

**MEDIATION OF LEARNING IN BUSINESS STUDIES IN THE FURTHER
EDUCATION AND TRAINING PHASE IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA EDUCATION
DISTRICT**

by

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DECLARATION

I Nyameko Victor Pele, student number: 20385498, do hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State for the Degree: Magister Educationis, is my own independent work; and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology, Free State; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfillment of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

PELE, V

DATE

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

- My late father, Mbalimbi Escourt Pele
- My mother, Nombulelo Elisa Sonkwala
- My son, Luyolo Pele
- My wife, Noludwe Pele

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates mediation of learning in Grade 10 Business Studies. Mediation of learning is one of the roles that have to be fulfilled by educators in the teaching and learning situation. Learning theories that focus on teaching and learning provide insight about the study under investigation. Aspects such as teaching, learning, constructivism, mediation of learning, teaching strategies, teaching and learning through different learning theories and assessment for learning are dealt with.

A qualitative research design is employed in this study. Data is gathered through observations of Grade 10 Business Studies lessons and questionnaires completed by Grade 10 Business Studies educators. Purposive sampling is used to sample the participants for this study. Ten schools in the Lejweleputswa district and ten Business Studies educators from these schools are sampled. Data is analysed qualitatively and emerging trends are reported on and interpreted.

Observations in the study indicated that most Grade 10 Business Studies educators do not implement mediation of learning in their lesson presentations. Learners are mostly passive listeners in the classrooms. Most educators indicated that they implement mediation of learning in their lessons, although observations portrayed the opposite. Educators are in need of training to be successful mediators of learning.

Conclusions and recommendations are made regarding mediation of learning in Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a guide of how this research study was carried out. Background to, as well as the significance of the study are provided, the problem is stated, which leads to the research questions and objectives of the study. The research methodology is described in short and is expanded on in Chapter 3. A few relevant terms to the study are also defined.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In the pre-1994 education system, the traditional way of teaching has failed to meet the quality standard of education including the desired needs of learners in South African schools. The traditional approach of teaching is when educators convey information usually from a textbook to passive learners and establish whether learners were able to reproduce it (Nieman & Monyai, 2006:1). A single comprehensive Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was developed for each school subject in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase (Grade 10-12). The structure of the CAPS document in Business Studies aims to provide educators with the necessary opportunities to teach and facilitate Business Studies in an interesting, enthusiastic and competent manner in the classroom. The CAPS document for Business Studies provides a much more structured outline of what must be taught, how much time to spend on topics and what to assess. Mediation of learning as an important aspect in the teaching and learning process needs to be implemented for such a curriculum document to be successful.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Mediation of learning is driven by the principle of success, flexibility, collaborative and co-operative learning and interaction between learners and educators. Good teaching involves certain skills, knowledge and competencies by educators when employing the various methods they use: managing discussions, handling questions and answers and organising practical sessions (Squires, 2002:30). What is significant about this study is its focus on the intended mediation of learning and the pattern of teaching by Business Studies educators in the FET phase. A further benefit of this study is that it may lead researchers to further explore mediation of learning in learning contexts at schools, and for Business Studies educators to be aware of the benefits of mediation.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The ideal is for teaching and learning in Business Studies to be successful. Mediation by educators is essential to ensure that learners are assisted by the educator to build on previous knowledge acquired. The reality is that this may not always be the case. Certain factors may impede with successful mediation in the Business Studies classroom. Some of these may be: possible lack of content knowledge by the educator; insufficient teaching and learning material may be available at the school and in the classroom; class size; educators' attitude towards the subject; ineffective lesson planning; textbook-bound educators, and a lack of exposure to practical business experience. A learner-centered approach in teaching is expected in the classroom, but seems to have posed a major challenge to many educators. Learners are expected to take responsibility for their own learning, while educators should act as mediators and motivators to assist each learner to achieve the required objectives (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2004:60). This study investigates why the above-mentioned 'ideal' seems to have become such a problem in Business Studies classrooms.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions are based on the statement of the problem.

- What are the essences of teaching and learning?
- What is the level of participation of Business Studies learners in the classroom?
- Which teaching strategies are employed by Business Studies educators to stimulate critical thinking in the classroom?
- What are the challenges (if any) encountered by Business Studies educators as far as mediation of learning is concerned?
- How can possible challenges with regard to mediation of learning be overcome?

1.6 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to promote teaching and learning through mediation of learning by Business Studies educators. In order to realise this aim, the following objectives were considered:

- To ascertain what the essences of teaching and learning are.
- To establish the level of participation by Business Studies learners in the classroom.
- To determine which teaching strategies are employed by Business Studies educators to stimulate critical thinking in the classroom.
- To establish the challenges (if any) encountered by Business Studies educators concerning mediation of learning.
- To determine how possible challenges with regard to mediation of learning can be overcome.

A short literature review is provided next to provide some context.

1.7 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

Although a full literature review is provided in Chapter 2, a few important aspects in this regard are provided here. The culture of teaching and learning is effective when educators apply the best method of teaching that encourages class participation. Educators need to provide learners with opportunities to be in constant contact with an environment as a way of experiencing things in a real life situation (Blumenfeld, Kempler & Krajcik, 2005:478). The teaching of Business Studies should not be confined to the classroom only, but the interaction with the business world outside is essential to gain authentic knowledge. Correlation between theory and practice can be realised when learners understand business contexts and are able to think rationally.

Learning content, which revolves around mediation of learning, provides learning experiences and advance learners' thinking processes (cognitive processes). Du Plessis, Conley and Du Plessis (2008:3) mention with regard to cognitive theory that learners should construct knowledge in their own minds and educators cannot merely provide learners with knowledge, but that they should facilitate this knowledge. Experience shows that human beings are unique, using different approaches to discover things based on their cognitive structures and understanding. Business roles as one of the main topics in the Business Studies curriculum focus on the learners' creative thinking, self-analysis and problem solving abilities, which implies that learners need to engage in critical thinking processes. This connects to a specific interpretation of constructivism, which emphasises the learners' mental processing (Gravett, 2005:21).

1.7.1 Constructivism

The constructivists' viewpoint is that, through higher-order thinking learners are able to interpret information. Constructivism further implies that it is through learners' pre-existing cognitive structures that enable them to incorporate new information (i.e. they

construct new meaning and new ways of thinking) into their existing knowledge structures (their existing ideas are enriched) (Gravett, 2005:20). Referring to the constructivist approach, Henson (2004:15) states that learners question their own understanding and discover new knowledge. With respect to constructivism, educators need to mediate learning by guiding learners to construct their own knowledge (Du Toit, Froneman & Maree, 2002:159).

1.7.2 Mediation

Mediation of learning is when learners discover things by themselves through mediation by educators. Educators should refrain from acting as didactic instructors (Selaledi, 2013:2). Nieman and Monyai (2006:1) mention that learners should take responsibility for their own learning and to be independent thinkers. This is only possible if educators become mediators in the classroom and allow learners to engage with content. Educators are expected to be a master of their subject in order to be able to intervene and present their lesson with confidence. In a classroom where mediation of learning is practiced, educators generally apply different teaching strategies in order to meet the diverse needs of the learners.

1.7.3 Teaching strategies

A teaching strategy is a method an educator uses in order to convey certain lesson content to a certain class, and is also referred to as method, technique, tactic and mode of instruction (Kruger & Van Schalkwyk, 2007:96). Certain objectives need to be attained in a teaching and learning situation and mediation of learning is needed to ensure that such attainment is successful. This means that educators can use a variety of teaching strategies in the teaching and learning process, for instance the use of enquiry learning (where the educator carefully prompt learners to formulate their own questions), the educator can even assist the learners to develop intellectual skills by allowing multiple interpretations and expressions of learning (multiple intelligences) and

the opportunity for learners to work as a group and the use of peers as resources (collaborative learning) (Bhattacharya & Han 2001).

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.8.1 Research design

A qualitative research design was undertaken in this study. A qualitative research design in its broadest sense refers to research that elicits participants' accounts of meaning, experience or perception (Flick, 2009:89). Babbie (2007:117) opines that a research design involves taking a number of decisions regarding the topic to be studied, which population to use, which research method(s) to use and for what purpose. In the same vein, Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2007:1) concur that the researcher's purpose of the research will mostly influence the use of certain methods of data collection and especially data analysis.

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the process and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns and is mostly concerned with exploring the "why" questions of research. Qualitative research typically studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment and focusing on their meanings and interpretations (Nieuwenhuis 2008:51). Gray (2004:320) asserts that qualitative research is highly contextual, being collected in a natural 'real life' setting. It goes beyond giving a mere snapshot of events and can show how and why things happen, also incorporating peoples own motivation, emotions, prejudices and incidents of interpersonal cooperation and conflict.

In this study, an ethnographic approach is chosen as a strategic inquiry in qualitative research design. Swarts (2004:36) states that through an ethnographic approach the researcher normally relies on gaining data in the natural setting of the participants (which in this study is the Business Studies classroom).

1.8.2 Population and Sampling

A population is a set of entities for which all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researcher are presented (Fouche & De Vos, 2011:190). Imenda and Muyangwa (2006:97) define a target population as a group of participants from whom the researcher wishes to collect the information required to address the research questions. Therefore, an accessible population in this study consists of the FET educators who teach Business Studies in the Lejweleputswa education district.

Sampling is the process of choosing a number of participants in a manner that will represent the larger population from which they were selected (Corbetta, 2003:210). Purposive sampling was appropriate for this study. Pudi (2006:105) states that, in a situation where purposive sampling is employed, previous information assists the researcher in assuming that the selected sample would be representative of the population. In this study Business Studies educators will be purposively sampled. The reason for employing purposive sampling is the belief that Business Studies educators can provide the information needed about the topic under study. One Grade 10 Business Studies educator was selected from 10 schools in the Lejweleputswa education district of the Free State Province. The total sample was therefore 10 Grade 10 Business Studies educators.

1.8.3 Data Collection

In this study, two instruments were used to obtain information, namely questionnaires

and observation.

1.8.3.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire can be described as a list of questions presented in written format and the participants indicate their responses on a form, mailed or completed in a particular place (Laws, 2003:306-307). This study employed an open-ended questionnaire to allow the participants to express their views regarding mediation of learning. Open-ended questions provide the participants the opportunity to write many possible answers and permit creativity, self-expression and richness of details (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006:273).

1.8.3.2 Observation

For the purpose of this study observation was also used as a tool necessary to collect data. Observation allows the researcher to observe the behaviour of people in a natural setting. There are two basic types of observation techniques used in ethnographic studies: participant and non-participant observation (Grix, 2004:129). Participant observation was preferred in this study because the observer sought to understand the learners' way of communication with their educators in the classroom, meaning that learners' and educators' ideas, attitudes, motives and behaviour were observed in a natural situation. However the researcher's participation is to alleviate any disturbance during the lesson by only recording the occurrences in the classroom.

Delamont (2002:138) recommends that recording during observation should be carried out as unobtrusively as possible, ideally noting verbatim speech or at least some key words/phrases that served to jog the memory later. It is essential to constantly analyse and interpret data, or it may become so complex and confusing that it fails to serve any purpose. The lesson observation schedule was developed after taking into

consideration the current literature on the subject, as well as emerging topics that could come to the fore. Seidman (2013:161) refers to observation and questionnaires as triangulation, hence the researcher employed more than one data source to collect information. These instruments were used in order to generate data concerning the observation of the researcher and opinions of Business Studies educators regarding mediation of learning in the FET phase.

1.8.4 Data Analysis

Mouton (2006:161) states that data analysis is the process of bringing order and identifying patterns and themes in the data. Throughout data analysis, new data will be compared with data previously obtained so that data can be explained and made understandable. The questions in the questionnaire will be categorised so that the relationship between the actual questions and responses can be interpreted. The data collected during the observation will be interpreted by means of coding and classification, so as to link the findings to the wider literature on this subject.

1.9 DELIMITATION AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study resides under the didactical field of education. It includes Business Studies educators in the Further Education and Training phase (FET) in the Lejweleputswa education district. It would be difficult to expand this study to other parts of the country due to time and financial constraints. The qualitative approach followed in this study does not aim to generalise findings to the broader South Africa, but aims to study a specific phenomenon.

1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.10.1 Curriculum

Curriculum is derived from the Latin word *curro* (I run) or *currere* (to be running) which refers to a race or racetrack (Carl, 2002:31). In educational context the racetrack is seen as follows: racecourse-learning content, which has to be completed-mastered and participant-learner. In this study the curriculum refers to What needs to be dealt with in Grade 10 Business Studies.

1.10.2 Mediator

A mediator is regarded as a person who is in the middle with a view to facilitate. The educators are facilitators who should guide and direct the learners. Gravett (2005:23) asserts that, the term mediate comes from the Latin word *mediare*, which means to be in the middle or to put oneself between.

1.10.3 Assessment

Assessment can be defined as the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement. Assessment is required to decide whether a learner has made desirable progress, assessment consists of a tasks set in order to obtain information about learner's competence (Department of Education, 2002a:54-60).

1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The chapter outlines are drawn as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction.

Chapter 2: Literature Review- Mediation of Learning.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology.

Chapter 4: Presentation of the findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of the study. This overview included a background to and significance of the study. The problem was stated and linked to research questions and objectives to guide the study. The research methodology was described in short and was expanded on in Chapter 3. A few relevant terms to the study were also defined. Chapter 2 deals with mediation of learning.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: MEDIATION OF LEARNING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two elaborates on mediation of learning as one of the roles that has to be fulfilled by educators in the teaching and learning situation. To shed light on mediation of learning many sources were consulted. It is from these sources where learning theories that focus on teaching and learning provide insight about the study under investigation. Aspects such as teaching, learning, mediation of learning, teaching strategies, teaching and learning through different learning theories and assessment for learning are dealt with in this chapter.

Teaching and learning theories are to assist educators and remind them that they have a crucial role to play in understanding how the learners experience learning. It is important to point out that every teaching and learning relationship is both teaching and learning for all participants (i.e. educators and learners).

2.2 TEACHING

Teaching refers to the process of imparting knowledge and skills from the educator to a learner (Lott, 2008:48). For teaching to be effective it should encompass the activities of educating or instructing. An educator need to consider that teaching is an act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of a learner. Kochhar (2009:21) says that teaching is more than standing before a class and applying a few specific techniques. Thus, it is important for an educator not to merely present text-book information and test learners' ability to repeat it, but to guide the learners' experience. Educators must be able to instill confidence in learners so that they understand the learning content (Smith, 2013).

2.2.1 What is teaching?

Teaching can be seen as creating opportunities for learning to take place, as the process of helping learners to learn. Teaching and learning are thus closely related (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2008:2). Teaching aims at developing the kinds of capabilities associated with education. The instructional process commonly called teaching involves implementing strategies designed to lead learners to attain certain goals.

Jacobs *et al.* (2004:240) explain teaching as a way in which an educator provides information that is based on reality within the developmental level of the learners. Teaching takes place when an educator helps learners to learn. However, the relationship between the educator and the process of teaching is quite important, as commitment from both the teacher and the learner is needed for proper teaching to occur. Squires (2002:30) says that good teaching involves certain skills. It has to be geared to the needs of the particular situation: the type of course, a particular subject and the developmental levels of the learners. Because of the specialised nature of many subjects, including Business Studies, it is necessary for educators to master the skills and competences required for effective teaching in a particular subject. Arends (2012:19) defines an effective educator as a person who has a love for teaching, a superior command of a particular subject and an ability to transmit his or her subject effectively to learners.

Wilén, Bosse, Hutchison and Kindsvatter (2004:105) refer to the following summary as keys to effective teaching:

- Learners' prior- knowledge influence learning.
- Learners need to think about their own learning strategies.
- Motivation has a powerful effect on learning.
- Development and individual differences influence learning.
- The classroom's social context influence learning.

MacDonald and Pinheiro (2012:90) state that in order to head for a system that is conducive to real, meaningful learning, it is needed to redefine teaching as assisted performance. Teaching as assisted performance is a particularly attractive notion that could be seen as a particular form of mediation. The manner in which teaching is defined and conceptualised has certain implications for instruction. Lott (2008:49) refers to teaching as a process of imparting knowledge and skills from an educator to a learner, it comprises the activities of educating or instruction. Taylor (2002:75) says that teaching and learning should not focus so much on what learners learn as on how they learn. Therefore, this chapter has considered teaching and learning theories that are based on mediation of learning.

2.3 TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH DIFFERENT TEACHING AND LEARNING THEORIES

Educators need to know that there are many different theories of teaching and learning to be considered as the most important aspects of the teaching-learning process. Tanner and Tanner (2007:38) state that a curriculum should be planned in such a way that it guides educators with different theories of teaching and learning. It should serve as a useful instrument with which one may determine an appropriate theory for teaching and learning. Wiles (2005:25) mentions that theories of teaching and learning that gained prominence during the twentieth century are divided into two broad categories: the traditional theories and the inquiry theories. These two theories, and some theories that are associated with them are briefly dealt with, as they link to the teaching and learning process as put forward in this study.

2.3.1 The traditional theory

Jacobs *et al.* (2004:39) mention that the traditional theory is made up of the theories that tend to be prescriptive and exclusive in the sense that each one resembles a

definite package. It serves as a representative set of theories which are characterised by one particular view. Among the large number of traditional theories, the two most important theories are the experiential theory and the behaviourist theory.

2.3.1.1 The experiential theory

Jacobs *et al.* (2004:40) state that Dewey is the chief proponent of the experiential theory. He sees the central argument in this theory, as one where learners can only acquire knowledge through personal experience. Since each learner's experiences are different, the educator (i.e. Business Studies educator as mediator) should facilitate the personal growth by exposing learners to as many real life experiences as possible. Nieman and Monyai (2006:75) further explain that for learning to occur, experience needs to be mediated and reconstructed by the learners.

Both learners and educators are constantly learning from each other. This could involve, for example, reflection about the extent to which an educator helps learners to master the subject content for which he/she is responsible. Moreover, educators provide not only mastery of the subject content, but also a base for learners' self-monitoring, self-reflection, self-collection and self-analysis. In the context of education, educators and learners also bring prior-educational experience into the education setting. It is critically important that an educator should know that learning is not just an addition of new experiences; rather it is a synthesis of the old and new experiences which result in a completely new experience (Kochhar, 2009:30). To help learners make the most of a new experience, educators need to understand how prior-knowledge affect learning. Effective learning conveys the message that what the learners know and experience about the content is relevant to the lesson. Therefore learners can relate previous information to new information obtained in the classroom.

A key element of creating new experiences is that learners analyse their experience by reflecting, evaluating and reconstruction (Foley, 2004:225-239). This experience may

comprise earlier events in the life of the learner, current life events, or those arising from the learner participation in activities implemented by the educator. Thus the task of the educator is to create new experiences through role playing, games, simulations and case studies. Learning is the result of active participation by all learners in for instance simulated experiences, including the subsequent analysis and reflection on such experiences. Kolb (2013) describes the creation of new experiences as a learning undertaken by learners who are given a chance to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and their feelings.

One of the major aspects when creating new experiences is that an educator should show the learners the value of consulting various textbooks, newspapers, the Internet and other sources before they commence with simulations, case studies, games and role playing. Learners are to be made aware that an educator is not the only source of knowledge. Learners are to be assigned with projects that make them to learn as a result of new experiences. It is thus important that learners question their own understanding and discover new experiences (Henson 2004:15). Experiences provide insights, understanding and skills that are difficult to describe to someone who has not had similar experiences. Arends, Richard and Kilcher (2010:308) say that learning through experience starts with direct experiences, continues with reflection upon these experiences, and concludes with the construction of personal knowledge ready to be tested in a new situation. Therefore, learning through experience is inductive, learner centered, and activity oriented. It is important to note that learning through experience helps learners to generate understanding and transfer knowledge in a manner different from the traditional didactic method of teaching where educators simply transfer knowledge upon their learners.

2.3.1.2 The behaviourist theory

According to the behaviourist theory, behaviour refers to the action or reactions of an object or organism, usually in relation to the environment (Darby, 2003). Thus changes in the environment lead to changes in measurable behaviour. Smaldino, Lowther and

Russell (2008:39) believe that educators need to provide reinforcement for those changes in behaviour, which they term learning. Their view means that educators could state how well a learner should perform a specific response by linking a new behaviour to a stimulus. Therefore there has to be a connection or association that is formed among stimuli and responses. We remember things together when they are similar; or when they contrast; or when they are connected. The connectedness means that whenever two or more sensations occur together, they will become associated. Later, when one of these sensations (a stimulus) occurs, the other will be remembered too (a response).

Ertmer and Newby (1993), as proponents of this theory, are of the view that the goal of instruction for a behavioural theorist is to have learners emit the desired behaviour in response to a stimulus. They view learning as a change in the form or frequency of behaviour. In the behavioural approach, learners' behaviour is assessed to determine when to begin with instruction. Learning requires arranging stimuli that connect learners and the environment so that learners can make the proper responses and be reinforced. The second theory in the broad category mentioned earlier is the inquiry theory, to be discussed next.

2.3.2 The inquiry theory

Jacobs *et al.* (2004:43) are of the view that one of the developments in the latter half of the twentieth century was the rise of the inquiry theory. Traditional theories are closed systems hence they tend to be prescriptive - they prescribe how the lesson content should be. Unfortunately the traditional teaching has worked in a way that discourages the natural process of inquiry. The process of inquiring begins with the gathering of information and data through applying human-senses, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling (Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2004). Useful application of the inquiry learning in the mediation of learning is when the educator involves several factors: a context for questions, a framework for questions, a focus for questions and different levels of questions that promote an inquiry minded learner. The educator as

mediator of learning should remember that memorizing facts and information is not the most important skills for learners in today's world because facts change and information is readily available.

Rambuda (2002:54) says that, by focusing on inquiry learning and process skills, learners' acquisition of knowledge and skills should not be excluded. In this regard when learners are required to solve problems which are new to them, inquiry learning is called upon. The educator therefore has an enormous task in this regard and must learn to mediate in such a way that the learners are motivated to inquire by themselves. The strength of inquiry learning requires the learners to project a range of process skills into a real world. Henson (2004:262) states that learners gain insight and knowledge when they are encouraged to inquire by themselves in a real life situation. Good mediators should constantly ask learners to inquire by themselves and think critically in order to find a solution to a potential academic problem.

2.3.2.1 The critical inquiry theory

The critical inquiry theory revolves around the need for all people to acquire and use critical thinking abilities (Jacobs *et al.*, 2006:45). Educators should stimulate critical thinking in the classroom during mediation. This implies that an educator should not impose knowledge on learners. Learners must be encouraged to do most of the learning themselves, based on materials that they find interesting and challenging and that will sustain their critical thinking and arise curiosity as they search for solutions. Thus learners should be made to think critically and use critical thinking skills to analyse deep-rooted problems. Wilen *et al.* (2004:38) cite two thinking skills to be considered by educators during mediation of learning, namely critical thinking skills and creative thinking skills.

- **Critical thinking skills**

Halpern (2002:6) describes critical thinking skills as purposeful, reasoned, and goal-

directed - the kind of thinking involved in making decisions and solving problems. By critical thinking skills learners are able to understand the information and compare or connect it with the content of the lesson or the task assigned to them. For instance, Business Studies educators should encourage learners to use mind mapping, brainstorming and creative thinking/idea generation to identify innovative and entrepreneurial business opportunities. Learners must break up information into its component parts. They must therefore be able to identify the elements or parts which comprise the information.

Tsui (2002:748) sees critical thinking skills as a means during which learners assess and scrutinize knowledge prior to its consumption. Thus, critical thinking skills generally include the following:

- seeing cause and effect when solving open-ended problems;
- forming relationships when engaging in problem solving;
- using logic when identifying central issues and problems; and
- predicting consequences.

- **Creative thinking skills**

Creative thinking as part of inquiry theory involves the ability to produce new and original ideas. Fisher and Scriven (2006:5) say that creative thinking is shown when learners generate ideas, show imagination and demonstrating originality, and can judge the value of what they have done. This process can involve accessing other learning resources such as books, videos and Internet. Sternberg and Williams (2002:309) emphasise that though everyone thinks, most do it poorly and what is required is that the educator as mediator of learning create an atmosphere where learners think more effectively, more critically, more coherently and more deeply than they typically would do.

Teaching for critical thinking is therefore a necessity in mediation of learning. Barnes (2005:12) argues that we find ourselves in a time where learners are inundated with information, but have limited skills to decipher, question, validate and reason through its

substantiality or validity. The context for creative thinking should indicate how the interaction between individual and contextual factors shapes the development of creative thinking (Meintjes & Grosser, 2010:364). It shows that contextual factors (education, social environment, family and physical condition) interact with learners' intelligence, knowledge and experience. This emphasis on creative thinking and the demand for creativity should relate to a change in the perception of educators' and learners' respective roles in learning.

It is important that educators themselves need to be creative thinkers in order to design appropriate learning environments and to nurture creative thinking abilities among learners. Educators should be responsible for designing and constructing relevant, challenging, learner-centred learning environment. Meintjes and Grosser (2010:363) say that educators must construct experiences, as well as assessment tools to assist learning within learners or adapt existing experiences to suit the needs of the learners and situation. They must further mediate, mentor, model and finally deliver creative thinking in learners. Unlike teaching and learning that takes place through transmission and reception, a mediation approach to teaching and learning aims at helping learners to construct their own knowledge, solve problem on their own and to understand their own thinking processes.

Thus, educators should play an important role to help learners develop creative thinking skills. Teaching creative thinking skills and dispositions as part of critical inquiry theory rest mainly on cognitive and constructivist perspectives about how learners learn (Arends & Kilcher, 2010:230).

2.4 CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is based on the belief that learners should be guided when constructing knowledge that is meaningful and useful in their own lives (Jacobs *et al.*, 2004:46). What is important is not so much what learners learn, but how they learn. The skills they learn are more important than the content. Learners are encouraged to develop their

own understanding of knowledge. This does not negate the role of practice and feedback by the educator, but rather allows learners more latitude in developing knowledge structures.

Constructivism is not a unified theory, but rather has different perspectives (Bruning, Shraw, Norby, Ronning, 2004). Exogenous constructivism holds that the acquisition of knowledge represents a reconstruction of structures that exist in the external world. This view emphasizes a strong influence of the external world on knowledge construction, such as experiences, teaching and exposure to models. Knowledge is accurate to the extent that it reflects that reality. In contrast, endogenous constructivism emphasizes the coordination of cognitive actions (Bruning *et al.*, 2004). Mental structures are created out of earlier structures, not directly from environmental information; therefore knowledge is not a mirror of the external world acquired through experiences, teaching or social interactions. Knowledge develops through the cognitive activity of abstraction and follows a generally predictable sequence.

According to Gravett (2005:19), constructivism regards learning as an active process of constructing meaning. For this reason constructivists explain learning as individualized, social and occurring within context, and knowledge is acquired through construction and reconstruction of leaning. Thus, educators should structure situations such that learners become actively involved with content through manipulation of materials and social interaction. Nieman and Monyai (2006:5) state that a mediated learning experience represents a theoretical and operational formulation of the interaction that can occur to facilitate cognitive and social learning. It is for this reason that principles of mediation are embedded in the theory of constructivism. Social constructivism is a social process whereby learners acquire knowledge through interaction with their environment.

2.4.1 Social constructivism

Based on Vygotsky's co-construction theory, the social constructivist perspective advocates that knowledge is not built by individual learners, but in a wider social context which is linked to learner's environment and cultural activities (Nyaumwe & Mtetwa, 2009:47). Effective teaching in the social constructivist perspective is based on creating opportunities for learners to experience, discuss, discover and socially construct knowledge using their contexts. Such teaching involves learner active engagements on physical and mental activities that involve interpreting, constructing and reflecting on their decisions in ways that enhance learners to create knowledge through personal experience. The content of the subject, Business Studies, continually requires the learners to be in contact with a business environment and as such, socio-constructivism becomes relevant in this study. Thus, learners' contact with business practices assists them to gain insight into the teaching and learning of business sciences.

An influential constructivist, Spector (2010), reveals the following characteristics of socio-constructivist learning content:

- The focus will be on processes to develop connections and form conceptual frameworks into which new information may be integrated, rather than to teach content loaded with detail. The emphasis will be on holistic concepts.
- Instead of the content being selected and organized around the structure of the discipline, it will be organized around themes, current matters and real life-life problems. The curriculum will, in fact, be problem-based rather than discipline-based.
- Science is portrayed as a dynamic discipline challenging established 'truths'; that is science as doing rather than a set of abstract rules defining reality. In the context of this study science is seen as Business Studies within the Economic and Management Sciences.

- Learning is seen as scientific inquiry in which new meanings are constructed. Scientific activity is regarded as human and responsive to human perception and interpretation.

Therefore, Schunk (2012:237) states that educators should not teach in the traditional sense of delivering instruction to learners. Rather, they should structure situations such that learners become actively involved with content. Furthermore, the instructional implication is that the teaching method should:

- be guided by their learners' questions and their need to know;
- assume that learners have pre-knowledge and a frame of reference based on experiences.
- incorporate different ways of knowing and allow for different learning styles and expression;
- focus on inquiry and communication, rather than on routine teaching;
- support open-ended activities, active learning and hypothetical reason;
- create learning experiences rather than present learning content; and devise cooperative learning strategies, foster a collaborative environment and discourage a teacher-dependent attitude.

Andrews (2012) asserts that socio-constructivist learning content will empower learners to become lifelong learners with the emphasis on 'learning to learn'. Constructivism emphasizes learners' construction of knowledge and belief. Learners construct information from the environment and combine it with their present knowledge. Learners' construction of knowledge is determined by instructional conditions that stress social interaction (Schunk, 2012:516). For educators it is essential to use a range of processes to convince learners of the validity of constructing knowledge about the matters related to, for instance Business Studies, and incorporate them into classroom knowledge. Although the educator might still be required to guide learners, it is essential

that learners are presented with contextual problems where they (the learners) can construct, experience and solve the problem by themselves.

Constructivism further implies that learners incorporate new information through their cognitive structures, which enable them to incorporate new information into their existing knowledge structures (their existing ideas are enriched) (Gravett, 2005:20). Constructivism is not a single, homogeneous theory of learning. The term is used to denote a cluster of related views (radical constructivism, social constructivism, socio-cultural approaches, emancipatory constructiveness and social constructionist) that all rest on the assumption that learning is a process of constructing meaning derived from the learner's action in the world.

In relation to social constructivism, Donald, Lazarus and Lolwane (2002:69-71) assert that Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) provides insight into the process of cognitive development. Instead of arguing about whether learners should receive their knowledge in ready-made format, Vygotsky interpreted educational processes as a source of the development of cognitive and learning skills, rather than a consequence thereof. Du Plessis *et al.* (2008:9) explain that Vygotsky's assisted learning emphasises:

- social, cultural and historical influences on learning and cognitive development;
- the relationship between thinking (i.e. cognition) and language; and
- assisted learning: how, with the help of educator, parent, or more experienced peer, learners can learn more, and do more than they can do and learn on their own. In this way, it is through interaction with others that learning takes place.

Donald *et.al.* (2002:72) assert that Vygotsky argues that learners' thinking and problem solving ability fall into three categories: those problems that can be performed independently, those that can be performed with assistance and lastly those problems that cannot be performed (even with assistance). It is important in Business Studies classrooms that learners' understanding should be facilitated by means of activities,

class discussions and exercises that are done outside and inside the classrooms. These learning activities should be designed by the educator to start from what the learners can do independently based from prior-knowledge so as to link the already existing knowledge that they can perform with assistance. As learners continue to practice, they can do certain tasks independently in activities that were previously performed with assistance. The shifts learners gain in understanding the activities help them to find ways of attempting the problems that they were unable to solve even with assistance. Bay, Bagceci and Cetin (2012:344) state that Vygotsky's assisted learning emphasizes that every learner has a ZPD that represents the difference between what the learner can do on his/her own and what he/she is capable of doing with the assistance of others.

2.4.1.1 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD notion is often used to focus on the importance of more competent assistance (i.e. competence of learning mediator) to learners (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev & Miller, 2003:188). In other words it is not the more knowledgeable person (i.e. BS educator) that is important, rather it is to understand the meaning of that assistance in relation to a learner's learning and development. The ZPD is the difference between what a learner can do independently and what he or she is capable of doing with targeted assistance (such as mediation).

One of the main implications of Vygotsky's ZPD is that learners should be continually placed in situations where their cognitive skills are challenged (Human-Vogel & Bower, 2005:230). Social interaction may be just as important in the development of cognitive processes. In proposing learning through interactions and negotiations, Ferguson (2005) states that the ZPD has the potential to contribute more to learners' understanding than what learners are capable of constructing as individuals. The argument of social learning is that cognition and intelligence are not properties of individual learners, but arise from interaction with other learners in the learning environment. Construction of knowledge in social contexts facilitates the development of

conceptual understanding and transferability of the concepts to applications in a variety of contexts.

To facilitate learners' social interactions in classrooms, learning is to be made challenging through provisioning of authentic problem-solving tasks existing in the learners' environment (Nyaumwe & Mtetwa, 2009:48). Such tasks can intuitively be approached by learners using trial, error and success. Thus, social constructivist strategies in the classroom require authentic learning environments that facilitate the building of new knowledge from prior knowledge. Such learning facilitates learners' applications of concepts in a variety of contexts in the classroom and their environments. Arends and Kilcher (2010:258) say that the concept teaching strategy is useful to help learners to construct conceptual knowledge. It is particularly important for educators to use different teaching strategies in order to create a conducive atmosphere for learning.

2.5 WHAT IS A TEACHING STRATEGY?

A teaching strategy is a broad plan of action, or steps and processes for teaching-learning activities that allows learners to accomplish learning (Prater, 2007:273). Leibowitz and Adendorff (2007:113) explain a teaching strategy as an initiative which seeks to drive change and improvement in teaching and learning across an entire educational institution. A teaching strategy gives an outline of the approach an educator uses when facilitating teaching and learning activities. According to Kruger and Schalkwyk (2007:96), teaching methods are also referred to as strategies, tactics, techniques and modes of instruction. One view is that a teaching strategy is the way in which an educator will convey a certain lesson to a certain class.

Each teaching strategy poses its own demands and educators must be able to adapt the strategy to the nature of the lesson content, as well as the nature of the class group in question. Du Plessis *et al.* (2008:28) assert that it is important to use certain

strategies to mediate learning, and educators should have a broad knowledge of teaching strategies in order to be able to use the right one at the right time. No teaching strategy is better than other strategies, so an educator has to be able to apply a variety of teaching strategies, and make a proper decision about when each of the teaching strategies is likely to be most effective. Some of the teaching strategies used by educators are discussed next.

2.5.1 Direct instruction

Direct instruction means that educators exert strong direction and control over what is to be learned and how (Cruickshank, Jenkins & Metcalf, 2009:273). It is an educator-centred approach in which the educator provides the learners with academic content in a well-structured format. The purpose of direct instruction is to assist learners to learn basic academic content. Cruickshank *et al.* (2009:273) state that direct instruction is most likely to be employed:

- when the educator introduces new lesson content;
- when the educator wants to teach learners a skill or procedure that has a clearly defined structure;
- when the subject matter the educator is teaching is suitable for presentation in the pattern of explanation, modelling, questioning and application;
- when the educator wants to demonstrate techniques or procedures prior to learners engaging in some practical activity;
- when the educator wants to outline the broad parameters within which learners will pursue their independent (or group) study;
- when learners experience difficulties that can be overcome by a carefully structured exposition; and
- when the teaching environment is not suitable for learner-centered strategies.

Direct instruction can be a very strong teaching strategy that assists learners who are struggling with subject. Thus, when learners struggle with a subject, the repeated use of direct instruction can have a strong positive effect on learning outcomes (Morgan, 2004). It condenses difficult or complex ideas into simple definitions or explanations, and then indicates how all the information relates. Ideas are simplified, it is easier for learners to see “the big picture”. The educator should start by highlighting the new ideas to the learners in simple sentences. Then the relationship between these ideas and the prior knowledge the learners already has is highlighted. Arends (2012:293) states that direct instruction is not intended to accomplish higher-level thinking and is best used in conjunction with a more learner-centred teaching style.

2.5.2 Discussion

A discussion is a situation wherein learners and the educator converse to share information, ideas, or opinions or work to solve a problem (Cruickshank *et al.* 2009:205). Discussion help learners apply abstract ideas and think critically about what they learn and build learners’ problem-solving skills more effectively than do direct instruction. However, fostering productive discussions can be difficult for even the most experienced educators (Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT), 2011).

According to Snowman and McCown (2011:12), most class discussions really involve relatively little discussion. Occasionally during a lecture, the educator asks a question and then waits for someone to answer. Most learners try to look busy by taking notes and normally only a few learners carry the load of the discussion. In a ground breaking study of 20 different classes involving a total of 579 learners by Nunn (1996), it was found that the median percentage of time spent in learner participation per class was 2.28%, and the median percentage of learners who spoke was 25.46%. The reality is therefore that most learners do not talk during discussions and those who do, do not talk much.

If all or most of the learners are actually participating during class discussions, the educator as mediator of learning can be better assured that the majority of the learners are doing more than just memorizing facts. They may be thinking about ways to use the content in individual ways, such as applying the facts to their own lives. After all, the key motivation behind the drive for more active learning approaches in the classroom is the fact that learners forget memorised facts and are more likely to recall meaningful lessons (Sikorski & Keeley, 2003:3).

Thus, for discussion to be effective in the classroom, the educator as a mediator should allow the learners to take control of the discussion, but at the same time, direct and instruct the learners in how to have a meaningful discussion. Learners must know how to have a discussion and where they are going with the discussion for the discussion to be useful and meaningful to them (Webb & Webb, 2008:27). Learners have a tendency of elaborating fully in response to their peers' comments or questions than to those of the educator. This seems logical, since learners are more likely to debate and discuss various subjects and materials with an individual on their intellectual level rather than with an individual who they feel is on a higher, more advanced intellectual level, such as their educator.

2.5.3 Co-operative learning

Abrami, Poulsen and Chambers (2008:203) and Gravett and Geyser (2004:43) state that cooperative learning (CL) is an instructional approach in which learners work purposefully together in small groups to develop both their own and the group members' knowledge. CL differs from other types of group work or traditional instruction in several ways. In contrast to traditional 'talk and chalk' classrooms, where learners work separately or sometimes in competition with other learners, with co-operative learning they are encouraged to function interdependently. Constructive interdependence can grow in numerous ways, including through sharing resources, working towards a shared goal, and depending on other learners for acknowledgement and appreciation. Second,

learners' goals are positively linked, in other words, when one learner achieves a goal, it increases the possibility that other learners will achieve the goal. Third, CL is different from other methods of instruction in the degree and quality of learner collaboration. Finally, the educator's role in a classroom employing CL is often different, with academic and social purposes often set in collaboration with learners.

According to Bitzer (2004:41), CL is not just a new kind of small group teaching, but it is a way of stimulating learners' participation and responsibility. Perhaps if co-operative learning is adopted more as a teaching strategy, there would be more engagement by learners and the classroom will be more activity-centred, which leads to understanding of the subject content by the learners (Scherman & Du Toit, 2008:423). Therefore, co-operative learning should not allow certain learners to do more than others. The work load has to be divided equally, and each group member is responsible for a section of the work. The individual will not succeed unless everyone succeeds, while each member's efforts benefit all other members as well. Learners' vested interest in one another's achievement will result in their sharing of resources, assisting each other's efforts, providing mutual support and celebrating their joint successes.

Scherman and Du Toit (2008:427) highlight four co-operative learning methods, namely jigsaw, teams-games-tournament, Student teams-achievement division and Problem solving. These are discussed in short.

- **Jigsaw**

All groups in a class may cover the same topic, or different groups may have different parts of the topic. Groups are then reorganised to peer teach the content (Grasha & Yangarber-Hicks 2000:6). The jigsaw technique can enhance cooperative learning by making each learner responsible for teaching some of the material to the group. In this technique, learners are members of two different groups, the 'home group' and the 'jigsaw group'. Initially, learners meet in their home groups, and each member of the home group is assigned a portion of the content to learn as an "expert" (Doymus, Simsek & Bayrakceken, 2004:106). The home groups then break apart, like pieces of a

jigsaw puzzle, and the learners move into jigsaw groups consisting of members from the other home groups who have been assigned the same portion of the material. While in the jigsaw groups, the learners discuss their particular content to ensure that they understand it. Arends (2012:358) states that learners then return to their home groups, where they teach their material to the rest of their group.

- **Teams-Games-Tournament**

Scherman and Du Toit (2008:427) state that in teams-games-tournament learners form the teams and members of teams compete against other members to contribute to the team score. Heterogeneous groups of 4-6 members are formed. This means that low achievers (competing against other low achievers) and high achievers (competing against other high achievers) have equal opportunities for success (Gravett & Geysler, 2004:56). This technique is not just a play, but educators present new academic information to learners, either through verbal presentation or text.

- **Student Teams-Achievement Division (STAD)**

STAD is a form of co-operative learning in which the educator presents information and then places learners in heterogeneous groups to learn or master that information (Cruikshank *et al.*, 2009:255). Thus, two kinds of preparation are essential: (1) An educator must be prepared to provide information in the most effective way, and (2) learners must be prepared to engage in group work so they can master the information. In this regard the goal of the educator is to have learners working with one another and begin to see themselves as a team. An educator assigns each learner in a group with a similar topic to investigate and then get learners to come to consensus on

Kamla (2012:3) further says that the task of the educator is to assign the learners to groups, because learners tend to choose only certain members for their groups. Team members study only the subject matter and learning material together until all learners successfully master the subject matter and work assignments. The educator will test each learner individually on the learning material without any assistance from other

learners. Each learner points (mark per worksheet or assignment) are constantly compared with the points (mark) scored previously. The sum of the individual points (marks) in a group serves as the basis for the points allocated to the group. Group members compete with one another and earn a reward on the basis on how well the group performs.

- **Problem solving**

Problem solving can be considered as the process of applying existing knowledge to a new or unfamiliar situation in order to gain new knowledge (Du Toit & Kotze, 2009:60). The purpose of this approach is to provide learners with a range of problem-solving strategies, and then to train them to use those strategies effectively. When learners are only taught about problem solving and then have to work on problems at home, the educator is not present in the midst of problem solving. The educator's input is to promote the use of self-regulation skills, for example, the educator informs learners that they are going to be asked the following three questions whenever they work on a problem: "What exactly are you doing?"; "Why are you doing it?"; and "How does it help you?". Gradually, it becomes a matter of practice for learners to start asking the questions themselves.

Henson (2004:275) states similarly that problem-solving forces learners to think, analyze, draw conclusions, make generalisations and suggest solutions. Wilen *et al.* (2004:38) say that problem solving involves the ability to use complex thinking skills to solve problems. The basic steps in problem solving are: identifying the problem; analyzing the problem; formulating a hypothesis; formulate appropriate questions; generating ideas; developing alternative solutions and applying the best solution. From the above it is concluded that problem-solving therefore involves three basic functions, namely to seek information, to generate new knowledge and to make decisions (Fredericks, 2005:150).

Various teaching strategies are available to the educators. The use of a single teaching strategy for a prolonged period of time does not seem to be the best route to follow. The nature of the subject content of a subject, such as Business Studies, differs and therefore the strategy employed by the educator will have to differ. A single strategy can be used, but should preferably be complemented by another strategy in order to ensure that content is understood by the learners. These teaching strategies should always be foremost in the educator's mind in order to promote effective learning.

2.5.3.1 Challenges of co-operative learning

Incorporating co-operative learning in the classroom is not without challenges. Arends (2012:374) says that the cooperative learning model can be challenging in the following ways:

- Making the transition from whole class to small groups can take up valuable instructional time.
- It simply takes longer for learners to interact about important ideas than it does for the educator to present ideas directly through teaching.
- The educator needs to prepare extra materials for class use and some educators experience it is a burden for them to prepare such materials.
- Educators do not trust learners in acquiring knowledge by themselves: Educators think they must tell their learners what and how to learn.
- Lack of familiarity with co-operative learning methods: Cooperative learning needs to be planned and mediated by the educator to ensure that it does not become an informal chat amongst the group members.
- Learners lack the skills to work in groups: Educators are often concerned with learners' participation in group activities. They think that learners lack the necessary skills to work in groups. However, educators should teach the missing skills and/or review and reinforce the skills that learners need.

2.6 WHAT IS LEARNING?

Learning is defined as a relatively permanent change in mental associations due to experience. This definition focuses on a change in mental associations, an internal change that cannot be observed (Smaldino *et al*, 2008:9). This change leads to the learner's development of new knowledge, skills, or attitudes as an individual interact with information. Segalo (2002:22) explains learning in terms of thought processes, perceptions and consciousness. By thought processes is meant that learners have the ability to think and analyze things according to how they have learned and perceived them. Learning is the process that entails a relative permanent change in a person as regards to behaviour or mental state (Gardner, 2002:72-73).

Meyer, Mabasa, Lancaster and Nenungi (2006:69-70) explain the importance of learning as follows:

- Learning means the development of learners' knowledge, understanding, skills, activities and values and is based on interaction between educator, learner, context and content.
- Learning is flexible and leads to critical thinking, reasoning, research, reflection and action.
- Learning focuses on learning activities and is relevant to real life-situations and the experiences of learners.

It is noted from the last bullet that prior knowledge of learners influences learning. Gravett and Geyser (2004:37) state that prior knowledge of the learners is related to their life experience. Thus, it is important to consider the prior knowledge of learners and develop concepts and principles from their existing knowledge. Prior knowledge has long been considered the most important factor influencing learning and learner success. The amount and quality of prior knowledge definitely effect both knowledge acquisition and the capacity to apply higher-order cognitive problem-solving skills. A crucial factor in developing a cohesive knowledge framework is to create a learning

environment in which learning means actively constructing knowledge and skills on the basis of prior knowledge.

Hailikari, Katajavuori and Lindblom-Ylänne (2008:113) assert that inadequate prior knowledge is a crucial factor to consider because if there is a difference between the educator's hopes of learner knowledge and the learners' actual knowledge base, learning may be slowed down from the start of the learning process. Trying to learn something without having adequate prior knowledge or even worse, having misconceptions regarding the new knowledge, may lead to rote memorisation. This type of superficial learning may transpire if learners cannot transmit the new knowledge to their existing knowledge frameworks. Awareness of the learning process can help an educator to mediate learning in the best way possible. Lujan and DiCarlo (2006:19) state that learning is a process during which the learner constructs his or her own understanding and knowledge of the world on the basis of information received, through experience and reflection on experiences, rather than the mere absorption of information that is passed on.

2.6.1 Understanding learning

According to Gravett (2005:18), learning entails either rote learning or meaningful learning. Rote learning involves the solution of artificial problems or the learning of arbitrary association. The effect is usually short term. Meaningful learning has a long-term effect, and involves the acquisition and retention of the complex network of interrelated ideas. Thus an educator as mediator of learning should realize that rote learning means that learners do not necessarily understand and attach their own understanding to the content. Therefore, learning implies change in the learner's insight, comprehension, behaviour or perception towards learning. Taylor (2002:1) states that learning is a change in performance through conditions of activity, practice and experience. This refers to changes in the individual's habits, insight, attitude, perception, preferences, skills or motivation which lead to the ability to do something. The educator

should mediate this change in the learner and assist him\her to understand the value and importance of such a change.

In the past learning was mostly regarded as the reactions of individuals to their environment. The consequences of their actions shaped their behaviour, and learning was regarded as a conditioned response to stimuli (Nieman & Monyai, 2006:73). It is evident that learners were passive recipients of a body of knowledge that has universal, acknowledged meaning. In contrast to the afore-mentioned view, Nieman and Monyai (2006:74) find the following summary made by Killen (2002) very useful:

- Learners learn more when they accept challenging, but achievable goals.
- Learners learn what is personally meaningful to them.
- Learning is developmental and occurs through social interaction.
- Learners learn differently, but in general they construct new knowledge by building on their current knowledge.
- Learners need feedback to learn, but feedback needs to be accurate, useful and timely.
- Successful learning involves the use of strategies, which themselves are learnt.
- A positive emotional climate strengthens learning.

Linking to the clarity about learning provided above, the concept of memory in learning should also be considered. Memory is defined as the capacity to preserve and recover information that becomes possible (Nairne, 2009:268). Without memory learning is impossible. Through memory learners can recall information or skills previously learnt. The basic memory processes include encoding, storage and retrieval. *Encoding* refers to the process that determines and control how memories are initially acquired. There are different levels of encoding, namely shallow level, intermediate level, and deepest level. The more in-depth the processing of the information, the more likely it is to place it in memory. Encoding also depends on elaboration, which refers to how extensively the

information is processed at any given depth in memory. *Storage* consists of retention of information over time and the representation of information in memory. McLeod (2007) states that according to the popular Atkinson-Shiffrin theory, information can be collected and kept in three main stores that vary according to time frames: sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory. *Retrieval* is the process of getting information out of memory.

Dehn (2011:211) asserts that much of the interest in retrieval has focused on long-term memory. The serial position effect refers to how recall is greater for items at the beginning (primacy effect) and at the end of the list (recency effect). Retrieval is also prejudiced by the existence of cues and the nature of the task. Two different forms of memory retrieval are recall and recognition. Recall is a memory measure where information must be retrieved from previously learned material, whereas in recognition one only has to identify learned items. Taylor (2002:208) further explains memory as beginning in the sensory organs which receive light, heat and sound, and transform these into electric nerve impulses. The encoded information is then stored for later use. When the information is needed, it can be searched for and accessed (retrieved) from the complex filing system (the memory). However, many memory questions go beyond simple recall, and involve relating what learners have learned about some problem or task (Squires, 2002:144). The ability to gather information from the memory also relies on the learning style the learner employs.

2.6.1.1 Learning styles

Learning Styles Online (2012) recognizes that each person favours different learning styles and/or techniques. Learning styles group common ways that people learn and everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may have a foremost style of learning, with not as much of use of the other styles. Others may use different styles in different circumstances. There is no right combination. Using several learning styles for learning is a fairly new approach and one that educators have only started to recognize

in recent times. Traditional schooling used (and continues to use) mostly linguistic and logical teaching methods. Many schools still depend on classroom and book-based teaching, much repetition, and examinations for underpinning and review. Learning Styles Online (2012) further states that the result is that those learners who perform well academically when using these learning styles and techniques are often considered as bright. Those learners who use less preferred learning styles often do not perform as well academically, as this is not the manner in which assessment occurs. This can create positive and negative spirals that reinforce the belief that one is either smart or dumb. By recognizing and understanding their own learning styles, learners can use techniques better suited to them. This improves the speed and quality of learning.

Learning styles mostly used can be categorized as follows (Learner Development Centre, 2009):

- Visual learners (learning through seeing): These learners need to see the teacher's body language and facial expression to completely understand the content of a lesson. They are likely to prefer sitting at the front of the classroom to avoid visual hindrances (e.g., people's heads). They may think in pictures and learn best from visual presentations, including diagrams, illustrated textbooks, overhead transparencies, videos, flipcharts, and handouts. During a lecture or classroom discussion, visual learners often favour to take comprehensive notes to absorb the information.
- Auditory learners (learning through listening): They learn best through verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through, and listening to what others have to say. Auditory learners interpret the causal meanings of speech by listening to tone of voice, pitch, speed, and other nuances. Written material may have little importance until it is heard. These learners often profit from reading text aloud and using a tape recorder.
- Tactile or kinesthetic learners (learning by moving, doing, and touching): They learn best through a hands-on approach, actively discovering the physical world

around them. They may find it hard to sit still for long periods and may become sidetracked by their need for activity and investigation.

According to Arends and Kilcher (2010:42), learning styles refer to the way individuals perceive and process information, and in general styles can vary in a number of ways. The teaching and learning principles discussed next have a direct bearing on the success of mediation of learning (which is discussed in detail later on).

2.6.1.2 Teaching and learning principles

This sub-section describes the principles which should guide teaching and learning for learners to reach academic success. This sub-section also links the teaching and learning that has been discussed earlier in this chapter with mediation of learning that will follow in section 2.7. The emphasis is on the establishment of a school and classroom environment which is intellectually, socially and physically supportive of learning. These principles not only assist whole-school planning, but also individual classroom practice.

These principles are based on the learning atmosphere educators should provide and also about how learning can be supported. As such, they should lead to classroom practices which are effective in helping learners to achieve learning objectives. These principles are:

- **Opportunity to learn**

The Department of Education of Western Australia (2012) states that learning experiences should allow learners to perceive and practice the real processes, products, skills and values which are expected of them. Learners should have the chance to engage as fully as possible in the processes they are expected to learn about or through, rather than only components of the content. Business Studies as a subject

relates directly to real life situations that can be used by the educator to integrate content with practice. If learners are expected to learn to plan, investigate and make choices, then they must practice these skills, rather than simply carrying out the plans, investigations and choices of others.

- **Connection and challenge**

Dilworth (2012) asserts that learning experiences should link with learners' existing knowledge, skills and values while extending and stimulating their existing ways of thinking and acting. Learning is most likely to be successful when learners are challenged to go past what they already know, understand or can do in order to build new knowledge, understandings and skills. Sometimes existing conceptual frameworks and capabilities can be readily extended to incorporate new learning; at other times they need to be exposed (and possibly discarded) in order for new learning to occur. Either way, learners need to be able to link new experiences to what they already know and can do, while at the same time reconstructing what they know and can do to take account of the challenge provided by their new experience. Effective teaching both connects with and challenges learners' present knowledge, skills and values.

- **Action and reflection**

Dilworth (2012) states that learning experiences should be meaningful and encourage both action and reflection on the part of the learner. Learning is likely to be enhanced when the learner engages actively with the task at hand. Learners should be encouraged to think of learning as an active process on their part, involving a conscious intention to make sense of new ideas or experiences and improve their own knowledge and capabilities, rather than simply to reproduce or remember. This means that learning experiences should be potentially meaningful and involve learners in both doing and reflecting. Learners should learn to carry out relevant actions (do, imitate, plan, experiment, test, create, rehearse, make, choose, try alternatives) and reflect upon and make sense of the results of those actions (What does this mean? Why did this or that happen? Does it make sense? How is this problem like others I have seen before?)

What worked? Why?). According to Prince (2004:1), this active learning is any instructional method that engages learners in the learning process. It requires learners to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing.

Geertsema (2005:3) states that as part of the reflective process, learners should be assisted to make connections between apparently unrelated ideas and experiences and different areas of knowledge. Educators should emphasize the interconnectedness of knowledge, skills and values, both within and across different subjects. Reflection is thinking for a prolonged period by linking recent experiences to earlier ones in order to promote a more complex and interrelated mental schema. The goal is to develop higher order thinking skills.

- **Motivation and purpose**

Learning experiences should be motivating and their purpose to be clear to the learner. Ormrod (2008:385) asserts that learners should be provided with purposeful and relevant activities that stimulate thought, inquiry and enjoyment. They may regard such activities as purposeful and relevant if they have an immediate practical goal, or if they relate to some longer-term goal which the learner values. Educators can enhance purposeful learning by making clear the long-term outcomes expected to result from learners' interest and engagement with the learning experiences provided.

How hard learners work on a given task is determined by their level of interest. The greater their interest, the harder they will work, and the lower their interest the less hard they will work. Child (2004:367) says that an interest is a starting point as learners would end up becoming competent when continuously motivated by the tasks they are doing in the classrooms. Schunk (2012:455) further says that factors associated with instruction, such as educator feedback, provide information about goal progress and outcomes expectations. Thus, learners who expect to do well and receive positive outcomes from learning are apt to be motivated to continue to learn assuming they

believe they are making progress and can continue to do so by using effective learning strategies.

- **Inclusivity and difference**

In the Education White Paper 6, the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) (2010:37-38) states that learning experiences should respect and accommodate differences between learners. Learners have a variety of past experiences shaped by their language, culture, health, location, values, abilities and disabilities, and previous education. The extent to which a learner can benefit from an experience will depend on the extent to which it connects and challenges that learner's knowledge. Thus, teaching must be highly adaptive, acknowledging, respecting and accommodating the diverse background experiences learners bring to the classroom.

Hockings, Brett and Terentjevs (2012:239) affirm that learners develop at different rates and also learn new ideas more or less quickly. They should be provided with the time, conditions and encouragement they need to learn in robust ways, and discouraged from superficial learning which gives the impression of keeping pace at the expense of long-term and sustained learning. Learners may differ in the extent to which they prefer to work independently or collaboratively, through pictures or words, orally or in writing, laterally or in a linear fashion, cautiously or adventurously. The same learner may successfully use certain approaches in one learning situation and other approaches in a different learning situation.

Hockings *et.al.* (2012:240) state that learners should be provided with a rich variety of learning opportunities which enable them to build on their existing experiences and personal strengths and work in preferred ways. The experiences should, however, also broaden learners' horizons by extending the range of contexts in which they can function and the learning strategies which are available to them as individuals. The use of the Internet as a tool for learning and teaching is critical in this regard.

- **Independence and collaboration**

Learning experiences should encourage learners to learn both independently and from and with others. If learners are to become autonomous learners, they need to regularly experience opportunities for both individual and collaborative learning. The Quality Improvement Agency (2008:1) states that working individually is necessary and can help to ensure a personal grasp of concepts, processes and skills. Working with peers enables learners to be challenged by the views of others, clarify ideas and interpret and use appropriate language. Often discussion will involve learners in explaining ideas to others and, in doing so, clarifying these ideas for themselves.

O'Neill, Scott and Conboy (2011:942) claim that learning experiences should be organized so that learners can learn not only from their direct peers and educators, but also from family, community members and people from other parts of the world, who are now more readily reachable through various forms of technology. This will help them to appreciate that all people can contribute to learning and that life experiences are to be valued, together with books and other sources of information. It will also enable them to see things from different perspectives, to stand outside their own culture and their own society, to value and respect diversity, and to be critical and analytical of different points of view. Educators should plan learning experiences which enable learners, whether working individually or in groups, to become increasingly autonomous. Learners should be assisted to reflect on their own learning, thinking about how they learn and the conditions which help them to learn. Classroom processes should give learners some flexibility in choosing ways of working and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.

- **Supportive environment**

Sungur and Güngören (2009:885) comment that the school and classroom setting should be safe and conducive to effective learning. A supportive learning environment provides the intellectual, social and physical conditions in which effective learning can occur. School and classroom policies and practices should be designed to foster in

learners the knowledge that they can be successful autonomous learners and support the development of a confident approach to learning and a desire to achieve well. This means, for example, that learners should feel challenged and able to take sensible risks in their learning in the knowledge that the errors which may result will be regarded a necessary, acceptable and often helpful part of learning.

Miller and Pedro (2006:295) are of the opinion that the school and classroom should provide a cooperative atmosphere, free from harassment such as teasing, sarcasm or remarks that stereotype or denigrate learners or their efforts. Difference and diversity should be respected and sensitivity shown to matters of gender, cultural difference, social class, ability and disability, family circumstance and individual difference. A supportive learning environment also provides sufficient, fair, safe and ethical access to a suitable and varied range of resources, including space and equipment, print and other materials and useful technology. This does not imply the same environment for all. Indeed, special provision may often be necessary to ensure that all learners are given the opportunity to achieve intended outcomes.

The active participation of both the teacher and the learners in the teaching and learning process is made clear from the above principles. Mediation of learning and its role in the teaching and learning process is discussed in the next section.

2.7 MEDIATION OF LEARNING

Mediation of learning is more than a presentation of more traditional topics associated with administering tests and giving grades. Instead it focuses on the relationship between educators and instruction and show how the interplay between these impacts on how educators teach and what learners learn. Gravett (2005:23) defines mediation as a process during which a person is in the middle with a view to facilitate. Broadly speaking mediation refers to any instance in which a third party helps others reach an objective. Thus, the mediator acts as neutral third party and facilitates rather than

directs the process. It is important for the educators as mediator of learning to open or improve dialogue between the learner and the lesson content. The concept of mediation of learning is a useful way of viewing the optimisation of the learning process. After the educator's presence during the learning transaction, his/her primary role is to support the transaction as a mediator. Thus, the educator assists in problem solving, not by offering templates or solutions, but by asking questions, offering hints, calling attention to overlooked information and supporting learners as they synthesize material into new concepts. This implies that the educator should intervene and direct learners in the learning process (Nieman & Monyai, 2006:1).

Nieman and Monyai (2006:5) assert that a mediator is expected to act as an intermediary (the educator as a mediator of learning) to be able to solve conflict, effect change, show understanding for diversity and communicate effectively. Educators should be good at communicating and be able to stimulate communication between the learners and their environment, their fellow learners and learning content. Meyer (2008:65) says that a learning mediator functions as a go-between the learner and the information. The concept, mediation of learning is a useful way of viewing the optimisation of the learning process. After the educator's presence during the classroom learning situation, his/her primary role should be a supportive one in the mediation process. Therefore, the educator as mediator of learning must also be able to think outside the confines of the classroom for possible solutions by showing learners the value of consulting various textbooks, the Internet and other sources. Learners should be assigned projects that require them to use their families, community members, peers, newspapers, and incidents in their own real-life experiences as sources of information. It is also important for educators to:

- mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, including those with barriers to learning;
- construct learning environments that are appropriately contextualized and inspirational;

- communicate effectively showing recognition of and respect for the differences of others.

A good mediator must have patience and tact in creating and maintaining rapport between him/herself and the learners.

2.7.1 Features of a good mediator

Gonzalez, Palencia, Umana, Galindo and Villafrade (2008:313) assert that the educator as mediator of learning should interpret for the learner the significance of what the learner has accomplished. It is essential that the educator causes the learner to reflect not just on the solution to the problem, but also on how the solution was obtained and the generalizations that flow from it. It is important for educators (mediators) to encourage learners to investigate, discover and experiment things on their own. Educators should set up the framework for experimental learning within which the learners can safely take risks, with the support and encouragement of the mediator. Thus the learners will then construct knowledge for themselves, and be able to reflect and assess themselves in order to make changes with the encouragement and support of the educator.

In addition, an educator as mediator should demonstrate sound knowledge of subject content and various principles, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching and learning. Oliva (2005:96-97) indicates that educators have to show competency (i.e. subject knowledge) to effectively mediate learning. The attitude, experience, skills, subject knowledge and competency of the educator are all necessities to effectively present the content to the learner. Stephens and Crawley (2002:5) and Du Plessis *et al.* (2008:11-12) mention the following competences in respect of the role of the learning mediator:

- Practical competence: An educator should exhibit the capability in an authentic context (such as the classroom) to reflect on a range of potential actions to

mediate, to make considered choices about which responsibility to follow, and to perform the chosen action. In this sense it is important to be able to adjust teaching strategies to link to the developmental stages of learners and meet the knowledge requirements of the particular subject (such as Business Studies). Such mediation options should also take into consideration and cater for cultural, gender, ethnic, language and other differences among learners (SchoolNet South Africa, no date).

- The educator needs to adjust the teaching strategies to cater for different learning styles and preferences of learners and to be able to assist learners with barriers to learning to cope in the mainstream. In order to do this it is essential to create a learning atmosphere in which learners cultivate internal discipline, where conflict is controlled through discussion and where learners seek development and success.
- Foundational competence: An educator ought to demonstrate an appreciation of the knowledge and thinking which underpins the mediation actions taken. Significant in this regard is an understanding by the educator of different explanations of how language mediates learning, the principles of language as part of learning and language across the curriculum (as the language of learning in all subjects). In addition to the possible barrier that the language of learning may bring, the educator needs to understand the different learning styles, preferences and motivations of learners, as well as to understand the different descriptions of how learners learn at different ages, and likely causes of success or failure in these learning processes .
- Reflexive (reflective) competence: An educator should demonstrate the ability to integrate performance and decision making with understanding, and with the ability to adjust to change in unexpected situations and to show the ability to explain the reasons behind such actions. Imperative is for an educator to reflect on the degree to which the intentions of the learning experience have been achieved and to decide on the nature of adaptations if required. Positive reflection will include defending the choice of learning mediation embarked on by

the educator and the ability to reason why other learning mediation possibilities were excluded. Reflecting on how teaching in different contexts in South Africa affects teaching strategies and proposing adaptations is the pinnacle of competence in this context (SchoolNet South Africa, no date).

Human-Vogel and Bouwer (2005:229) further say that educators in South Africa are expected to show foundational, practical and reflective competence in variety of roles, such as leader, administrator, manager, scholar and learning mediator. Apart from certain competencies that educators must possess and execute, the learning environment where teaching and learning takes place is as important for successful mediation of learning.

2.7.2 The learning environment and mediation of learning

The concept of a learning environment can be defined as being the psychological and social feeling that exists in each classroom (Van der Horst & McDonald, 2003:100). Educators should strive towards a social just and democratic classroom, where the climate should preferably be one of support, friendliness and high expectations. Educators should play a paramount role in establishing and maintaining a conducive environment in which learners experience safety, trust, acceptance, respect and satisfaction (Oakes & Lipton, 2003:33).

Brophy (2004:22) says that educators' own personalities and their everyday behaviour in the classroom can become a powerful motivational tool. These begin with characteristics that make educators well liked, such as a cheerful disposition, friendliness, emotional maturity, sincerity and other qualities that indicate personal adjustment. Learners' motivation to learn and sense of belonging in the classroom tend to be high when learners perceive their educators as being involved with them (liking them and being sympathetic and responsive to their needs).

Kiri (2010:41) asserts that educators have to safeguard the culture of teaching and learning in the classrooms. The physical environment of the classroom should communicate the educator's attitude. This implies that the classroom may be interesting with its colourful pictures and posters. Therefore, an educator has to create a learning environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place. Humanizing Education (2013) mentions the following platforms for the mediator as regard to learning environment conducive for mediation of. The mediator in the classroom should:

- arrange a physical environment, which provoke curiosity, encourages learners to flow up on the interests stimulated by the environment.
- help learners see realistic purpose for school activities in relationship to their own needs and goals, therefore he exposes learners to many potentially interesting facets of the world.
- elicit from learner what they want to find out.
- help learners define complex problems.
- place learners in active, creative role of explorers, inquirers, designers and performers.

Arends *et al.* (2010:168) state the following as essential for the physical environment of a business type classroom:

- A bulletin board in each classroom on which applicable graphic representations, cuttings and pictures can be displayed. The classroom decoration must give the effect of business and management activities (charts, graphs).
- Care should be taken to have ample technology for visual display (financial and other magazines, relevant business sections of newspapers).
- For formal presentations, accessible chalkboards, flip charts are necessary and then for electronic displays, projectors and other electronic equipment and software are needed (television, DVD player).

Therefore, the environment and facilities in which the Business Studies educator work, should with regard to appearance and atmosphere stimulate a culture of teaching and learning. Such a culture of teaching and learning is also dependable on class discipline.

2.7.3 The learning environment and class discipline

One of the primary roles of the mediator in the classroom should be to create a learning environment in which learners develop strong self-discipline. Good behaviour promotes a well-disciplined classroom environment and prohibits unacceptable conduct by the learners. It is of paramount importance to foster a culture where the learner takes responsibility for his/her own learning and action. Wilson (2002:60) says that the purpose of discipline is to develop and entrench desirable learning habits in learners, as well as to foster sound judgement and morals to the learners. Thus, an educator as a mediator should apply different strategies that can set the stage for a positive learning environment and can reduce problems within the classroom.

Kiri (2010:41) indicates that a positive learning environment where educators can assist and mediate class discipline properly needs to include aspects such as:

- well-prepared lessons;
- learners who exercise self-discipline regarding their academic subjects;
- ensuring that teaching and learning happen consistently;
- ensuring that learners are stimulated;
- providing a rationale for all classroom activities – learners need to know why certain things are done and must be able to relate to such activities; and
- building a positive relationship with learners.

Therefore a positive classroom atmosphere is created by satisfying learners' needs and the implementation of effective classroom rules. Learners must also be taught how to

behave in a civilized fashion in various situations. Positive attention must be given to the learners and productive dialogues should be held with those who disrupt the class.

2.7.4 Reasons for using communication to ensure effective discipline

People interact through communication. In the school and classroom, teaching and classroom management take place by means of communication. Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (2007:58) explain communication as a means by which the educator and learners' different needs, feelings and attitudes are conveyed to each other in order to establish cooperation and achieve goals.

Vigouroux (2005:242) sees communication as the exchange of information and how this information is perceived. Thus, the educator has information to convey and therefore initiates the communication process by using his/her knowledge and skill to ensure proper order and discipline in the classroom. It is important that the educator communicate positive expectations to the learners, because by so doing the educator lays the foundation for the learners to behave well in the classroom. Jacobson (2009:7) states that another way of communicating a message is by using media. Through media the communicator (i.e. educator) ensures that the audience (i.e. BS learners) gains a better understanding of the subject matter.

2.7.5 The language of learning and teaching (LOLT) in mediation

Ferreira (2011:102) says that language play an important role in effective teaching and learning. Language is often subject dependent where each subject has its own vocabulary and terminology. Business Studies use words, concepts and language structures different from other subject areas. Language plays a major connecting role between doing and reflecting and learners need to learn to use language as a tool for their own learning. Thus, learners should acquire and use the language specific to a particular subject. Taylor and Prinsloo (2005:9) also point out that language and

particular proficiency in the language of learning is the largest single factor that affects learner performance at school.

Nieman and Monyai (2006:22) assert that effective teaching and learning depend on communication through appropriate, accessible language, so that learners can make sense of the educator's explanation. Language plays a major connecting role between doing and reflecting and learners need to learn to use language as a tool for their own learning.

2.7.6 The importance of assessment in the mediation of learning

Through assessment the educator is able to measure the learner's attainment of knowledge (Thobedi, 2006:143). When assessment is used, learners are helped (i.e. through mediation) to make judgement about their own performances. According to the Department of Education (2003:4), assessment refers to the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement for a particular phase of learning (such as Business Studies in the FET phase). The assessment of activities should also help learners to make judgements about their own performance, set goals for progress and provoke further learning (Department of Education, 2002b:3).

The Department of Education (2002a) sees the purpose of assessment as being the evaluation and review of learning programmes used in the classroom and maximise learner's access to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Assessment is a continuous, planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, using various forms of assessment. It involves four steps, generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating this evidence; recording the findings and using this information to understand and thereby assist (i.e. facilitating/mediating) the learner's development in order to improve the process of learning (Department of Basic Education, 2012:39).

Gravett (2005:90) asserts that the major paradigm shift in assessment is reflected in the changing perceptions of the nature of assessment and of its purposes. Thus, educators should mediate learning in a variety of ways and assess learners in a variety of assessment formats. According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:44), assessment is both informal (assessment for learning) and formal (assessment of learning). Department of Basic Education (2012:3) further explains the assessment for learning as monitoring of learners' progress, and this is done through educator's observation and educator-learner interaction, which may be initiated by either the educator or learner, whereas the assessment of learning provides educator with a systematic way of evaluating how well learners are progressing in a particular subject or a grade, and this involves explaining to the learners which knowledge and skills are being assessed and the required length of responses.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) outline the following forms of assessment to be employed by educators – in general as well as with possible mediation in mind (Department of Basic Education, 2012:47).

Projects:

- For the project to work well the mediator should structure it around some form of problem.
- The mediator should give learners the necessary guidance prior to commencement of the project.
- The mediator should give learners a longer period of time to complete a project as it involves some form of research.

Presentations:

- The mediator should decide whether the project is written or oral, but there must be evidence of the presentation.
- The mediator should use all the criteria to assess the presentation and discuss the criteria with learners prior to the commencement of the presentation.

- Where the resources are available, use of electronic presentation might be encouraged and where the resources are not available, the mediator can use posters and handout presentation to encourage learners.

Case Studies:

- The mediator can use a case study as a good way of keeping the subject up to date and relevant, and the learners are presented with a real-life situation, a problem or an incident related to the topic.
- The mediator expects learners to assume a particular role in articulating the position.
- The mediator can use question from lower order-direct quotes from the article-to higher order when they are asked to analyze comments and possibly make suggestions.

Tests and examinations:

- The mediator should use tests and examinations to cover the different cognitive levels of learners.
- The mediator should also include problem-solving in a test and examination.
- The mediator should use test and examination to cover a range of integrated topics, as determined by the work schedule and assessment plan.

Assessment in Business Studies focuses on the knowledge, skills and values necessary for informed, ethical, productive and responsible participation in economic sectors of our country (Department of Basic Education, 2012:44). Thus the study and assessment of Business Studies must not only cover essential business knowledge, skills and principles, but should also promote entrepreneurial initiatives, sustainable enterprises and economic growth.

2.7.7 Motivating learners to learn through mediation

There are two types of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Nieman & Monyai, 2006:19). Intrinsic motivation comes from inside the person. People who are intrinsically motivated do not need external encouragement (i.e. the educator must create a situation where learners feel they are taking part in learning for their own advantage). Extrinsic motivation means that a learner is motivated by a source outside him/herself (where the BS educator use incentives such as good symbols/marks, certificate, awards, praise and encouragement to motivate learners).

The secret of optimum motivation of learners does not lie in the learning content or in what is being taught, but in the teaching process - in how the educator mediates the learning. The educator's chances of motivating learners to learn and achieve competence are best if he/she involves Business Studies learners actively, maintain a high level of interest, communicate expectations and provides positive feedback to the learners.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the manner in which educators are expected to teach so as to promote effective teaching and learning in the classroom. Effective teaching and learning can be achieved by considering a diversity of teaching and learning theories. In this brief overview of teaching and learning theories, the theories are simplified to facilitate understanding. The examples are merely supplied to help readers distinguish between different theories and to make the abstract theories more understandable. Constructivism has been emphasized as a theory that gained considerable attention in educational literature; hence this theory should be understood as a theory about knowledge and learning. Teaching strategies form the basis of engaging the educator, the learner and the content.

The classroom is no longer a place where educators pour knowledge into passive

learners. Learners are expected to be actively involved in their own process of learning. Educators' duty is to facilitate, coach, mediate and assist learners develop and to assess their understanding. Important implications of mediation of learning include the learning environment, the language of learning and teaching, media and assessment. Thus, the classroom is the place where the educator must create a positive learning environment for effective teaching and learning to occur. The next chapter focuses on research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two of this study dealt with literature regarding mediation of learning. This chapter is devoted to a description of the research methodology employed in this study. Attention is given to all relevant aspects of research.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section provides the research design and method for this study.

3.2.1 Research Design

Babbie (2007:31) refers to the research design as an approach the researcher selects to study a particular phenomenon. The research design provides the blueprint for answering the research questions. A research design in any study therefore serves as a basic research plan. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009:422), qualitative researchers go directly to the particular setting of interest to observe and collect their data. Therefore, qualitative research is more concerned with the understanding of social phenomenon from the point of view of the participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:45). It is for this reason that the researcher employs the qualitative approach for this study. Some biographical information is gathered from the participants to place them in context of the study, but the limited data gathered in this manner does not constitute the use of the quantitative approach to data gathering and reporting.

Terre Blanche, Burrheim and Painter (2006:287) state that a qualitative research design makes sense of opinions, experiences, social situations or phenomena as they occur in

the real world. A qualitative research design is thus good for those who approach research from an interpretive perspective. An interpretive perspective means that one should not disturb the context unnecessarily, but to become a natural part of the context. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding rather than explanation. The subjective exploration of reality from the researcher's perspective is to gain a broad understanding of a situation. Furthermore, qualitative research aims to increase human understanding of a particular population. This can be achieved by approaching and engaging with the research participants in an open manner, as is done in this study.

Kuada (2012:27) lists the following advantages of qualitative research:

- Qualitative research primarily makes use of data inductively: Inductive reasoning allows the researcher to explore and discover information with an emergent research design, rather than testing deductions from theories in a predetermined design as is the case with quantitative research.
- Qualitative methods are humanistic: In qualitative research one gets to know people personally and experience what they experience in their daily lives.
- Qualitative research is a craft: Researchers are flexible in how they go about conducting their studies.
- Qualitative research usually involves fieldwork: The researcher physically visits the participants, setting, site, institution in order to observe behaviour in the natural setting.
- Qualitative research focuses on process, meaning and understanding: The product of qualitative research is richly descriptive. Words and even pictures, rather than numbers and charts are used to convey what a researcher has learned about a phenomenon.

3.2.2 Research method

The research method employed in this study is ethnography. Reeves, Kuper and

Hodges (2008) assert that ethnography is the engagement of social interactions, behaviours and perceptions that take place within groups, organisations and communities. The fundamental aim of ethnography is to provide a rich, complete understanding of people's views and actions, as well as the nature of the location they occupy, through the collection of detailed observations. Whitehead (2004:6) states that classical ethnographic methods traditionally employed are for instance, carrying out fieldwork, observing activities of interest (such as the classroom), recording field notes and observations and the physical mapping of the natural setting. In this study the afore-mentioned were employed during observation in the classrooms. The research method is the term used in the description of the portfolio of data collection and analysis techniques used to operationalise a particular research design. The research method is also described as the philosophical framework that guides any research activity. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:141), it is such a philosophical framework within which the research problem is framed and which gives guidance to the selection of research objectives, and leads to the gathering and analysis techniques of data collection. Research methodology would further encapsulate the general orientation to life, the view of knowledge, and the sense of what it means to be human and that all these considerations would inform a particular method or source of investigation in a study (Gray, 2004:15).

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

Imenda and Muyangwa (2006:97) describe a population as the group of people from whom the researcher wants to collect information required to answer or address the research questions, objectives or hypotheses. Thus, a population means taking into consideration the totality of persons, events, organisation units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2011:223). The population of this study consisted of Grade 10 Business Studies educators in the Lejweleputswa district.

Sampling is the process of obtaining data from a smaller group or subset of the total

population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:92). Two distinct techniques are used to select a manageable number of participants to be involved in the project, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. According to Salkind (2011:145), in probability sampling every member of the population will have a known non-zero probability of selection, while in non-probability units the sample is selected on the basis of personal judgement or convenience. In this study the purposive sampling technique was used to ensure that information-rich data was gathered.

Purposive sampling, as Mishra and Koehler (2010:126) state, is precisely what the name suggests. Members of a sample are chosen with the purpose to represent the larger population. The members of the sample share similar characteristics that are essential for a specific study. Gravetter and Forzano (2003:465) explain that purposive sampling is an important type of non-probability sampling and is often used in qualitative research. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate for this study as the researcher selected participants who are able to provide in-depth knowledge about the phenomenon under study (mediation of learning practices). Grinnell and Unrau (2014:153) refer to this kind of sampling as typical case sampling in qualitative research where cases are sought and selected for the study. Patton (2002:244) states that there are no rules for sample size in a qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful and what can be done with the available time and resources. The purposive sample for this study consisted of one Grade 10 Business Studies educator selected from ten secondary schools in the Lejweleputswa district in the Free State province. The sample therefore is 10 Grade 10 Business Studies educators.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

For this study two data collection instruments were used to collect data, namely questionnaires and observation. Each of these is discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Babbie (2007:246) defines a questionnaire as a document containing questions and items designed to gather data appropriate for analysis. The basic objective of a questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from the participants who are informed on the particular issue.

An open-ended questionnaire was employed in this study to allow participants to express their views and opinions on the various questions posed. Kreuger and Neuman (2006:273) state that open-ended questions allow for detailed opinions regarding potentially complex situations and make space for unanticipated findings to be discovered. Open-ended questions also promote creativity, self-expression and richness of details. Thus, the researcher leave the participants completely free to express their answers as they wish, as detailed and complex, as long or as short as they feel is appropriate. No restrictions, guidelines or suggestions for solutions are given. Babbie (2007:212) states that open-ended questions are questions for which the participant is asked to provide his or her own opinions, beliefs and viewpoints. In-depth, qualitative interviewing relies almost exclusively on open-ended questions.

The intention of the questionnaire was to determine the role of the educator with regard to mediation of learning.

According to Kuada (2012:42), the following are some of the advantages of open-ended questionnaires:

- It can be used when the researcher would want to ascertain what the participants' views on certain issues are.
- They allow the participant to answer effectively, in all the details he/she prefers to clarify the answer.

- They are preferable for more complex issues that cannot merely be rewritten into a few small categories.
- They allow more opportunity for creativity or self-expression by the participant.

The following are disadvantages of open-ended questionnaires that are relevant (Kuada, 2012:43):

- It may lead to the gathering of insignificant and irrelevant information.
- Data is not standardised from participant to participant, making comparison or statistical analysis difficult.
- They require good writing skills and the ability to express one's feelings verbally, and generally a higher educational level than do closed-ended questionnaires.
- Open-ended questionnaires generally requires more of the participants' time.
- It requires more paper and let the questionnaire look longer, possibly discouraging the participants who do not wish to answer a lengthy questionnaire.

Questionnaires were distributed to Business Studies educators as indicated in the sample. They were asked various questions relating to mediation of learning in the Business Studies classroom. In addition to open-ended questionnaires, observation of the classroom environment, as well as teaching and learning in the classroom was done.

3.4.2 Observation

Cohen *et al.* (2007:396) state that observation as a research tool offers the researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from natural occurring situations (such as a Business Studies classroom). Using participant observation as a method to collect qualitative data is to develop an appreciation of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible. They further propose that participant observation be

used as an approach to increase the validity of the study, as observation will assist the researcher to get a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. The role seen as the most ethical approach to observation is that of the participant observer, as the researcher's observation activities are known to the group being studied, yet the emphasis for the researcher is on collecting data, rather than participating in the activity being observed (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002:92).

Angrosino (2008:55) says that a participant observer is integrated into the life of the group under study and becomes a neutral researcher. However the researcher's participation is to ease any disorder during the lesson by only playing the role of silent observer and recording the occurrences in the classroom. Royse (2004:237) suggests that the researcher literally walks in the shoes of the participants, for example the researcher walks into the classroom and observes what the educator and learners do without participating in those activities in the classroom. Alston and Bowles (2003:196) and Gravetter and Forzano (2003:462) further state that researchers become part of the situation and submerge themselves in order to become part of the group. In this study, teaching and learning processes relating to mediation of learning in Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms were observed.

By using different data collection instruments, triangulation is created in order to better understand the phenomena. Mouton (2006:156) defines triangulation as multiple sources of data collection that increase the reliability of the study. This refers to the use of multiple methods (i.e. questionnaire and observation). In this study data collected through questionnaires and observation were analysed qualitatively.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Once the data have been collected the researcher is faced with the task of going through all the information collected and organize it according to the research questions and/or objectives to be addressed (Imenda & Muyangwa, 2006:77). Schwandt (2007:6)

states that data analysis brings order, structure and meaning to the data that has been collected. Data analysis in essence involves reducing the accumulated data to a manageable size to allow summarising, comparing and synthesising with a view to interpreting the results in relation to the research problem. Therefore the idea of analysis implies some kind of transformation. Gibbs (2007:1) says that the researcher starts with some (often voluminous) collection of qualitative data and then process it through analytic procedures into a clear, understandable, insightful and trustworthy. For that reason, the researcher views qualitative data analysis as the process which involves the selection and focus of relevant data as well as the discarding of irrelevant data.

The purpose of conducting data analysis is to produce findings or results. Patton (2002:432) alludes that qualitative analysis transforms data into findings, thus reducing the volume of raw information, identifying significant patterns and communicating the essence of what the data reveal. Terre Blanche, Burrheim and Painter (2006:324) state that data analysis involves reading through data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down and building it up again through the process of categorization and coding.

3.5.1 Categories and coding the data

Flick (2009) and Kreuger and Neuman (2006:288) regard categorisation and coding as simultaneous activities where data reduction and categorization of data into themes reflect the action of reducing raw data into manageable piles. The process of categorization involves noting consistencies found in the setting. The process of coding is to identify meaning of units, fitting them into categories and assigning them codes. In coding a body of data is broken down into labeled and meaningful pieces (Terre Blanche *et al.* 2006:325). During the activities of developing themes per questionnaire question, the researcher coded the data by assigning certain sections of data to one or more of the themes. Thus, coding implies that data are broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways (De Vos *et al.* 2011:346). Reporting of the

questionnaire data per theme was then done. Similarly, the data gathered through observation was analysed and reported on by theme.

3.6 PROCEDURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Lincoln and Guba (1985:29) originally proposed the now well-known four criteria for providing soundness to qualitative research. They offered these criteria as alternative to the more traditional and well-known quantitative criteria. Their view was that the four criteria better reflect the fundamental expectations involved in qualitative research.

3.6.1 Credibility

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:346), the credibility criteria involves that the results of qualitative research are credible or realistic from the viewpoint of the participant in the research. The purpose of qualitative research is to define or understand the phenomena of interest from the perspective of the participants and therefore they are the only ones who can justifiably review the credibility of the results. Clear parameters for a study are set to ensure that credibility of such a study is maintained. Only participants who are able to offer in-depth data regarding the phenomenon at hand formed part of the sample of the study. The researcher also presented the planned proposal at the Campus Research Committee, after which it served at both the Faculty Research Committee and the University Research and Innovation Committee.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability speaks of the degree to which the results of qualitative research are to be generalized or transferred to other situations or surroundings. From a qualitative viewpoint, transferability is principally the obligation of the person engaging in the generalizing. A qualitative researcher can improve transferability by thoroughly defining the research setting and the assumptions that were fundamental to the research. The context of this study is declared in the literature study, as well as in the sections dealing

with the reporting of data and presentation of findings. The researcher who desires to transfer the results to a different situation is then accountable for making the decision of how functional the transfer is (De Vos *et al.* 2011:346).

3.6.3 Dependability

The traditional quantitative view of dependability is founded on the supposition of replicability. Cohen *et al.* (2007:434) assert that principally it is concerned with whether similar results are to be attained if the same thing is observed twice. But the argument is made that similar results can essentially not be measured twice, because by definition if measuring is taking place twice, we are in essence measuring two dissimilar things. The idea of dependability highlights the need for the researcher to justify the ever-changing context within which research takes place. The research is accountable for relating the variations that occur in the setting and how these variations affected the way the researcher engaged with the study. In this study, the experiences of participants were meticulously analysed and accurately described or interpreted.

3.6.4 Confirmability

Qualitative research is inclined to accept that each researcher brings a distinctive perspective to the study. Cohen *et.al* (2007:435) state that confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or verified by others. There are a number of approaches for augmenting confirmability. The procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study can be documented by the researcher. A different researcher can play a "devil's advocate" part with respect to the results, and this procedure can be documented. The researcher can explore and define any negative instances that contradict prior observations. After the study the researcher can execute a data audit that scrutinises the data collection and analysis processes and provides judgements about the possible bias or misrepresentation. An audit trail was followed for this study where participants were given the chance to comment on the data they provided.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The research design and methodology embraced in this study have been deliberated on in detail in this chapter. The methods, as well as procedures which were followed as part of designing this study were discussed to offer a complete account of those processes and methods. Qualitative research, as well as its disadvantages and advantages were emphasised. The population of the study and the target sample were specified. This chapter outlined the research instruments employed in this study and also comprised the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires. Lastly the approaches to ensure trustworthiness were expanded on. The next chapter provides the data reporting of this study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS, REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the role of educators as mediators of learning in Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms. This chapter focuses on the analyses, reporting and interpretation of observation and questionnaire data.

The research questions of this study are answered as follows:

Research question 1 is answered by the literature study conducted in Chapter 2.

Research question 1: What are the essences of teaching and learning?

Research questions 2, 3 and 4 are answered by the data responses and interpretation in Chapter 4.

Research question 2: What is the level of participation of Business Studies learners in the classroom?

Research question 3: Which teaching strategies are employed by Business Studies educators to stimulate critical thinking in the classroom?

Research question 4: What are the problems (if any) encountered by Business Studies educators as far as mediation of learning is concerned?

Research question 5 is answered by the recommendations made in Chapter 4.

Research question 5: How can possible problem areas with regard to mediation of learning be overcome?

4.2 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

This section deals with determining the educators' perception regarding the implementation of mediation of learning in Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms. Open-ended questionnaires provided qualitative data regarding opinions and perceptions of Business Studies educators.

4.2.1 Analysis of questionnaire data

The questionnaire consisted of two sections, namely a biographical data section and a mediation of learning section. The biographical data provided some background on the gender, experience and qualifications of participants. This data is reported on in numerical format due to its numeric nature.

The data gathered through questions dealing with mediation of learning was analysed and emerging themes per questionnaire question are reported on in the narrative, as is characteristic for qualitative reporting.

4.2.2 Analysis of observation data

Permission was asked and granted by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) to observe Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms. Data was gathered through an observation schedule and voice recorder. This data was analysed and emerging trends are reported on and interpreted.

The next section deals with reporting and interpretation of observation data.

4.3 REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION OF OBSERVATION DATA

In this study, observation of Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms was done with the aim to capture the extent to which mediation of learning was implemented in the

classroom. During the observations at the schools, the researcher was successful in observing the following which may assist or hinder mediation of learning: materials and resources; different kinds of instructional media, such as auditory media, visual media and audio visual media; the classroom size; seating arrangements; posters or pictures displayed in the classroom or flannel board and the number of learners in each Business Studies classroom.

The observation at 10 schools is reported on in the next section. Some background information of the school, as well as observed behaviour of learners and educators prior to the lesson is provided first, after which the observed findings within the Business Studies classroom are reported on.

School 1

Background

This school is mostly attended by learners who come from informal settlement dwellers. By the time I arrived at the classroom the educator was busy teaching Sesotho. Before the siren rang Business Studies learners rushed into the classroom whilst the educator was not done with the Sesotho lesson. It was clear that discipline was not upheld by learners. There were 35 Grade 10 Business Studies learners in this classroom. The desks in this classroom were arranged in three rows, all facing the educator.

Mediation of learning

The educator started her lesson by reading from the textbook. The textbook was used by the educator for prolonged periods of the lesson. I immediately wondered why the educator was not explaining more of the content, or asking questions to allow learners to provide their viewpoints. The topic of the day related to entrepreneurial qualities. The short, sporadic explanations were done in Sesotho and did not provide more clarity. The educator was supposed to use English as medium of instruction as prescribed by the

language policy of the school.

The textbook approach was not perceived as interesting by the learners, as they did not seem very interested to participate or ask questions (not that the educator provided them with many opportunities). Examples of real-life situations did not form part of the explanations of the educator. Real-life examples provide learners with skills to make broader connections in the context of the real world, especially in a lesson on entrepreneurial qualities (cf. 2.4.1). Such skills assist the learners to comprehend and make sense of concepts, which will be of huge benefit when sitting for examinations. The chalkboard was the only teaching media used in this lesson when the educator wrote some key aspects from the textbook on the chalkboard.

Participative learning was hardly observed by the researcher. In the classroom the learners were quiet and listened to what the educator was saying. It was clear that the educator's approach of teaching did not encourage independent thinking. The educator does not seem to realise that the classroom situation and her ability to allow participation will encourage independent thinking by learners (cf. 2.3.2.1).

During the observation, it became evident that the educator did not seem very confident in her knowledge of the subject. This led to a situation where the presentation of the subject content was not perceived as interesting by most learners. Only a few learners participated in class and most of them were not concentrating on what the educator said. It also seemed as if this did not bother the educator too much as she did not try and ensure participation. The educator managed to minimize disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Though learners were not making noise, what worried me was the lack of participation of learners during the lesson.

I was very disappointed with the manner in which the educator asked questions. Questions were sporadic and when asked they related to only the keywords written in the textbook. These are basic definitions and do not lend themselves to analysing any content with real-life situations.

After the content of the textbook was 'read', the educator drew the attention of the learners to a case study in the textbook. The educator asked the learners to read from the case study and answer the questions in their workbooks. No real assistance was provided by the educator and what I found also alarming was that learners did not ask the educator for clarity or assistance. There seems to be no real interaction between educator, content and learner (cf. 2.4.1.1).

The classroom environment was not conducive for the teaching and learning of Business Studies. No posters or pictures related to Business Studies were observable. On the flannel board in the classroom a picture of a musician was observed, but no connection was made between this picture and the lesson topic. My only conclusion regarding the picture was that it must have been on the flannel board prior to the lesson starting.

In the light of the above, no mediation of learning was evident during this lesson as no real participation by both educator and learners occurred.

During my conversation with the educator after the lesson, she indicated that, "*I majored in Sesotho, therefore I struggle to explain some of the concepts in this subject (Business Studies – my insert)*". When asked why she teaches Business Studies, she mentioned that she completed Business Management at level 1 at university and that the principal said she must teach Grade 10 Business Studies. According to her biographical information, she is not qualified to teach Grade 10 Business Studies. In order to teach in the FET phase (Grade 10-12), educators must have passed the relevant subject at 2nd year university level.

School 2

Background

This is the oldest school in the township with old buildings and classroom desks and

tables. Some windows were broken and I noticed big cracks in the floor of the classroom. The walls of the classroom were clear of posters of any nature. My first impression was that this is not a conducive environment for teaching and learning.

The Grade 10 group observed consisted of 33 learners. All desks sit one learner each and face to the front of the classroom.

Mediation of learning

The teacher started her lesson by asking learners where they ended the lesson yesterday. This was a clear indication to me that the educator came to the classroom unprepared, unless she wanted to ascertain whether they could remember anything from the previous lesson. She however did not mention this possibility after the information was provided by a learner.

The topic of this specific lesson was Forms of Ownership. During the lesson the educator read from the textbook and also asked questions to learners. For example the educator asked, "What is an example of a form of ownership?" upon which a learner then answered, "A company." The educator said that it was correct and asked whether a company is a good form of ownership, upon which the learner replied "Yes". No follow-up question(s) were asked in this regard, such as "Why do you say it is a good form of ownership?". I was waiting for such thought provoking questions, but was disappointed when they were not forthcoming during this lesson. This style of superficial questioning does not provide the learners with an opportunity to engage with content and to think about and analyse questions to derive answers (cf. 2.6.1). English was used in the classroom by the educator, but learners were allowed to respond in Sesotho.

During the observation, I noticed that the educator used only the textbook prescribed. No other form of information was available (such as pictures, posters or even an alternative textbook to be used by the educator).

Upon scrutinising the classroom, there was no indication that the classroom is used for

Business Studies teaching and learning. No posters or pictures of any kind were pasted on either the walls or the flannel board. Pictures and posters can arouse the learners' interest and stimulate enthusiasm, as well as being an alternative resource for the educator to clarify concepts. In this classroom the educator used a textbook as the only source of information. Only the chalkboard was used where certain keywords were written. The importance of using different teaching media is that they are used in the teaching and learning situation to reveal the subject content to learners in order that optimal teaching and learning may occur.

The educator used a case study in the textbook to provide learners with an opportunity to do homework. The problem is that, not only one strategy suits all lessons and some are more suitable to particular tasks. Therefore, the educator should know the direction that the lesson takes in order to make an appropriate choice of strategy for a particular task (cf. 2.5). Not much assistance was provided by the educator and only two learners asked any questions during this part of the lesson. These questions were asked and answered in Sesotho. It seems as if the educator uses English when teaching and Sesotho when dealing with questions from learners.

The educator was able to manage the classroom. No learners were seen or heard making any noise during the presentation of a lesson. During this lesson though, learners seemed reluctant to answer questions posed by the educator. It was not clear whether they may have difficulty with English as medium of instruction and may not feel confident enough to engage with English.

During my conversation with the educator after the lesson regarding an alternative textbook for herself, she indicated that "I use only one textbook as a source of information because no other alternative textbooks were delivered in this school". My first thought was that this educator only relies on what the school or Department of Basic Education provide and that she does not realise that she can also be a source of information.

No real mediation of learning occurred in this classroom.

School 3

Background

On the day of my appointment at the school, the Business Studies educator was absent due to illness. I arranged to visit the school again on another day when the educator returned. Upon my arrival on the new date, I noticed that the class seemed very overcrowded. I counted 43 learners in this classroom. In this school there is only one Grade 10 Business Studies group. All the learners were facing the front of the classroom on double-seated desks (two learners per desk) and not much space was available between the rows.

Mediation of learning

The topic was on entrepreneurial qualities. The educator's knowledge of the content seemed good, but he lacked the ability to engage learners in the lesson. The learners listened mostly to his presentation of the lesson (cf. 2.5.1). Learners were not really provided with the opportunity to participate during the lesson. I felt that the educator could have done much more to involve the learners through questioning and discussion. The lesson was however structured and relatively clearly presented by the educator. This was proven by the fact that he was good in linking textbook content with real business events. Unfortunately the learners did not take part in most of these elaborations by the educator. It was not clear why he did not provoke discussion through questioning (cf. 2.4.1). The educator applied direct instruction as a teaching strategy. At some stage I observed some boredom with sections of the learners as they did not seem to focus on what the educator said.

The only resource used during this lesson was a textbook. There is no problem per se in using a textbook, but the concern is how the educator meets the diverse needs of the

learners if no other materials are used to supplement the textbook. Most of the learners in this class were sharing textbooks. During my conversation with the educator after the lesson, he mentioned that, “Since I started teaching in this school in 2011, I never received enough textbooks as they were not delivered to the school”. This poses a huge problem, as it definitely has a huge impact on the ability of learners to prepare for the classroom situation as well as for tests and examinations. Notes from the textbook are copied for learners during examination times, but this is hardly the solution.

The educator used the chalkboard as the only teaching media during the lesson. He managed to use it effectively by drawing graphs that shows various sectors of the economy. He seemed prepared and was aware of when to use the chalkboard to capture important aspects of the lesson. He however did not engage with learners, which is a very important aspect of successful mediation of learning.

The learners were afforded the opportunity later on in the lesson to read from their textbooks and answer the questions based on the case study in the textbook. It was during this part of the lesson that I realized that some learners were very proficient in English. I cannot comment on all the learners in this regard, but their proficiency implies that they should not experience difficulty in participating in the lesson. Both teaching and the few responses from learners occurred in English.

The overcrowding of learners in such a small classroom is a concern though. The educator could not move freely in the classroom and that prevented the possibility of having effective group work. This is possibly also a reason why group work is not considered as a viable teaching and learning option. If the educator dominate the lesson and does most of the talking, learners will never gain experience in expressing their ideas and opinions. It is important that educators understand that learning is influenced by learners’ interaction with learning content (cf. 2.6.1.2).

No real mediation of learning occurred in this classroom.

School 4

Background

When arriving at the agreed time for observation, the educator asked me whether we can postpone the observation as she was not well prepared for her lesson. The appointment was made two weeks prior to the observation date. After discussion with her we agreed that my observation will continue.

As we approached the classroom I observed a loud noise coming from the classroom. Even when we entered and I took my seat at the back of the class, the noise continued. The educator mentioned that Business Studies was spread over four groups (classes), but that a decision was taken to reduce the groups to two. Both Business Studies Grade 10 groups have more than 50 learners. Learners struggled to fit into the classroom and here and there learners sat two-two on a seat.

Mediation of learning

The topic was on socio-economic issues. During my observation I realised that the educator was not knowledgeable about the topic. This may have been because of not being well prepared, but one would assume that such an educator would have good knowledge of any topic to be taught. During the lesson some learners laughed when she made mistakes. What was surprising was that the educator made no real attempt to discipline these learners. My first thought was that she will never earn the respect of the learners if she does not know the content. Upon scrutinising the biographical data, it was found that this educator is in possession of a professional teaching qualification and is qualified to teach Grade 10 Business Studies.

The educator's textbook approach discouraged learners' participation in the lesson. The focus was on one-way teaching and not on learning. Here and there some explanations were provided, but these were very superficial. Learners had no opportunity to engage

with the content. The educator did talking without offering the learners a chance to have an input in a lesson. No examples in relation to business studies ever made in class by the educator. The educators should remember that learners are motivated when they see that what they learn can be used in practice (cf. 2.6.3).

I realised during this lesson that the educator did not move from the known to the unknown in order for learners to use their metacognitive skills. Metacognitive abilities allow the learners to think and engage with content to provide opinions regarding content. This important aspect did not occur in the classroom. It is essential that Grade 10 Business Studies educators aim to enhance learners' individual academic growth and development, monitor the thinking processes of learners and facilitate the lesson accordingly (cf. 2.4.1).

The educator used the chalkboard to write some examples linked to the content of the lesson. This was more to the end of the lesson in order for the learners to have a short summary of the more important concepts dealt with in the lesson. This was according to me a positive aspect, although it would have had more value if this was done during the lesson. A textbook was the only information source used by the educator. The educator also asked learners to read section from the textbook. Some learners struggled with pronouncing certain words. I could not really gather the necessity of this action, as the time spent on reading from the textbook could have been used much more effectively, for instance to discuss certain concepts and business statement. The educator never stopped a learner to ascertain whether a word or concepts is understood. On the other hand, learners were also not asking questions or seeking clarification (cf. 2.7.5).

No posters or pictures of a business nature were observable in the classroom.

The number of learners in the observed classroom was 54. This is in line with some educators mentioning in the interviews that overcrowding of classrooms has a negative impact on the proper engagement of learners with content (cf. Questionnaire Question 5 and Question 7). The educators asked the learners to be quiet on numerous occasions. This then only lasted a few minutes before noise levels became disturbing again. Some

of the learners were looking outside the classroom whilst the educator presented the lesson. One of the learners went to the bathroom without asking the permission of the educator. Nothing was mentioned by the educator in this regard. The educator also mentioned to me after the lesson, "I really struggle with these overcrowding classes". I have sympathy with the large number of learners in the classroom, but still wondered why no attempt was made to at least put in an effort to engage them more. The educator struggled to guide the learners' behaviour and action in the classroom. It was almost as if she resigned to the fact that she was not able to control them.

My observation of the educator was firstly that she was not prepared for this lesson. Proper preparation of the content and method to be used to engage with the content must be done prior to the lesson. Secondly, she was not able to control the discipline in the classroom (cf. 2.7.3). Learners did not show her the necessary respect. If she was not prepared for a lesson such as this when she knew that observation will occur, it is doubtful that she is normally well prepared. This could be a reason why learners do not respect her.

No real attempt was made by the educator to mediate in this classroom.

School 5

Background

There are two Grade 10 Business Studies groups in this school. These two classes are made up of 44 and 40 learners respectively. One educator is responsible for both these groups. Desks and tables were placed very close to one another. These were double desks (seating for two learners per desk), although some desks seated three learners. No pictures or posters were observable.

Mediation of learning

The topic of the lesson was on the nature of business (primary, secondary and tertiary sectors). From the start I observed that the educator did not seem very confident in his engagement with the learners. This was merely in his demeanour as he was able to link content with practical examples from the business world. The major problem for me was that learners were never asked to provide examples. They were all provided by the educator. Therefore no real opportunities for learners to engage with content were created (cf. 2.6). The content of this lesson lends itself to be practical. Many interesting examples could have been forthcoming from learners, but never did. The approach employed by the educator was more lecturing and not coupled with questioning and discussion (cf. 2.5.1). Many of the learners seemed to become bored after a while and therefore also did not make an attempt to participate in the lesson.

In terms of medium of instruction I realised that the educator is not as fluent in English as one would have expected. Similarly, the learners seemed not as confident with English when they were instructed to read from the textbook. I noticed that many learners shared textbooks while in class. The educator informed me after the lesson that all learners received textbooks, but that these got lost during the year. (Learners have to buy new textbooks in such a case, but do not do so - mostly due to financial constraints). Mediation did not occur during the lesson as mostly reading from the textbook occurred during the lesson. The educator or learners would read the textbook with the educator sometimes asking whether everybody understood. A “Yes, Sir” answer from the learners followed each time. No attempt to confirm such understanding was done by the educator.

No class activities were distributed to the learners in order for them to apply knowledge gained from the lesson. During the observation, I never saw the educator applying any other teaching strategy than reading from the textbook. No questioning for understanding, discussions to engage with content or group work occurred. No posters or pictures of a business nature were observed.

The discipline in the classroom was reasonable. Learners were mostly passive and did some reading from the textbook.

I was worried about learners not having textbooks, as this would negatively influence their academic progress. The educator mentioned that the schools do not have the financial means to make copies for all learners who lost their textbooks.

This educator indicated in the questionnaire that he obtained a teaching diploma with Business Management as one of the modules completed at 2nd year level. He is therefore qualified to teach in the FET phase (Grade 10-12).

No meaningful mediation of learning occurred in this classroom.

School 6

Background

The researcher identified some posters on the flannel board with pictures that are related to Business Studies. During my conversation with the educator she indicated that, "I got all these posters from a private supplier". She further indicated that no poster was received from Department of Basic Education (DoBE) since she started teaching this subject. This group consisted of 40 learners. The size of the classroom was wide enough and desks were in a horseshoe arrangement, seating 8 learners in a group. This type of seating arrangement is particularly suitable for classroom discussion and group work. By giving attention to the seating arrangements, the educator can change from a teacher-centered approach to a more learner-centered approach. This is easily accomplished if educators, rather than telling the learners what to do, guide each group and let learners to discover for themselves what the solution is (cf. 2.4.1.1).

Mediation

The topic was entrepreneurial qualities. The educator started the lesson by determining the learners' prior-knowledge about the topic. Most of the learners raised a hand to provide responses based on the topic. The learners appeared to be much more responsive than any other lesson previously observed. The educator then asked learners to mention the other qualities they would think an entrepreneur should possess (other than those mentioned in the textbook). Some of the answers of learners were discussed and interpreted by the educator. Some challenges that led from entrepreneurial qualities were also discussed.

The lesson was presented for about half of the period after which learners were provided with an individual task on problem solving as a quality of an entrepreneur to complete. The time frame in which the task had to be completed was also provided. After completing the task she asked the learners to swap their books with another learner. Various aspects regarding problem solving as quality were then provided (also incorrect assumptions made by some learners). A positive aspect was that learners had to explain why certain answers were correct or incorrect. This allowed for thinking to occur, which is essential for proper comprehension.

During the lesson the educator used the chalkboard to summarise some important issues. The educator used the textbook as a source, but mostly discussed issues from the textbook and rarely read from the textbook. I realised that this is the type of classroom situation that would be conducive for teaching and learning to occur. Questions were asked to learners and learners had to explain their answers. Learners were not afraid to challenge an answer of another learner, which indicated to me that learners felt free to air their opinions in this classroom. Most of the learners were participating in the lesson. No discipline problems were observed as learners were all engaged with the content (cf. 2.7.4).

English was used by both the educator and learners. Learners seemed more at ease with the usage of English than in other schools. My own opinion is that the more one

uses a language, the more fluent you become. My impression was that learners in this classroom engage with English frequently, therefore the ease of use they displayed (cf. 2.7.5).

During the lesson a question was raised by a learner regarding the management of staff by an entrepreneur. The educator asked the learners to form groups of around 4-5 to quickly discuss the question posed. This indicated to me that group work is often used and that the educator does not merely want to answer all questions, but that he wants learners to discuss certain questions. The educator waited in front of the class for groups to finish their discussion. A learner per group was asked to provide feedback. The number of learners in the classroom also made it easier for group work to be employed as a strategy. I did expect the educator to move around the groups to ensure that learners understood their task.

The educator encouraged proper participation, interaction, collaboration and cooperation in the classroom. This was evident during group discussions and in the manner that questions were asked and answered by both the educator and the learners.

I observed a few magazines and newspapers on the desk of the educator during the lesson. None of these were used during this lesson. Upon enquiry after the lesson the educator indicated that these are used during lessons, depending on the topic of the day. He also mentioned that he regularly receives new magazines and newspapers from his friend to use in the classroom. Although no posters were found in the classroom, he indicated that he wanted to engage learners per group to make posters for the classroom on certain topics.

Mediation of learning occurred in this classroom. Learners took responsibility for their own learning and were supported by the educator in this regard.

School 7

Background

As was the case with most other schools visited, the overcrowding of classrooms was prevalent. The observed classroom had 43 learners. On the flannel board only Life Orientation pictures were displayed and upon enquiry learnt that this classroom is used for both Business Studies and Life Orientation. The seating arrangement did not lend itself to group work as three learners were seated in most desks (desks are designed to sit two learners).

Mediation

The topic of this lesson was to determine business opportunities. I was frustrated to again observe an educator reading mostly from the textbook with learners sitting passively. The topic lends itself to engagement with learners, as they should have some knowledge regarding possible business opportunities. The learners' prior-knowledge was not considered or ascertained by the educator.

Sporadically he tried to explain some content to the learners, but always referred back to the textbook to ensure what he said was correct. It was as if the educator did not want to go any further than what the textbook provided. He never encouraged any participative learning and learners did not attempt to ask questions (cf. 2.5.1). Such a process in the classroom was an indication to me that this was normal procedure for this classroom. He sometimes asked, "Are we all together?", upon which some of the learners responded with a, "Yes, Sir." This seemed more like a habit to me than trying to ascertain understanding. He also seemed glad that learners answered in the affirmative. While observing this, I wondered what would happen if a learner answered, "No, Sir", but this did not happen.

All learners in this classroom had a textbook. This was also the only source of

information used in the lesson. Learners mostly followed his reading from their textbooks. During my conversation with the participant after his lesson I asked him why he does so much reading for the learners, he stated that, “I keep on reading for these learners because their reading skill is not good”. My question was actually related to the amount of time spent on reading with no other activities occurring, but he understood it that he must do the reading as they could not read well in English. As the conversation was merely done to ascertain some clarity and not a formal interview, I did not pursue the discussion further.

The educator was able to maintain discipline in the classroom, but although these learners were not noisy, they were also not involved in the lesson. No opportunities were created by the educator for learners to actively engage with the learning content (cf. 2.7). Learners received homework where they had to study some definitions and a SWOT analysis for the next period.

One can deduce that learners' lack of involvement is caused by the educator's style of teaching. Learning opportunities are created by the educator and if such opportunities are not forthcoming, no real learning can occur. The educator should be aware that learners have to take responsibility for their own learning (cf. 2.6.1). The educator's responsibility is to mediate learning rather than dominating in the classroom. The educator stays the manager of the classroom situation, but such management need to include guiding the lesson forward with the creation of opportunities for learners to be involved through discussion and questioning.

No real mediation of learning occurred during this lesson.

School 8

Background

Pictures relating to Business Studies were attached to the flannel board in the

classroom. I also observed posters on the walls of the classroom. These posters seemed of superior quality. In my discussion with the educator after the lesson she indicated that the posters were donated by a private company who offers career guidance at the school. Sitting in the classroom it felt as if Business Studies was the subject learnt about in this classroom (other than most other schools I visited who had not pictures or posters).

This group consisted of 24 learners. The seating arrangements in this classroom were as such that group work and discussion could easily occur. Desks were arranged to provide four groups in the classroom. Each group consisted of three desks (two desks facing each other and one desk against these and facing to the front of the classroom). Each desk sat two learners. The chalkboard was visible for all learners as those facing each other just had to turn their heads sideways to see the chalkboard.

Mediation of learning

The lesson dealt with Socio-economic issues. The educator seemed in control of the learners and the content. She appeared confident and from the onset involved learners through questioning. She guided the lesson from the unknown to the known and ensured that learners understand the fundamental concepts (cf. 2.7). The concept 'social' was discussed first followed by the link to economics. Learners were clear about the concept 'socio-economic' when the rest of the lesson followed (cf. 2.6.1.2). No textbook reading occurred. The educator had a prepared lesson plan that she occasionally consulted briefly as the lesson progressed.

Learners were attentive and were not afraid to answer questions. English was the only language used during this lesson. Questions to the learners were clear and answers were not merely taken as correct. When a learner did not provide a clear answer, the educator tried to lead the learner to the answer. Learners were allowed time to think about an answer and the educator also allowed other learners to provide comments and inputs as she worked towards the answer (cf. 2.7). Questions starting with the three W's

were frequently asked (What, Why and Where).

A poster and the chalkboard were used during this lesson. Learners' attention was drawn to a poster depicting some socio-economic issues. Learners were asked individually to comment on the various issues portrayed on the poster. Examples from their life-world were frequently used during explanations (issues such as poverty, unemployment and HIV/Aids seem to form part of the lives of many of these learners). The chalkboard was used to summarise the major socio-economic issues provided in the textbook. Learners were observed writing down this summary in their work books. My view is that this will allow them to refer to this content easily when preparing for tests and examinations.

It was evident from the manner in which the lesson was mediated that learners wanted to be involved and I got the impression that they enjoy the manner in which this educator imparted knowledge. All learners were focused on the lesson, which was not often seen during other observations. The moment learners become involved in the lesson, learning seems to occur. Questioning was directed at most of the learners and learners seemed comfortable in providing answers and asking questions. At some stage during my observation of this lesson, the thought came to mind that, 'In this classroom teaching and learning takes place through proper mediation' (cf. 2.7).

The educator used a case study to consolidate the lesson. This case study was taken from the textbook. As was the case when lessons in other schools were observed, the educator asked learners to read the case and answer the questions that followed. I realised that case studies are not treated as practical applications of content, but that it stays theoretical in the manner they are handled by educators. No role-play or other practical application was ever considered when completing these case studies in the classroom. No group work was done during my stay at this school (learners were involved individually). The educator indicated at the end of the lesson that learners had to prepare the topic of that day to make certain presentations in their groups the following day (cf. 2.5.3).

During my conversation with the educator after the lesson, she stated that, “I am always well-prepared for my lessons as I do that the day before I go to school”. She further stated that she wants the learners to be involved as that is the way they learn most and it reduces the risk of discipline problems in the classroom.

Mediation of learning occurred in this classroom.

School 9

Background

The classroom used for Business studies at this school is a science laboratory. Seating for 50 learners is available in this classroom, although the Business Studies class observed had 22 learners. The laboratory desks are not easy to move around for group work, but learners should easily be able to move their chairs to work with learners at the desk behind them. The back half of the desks in this classroom were empty. No posters of a business nature were observed.

Mediation of learning

The topic of the lesson was entrepreneurial qualities. No prior knowledge was assessed or asked for by the educator. No link was therefore established by what learners already know and what the objectives for the new lesson will be (cf. 2.4.1.1). From the onset I observed that although the educator was confident in presenting the content, no real learner participation was evident.

The educator followed a superficial questioning technique by asking learners, “Are we together?” upon which the learners responded with a “Yes Ma’am.” This was sometimes interchanged with “Is there any question?” which was followed by “No Ma’am.” The educator did not attempt to ensure that all learners understood the content and seemed satisfied when receiving such chorus answers from the group of learners. Learners

mostly also did not ask the educator any questions regarding the lesson. All engagement with content was superficial and I almost got the sense that the educator wanted to ensure that all content is covered, irrespective of whether all content was understood.

One learner sometimes asked questions and the educator then answered these. I do not have a problem with educators providing answers to questions, but the educator never attempted to involve other learners to try and reach an answer with their inputs (cf. 2.7). During my conversation with the educator after the lesson she stated that, “The learner who answers in class is coming from a previous Model C school”. She further stated that many of the learners used to answer questions, but since this learner arrived at the school early in 2014, most of the learners seem to inferior to this learner. Her English usage is good and she obtains higher marks than the rest of the class. It was evident that the educator did nothing as yet to address this situation. One would assume that as manager of and mediator in the classroom that the educator would have resolved any negative influences in the classroom.

As was the case with most of the schools, the educator used the chalkboard to provide the key aspects of the lesson. A case study was used in an attempt to apply the knowledge gained from the lesson. The educator asked the learners to read the case and answer the questions from the textbook. Learners were then asked by the educator to answer these questions. With two of the questions the appointed learner did not answer the question and just kept quiet. The educator then relayed these questions to other learners. No attempt was made by the educator to guide the appointed learners to the correct answer. This was an ideal opportunity for the educator to mediate learning, but unfortunately was not seized by the educator. No group activities occurred during the lesson.

My observation was that although the educator was knowledgeable about the subject matter, no attempt to impart this knowledge was made by her. The lecture method was used mostly, with no real engagement created to delve deeper into the content (cf.

2.5.1). It is essential for educators to employ various teaching strategies in order to enhance learner understanding (cf. 2.5). Educators need to take the lead to ensure their learners are mediated in the Business Studies classroom.

My observation was that no mediation of learning occurred in this lesson.

School 10

Background

This was a technical school previously and many classrooms are bigger than the norm at other schools. When entering the classroom for the observation session, I noticed that a number of computers and overhead projectors were locked in a store room at the back of the classroom. In my conversation with the educator after the lesson, she indicated that this equipment is not in use as the educators are not trained to use computers. According to her the computers were donated by a company, but other than the administration clerks, none of these computers were in operation in any classroom. When asked about the overhead projectors, she indicated that educators do not have transparencies or special pens needed to write on these transparencies and do not want to buy these from their own pockets. The number of learners in the observed classroom was 30. The seating arrangements were as such that all learners faced forward. Each desk seated one learner.

Mediation of learning

The topic of the lesson was on Project planning. The educator began her lesson presentation by reading from the textbook. This method was used for the duration of the lesson. During this time she explained some concepts by linking the content to practical examples from the business world. Although the examples used by her would have provided more clarity to learners, they were never provided with the opportunity to afford their own examples, nor were they trying to. This indicated to me that learners in this

classroom are not fully engaged in lessons. Educators should encourage learners to participate, otherwise they stay passive listeners (cf. 2.7).

The educator applied a teacher-centred approach. It seemed important to her that the content should be delivered to the learners and the best way to do that was through her. No learner attempted to ask clarity seeking questions and answered “Yes, Ma’am” to the educator’s question of “Do you understand?”. Twice she followed this response from learners with the request to the learners to close their books and to state what they have just learnt. No-one raised a hand to answer and she picked a learner each time to answer. Both these answers were vague and not comprehensive. These answers prompted her to encourage learners verbally to listen carefully to what she was teaching. No questions asked during this lesson aroused any interest with learners. They merely had to reproduce what were mentioned in the textbook.

Both the chalkboard and textbook were used to convey information to mostly passive learners. The educator seemed to realise that a chalkboard summary is always valuable for learners and therefore that aspect was covered well. The textbook was used as the sole source of information – without any discussion regarding any of the content covered for this lesson (cf. 2.5.2). My observation was almost as if everybody was satisfied that excellent teaching and learning occurred, but on the contrary, just the opposite occurred.

The educator asked the learners to complete homework by studying the SWOT analyses. I perceived this request to be that they only need to know the different concepts, namely Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This was an ideal opportunity to provide the learners with a practical application where they could apply the SWOT analyses to something from their life-world (cf. 2.6.1.2). Unfortunately, this did not happen.

The next section provides the reporting and interpretation of questionnaire data.

4.4 REPORTING AND INTERPRETATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

This section commences with the reporting of biographical data.

4.4.1 Biographic information of educators

Due the nature of biographic data, this section is reported on in numerical format. The reporting of data is done in accordance with the sequence of the questions on the questionnaire.

The following questions are asked to gather information regarding the gender, years' experience in teaching, years' experience in the teaching of Business Studies, qualification and major subject(s) in the qualification. The qualifications of the participants are also sought as it may have an influence on the opinions provided by them.

Table 4.1: Gender

| Gender | Frequency | % |
|---------------|------------------|------------|
| Male | 3 | 30 |
| Female | 7 | 70 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

Table 4.1 outlines the biographic information of participants with regard to the gender of the educators. The study reflects that females form the majority with 7 (70%) with males constituting only 3 (30%). This information reflects the current trend in South Africa where more females enter and stay in the teaching profession than males.

For this study, educators in the profession for *longer than 5 years* are considered as experienced.

Table 4.2: Years' experience in teaching

| Years | Frequency | % |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| 0-3 | 0 | 0 |
| 4-5 | 0 | 0 |
| 6-10 | 4 | 40 |
| More than 10 years | 6 | 60 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

Table 4.2 outlines the information of participants with regard to the years' experience in teaching. The study reflects that 4 (40%) of the educators are considered as experienced. The rest 6 (60%) are considered as very experienced. The participant sample of this study therefore reflects that all participants are experienced educators.

Table 4.3: Years' experience in the teaching of Business Studies

| Years | Frequency | % |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|
| 0-3 | 1 | 10 |
| 4-5 | 2 | 20 |
| 6-10 | 3 | 30 |
| More than 10 years | 4 | 40 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

Table 4.3 outlines the biographic information of participants with regard to the years' experience in the teaching of Business Studies. The study reflects that 3 (30%) of the educators have 5 years or less experience and are therefore considered not to be very experienced. 7 (70%) have more than 5 years' experience and are considered to be experienced Business Studies educators.

Table 4.4: Qualifications

| Qualification | Frequency | % |
|---|------------------|------------|
| Not a qualified teacher | 0 | 0 |
| 3 year teaching diploma | 5 | 50 |
| Degree (i.e. BCom) and teaching qualification (HDE or PGCE) | 5 | 50 |
| Other (please specify underneath) | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

Table 4.4 outlines the biographic information of the participants with regard to educators' qualifications. The study reflects that 5 (50%) educators obtained a 3 year teaching diploma and the other 5 (50%) obtained a degree capped with a one year professional teaching qualification. All educators are therefore in possession of professional teaching qualifications.

Table 4.5: Qualifications in Business Management

| Qualifications | 1st year level | 2nd year level | 3rd level | Frequency | % |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Business Management | x | | | 3 | 30 |
| Business Management | x | x | | 2 | 20 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|-----------|------------|
| Business Management | x | x | x | 4 | 40 |
| No qualifications in Business Management | | | | 1 | 10 |
| Total | | | | 10 | 100 |

Table 4.5 outlines the biographic information about qualifications in Business Management. The study reflects that 3 (30%) educators completed Business Management at 1st year level, 2 (20%) proceeded to 2nd year level and 4 (40%) educators completed Business Management at 3rd year level.

In order to be qualified to teach Business Studies in the FET phase (Grade 10-12), an educators should have completed Business Management up to 2nd year level. 6 (60%) of the educators forming part of this study therefore are qualified to teach Business Studies in the FET phase (Gr 10-12) and 4 (40%) are only qualified to teach up to the Senior Phase (Grade 7-9).

Completion of 2nd and 3rd year level Business Management does not necessarily mean that these educators will be successful mediators of learning, but it does show that they should have the content knowledge to teach in the FET Phase (Grade 10-12) with confidence.

The next sub-section reports on the questionnaire responses received from educators. This section follows the qualitative pattern of narrative reporting where themes and trends emerging from the questionnaire data are reported on.

4.4.2 Questionnaire responses

Question 1

What is your understanding of mediation of learning?

Most of the educators mentioned that mediation of learning is an approach where an educator and learners are involved in teaching and learning. It was indicated that mediation is when an educator guides learners.

Other participants provided similar views, but added more information:

- This is a strategy that an educator can use to involve learners in the lesson and help them to understand the content.
- The art of giving knowledge or teaching so that learners can easily acquire knowledge and learn. The teacher is the mediator between content and learners. The teacher gives direction to the learners.
- Mediation of learning is a strategy implemented by an expert (i.e. educator) to resolve any problem that is encountered by learners during the delivery of a lesson. If misunderstanding crops up mediation usually take the form of two way communication in the classroom situation.

Some of the participants mentioned that mediation of learning involves all teaching strategies that an educator can use during the teaching and learning process. It was mentioned that the use of pictures and posters in the classroom make mediation of learning to be meaningful.

A few participants mentioned that mediation of learning means they are the ones to assist in reducing learning barriers such as: poor study methods, not understanding questions and bad attitude from the learners.

Interpretation: It appears from the response that the educators understand that

mediation of learning is when an educator and the learners are both involved in teaching and learning. The educators have the responsibility to use certain teaching strategies during mediation in the classroom. Mediation of learning is seen as an important aspect of the teaching and learning process. When compared to observation data, it appears as if educators know what mediation of learning is, but that not much mediation occurs in the actual teaching and learning situation (cf. 4.3).

Question 2

How do you create a learning environment conducive for teaching and learning of Business Studies?

Most of the participants mentioned that learners should be given a chance to relate matters with what they come across in their immediate environment. It was indicated that learners should be given an opportunity to provide their own examples during the teaching and learning process. Another participant indicated that a learning environment conducive for teaching and learning is when learners actively participate in the classroom situation. She mentioned that both educator and learners must take responsibility for teaching and learning. It was indicated that practical examples that emanate in the working place (i.e. Business Sector) should be part of Business Studies teaching and learning. It was mentioned that questions from the learners and educator's answers create a learning environment conducive for the teaching and learning.

Some of the participants mentioned that discipline plays a vital role in a learning environment. It was also mentioned that disruptive behaviour should be minimized in the classroom. A classroom policy which includes a code of conduct that clearly indicates expected behaviour has to be known by the learners. A good interpersonal relationship between the educator and learners create a positive learning environment. Educators who demonstrate sound content knowledge of Business Studies will most probably create an environment conducive for learning. Respect between learners and educators cultivate positive attitudes in a classroom.

A few participants added that a learning environment conducive for teaching and learning is when learners take part in the classroom. Educators should allow learners to interact with the content of the lesson. In such a way learners stay focused on the topic and a conducive learning environment is created. The learners should be asked the kind of questions that enable them to share their real life business experiences with the rest of the class. One participant indicated that she often provides learners with opportunities to provide their own understanding of content.

Other responses were also received and they are listed below (direct from questionnaires):

- By knowing the background of these children. Every learner has to answer the question posed to him or her. By making the lesson interesting and use examples from the news, Internet and adverts.
- I create a favourable condition by linking introduction to the real world situation.
- Conducive environment is when the educator prepares his/her lesson logically and systematically by making learners to understand the subject.
- There are posters in the classroom, learners are asked to bring along magazines and take out pictures which are relevant to the topic that we are dealing with.

Interpretation: It appears that educators are attempting to create a learning environment conducive for learning by allowing learners to participate in the classroom and provide examples of what they have experienced in real world situations. Again, educators are aware of how a conducive learning environment should be created, but this contrasts mostly with the actual classroom situation.

Question 3

How do you understand your role between the learner and the learning content?

Most of the participants mentioned that their role as educator is to guide and facilitate better understanding of the learning content. They indicated that their role as educators is to simplify the learning content, encourage interaction and assist learners to expand more. It was mentioned that to expand more is when learners understand the content and relate it to different Business contexts.

Some participants mentioned that they allow learners to read scenarios from the textbook and ask learners questions about such scenarios. They indicated that they provide learners with opportunities to ask questions regarding the topic.

A few participants mentioned that their role is to teach and learners are expected to do their work based on what they have been taught in the classroom. These participants view their role as conveyers of knowledge and not necessarily for learners to engage with knowledge.

Other participants have provided this information on the questionnaire:

- My role is to make sure that the learning content is brought down to the level of the learners so that they could understand the content and be able to put it in ways that they can understand.
- It's to make learners understand clearly the concepts in this subject and to show them how to study and reproduce their work in tests and examination and encourage them to be flexible in answering the question.
- The role of the educator is to make learners understand and enjoy the content by having clear understanding of what is happening in class. All learners

should be aware of the things that are happening in their daily life in relation to this subject.

Interpretation: Responses mostly indicate that educators provide data which portrays a 'best practice' scenario. This indicates that educators know what is expected of them and that they understand their role in providing content to learners. It is mostly in the manner that this provision is done where the differences occur. There is a clear difference in the understanding of their role as mentioned earlier and the actual execution of this role in the classroom (which was evident from observations).

Where learners are supposed to be provided with opportunities to engage with content through questioning and discussion, observation data indicates that reading of content from textbooks mostly occur (cf. 4.3).

Question 4

What is your opinion regarding the use of various forms of media (such as posters, pictures, loose objects) in the teaching and learning of Business Studies?

Most of the participants indicated that textbooks and the chalkboard are the media mostly used in the school. It was indicated that the delivery of different forms of media are needed to realise the purpose of providing effective teaching and learning. "We do not have posters, computers and projectors as part of learning and teaching support materials". It was indicated by a few participants that they never received training on how to use these materials effectively.

Other comments from the participants are (direct from questionnaire):

- They are very important as they are always visible and can stick in each learner's mind for a very long time, thus helping learners to understand the subject.
- My opinion of using various forms of media is to create a better understanding of a work place so that learners could have a better chance to interact with the learning content. A media create objective communication and teaching becomes more interesting to learners.
- A media plays a vital role in enhancing the understanding of the subject matter, because it helps learners to be able to see and have a visual picture of what we discuss in class. A media also arouse interest in learners.

It was indicated by some participants that they regard posters to be an effective media tool to provide learners with clarity of certain concepts. The same participants are those where posters were found in the classroom during observations.

A participant indicated that apart from a textbook and the chalkboard, she uses television as a convenient media option in the school. According to her, television plays a vital role in enhancing the understanding of the subject, as it assists learners to have a visual picture of what is discussed in the classroom. She did not elaborate on the questionnaire whether these are recorded programmes or bought by the school.

Interpretation: It seems as if most educators expect that media such as posters, newspapers and magazines should be delivered to them before they will use such media. Many educators do not seem prepared to create posters themselves, or to use newspaper clippings or magazines in the classroom. It almost seems as if many educators have lost the passion needed to ensure that they provide their learners with the best opportunities to succeed academically. This was confirmed with the observation data where the use of media during lessons was almost non-existent (cf. 4.3).

Most of the educators are expecting delivery of posters by the DoBE so as to assist to

eliminate some of the resource challenges encountered by their schools. Some of these educators received posters from a private supplier (cf. School 6).

These posters and pictures do not need to be delivered by the DoBE, but the educators must take the initiative and make posters or bring pictures and loose objects to class. These are professional people and one would expect them to make their own media if they are serious about teaching.

Question 5

What would you consider to be the barriers to learning in the Business Studies classroom?

Most of the participants indicated that the majority of the learners are coming from poor families. It was indicated that parents of these learners do not have the financial capacity to pay for Internet services at home, with the result that learners are not able to search widely for information.

Some of the participants mentioned that unavailability of sufficient media and overcrowding of classrooms are the main barriers to proper learning in the classroom. Another participant wrote that some educators cannot explain concepts clearly to learners. It is not clear whether this participant refers to herself or to others, as the question deals with the Business Studies classroom of which she is the educator. It may be that she did not want to implicate herself directly and decided to refer to the problem as that of another educator.

A participant stated that he never majored in Business Management and finds it difficult to explain some of the concepts to learners.

Other participants provided various responses (direct from questionnaire):

- Some of the learners can't realise the importance of speaking English during the Business Studies lesson. These learners ask questions and answer in their home language. Therefore they find it very difficult to express themselves in English when they write.
- Lack of understanding, poor responses on essay and poor study method since in Grade 9 they had 25% exam and 75% projects, in Grade 10 it's the other way round as most of these learners are not able to sit for a 200 marks test.
- All learners have textbooks, writing materials and time to learn, but they do not use the time they have to their advantage. English as medium of instruction is also a barrier that makes them not to be able to study on their own.

Interpretation: Many learners are from poor economic backgrounds and do not have the resources to complete homework tasks they are given. Internet access is a luxury many of these households cannot afford. This is why it is so important that educators need to ensure that resources such as newspapers and magazines are made available in the classroom. Educators must be aware of this problem and actively address it.

Overcrowding of classrooms seems to be a problem not addressed by the DoBE. The learner:educator ratio rarely seems to be under 40:1. Most schools do not seem to have the funds to appoint more educators through the Governing body to alleviate this situation. Educators therefore need to vigorously pursue strategies such as mediation of learning to ensure all learners in the classroom are provided with quality education. Such strategies unfortunately were rarely employed by educators visited for this study (cf. 2.7).

English as the language of learning is another factor highlighted as a possible barrier to learning in the Business Studies classroom. For most learners English is not their home language, which poses problems when learners need to express themselves in the classroom. It seems as if learners are not confident enough to ask questions or to engage in discussions through English. Educators sometimes resort to mother tongue

instruction with a possible negative outcome when learners need to write tests and examinations in English.

Question 6

What would you consider to be the best teaching strategies to employ in the teaching of Business Studies?

Most participants mentioned that they use case studies because it contains scenarios where learners read and answer questions based on their understanding of a real life scenario. They indicated that through the use case studies, they can relate information from the textbook to business scenarios in the real world.

Some participants stated that they consider group work to be a very effective strategy to use. They wrote that learners then have the opportunity to discuss the content with their peers to gain more insight.

A few participants indicated that they find discussion of content during the lesson to be a very effective strategy. Learners then become part of the lesson and learn much more in this way.

Some responses from the participants were:

- In the classroom I offer learners a chance to talk, present and discuss.
- I introduce a topic and allow learners to discuss it among themselves. The other strategy can be to take them to different companies where they can be able to experience business matters in practice.

Interpretation: According to the researcher's observation, case studies were very rarely employed as a strategy to encourage discussion. Most case studies were merely read

to learners (or the learners read the case study aloud) and questions had to be answered without any discussion taking place.

Although educators may be aware that discussion and group work are effective strategies to use, these were not used during the time of the researcher's observation. One can deduce that if such strategies were not used during the observation period, they most probably are not used during other times.

Question 7

Elaborate on your current success in implementing the afore-mentioned teaching strategies.

Most of the participants stated that case studies seem to work because learners are able to express their knowledge. Thus, learners become engaged in interpretive analysis of knowledge derived from a case study. By employing a case study, learners are able to present their findings orally in class, or submit a written report. It is necessary to use a case study because it inculcates learners' critical thinking and confidence to express one's views about the scenarios from the case study. A few of these participants revealed that not all learners have textbooks, which make provision of homework difficult, as such learners do not complete such homework. It was also stated that their schools do not always have the financial means to ensure that copies of such sections are made for learners, or that the copy machine is sometimes broken of long periods on end.

Some participants mentioned that other strategies, such as group work, are difficult to implement due to the large number of learners in their classrooms. They indicated that it becomes very difficult to engage all learners in the lesson and that some learners lose concentration and focus in the classroom. A few of these participants wrote that the overcrowded classroom slows their curriculum completion progress, with the effect that they sometimes need to rush through the curriculum to ensure all content is covered

during a term.

Other responses were also received:

- By using case studies learners are able to understand the topic on responsibility of business to the community. This strategy also offers reading information from magazines and newspapers (i.e. matters that are related to business).
- The success of using group work is that learners work in groups and get the opportunity to express their point of view without fear. This strategy instils confidence even to introvert learners.

Interpretation: According to participants, the strategies they implement seem to be successful. Case studies seem to be the most popular strategy to ensure that learners engage with the content in a practical manner. The researcher is however aware that most Business Studies textbooks currently used in schools include case studies for learners to apply the knowledge they gained. Through observing lessons for this study, the researcher however is of the opinion that this strategy is rarely successfully implemented in classrooms. It seems as if educators believe that as long as they complete the case study provided, it is deemed successfully completed, irrespective if learning occurred or not.

Group work is seldom employed. Participants stated that they find it difficult to execute group work due to large learner numbers in the classroom. Through observation this can be confirmed by the researcher. Large learner numbers make it almost impossible to successfully implement group work. It is also the opinion of the researcher that participants do not even consider using creative methods to arrange seating in such a way as to attempt group work in the classroom. Such seating arrangements were found in some of the schools visited (cf. 4.3).

Question 8

What is your opinion regarding the prior Business Studies knowledge of Grade 10 learners coming from EMS in Grade 9?

Most of the participants indicated that there is not enough Business Studies content covered in the Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) learning area in Grade 9. They stated that a lot of attention and time is spent on Accounting and Economics as part of the EMS curriculum. Learners have very little prior knowledge of the Business world when entering their Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms. A few of these participants also stated that most learners in their classrooms do not come from socio-economic environments that provide them with general business acumen and knowledge. This lack of general business knowledge is therefore a factor to keep in mind when learners do not participate in classroom discussion.

Some participants wrote that the volume of content to be completed in Grade 10 is much more than what is to be covered in Grade 9. Learners in Grade 10 Business Studies find the workload then difficult to complete. Some mentioned that learners at least have some knowledge of Business Studies obtained from Grade 8 and 9 EMS, but that this knowledge is below the level where they can commence with the Grade 10 syllabus with confidence.

Some responses from questionnaires were (verbatim):

- Their Business Studies knowledge is not at the required level for Grade 10 since they regard content from Grade 10 to be very difficult for them. They start to perform as the year progresses.
- This learning area should be taught separately in Grade 9 because they touch only on a few topics in this grade. Most of the learners struggle because the exam in Grade 9 is 25% and case study being 75%, therefore in Grade 10 is completely different.

Interpretation: The Grade 9 EMS syllabus aims to prepare learners for Accounting, Economics and Business Studies in Grade 10. Syllabi are written with the cognitive development of learners in mind. Learners need to grasp and understand Grade 9 EMS content in order to use such content as the foundation to build on in Grade 10. The curriculum will not necessarily change; therefore educators should not blame such a lack of prior knowledge, but create opportunities through mediation of learning to ensure successful learning occurs in Grade 10. During observation it was revealed that many participants do use activities, but that it is done very superficially (cf. 4.3).

Question 9

How possible is it for you in your current situation to implement all the learning activities as prescribed by the CAPS for Business Studies?

All participants stated that the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) require extensive activities to be completed as part of the Grade 10 syllabus. Most of these participants indicated that they find it difficult to cover all of these activities during the year. A participant summed it up as: *“We are confronted with a workload containing content, assignments, tests and exams, and this makes us sometimes not to cover all the CAPS activities in a term”*.

Some of these participants stated that the content to be covered do not allow them enough time to engage in many activities in the classroom. It was mentioned that they deem it more important to cover all the content rather than to cover all the activities.

One participant revealed that she regularly uses activities as she plans her lessons well in advance.

Some responses were:

- Time is allocated for activities, but I mostly use that time to make sure all the content is covered. I sometimes use activities when there is time left over in a period.
- It is possible because I use the CAPS document to plan my lessons according to the time-frames given in the document.

Interpretation: Participants seem to find it difficult to cover all content and activities during each term. The CAPS document for Business Studies however provides educators with proper planning templates and clearly indicate the number of activities that need to be completed. It is my opinion that educators need to complete mind shift regarding practical activities. It is as if they regard such activities as negative and taking too much of their teaching time, whereas such activities are included in the CAPS to ensure that learners are able to link theory to practice. Educators need to understand the benefits of engaging with activities as a means to mediate learning. My observation in classrooms revealed that educators do a lot of reading from the textbook, which leaves very little time for application of knowledge (cf. 4.3).

Question 10

What effect, if any, does English as the language of learning has on the teaching and learning of Business Studies?

All participants mentioned that English as a language of instruction is a concern. They indicated that learners encounter problems to express themselves in English, even when they answer questions or write in English. It was indicated that most of the learners from township schools battle with English as an academic language. Some of these participants indicated that it is expected of them to also be English educators, as they need to explain many concepts to the learners. This is time consuming and in many instances lead to them rushing to complete the syllabus each term. A few of these participants revealed that they sometimes explain certain concepts in the mother tongue

of the learners to ensure that they grasp such concepts. They also allow learners to sometimes answer or ask questions in their mother tongue as this ensures that such learners comprehend concepts.

Some responses were:

- English is a barrier because learners cannot speak. They cannot read with understanding which makes teaching and learning difficult. An educator has to go through an aspect over a long period of time before the learners can grasp it. This situation makes it difficult to deal with all the activities in Business Studies.
- English has a great effect in that if a learner cannot relate or know the meaning of words in simple English, it becomes difficult for such a child to understand Business Studies' concepts. Learners have to answer essay type questions and they struggle a lot because they cannot rephrase their points in good English. I then sometimes use Sotho to explain the concepts to them.

Interpretation: English as the language of learning has been a contentious issue in South African education for decades. English is used by most learners in South Africa as the language of learning. Most of these learners, however, are not first language speakers of English. Many such learners find it difficult to express themselves in English in an academic situation. From the responses it is evident that learners also struggle to answer examination questions in English. Learners need to construct knowledge using English as language (cf. This seems to be the problem area, as they do not seem to be successful in constructing such knowledge and to verbally or in written form express themselves in English. This was evident from observation data where most learners did not venture into any explanations or discussions during the lessons (cf. 4.3).

Question 11

What is your opinion regarding mediation of learning as a strategy to assist Business Studies learners in the classroom?

Most of the participants indicated that mediation of learning is an important strategy to ensure successful learning, as it brings about learners participation in the classroom. A few of these participants mentioned that they do not feel confident to use strategies other than the comfort of their textbooks. Others mentioned that they are of the opinion that workshops on mediation of learning need to be organised by the DoBE in order for them to employ such strategies in their lessons.

A few participants stated that mediation of learning should be a natural everyday occurrence in the classroom, as this is the only way in which learners engage with content through discussion. Once learners get used to participation in the classroom, their self-esteem and usage of English increase. It was stated by a participant that the benefits of mediation for learners are huge, as their knowledge increases and this reflected in the marks they obtain in tests and examinations.

A few participants also mentioned that mediation of learning allows learners to become independent learners. The educator as mediator creates a situation that in a way forces the learners to think, analyse, draw conclusions, make generalisations and suggest solutions.

Interpretation: All participants seem to agree on the importance of mediation of learning to ensure understanding by learners. The reality is, however, that this agreement does not manifest itself in the actual classroom. Although educators seem to realise the importance of their role as mediators, they do not follow this through in their Business Studies classrooms. The reality is that most educators mostly rely on the textbook and merely reading content to the learners, or asking learners to read the content or case study to the class.

There seems to be a lack of knowledge regarding what mediation of learning actually entails. Some educators indicated that they need a workshop to gain knowledge regarding the implementation of mediation of learning. They may be under the impression that merely reading from the textbook to convey knowledge forms part of mediation of learning. Data obtained through observation indicated that most educators read from the textbook for prolonged periods during their lessons (cf. .

Question 12

Comment on your current implementation of mediation of learning, if used, in the Business Studies classroom.

Most participants mentioned that they implement mediation of learning successfully by allowing learners to participate in each lesson. They indicated that learners are involved in lessons through writing, questioning and discussion. Some of these participants stated that they act as a facilitator between the learners and the content. One such participant wrote that this facilitation means to provide the learners with the content.

A few participants indicated that they do not implement mediation of learning all the time and mostly provide the learners with the content information they need. All these participants indicated time constraints as the reason. One of these participants wrote that she cannot implement mediation of learning as the DoBE does not provide her with the resources to do that.

A participant stated that the faster learners in the classroom sometimes assist the slower learners during group work.

Some responses were:

- I do mediation of learning. My learners write in their books and answer the case studies. We also discuss things a lot in the class.

- I facilitate in the classroom because I make sure that the learners get the content from the textbook.
- I want to do mediation, but the department never provide us with resources to use. How can I then do it?

Interpretation: Participants are under the impression that they implement mediation of learning in their classrooms. These responses link also to the responses of the previous question where some participants indicated that they need a workshop to fully grasp what mediation of learning is and how to implement it. Facilitation to ensure learning takes place is more than providing content from a textbook to learners. During observation it was apparent very little mediation of learning occurs in the se classrooms (cf. 4.3), although these educators state actions to the contrary.

Time constraints are provided as a main reason for not implementing mediation of learning. These educators seem to want to mediate learning, but inn many lessons feel more comfortable reading from the textbook, as such reading require much less planning and preparation. The understanding is also that no mediation of learning can occur without the assistance of the DoBE. Educators cannot wait for the DoBE to provide them with resources, they need to take the initiative and be managers of their own classrooms.

Some successful mediation of learning did occur in classrooms observed. The difference in participation levels of learners and the positive effect this have on their confidence to engage with content was evident from observation data (cf. 4.3).

Question 13

To what extent do the Subject Advisors of Business Studies assist you with the implementation of various teaching strategies (such as mediation of learning)?

Most of the participants indicated that subject advisors focus mainly on the activities that must be covered as prescribed by the CAPS document. It was mentioned that subject advisors check whether the educators have completed their work according to their schedules. Some of the participants stated that subject advisors are concerned about good performance of learners and never ask about strategies they employ to convey content.

A few participants indicated that subject advisors assist them, but not regarding mediation of learning. Such assistance is more to ensure the administrative parts of their work are submitted (such as their files and marks). Most participants indicated that subject advisers assist them by organising cluster meetings. At these cluster meetings educators share knowledge regarding problems they experience in the Business Studies classroom and how to overcome such problems. A few participants also mentioned that at these cluster meetings, subject advisors encourage educators to fulfil their role as mediators of learning.

Interpretation: Assistance from subject advisors deals mainly with adhering to the administrative aspects expected from educators. The data indicate that educators do not always receive assistance regarding mediation of learning from subject advisors. Subject advisors visit these educators at their respective schools and meet with them on an individual basis. During these visits not much discussion occurs regarding mediation of learning as a strategy.

It was however mentioned that during cluster meetings problem areas are discussed amongst educators. The subject advisor normally chairs such meetings. Responses indicate that the subject advisor do encourage the implementation of mediation of

learning in the classroom. It is up to individual educators whether they will take this advice seriously.

Question 14

Comment on the development opportunities you have received with regard to the implementation of teaching strategies such as mediation of learning.

All participants indicated that no workshop or development opportunity was provided specifically for mediation of learning. They do attend workshops, but these mainly deal with their comprehension of the curriculum and assessment strategies. Most of these participants mentioned that they would appreciate such a workshop as they would like to be more knowledgeable regarding the implementation of mediation of learning. One of these participants stated that she obtained books in the library on mediation of learning to refresh her knowledge.

Interpretation: No workshops directly linked to mediation of learning have been either offered or attended by participants. From the responses there is a pressing need for such development to improve the quality of education. Such a recommendation will form part of this study.

Question 15

What do you consider to be YOUR shortcomings with regard to the implementation of mediation of learning in your Business Studies classroom?

A trend mentioned most by participants is that they are overwhelmed with administrative tasks and that they sometimes use teaching and learning time for this purpose. This result in them not being able to complete the syllabus as they need or want to. Some participants indicated that certain content needs preparation of practical activities. According to them it becomes difficult to adequately prepare for such activities prior to

these lessons because of the resultant accumulated workload they still need to complete. The option is then taken not to engage in these activities practically, but to merely complete it theoretically. One of the participants mentioned that mediation of learning is time consuming as some learners want to discuss business matters for long periods of time, which result in pressure to complete the syllabus.

Some of the participants mentioned that the DoBE should put more emphasis on mediation of learning during their offered workshops. This will allow them to be at the forefront of implementing this strategy.

It was also mentioned by some participants that the lack of resources hamper their implementation of mediation of learning. Their schools do not receive any new technology that subject educators can implement in the classroom. Computers are only for the usage of Computer Application Technology learners and not for any other subject.

A few participants indicated that they do not possess sufficient knowledge of the practical business world. This lack of practical knowledge hinders them to link textbook content to real-life business situations.

One participant revealed that when she becomes aware that she may not be that knowledgeable about certain content, she reads about it or discuss it with other educators or friends in the business world. She then feels prepared enough by the time the lesson needs to be presented.

Interpretation: Almost all participants mentioned external factors as shortcomings to implement mediation of learning. This range from administrative duties they need to complete, time constraints with preparation of practical activities, long discussions by some learners and lack of resources, such as computers. Only a few participants mentioned that they may not be knowledgeable enough to venture into discussions regarding the practical application of content.

It is as if participants want to blame someone or something else for their lack of implementation. These participants mostly feel that outside factors are to blame. It is interesting that none of the responses received relate to participants' personal shortcomings. The educators do not seem willing to admit that they have certain shortcomings regarding mediation of learning. Educators are the managers of their classrooms and as such should have the authority to facilitate discussions. If a specific discussion has been exhausted, the educators should stop the discussion and move on. One participant mentioned that she prepares well in advance to ensure that she is able to engage learners in the classroom.

Question 16

What must be done to assist you to become an excellent mediator of learning in the Business Studies classroom?

Most of the participants indicated that the DoBE must organise programmes and/or workshops based on mediation of learning. A few of these participants stated that their subject advisor should be tasked to assist them to be better mediators of learning. This can be addressed during their cluster meetings, but especially during the first cluster meeting of the year.

Some participants mentioned that as long as the overcrowding of classrooms (educator:learner ratio) is not addressed and solved, they would find it very difficult to successfully implement mediation of learning, such as group work.

Some participants stated that they need more assistance from the DoBE with regards to resources. Resources that were mentioned here include: posters dealing with the major concepts of Business Studies, a functional computer room with at least 40 computers, as well as software programmes dealing with Business Studies. Training to implement such technology should be done for them.

Interpretation: A clear need exist for these participants to receive proper training in aspects of mediation of learning. This can be either done across subjects or by the subject advisor of Business Studies. With the latter option, more emphasis can be placed on specific business Studies topics and ways these can be mediated.

The overcrowding of classrooms is a real concern. The participants' apprehension regarding this must be considered as a valid reason why mediation of learning is not implemented in most classrooms (as was evident from the observation). If the quality of education is to be improved, the educator:learner ratio needs to be addressed and solved.

Although overcrowding is a definite hampering factor, educators seem to use this as an excuse not to produce creative ideas to involve learners in the classroom. Most of these participants do not see themselves as the catalyst that can effect change in the classroom. They need to take the responsibility to ensure that more is done to engage and assist learners than mere reading through the textbook.

Linking this question to observation data gathered, a few shortcomings regarding mediation of learning are mentioned here (cf. 4.3):

- Most educators do not engage learners with thought provoking questions
- Learners are mostly passive listeners
- No clarity seeking questions are asked when learners provide vague answers.
- No discussion is encouraged through questioning techniques
- No real linking of content is made to real-life business examples

This ends the reporting and interpretation of observation and questionnaire data. The following chapter addresses the conclusions and recommendations based on the literature, observation and questionnaires.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter put forward the reporting and interpretation of both observations and questionnaires. A clear disparity exists between questionnaire responses from educators and what was observed in the classrooms. Educators are of the opinion that they engage with mediation of learning on a regular basis, whereas the observation data indicated that this is very rarely the case. The next chapter deals with conclusions from literature, observations and questionnaires.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the conclusions and recommendations of the study. Concluding remarks from literature regarding mediation of learning are presented, followed by the conclusions from the data gathered. Recommendations are also indicated.

5.2 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this study are discussed in sequence. First are conclusions from the literature study. The conclusions drawn from questionnaires and observations are discussed lastly.

5.2.1 Conclusions from literature

Research question 1 is answered by the conclusions drawn from literature.

Research question 1: What are the essences of teaching and learning?

- An educator need to reflect that teaching is an act or experience that has an influential effect on the mind, character or physical ability of a learner. Teaching is more than standing in front of the classroom and applying a few specific practices. Thus, it is important for an educator not to simply present text-book facts and test learners' ability to duplicate it, but to guide the learners' experience. Educators must be able to instill confidence in learners in order for them to positively engage with the learning content (cf. 2.2).

- Good teaching comprises of certain skills and has to be geared towards the needs of the specific situation, for instance a particular subject and the developmental levels of the learners (cf. 2.2.1).
- There are diverse theories of teaching and learning to be considered as part of the teaching and learning process. A curriculum should be planned in such a way that it guides educators with different theories of teaching and learning. It should function as a useful instrument with which one may determine an appropriate theory for teaching and learning. Theories of teaching and learning that gained importance during the twentieth century are divided into two broad categories, namely the traditional theories and the inquiry theories (cf. 2.3).
- The traditional theories are divided into the experiential theory - where the principal argument is one where learners can only attain knowledge through personal experience, and the behaviourist theory - where learners' behaviour is assessed to ascertain when to commence with instruction. Learning requires arranging stimuli that connect learners and the environment so that learners can make the proper responses and be reinforced (cf. 2.3.1).
- The process of inquiring (in the inquiry theory) begins with the gathering of information and data through applying human senses; seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. Useful application of the inquiry learning in the mediation of learning is when the educator involves several factors: a context for questions, a framework for questions, a focus for questions and different levels of questions (cf. 2.3.2).
- Within the critical inquiry theory, learners must be stimulated to do most of the learning themselves, based on materials that they find interesting and challenging and that will sustain their critical thinking and arise curiosity as they search for solutions. Thus learners should be made to think critically and use critical thinking skills to analyze deep-rooted problems (cf. 2.3.2.1).

- A mediated learning experience represents a theoretical and operational formulation of the interaction that can occur to facilitate cognitive and social learning. It is for this reason that principles of mediation are embedded in the theory of constructivism. Social constructivism is a social process whereby learners acquire knowledge through interaction with their environment (cf. 2.4).
- Educators should not teach in the traditional sense of delivering instruction to learners. Rather, they should structure situations such that learners become actively involved with content (cf. 2.4.1).
- The Zone of Proximal Development has the potential to contribute more to learners' understanding than what learners are capable of constructing as individuals. The argument of social learning is that cognition and intelligence are not properties of individual learners, but arise from interaction with other learners in the learning environment (cf. 2.4.1.1).
- It is important to use certain strategies to mediate learning, and educators should have a broad knowledge of teaching strategies in order to be able to use the right one at the right time. No teaching strategy is better than another one, so an educator has to be able to apply a variety of teaching strategies, and make a proper decision about when each of the teaching strategies is likely to be most effective (cf. 2.5).
- Various teaching strategies are to be used depending on the content to be taught or discovered. A combination of more than such strategy is often the best route to follow for a teacher (cf. 2.5.1 – 2.5.4).
- Learning is defined as a relatively permanent change in mental associations due to experience. This change leads to learners' development of new knowledge, skills, or attitudes as an individual interact with information (cf. 2.6).

- Inadequate prior knowledge is a crucial factor to consider because if there is a difference between the educator's hopes of learner knowledge and the learners' actual knowledge base, learning may be slowed down from the start of the learning process. Trying to learn something without having adequate prior knowledge or even worse, having misconceptions regarding the new knowledge, may lead to rote memorization (cf. 2.6).
- Using several learning styles for learning is a fairly new approach and one that educators have only started to recognize in recent times. Traditional schooling used (and continues to use) mostly linguistic and logical teaching methods. Many schools still depend on classroom and book-based teaching, as well as repetition (cf. 2.6.2).
- Learning styles mostly used can be categorized as visual learning (learning through seeing); auditory learning (learning through listening); tactile or kinesthetic learning (learning by moving, doing, and touching (cf. 2.6.2).
- Learning experiences should be organized so that learners can learn not only from their direct peers and teachers, but also from family, community members and people from other parts of the world, who are now more readily reachable through various forms of technology. It will enable them to see things from different perspectives, to stand outside their own culture and their own society, to value and respect diversity, and to be critical and analytical of different points of view (cf. 2.6.3).
- The mediator acts as neutral third party and facilitates rather than directs the process. It is important for the educators as mediator of learning to open or improve dialogue between the learner and the lesson content. The concept of mediation of learning is a useful way of viewing the optimisation of the learning

process. After the educator's presence during the learning transaction, his/her primary role is to support the transaction as a mediator (cf. 2.7).

- The educator as mediator of learning must also be able to think outside the confines of the classroom for possible solutions by showing learners the value of consulting various textbooks, the Internet and other sources. Learners should be assigned projects that require them to use their families, community members, peers, newspapers, and incidents in their own real-life experiences as sources of information (cf. 2.7).
- The educator as mediator should demonstrate sound knowledge of the subject content and various principles, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching and learning. The attitude, experience, skills, subject knowledge and competency of the educator are all necessities to effectively present the content to the learner (cf. 2.7).
- The secret of optimum motivation of learners does not lie in the learning content or in what is being taught, but in the teaching process - in how the educator mediates the learning. The educator's chances of motivating learners to learn and achieve competence are best if he/she involves Business Studies learners actively, maintain a high level of interest, communicate expectations and provides positive feedback to the learners (cf. 2.7.5).

The next section provides conclusions regarding the observations.

5.2.2 Conclusions from observations

This section on observations and the section on interviews provide answers to Research questions 2, 3 and 4.

Research question 2: What is the level of participation of Business Studies learners in the classroom?

Research question 3: Which teaching strategies are employed by Business Studies educators to stimulate critical thinking in the classroom?

Research question 4: What are the problems (if any) encountered by Business Studies educators as far as mediation of learning is concerned?

- **Class size:** Most of the observed classrooms are overcrowded. The average ratio of learner to educator was 36:1. This is generally acceptable as an average, but five of these classrooms had more than 40 learners per classroom. This may hamper effective mediation of learning, as educators may find it difficult to provide attention to all learners or to reach learners who may need assistance with tasks they may need to complete in the classroom (cf. 4.3).
- **Media:** The unavailability of visual media and audio-visual media is prevalent in most of the schools. Overhead projectors and computers are never employed during lessons. Most of the classrooms observed had no posters, pictures, newspapers or magazines. These are not difficult to produce by educators themselves or with learners. It almost seems that the perception of educators is that if they are not provided with such media, they do not make the effort to create these themselves. The use of media enhances mediation in the teaching and learning process and complements all approaches to teaching and learning (cf. 4.3).
- **Textbook usage:** The textbook was the most preferred teaching aid used by all educators observed. The trend was for the educator to open the textbook, ask learners to do the same, and then read from the textbook. In most cases content from the textbook was also not engaged with and very few thought-provoking questions to establish comprehension were asked. This creates an atmosphere in the classroom where content is merely delivered to ensure learners know what to prepare for tests and examinations – and not for understanding (cf. 4.3).

- **Questioning by educators:** In most cases, educators did not apply a thought-provoking style of questioning. Most questioning required merely a 'Yes' or 'No' answer and in many cases were not followed up with clarity seeking questions. In some instances learners answered as a choir 'Yes Mam' or 'No Mam' when asked if they understood a certain part of the content. This is not engagement with content or mediation of learning at all. Learners were very rarely provided with questions which will allow them to apply knowledge gained in the lesson to practical examples (cf. 4.3).
- **Questions from learners:** Questions from learners to clarify content were almost non-existent. Learners are not provided with an opportunity to engage with content. The educator as the manager of the classroom and mediator of learning must be much more aware of the value of questions from learners. Questions will provoke discussion and learners will become more comfortable to express themselves in the classroom. When questions were asked by learners, such questions were posed by the same learner in the classroom (cf. 4.3).
- **Discussion and group work:** Again, very few educators provide an opportunity for discussion and group work in their classrooms. Discussion follows questioning, and as mentioned above, no real questioning occurs in classrooms. The educator needs to provide such opportunities with questions directed at the whole class, and questions directed at different learners during a period. Learners need to be encouraged to discuss the topic of the day. Seating arrangements were generally not conducive for group work. Learners all facing to the front of the classroom will find it extremely difficult to engage in effective group work sessions (cf. 2.5.3.1). Again, the educator as mediator of learning needs to create opportunities for group work – and ensure that seating arrangements in the classroom are as such to enhance such group work. Larger class sizes may hamper effective group work, but educators should not allow large class sizes to disregard group work. Desks were arranged in such a way

for group work to occur in some classrooms, although not much group work occurred. The opportunity has however been created for group work to take place in such classrooms (cf. 4.3).

The next sub-section deals with the conclusions from questionnaires.

5.2.3 Conclusions from questionnaires

- Educators have a perceived knowledge of mediation of learning. They see mediation of learning as an approach that involves both educator and learners. Their role as educator is to reduce barriers to learning that learners may experience. Media such as posters and pictures form part of their role of mediating Business Studies (cf. Questionnaire Question 1).
- Learners should be provided with opportunities in the classroom to link content with the business environment. An environment where learners are actively involved in the lesson and where discipline is upheld is conducive for learning to occur (cf. Questionnaire Question 2).
- Educators perceive their role between learners and content in different ways. One view is where learners need to be facilitated and guided towards understanding through expanded opportunities – where textbook content is linked to business contexts. Another is that educators are mere conveyers of content and not necessarily there for learners to understand content (cf. Questionnaire Question 3).
- Textbooks and the chalkboard are the resources mostly employed by educators. Posters are sometimes created and displayed in the classroom. Other media, such as computers are rarely used in the Business Studies classroom (cf. Questionnaire Question 4).

- Lack of financial resources of families of learners is seen as a major factor contributing towards learning. Such learners do not have the opportunity to freely search for information on the Internet, as they do not have such a facility at home. Lack of media resources, overcrowding of classrooms and English as the language of learning are also put forward as barriers to learning (cf. Questionnaire Question 5)
- Case studies are believed to be the mostly used teaching strategy to employ in the Business Economics classroom. Such case studies provide a real-life business scenario which learners should solve. Group work and discussions are also considered to be effective strategies (cf. Questionnaire Question 6).
- Educators perceive themselves to be successful in their implementation of the mentioned strategies. Case studies are successfully implemented as learners are involved when answering these. Group work is not successfully implemented due to the large number of learners in the classroom (cf. Questionnaire Question 7).
- Not enough Business Studies content is covered in the Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) learning area prior to Grade 10. Most learners also are from deprived socio-economic backgrounds with the result that learners entering Grade 10 Business Studies do not possess the necessary business acumen needed to build on in Grade 10 (cf. Questionnaire Question 8).
- Educators find it difficult to implement the learning activities as prescribed by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for Grade 10 Business Studies. Reasons provided were the extensive content to be covered, assignments to be completed and other assessment requirements such as tests and examinations (cf. Questionnaire Question 9).

- English as language of learning has a negative impact on the academic success of Grade 10 Business Studies learners. Most learners are not English home language speakers, but need to express themselves in English in the classroom. The home language of the educator and learners is sometimes employed in Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms (cf. Questionnaire Question 10).
- Mediation of learning is an important strategy to assist Grade 10 Business Studies learners. It is not widely implemented in the teaching and learning process as educators rely heavily on the use of their textbook (cf. Questionnaire Question 11).
- Most educators in this study are of the opinion that they successfully implement mediation of learning in their classrooms. Time constraints and a lack of resources are put forward as barriers to regularly implement mediation of learning (cf. Questionnaire Question 12).
- The Subject Advisor for Business Studies focus more on whether administrative aspects and CAPS guidelines are adhered to by educators. Teaching strategies are discussed at cluster meetings, but no real assistance in this regard is provided by the Subject Advisor (cf. Questionnaire Question 13).
- No workshops or official development opportunities with regard to mediation of learning were provided for Business Studies educators. Such a workshop would be appreciated (cf. Questionnaire Question 14).
- Educators put forward various shortcomings with regard to the implementation of mediation of learning, but almost none of these relate to their own shortcomings. Shortcomings listed include: administrative tasks, volume of work, no workshops on mediation of learning and a lack of resources. A lack of content knowledge was the only personal shortcoming mentioned (cf. Questionnaire Question 15).

- Programmes and/or workshops based on mediation of learning are proposed by Business Studies educators to assist them. Overcrowding of classrooms must be addressed before proper mediation of learning can be implemented in Business Studies classrooms (cf. Questionnaire Question 16).

Taken the conclusions into consideration, the following recommendations are made.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Research question 5 is answered by the following recommendations.

Research question 5: How can possible problem areas with regard to mediation of learning be overcome?

- Business Studies educators must acknowledge their lack of commitment towards mediation of learning. Change can only occur once a shortcoming has been acknowledged.
- Business Studies educators must ensure that their annual planning is done well in advance. Only with thorough planning and lesson preparation will an educator be able to address the needs of learners through mediation of learning.
- Business Studies educators must provide a learning environment in their classrooms where learners feel comfortable to participate through asking and answering questions. The educator is the manager of the classroom and need to initiate such a learning environment.
- English as language of learning should be used in the classroom. The educator must create an environment where learners will be willing to engage with the

content through English, even if they have difficulty expressing themselves at the onset.

- The textbook should not be used extensively in the classroom. It should only be used to guide the lesson in terms of content to be covered. Thorough preparation is needed to ensure teaching and learning occurs irrespective of the textbook being used.
- Business Studies educators must provide learners with ample opportunities to participate in each lesson. Such participation should include discussion of content with the educator, discussion of content between learners during a discussion and discussion of content during group work. Lessons must be planned with such learner participation in mind.
- Business Studies educators must lead learners by means of questioning through the content, ensuring that learners are guided with hints and suggestions to reach the answers needed. Real-life practical business contexts must be provided to assist learners reaching answers.
- Posters of various Business Studies topics can be made with the assistance of the learners. Old magazines can be used to gather the necessary pictures. These posters should be displayed in the classroom and can be used during lessons. Loose objects (such as packaging materials, cans and bottles with brand names etc.) must be collected and used during lessons. Learners learn more by engaging than by mere listening.
- A classroom code of conduct can be developed to control discipline. It is important that such a code of conduct should be drafted with the inputs of learners. Learners should adhere more to such a code if they are part of the preparation thereof.

- Business Studies educators should consult their Subject Advisor to organise official workshops regarding mediation of learning. This can be formalised during their cluster meetings.
- Mediation of learning in overcrowded classrooms must be planned and managed by the educator. Seating arrangements can be altered to ensure group work to be possible.
- As learner numbers keep increasing, it is unlikely that the overcrowding of classroom problem will be alleviated soon, but the Department of Basic Education need to embark on a strategic plan to ensure that educator:learner ratios are adhere to as prescribed by policy.
- Two cluster meetings per annum (one per semester) should be organised by the Subject Advisor where Business Studies educators submit, discuss and develop relevant resources to implement in their lesson presentations. This will increase the volume and quality of such materials.

This section addressed conclusions drawn from literature, observation and questionnaires. The next section provides possible areas of further research.

5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following areas can be researched to provide a wider perspective regarding mediation of learning:

- An investigation into the implementation of mediation of learning in other FET (Grade 10-12) subjects.

- Strategies to implement questioning, discussion and co-operative learning techniques in overcrowded classrooms.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This study addressed mediation of learning and its implementation in Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms. Literature regarding teaching and learning theories was addressed and their link to teaching and learning indicated. Constructivism was discussed as a foundation of how knowledge should be constructed for learners to be academically engaged in their learning. Teaching strategies available to educators and mediation of learning were also addressed in detail. Observations of Grade 10 Business Studies classrooms were undertaken to ascertain how teaching and learning are dealt with through mediation of learning. These observations indicated discrepancies with literature which were reported on. Questionnaire data of Grade 10 Business Studies educators were reported on and interpreted. Discrepancies between questionnaire and observation data were discussed. The study culminates in the provision of conclusions and recommendations.

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ANNEXURE A: Request to conduct research

1596 Thokoza Street
MotseThabong
Welkom
9463

07 April 2014

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby humbly request a permission to conduct research at your school. The arrangement will be as follows:

- Time: During school hours
- Target Group: Business Studies Educators (Grade 10)

The research topic is as follows:

Title : Mediation of learning in Business Studies in the Further Education and Training Phase in the Lejweleputswa district.

I strongly believe that the findings of this study will contribute to the current body of knowledge with regard to an effective teaching approach in schools.

Only the researcher will see the information provided. Individual schools, principals, HODs and educators will not be identifiable in reports of the results.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours truly

.....

M.V. Pele (Researcher)

4 Home Address:

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5 Postal Address:

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❖
❖ **6.1 Name of tertiary institution/research institute**

❖
.....

6.2 Occupation:

6.3 Place of employment:

7 Name of course:

.....

8 Name of supervisor/promoter:

Please attach a **letter from your supervisor** confirming that you have registered for the course you are following.

9 Title of research project:

.....
.....
.....

10 Concise explanation of the research topic:

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.....
.....
.....
.....

11 Application value that the research may have for the Free State Education Department:

.....
.....
.....
.....

12. The full particulars of the group with whom the research is to be undertaken:

.....
.....
.....

12.1 List of schools/Directorates in the Department/Officials:

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.....
.....

12.2 Grades:

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.....

12.3 Age and gender groups:

.....
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.....

12.4 Language groups:

.....
.....

12.5 Numbers to be involved in the research project:

.....

13 Full particulars of how information will be obtained eg questionnaires, interviews, standardized tests. **Please include copies of questionnaires, questions that will be asked during interviews, tests that will be completed or any other relevant documents regarding the acquisition of information.**

.....
.....
.....

14 The **starting and completion dates** of the research project: (Please bear in mind that research is usually not allowed to be conducted in the schools during the fourth term.)

.....
.....

15 Will the research be conducted **during or after school hours**?

.....

16 If it is necessary to use school hours for the research project, **how much time** will be needed?

.....
.....

17 **How much time will be spent on the research project** by individual educators and/or learners?

.....

18 **Ensure that the following are included:**

- | | | |
|------|--|--------|
| 18.1 | A letter from your supervisor confirming your registration for the course you are following? | Yes/No |
| 18.2 | A letter that will be sent to the school principals requesting permission to conduct research in their schools? | Yes/No |
| 18.3 | A letter that will be sent to parents requesting permission for their children to participate in the research project?..(If applicable) | Yes/No |
| 18.4 | Copies of questionnaires that you wish to distribute? | Yes/No |
| 18.5 | A list of questions that will be asked during the interviews? | Yes/No |

NB: IN CASE WHEREBY A REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IS MADE BY A PERSON WITH DOCTORAL DEGREE,THE LETTER FROM THE SUPERVISOR IS NEEDED (EG.THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OR DEAN OF FACULTY). A CLEAR INDICATION MUST BE PROVIDED ON WHAT THE RESEARCH FINDINGS WILL BE USED FOR, E.G. WRITING AN ARTICLE, ETC.

I confirm that all the information given on this form is correct.

.....
SIGNATURE

.....
DATE

ANNEXURE C: Educator Questionnaire

Question 1

What is your understanding of mediation of learning?

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Question 2

How do you create a learning environment conducive for teaching and learning of Business Studies?

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Question 3

How do you understand your role between the learner and the learning content?

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Question 4

What is your opinion regarding the use of various forms of media (such as posters, pictures, loose objects) in the teaching and learning of Business Studies?

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Question 5

What would you consider to be the barriers to learning in the Business Studies classroom?

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Question 6

What would you consider to be the best teaching strategies to employ in the teaching of Business Studies?

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Question 7

Elaborate on your current success in implementing the afore-mentioned teaching strategies.

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Question 8

What is your opinion regarding the prior Business Studies knowledge of Grade 10 learners coming from EMS in Grade 9?

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Question 9

How possible is it for you in your current situation to implement all the learning activities as prescribed by the CAPS for Business Studies?

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Question 10

What effect, if any, does English as the language of learning has on the teaching and learning of Business Studies?

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Question 11

What is your opinion regarding mediation of learning as a strategy to assist Business Studies learners in the classroom?

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Question 12

Comment on your current implementation of mediation of learning, if used, in the Business Studies classroom.

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Question 13

To what extent do the Subject Advisors of Business Studies assist you with the implementation of various teaching strategies (such as mediation of learning)?

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Question 14

Comment on the development opportunities you have received with regard to the implementation of teaching strategies such as mediation of learning.

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Question 15

What do you consider to be YOUR shortcomings with regard to the implementation of mediation of learning in your Business Studies classroom?

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Question 16

What must be done to assist you to become an excellent mediator of learning in the Business Studies classroom?

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ANNEXURE D: Classroom Observation Form (Mediation of learning)

Date of Observation _____

Mediation of learning in the Business Studies classroom (Grade 10)

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|--|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-----|
| 1. Does the educator's approach of teaching encourage learners to become independent learners? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 2. Does the educator work with learners to help them understand their own approach to the problem? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 3. Does the educator give direction clearly, checks for understanding along the way? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 4. Does the educator allow learners to organize their thoughts in a way that enhances their understanding of Business Studies? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 5. Does the educator use probe questions to stimulate learners' curiosity? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 6. Does the educator use (i.e case study) as a teaching, in order for learners to analyze, investigate and discuss such a case study? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-----|
| Demonstrated | Improvement | | | |
| 7. Is the discussion seen as interaction during which learners exchange ideas ? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 8. Does the educator able to manage group dynamic during discussion? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 9. Does the educator allow learners to think of possible solution? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 10. Does the educator encourage better participation, interaction, collaboration and cooperation? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 11. Does the educator guide learners' behaviour and action in the classroom? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 12. Does the educator check for lesson-relevant prior knowledge at the beginning of lesson and guides if necessary? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 13. Is the lesson delivery paced to learners' developmental level? | | | | |
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
| 14. Does the educator adapt his/her teaching strategy to accommodate all | | | | |

learners?

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|------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-----|
| Not Demonstrated | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Outstanding | N/A |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------|-----|

15. List of the educator's teaching strategy/strategies.