classroom space, policy makers and community members should collaborate to guarantee that all students have access to high-quality education. The fact that teachers were struggling to use computers is because intensive training on the use of LTSMs towards transforming sustainable development of teaching and learning in Life Skills classrooms was overlooked during training. Teachers should be thoroughly trained on using LTSMs to mediate teaching and learning. In –service teacher training for professional development emerged to have a negative impact towards the role and use of LTSMs. Adequate training for teachers should therefore be crucial to improve knowledge and skills towards Life Skills subject, level of commitment and also attitude.

Teachers in former disadvantaged schools should liaise with teachers in the former Model C schools to learn effective use of modern resources. Therefore, teachers should use and improvise resources by planning and executing activities together. Subject advisors and Life Skills teachers might identify those pedagogical concepts which inform teachers' past teaching practices and discuss which concepts are compatible with current curricular objectives. As a result, subject advisors and teachers are called to collaborate in identifying how Life Skills LTSMs illustrate programmatic goals and objectives both globally and in terms of specific learning outcomes. It is noticeable that there are recent studies compared previously that looked at sustaible development of teaching and learning, for example, Lotz-Sisitka (2021), whose study was on instructors that need to have their ability built in three areas: 1) learning and teaching support material development; 2) assessment technique and standard selection; and 3) lesson plan preparation for possibilities for environmental learning. Thar shows there is a need for

teachers to transfom their practices for sustainable teaching and learning in all subjects not only in Life Skills.

 Limitations of the Study

This study limited itself since it was confined only to three Life Skills Foundation Phase teachers selected from schools and I could not overcome this limitation as this was prescribed. Also, the study was limited to the Foundation Phase classrooms in Dutywa District and not extended to other districts of the province. However, there were other studies conducted in other districts although they were not looking at LTSMs but also focused on Foundation Phase. Not all teachers from the three schools were selected for the study because focus was only on those who were teaching the Life Skills subject. This limited the study because I was not able to cover all Grade 3 Foundation Phase teachers in the Dutywa District for the purpose of this study.

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