

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF  
"GLOBALISATION" AND  
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

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**Master of Education**

**2012**

# **The relationship between teachers' conceptions of “Globalisation” and professional learning**

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Master of Education (Teacher Education and Professional  
Development) degree, University of KwaZulu-Natal.**

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**2012**

# **Dedication**

**To Jennifer Geldenhuis. An emotionally strong  
and enduring woman, whom I have the honour of  
calling “Mother.”**

## Declaration...

I, Wade Cafun, declare that this dissertation is my own work, and has not been submitted previously for any degree in any university.

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Researcher

\*\*\*\*\*

Supervisor

# Appreciation

To my supervisor, Nyna Amin, thank you for your supervisory guidance and support, the displaying of your caring nature, as well as for offering your sincere friendship which made my journey pleasantly bearable.

To my mother, Jennifer, for all of your love and support throughout my studies.

To the participants, most of whom are dear friends to me, for willingly giving of your time and for sharing your views and experiences. My study would not have been possible without your input.

## Abstract

*At present globalisation has engulfed the world in what has been described as a whirl wind effect, in that it has swirled around the globe and encapsulated it; almost to the extent that the effects of globalisation appear completely inescapable to most nations and citizens. One can assume thus that the influence of globalisation on education, and in particular teacher education, is inevitable. This study focuses on teachers' conceptions of globalisation and its relationship to teacher professional learning with an aim to understand how six teachers exposed to global discourses conceive globalisation and its effect on their professional learning. Given that an effect of globalisation is the merging of various ideas and the exertion of simultaneous influences on such ideas from a variety of sources, a single focus group discussion was used for the generation of data in this study to produce an environment very similar to the one achieved by globalisation (i.e. an environment in which various ideas are generated simultaneously and are subjected to influences from a variety of sources). From this, rich data emerged highlighting that the teachers in this study have very similar and in some cases very different conceptions of globalisation, teacher professional learning, and the relationship between the two. Interestingly, what stands out is that the teachers involved in this study conceive that context, plays an integral role in contemporary teacher learning. The analysis generated themes such as retrogression, inequity, contradictions as well as the experiences of these teachers in learning and not learning. In essence, globalisation and teacher professional learning are shown to be inseparable in this era in which teachers are currently forced to learn for specific contexts and in most cases have to relearn as their contexts change in accordance with the ever evolving nature of globalisation. Indeed teacher professional learning at present is placed under tremendous strain, and so an understanding of the links between globalisation and teacher professional learning is expressed in this study. In addition, what emerges as a plausible solution to the problem of how teacher professional learning may keep up with globalisation, appears to be a need for teachers to take charge of their professional learning and to move away from positions of dependency and passivity to a position of active agency.*

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## **Chapter one**

### **An introductory chapter**

#### **Introduction**

Globalisation is affecting societies in political, economic, cultural and educational areas, to list a few (De Souza, 1998). Globalisation affects societies politically and economically in that states begin to compete with each other for their citizens to possess a greater competitive edge in the current global market, as a state with the greatest wealth is generally a more powerful state than one with lesser wealth (Claassen, 1999). With respect to education, Brown and Lauder (1996) argue that the key to a nation's prosperity lies in the educational upliftment of its citizens, thus with the increased competition between and among states as a result of globalisation, education is subjected to increased influences. It therefore comes as no surprise that authors such as Day and Sachs (2004), Hoban (2005) and Tonna (2007) argue that contemporary writers in the field of education, and teacher education in particular, find themselves having to rethink theories of teacher learning, and teacher professional learning. Globalisation is said to have an enormous impact on teacher education (Tonna, 2007). At present, theories and models of teacher learning and teacher professional learning already exist, but many of these prescribe how teachers should learn in the contemporary era, and neglect to factor in the processes of learning and development (Henze, Van Driel and Verloop, 2009). My study thus focuses on how teachers do in fact learn professionally, rather than how teachers should be learning professionally.

#### **Context and rationale of the study:**

With respect to the context in which the study was conducted, one should note that over the last few decades the use of communication technologies, the rhetoric of competitiveness, the value of competition and economic success as well as travel and

migration associated with prospects of success outside of South Africa are issues with which people have been constantly faced, and have therefore been given much regard in literature (Tan, 2011). In respect of education, in particular the education of teachers, Henze *et al* (2009) claim that learning is an integral part of generative social practices in the lived-in world, thus teacher professional learning often takes place as a result of teachers' participation in everyday activities in their working contexts and is also influenced by their surrounding environments. A sort of contextual learning is accordingly suggested; and this highlights a need for one to understand teacher learning in the context of globalisation. In addition, as expressed above, Henze *et al* (2009) claim that many writers prescribe how teachers should learn, neglecting how the process does in fact take place. Henze *et al's* (2009) claim thus indicated a necessity, and aroused an interest in me, to explore how teachers learn professionally in this era of "globalisation" as this has been neglected by existing literature.

At present, education in South Africa has been described by Bloch (2009) as a national disaster. Bloch (2009) argues that globally South African learners are routinely underachieving despite the country's status as Africa's most industrialised nation with its vastly superior resources when compared to other African countries. Echoing Brown and Lauder's (1996) claim that the economic prosperity of a nation is dependent on the educational upliftment of its citizens, Bloch (2009) contends that education is key to growing the skills required in a cut-throat competitive world. However, with reference to the superior resources mentioned above, Bloch (2009) goes on to note that because South Africa is a developing nation those resources are neither evenly distributed nor evenly available to all citizens, and so the quality of education received by citizens at present is inequitable. This position, according to Bloch (2009) is common to developing countries, as the wage impact on the quality of education in these countries appears to be stronger than what is noted in the more developed world, thus in a country like South Africa, this position often perpetuates and in some instances accentuates inequality among individuals. Bloch (2009) goes as far as arguing that our schooling system is enforcing the social and economic marginalisation of the poor and vulnerable. This comes as many learners experience a reality of simply getting thrown out of the system



with little or no qualifications when their twelve years are up. Therefore a vast number of learners are left perpetually disadvantaged and unable to compete with other South African learners, who are the elite few who will “make it.” But even when taking into consideration those who do get through, it is noted by Bloch (2009) that there still remains insufficient graduates for South Africa to compete globally. South Africa thus routinely comes last on international scores, with the vast majority of our learners who are schooled in poor and often rural schools lagging even further behind than the so called “elite few” who get to attend wealthier, and often more advanced schools (advanced in respect of the availability of human and physical resources). It therefore appears as though our rural and poor schools are forming a second system of education which traps learners behind the massive blocks of the second economy, a second economy being one which is riddled with unemployment and poverty, which essentially means that the parents who are faced with unemployment and poverty often have to watch their children suffer too, as at present one is required to buy the opportunities for one’s child to survive in a globally competitive market. This sad state of affairs had to receive mention in my study as Bloch (2009) claims, and I agree, that if one cannot admit how bad the situation is, then one cannot begin to fix it. In addition, these circumstances form the backdrop against which my study takes place.

However, Claassen (1999) notes that developing countries like South Africa can seldom be classified in accordance with a single state of affairs, as there often exists unequal and uneven development resulting in the formation of various pockets of circumstances. Thus, in the midst of the situation described above, what Christie (2001) refers to as resilient schools, do exist. These resilient schools are described by Christie (2001, p. 45) as “schools that thrive despite their contexts of adversity.” Bloch (2009) claims that with respect to our current education system perhaps one should get a glimpse of what these thriving schools are doing in order to understand what needs to be done. Bloch (2009) makes reference to one rural school in particular, who improved their pass rate of 18% in 1998 to 91% in 2003. It was noted that this particular school had academic streams and sports clubs which enabled learners to travel as far afield as Robben Island, Cape point, Pretoria police museum etc. In this school six learners were on tertiary bursaries, and

many students got to enter Olympiads where they fared relatively well when compared to their more advantaged counterparts. Bloch (2009) also makes reference to several other rural schools who are thriving despite their environments, and what is of significance to my study is that many of these schools attribute their success to the people who are involved in the schools, claiming that they are simply prepared to work and learn effective approaches to teaching and learning. This takes one back to a central focus of my study, that of teacher professional learning, as inherent in the success of the schools described by Bloch (2009) is the fact that the teachers involved are prepared, and enabled, to learn and grow so as to enable learning and growth for the learners which is suitable for this competitive age.

Christie (2001) in her article on resilient schools identified six features common to all. The six features identified were the following: Centrality of learning, Christie (2001) explained that schools which viewed teaching and learning on the part of both teachers and learners as their primary purpose tended to thrive, good leadership was also identified with Christie (2001) claiming that rulers who were accountable and interested in the development of all (including teaching staff) proved to run efficient schools, Safety and organisation was yet another feature identified by Christie (2001) as she claimed that environments free of violence in which learning on the part of teachers and learners was organised proved to yield resilient schools. Authority and discipline was also seen as a feature for resilient schools, as well as A culture of concern, in that each person should be concerned about the development of the next, and finally, a sense of responsibility was identified by Christie (2001) as yet another feature of resilient schools. Christie (2001) argued that schools that moved away from a position of dependency on others for improvement and development towards a position of active agency tended to thrive. Thus, taking into account Bloch's (2009) description of schools that are thriving despite being classified as poor and rural, as well as Christie's (2001) identification of common features amongst schools which she found to be resilient, it seems apparent that the current state of education in South Africa is not entirely bad. What has been highlighted here is that often teaching and learning can and does thrive where individuals are prepared to actively take charge of their own learning and development so as to enable

themselves to teach and develop others. Teacher professional learning as it is taking place against the backdrop of the circumstances expressed above, thus requires attention, and so a need and motivation for my study is accentuated in the brief contextual account of South Africa's current education system which has been provided.

Remaining on the rationale of my study, on a more personal level, I have been a geographer at heart for as long as I can remember. I have taught and learned in this era of globalisation myself, and I have observed instances of disregard for spatial awareness on the part of many teachers. I am thus left intrigued in exploring how teachers learn professionally in this era of globalisation, and I also remain hopeful that my study will have some bearing on the minds of teacher education curriculum developers, so that they may be cognisant of the environments in which teachers find themselves having to learn professionally when designing curricula for teacher learning, and in particular teacher professional learning. My hope that cognisance will be taken of the environments in which teachers learn professionally also extends to other parties who play vital roles in the professional development of teachers and their professional learning, such as Department of Education (DoE) officials who run teacher training workshops as well as teachers themselves, who according to Lieberman and Mace (2008), can take charge of their own professional learning in a globalised era.

A dominant mode of teacher professional learning is narrative inquiry (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000). The dominant mode of teacher professional learning that emerges in this study is learning in context. The sort of context that appears most prominent is one in which knowledge from a variety of sources is shared and welcomed, and so knowledge from a variety of sources often converges, however the sharing of this knowledge is regarded as being dependent on the presence of expertise. The expertise, to which I refer, is considered necessary by the six participants in this study to facilitate the process of teacher professional learning in their contexts, which has appeared as being most prominent in the view of these six teachers. The convergence of knowledge from a variety of sources is characteristic of globalisation, which tends to merge knowledge and its varying sources of origin (Claassen, 1999). Thus, the relationship between

globalisation and how teacher professional learning is taking place contemporarily is, to an extent, revealed; and so a need to understand this relationship is highlighted.

The participants selected for this study were limited to just six practicing teachers engaged in MEd studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). They were each carefully selected in that they were engaged in Master's studies, and, through their studies have been exposed to global discourses. To elaborate on this point, in their studies they have been required to use information gathering technologies, and have been exposed to literature on teacher professional learning that does not only provide one with a local and a global perspective on teacher learning, but in some instances speaks directly about the relationships between teachers' professional learning and the phenomenon of "globalisation." It was thus conceived that each of these participants were exposed to globalisation in some form. This therefore made it possible for me to fathom the links between globalisation and teacher professional learning as conceived by these participants.

**Focus of the study:**

The focus of this study is on teachers' conceptions of "Globalisation" and its relationship to how teachers learn professionally. The methodological approach is a case study of teachers currently engaged in Master's studies, who have been exposed to global discourses through their studies.

**Purpose of the study:**

The study is framed by three objectives. The main objective is to explore the relationship between teachers' conceptions of "globalisation" and their professional learning. Given that the teachers selected for this study have been exposed to global discourses, it provided an opportunity to explore whether this exposure influences their professional learning in any way. However, in order to explore this relationship I first needed to acquire an understanding of these teachers' conceptions about the phenomenon

“globalisation” as well as their understanding of “teacher professional learning,” and whether or not these conceptions did in any way differ from or coincide with what exists in literature. My second objective was then to explore the selected teacher’s conceptions of “teacher professional learning.” Once those two objectives had been achieved, I was in a position to proceed to the third and main objective, which was to explore the relationship between teachers’ conceptions of “globalisation” and their professional learning.

**The key questions framing this study are:**

- 1: What are teachers’ conceptions of globalisation?
- 2: What are teachers’ conceptions of teacher professional learning, and its relationship to globalisation?

**Format of the study:**

Chapter one provides a brief introduction to the study highlighting the focus, purpose, context and rationale of the study. Brief comments are made concerning the participants and the manner in which they were selected so as to orientate the reader in respect of the origin of the data that emerges and is discussed in this study. Globalisation and its influence on education is briefly discussed so as to assist in setting the context in which this study was conducted, both in respect of one’s physical surrounds as well as one’s literary surrounds concerning globalisation and education.

Chapter two, which is the literature review chapter, provides depth and insight into existing literature surrounding globalisation as a phenomenon, teacher professional learning as an integral part of teacher education; and most importantly, for the purposes of my study, the relationship between globalisation and teacher professional learning. Some of the key themes emerging from literature were: globalisation and its relation to teacher education; teacher professional learning in a time of globalisation; teachers’

conceptions of professional learning; as well as the contextual nature of teacher professional learning.

Chapter three focuses on the research design and methodology of the study. The selection of participants and the data production procedures are described, explained and justified. The paradigm in which I positioned myself as a researcher is explained and justified, and a brief biography of each participant is provided.

Chapter four provides an analysis of the data obtained. In this chapter the spoken words of participants are grouped into themes which were common amongst most, if not all, of the participants. In some instances inferences are drawn from the participants' spoken words and are supported by literature, whereas in other instances literature is relied on merely to support a link or highlight a contradiction between existing literature and the participants' conceptions.

Chapter five is the concluding chapter in which findings and recommendations are highlighted and discussed. The emergent findings from the analysis chapter are pulled together and discussed in an integrated way, resulting in the emergence of four integrated meta-themes namely: globalisation, teacher professional learning, retrogression and inequity; globalisation, teacher professional learning and contradictions; globalisation, contexts and teacher professional learning; as well as globalisation, teacher professional learning and not learning. Recommendations are made both in respect of each of the meta-themes as well as in respect of further research with a similar, if not identical, focus.

## **Chapter two**

### **Reviewing literature: a theoretical unpacking of teacher professional learning in the context of globalisation**

#### **Introduction:**

The previous chapter introduced the study and provided a rationale for the focus on teachers' conceptions of globalisation and teacher professional learning, as well as the relationship between the two. This chapter provides an exposition of literature which accentuates what writers have said and are still saying about globalisation and teacher professional learning; and in some instances the relationship between globalisation and teacher professional learning is discussed to an extent. Common themes emerging from the selected body of literature will be highlighted and the writers' similar, and in some cases varying, arguments will be pulled together to comprise a composite representation of what is currently being said with regard to the focus of this study. Each theme is discussed in turn, and the inseparable nature of globalisation and teacher learning is revealed. It is crucial to note that this review of literature has an additional agenda in my study in that it provides a theoretical framework for my study.

#### **The phenomenon of globalisation and its relation to teacher education:**

Living in an age of globalisation, means that time and space are compressed, resulting in a single global village (Claassen, 1999). Like any village, it has a market place, which is highly competitive. South Africa is part of this global village with its citizens often having to compete as well as having to strive for economic upliftment to ensure their survival. The economic prosperity of a nation, according to Brown and Lauder (1996), is dependent on the educational upliftment of its citizens; and the upliftment of any society, according to Claassen (1999), is highly dependent on such a society's quality of education. With the need for economic prosperity and economic prosperity being

dependent on “educational upliftment,” it becomes apparent that “globalisation” and “education” are inseparable concepts. At present, as it is teachers who are the primary administrators of formal education, I argue that attention must be paid to the education received by teachers, in other words, a focus on teacher education is an obligation.

Globalisation is a phenomenon that encompasses a general increase in trans-national flows of goods, services, money, ideas, peoples and cultures, and it also draws attention to new forms of interaction and engagement that are produced (Smith, 2002). In particular the new terrains produced by these dimensions of globalisation mean that cultures are frequently forced to rub against each other in time and space; this happens in conjunction with changes in media and communication technologies that have had the effect of shrinking the globe (Morley & Robbins, 1995). Regarding education, Hoban (2005) contends that a direct consequence of globalisation is that schools find themselves dealing with increasing political, cultural and social diversities while knowledge continues to grow exponentially causing greater competitiveness between states and individuals, which ultimately means that schools are required to prepare individuals for survival in competitive spaces.

Both Brown and Lauder (1996) and Claassen (1999) contend that the quality of a nation’s education and training system can be seen to hold the key to future economic prosperity. Prosperity however is no guarantee because education is prey to external forces like globalisation and competitiveness. The education profession is changing in the sense that teachers now need to learn to meet the demands of the present, for instance teachers need to familiarise themselves with classroom technologies such as smart-boards, as well as understand trending approaches to teaching and learning, such as learner centeredness (Capper, Fitzgerald, Weldon & Wilson, 2000). Attention must thus be paid to teacher professional learning as it is taking place contemporarily. The need for a focus on present day teacher professional learning is supported by Henze *et al’s* (2009, p.184) claim that, “[t]heories and models of teacher learning already exist, but many of these prescribe how teachers should learn, neglecting how the process actually takes place.”



Indeed, a focus on how teacher professional learning is taking place at present is necessary.

### **Teacher professional learning in a time of globalisation:**

Teacher professional learning, according to Wilson and Berne (1999) is an ongoing process of development. Evans (2002) makes mention of teachers' professional development involving their investigating of their own practices to construct their own theories of teaching. By Evan's (2002) own admission, teacher professional development will occur in a learning-by-doing approach. Evan's (2002) asserts that teachers will acquire new knowledge and perspectives from interactions with peers and learners and from planning activities and teaching. This claim can be seen to be supported by Fraser, Kennedy, Reid and Mckinney (2007) who argue that teachers should operate not only as teachers, but as learners as well. Fraser *et al* (2007) go as far as echoing one of the roles of the current Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), namely, for teachers to be life-long learners with an emphasis on setting the agenda and being actively engaged in an experiential process.

The call by Fraser *et al* (2007) for teachers to be learners in order to effect teacher professional learning, fits in with Evans's (2002) idea of teachers learning-by-doing, an idea which was reiterated by Henze *et al* (2009) who identify "learning by doing" as one of four categories of teacher professional learning strategies, the other three being "learning in interaction", "learning by reading", and "learning by thinking". In support of the idea of teachers learning by doing, one must note that Shulman (1997) argued that theories developed independently of practice are either wrong or dangerously incomplete. The reason, Shulman (1997) contends, is that teachers who take the time to learn from experience through trying out theories can be argued to have experience. Shulman (1997) goes on to distinguish such teachers (those who can claim to have experience) from those who do not learn from experience, and therefore, in his words "suffer from chronic pedagogical amnesia" (Shulman, 1997, p. 504). The former, Shulman (1997) argues may for instance be said to have twenty years of experience, while the latter can

be said to have one year of experience twenty times. In this study I am thus inclined to accept teacher professional learning in an era of globalisation as encompassing Evan's (2002) notion of "learning by doing" as well as Fraser *et al* (2007) and Henze *et al's* (2009) idea of teachers "learning through experience". This, in essence implies that teacher professional learning occurs when teachers engage in the profession, and such engagement is on-going.

### **Globalisation's influence on teachers' identities:**

Identities, according to Tatum (2000) are complex as they are shaped and formed by a variety of factors such as society, geographical location and era, to list a few. As an individual, one learns to assume an identity that results from *inter alia* the factors listed above; for the purposes of my study, attention will be paid to the era in which globalisation is rife and the resultant identities of teachers in particular.

It has been argued by Smith (2002) that teachers learn what roles are expected of them as a result of their existence within a particular context, especially in cases when the given context requires that a certain identity is assumed which encompasses one's role for purposes of survival within the given context. A relationship between teachers' roles as a result of globalisation and teachers' identities can thus be established. It is my intention in this review to elaborate on the relationship between teacher roles and teacher identities as a result of globalisation. Given that teachers' roles are learned through the learning of one's expected identity in a given context (Smith, 2002), an understanding of the relationship between teachers' roles and teachers' identities resulting from the context of globalisation will provide insight on the influence of globalisation on teachers' professional learning.

Tatum (2000) proffers that the concept of identity, in this case teacher identity, is a complex one, shaped by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. Tatum (2000) contends that the answer to the question, "who am I?" depends largely on who the world around me says I am. It is therefore not

surprising, then, that teachers view themselves in accordance with how the world at a particular point in time views them. The way in which teachers view themselves is forced into a certain framework that is determined by the present global economy limiting teachers' views to narrowed conceptions of dominant globalised identities. Such a contention finds support in the assertion put forward by Zeichner (1983, p. 3) that, "our models of both research and practice in teacher education tend to be limited in number and narrow in scope and are too closely tied to paradigmatic orientations that are dominant at particular points in time." Such orientations of teachers' identities are described by Smyth and Shacklock (1998) as including, but not being limited to, one who simply does economic work and produces individuals capable of competing in the current interwoven global market. Smyth and Shacklock (1998) argue that a shift from quality teaching (which is teaching that focuses on basics such as reading and writing) to teachers doing economic work has arisen from the necessity to satisfy the requirements of a rapidly changing world of work. "Quality" in education is regarded by Smyth and Shacklock (1998, p.229) as an "aerosol word" as the rhetoric of quality in education at present is like a fragrance of a floral bouquet to cover up the offensive odour of a decaying schooling system. Consequently, teachers working within schools will view themselves as being submerged in decay, away from a position in which they can provide quality education to learners.

### **The influence of globalisation on the teaching profession:**

Teacher professional learning is an ongoing process of learning that occurs while teachers engage in the profession, and if globalisation is taking place simultaneously, then it must have some influence on teacher learning.

### **Globalisation's influence on teacher learning in the context of the teaching profession:**

This sub-theme relates directly to a key purpose of my study, which is to explore the relationship between teachers' conceptions of globalisation and their professional

learning. In addition it has been proffered by Tonna (2007) that teacher education is impacted on directly by globalisation. Tonna (2007) also claims that the evolving nature of teacher education cannot be isolated from teacher identity, which is also constantly evolving, and as a result both teacher identity and teacher education are affected significantly by globalisation and should, therefore, not be discussed in isolation. I will now proceed to discuss the influence of globalisation on teachers' conceptions of their professional learning taking place within the profession itself in light of globalisation's influence on the profession itself. This will be done in the two forthcoming sub-themes concerning, firstly, teachers competing with the state for control over professional learning, and secondly, teachers' conceptions of professional learning in respect of supply and demand, migration and economic prosperity.

### **Teachers competing with the state for control over professional learning:**

Nation states<sup>1</sup> have become increasingly competitive, and Day and Sachs (2004) claim that decisions concerning education are no longer made by teachers, instead one increasingly encounters a position where decisions concerning teachers' work become the everyday business of the state. Wilson and Berne (1999) argue that the current calls for higher standards in respect of student outcomes have resulted in the eruption of calls for higher standards for teacher performances.

Smith (2002) argues that at a time when severe limitations are being imposed on national governments in the sphere of economic policy, education has assumed even greater political significance as greater state involvement in the management and control of education has ensued. Smith (2002) argues further that the increase in state involvement in education is not an uncomplicated or uniform process; it involves attempts on one hand

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<sup>1</sup> Nation States are described by Ramirez (2003) as states that are not conceptualized as bounded entities or closed systems. Rather, Nation States are not bounded, and are therefore affected by power and exchange processes that take place among world actors who have competing interests and interest driven goals. Ramirez (2003) argues that these actors, interests and goals are contingent on the wider world for their identities and purposes as the wider world legitimates identities, goals and technologies for attaining these goals with education arising as a favoured technology for identity affirmation and goal attainment. This, Ramirez (2003) contends, will only make sense in a world that privileges education as giving individuals and states a competitive edge.

to control curriculum content (including content for teacher education), and on the other hand, the introduction of market mechanisms such as “choice” with the meeting of supply and demand is given increasing importance in order to boost national economic prosperity. The teaching profession is thus reduced to a situation in which teachers do what is dictated to them, with very little thought expected of teachers, which consequently, calls for very little professional learning within such a profession. Teaching is, therefore, influenced to such an extent that working within the profession, as Smyth and Shacklock (1998) explain, means doing “economic work.” “Economic work”, from Smyth and Shadlock’s (1998) perspective, means that teachers become instruments of the state teaching what and how as instructed to produce citizens who possess skills and knowledge that will enable them to compete globally for the purpose of boosting the state’s global economic prosperity.

In essence, teachers find themselves in a profession where they have very little say with regard to their job functions and even less involvement in their own professional learning. Lieberman and Mace (2008) attempted to highlight a technocratic position of teachers in their letter to the future president of the United States. In the letter they called for the president to enable and to empower teachers to have more control over their professional learning, rather than allowing prevailing circumstances to dictate professional learning to them. Fraser *et al* (2007) on the point of teachers’ involvement in their professional learning suggest that teachers should be provided with opportunities that allow them greater ownership and control of their professional learning, as this is more likely to result in transformational professional learning which requires internalisation of concepts, self reflection and construction of new knowledge, which are in line with the roles of “scholar, researcher and lifelong learner” that teachers should ideally be playing, as expressed by the South African Norms and Standards for teachers (2000).

Fraser *et al* (2007) contend that models of teacher education that are influenced by dominant global agendas tend to rely too heavily on notions of business efficiency and should be seen as both limiting in scope and over-bureaucratic as too much emphasis is placed on economics and little attention is paid to what individuals may bring with them

to the profession. In place of these models that are reliant on business efficiency, Fraser *et al* (2007) argue that more democratic models should be promoted as they tend to foster teacher self-efficacy through critical collaboration and acknowledge the importance of an ethical dimension of teacher professionalism. Jarvis and Holford (2005) claim that “globalisation” may positively influence education, and in this case, teacher professional learning, since it may bring together different peoples’ ideas and resources in a world-wide pool in which teachers are expected to play the role of mergers of this world wide knowledge. However, there exists a need for transformation on the part of most practicing teachers, as many teachers at present, Jarvis and Holford (2005) argue, are not equipped to play this role. Teachers’ conceptions of their roles and the influence that globalisation has on such roles in the teaching profession at present is, argued by Tonna (2007), to be constantly evolving and therefore inseparable from the phenomenon of “globalisation”. The constantly changing roles and nature of the profession itself highlights a need for teachers to engage in professional learning in what Lieberman and Mace (2008) refer to as “learning communities.” These communities are described by Lieberman and Mace (2008) as spaces for learning which evolve over time, and revolve around norms of openness, scholarly rigor, and collaborative construction of professional knowledge which is well suited to Fraser *et al’s* (2007) call for teacher self-efficacy through critical collaboration. It is thus likely that these communities, due to their evolving nature, will evolve along with teachers’ conceptions of their roles and the teaching profession.

### **Teacher professional learning as being “out of touch”**

Some teachers according to Hoban (2005) brand teacher learning as “out of touch.” This branding Hoban (2005) argues, is due to contemporary modes of teacher learning that fails to produce teachers who are dynamic enough to meet the demands placed on them in a time of a growing global economy.

Hoban (2005) goes on to note that present day teacher learning is “out of touch” with important aspects of schooling, due to a great deal of attention being focused on social

justice issues like ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and power. Social justice issues constitute a global trend in education, as opposed to what Hoban (2005) regards as important aspects of education i.e. reading and writing. Nation states, as expressed above, attempt to influence the teaching profession to such an extent that teacher learning within the profession will be “in touch”, not with the aims of education, but with an agenda to produce individuals who can compete globally (Brown & Lauder, 1996). This idea was mooted more than a decade ago as evidenced in the words of Wilson and Berne (1999, p. 175) calling “for a wholesale rejection of the traditional, replacing the old with the new.” However, in effect nation states achieve the opposite of bringing teacher professional learning “in touch;” because a state composed of individuals who are seriously lacking in reading and writing abilities does not stand a good chance of competing on the global market, as elsewhere adult literacy rates are increasing steadily (Claassen, 1999). Accordingly, in order to compete globally one must possess a fair competence with respect to reading and writing. Ultimately teacher professional learning which is “in touch” has to focus on the most important aspects of teaching. It is therefore suggested that through professional learning strategies, teachers learn to teach about contemporary global issues, (i.e. social justice issues) and simultaneously important aspects of teaching (i.e. reading and writing). If this can be achieved, then a form of teacher professional learning suitable for these times of globalisation will be in existence.

**Teachers’ conceptions of professional learning in respect of demands placed on the profession by supply and demand, migration and economic prosperity:**

There is no consensus on what “knowing more” and “teaching better” mean (Adler, 2002), yet according to Adler (2002), the simple idea of “knowing more” and “teaching better,” in a time in which information is abundant, guides teacher professional learning. An inherent implication is that teacher professional learning that is guided by this idea will undoubtedly be overloaded as attempts are made to “know more,” as knowing more supposedly results in “teaching better.” Further to such implication, if teacher professional learning proceeds from an assumption which is not clearly defined, given that there exists no consensus on what “knowing more” and teaching better” really mean,

there can be neither a guarantee that such teacher professional learning will be beneficial to teachers, nor that any professional learning will be taking place at all.

In light of the implication stated above, it would make more sense for teacher professional learning to proceed from some well understood and established idea. From this perspective, teacher professional learning, in an era of globalisation, ought to proceed from, and have as its base, the idea that teachers must learn in such a way that they are equipped to compete in a global market, and are, furthermore, equipped to produce citizens capable of competing in a global market. These twin ideas, Hoban (2005) argues, can only be achieved if teachers are educated to meet global demands without centring on issues of supply and demand. The issue of meeting demands inherent in a global economy; as well as the issue of supply and demand, constitutes two issues to which I, in this review, will now respectively allude.

With respect to meeting the demands inherent in a global economy, and still remaining on this issue of an overloaded curriculum, Lewin (2003) proffers that much teacher learning seems to assume that in order to meet the demands of a global economy everything that is globally considered as necessary, has to be learned by teachers, and as a result the process of teacher learning becomes grossly overloaded with “trendy” content. This, Lewin (2003) argues, leads to a partial grasp of core outcomes which ultimately means that poorly grasped methods of teaching, results in poorly delivered lessons for learners in schools. Often the teachers concerned know no better. Thus, it would appear that contemporary teacher professional learning, merely through its very existence in these times of a growing global economy is inherently limited in the sense that teachers are unable to learn sufficiently to adequately grasp effective teaching approaches.

Based on the above, teachers whose learning is limited to the extent that they only obtain a partial grasp of core outcomes will naturally possess a limited view of themselves as professionals. This highlights a contemporary need for teacher professional learning that is neither overloaded, with what are most likely irrelevant issues at the overloaded



expense of what is important, nor limiting. Thus, in this respect, and taking into consideration a unique South African context in which issues of redress and its accompanying demand for curriculum reform, appear to be the driving forces behind contemporary teacher education curricula (Adler, 2002). One should accordingly call for teacher professional learning which is not overloaded, but rather allows for quality teacher learning which addresses issues of redress and curriculum reform over a longer period of time.

Globalisation contributes tremendously to placing limitations on teacher professional learning through states becoming more and more involved in teacher learning (Day & Sachs, 2004), and South Africa is no exception in this regard. As Manik (2005) explains, South Africa is part of an international labour market and teachers are responding to a global trend of supply and demand. Manik (2005) goes on to highlight that economically, the United Kingdom (UK) has the strongest currency in the world and it is performing well against the South African Rand. It seems that from a financial perspective teachers are drawn to countries such as the UK. This suggests that rather than attempting to entice teachers to remain in South Africa for financial gains, South Africa may be far more likely at succeeding in enticing teachers to remain in the country by the upliftment of the profession in terms of other aspects, such as promoting a positive teacher identity with meaningful teacher professional learning.

Keeping teachers in the country may be achieved through an approach to professional learning that focuses on promoting a sense of pride in terms of their identities as South African teachers, rather than subjecting them to professional learning that strips them of their local identity. Lieberman and Mace (2008) argue that teachers can be empowered to take charge of their professional learning and identities as professionals, if districts and states support professional learning communities by providing teachers with continuous blocks of time devoted to a variety of ways for teachers to teach their peers the strategies that have been successful with their own students. In so doing this, one may be engaged in more meaningful professional learning and accordingly one's sense of pride in one's local identity as a professional may be uplifted. Thus, a skills acquisition emphasis may

result in teachers being less likely to leave the country to advance themselves economically in the highly competitive global market to which they are exposed and are aware of.

### **The influence of globalisation on the nature of teachers' work:**

A summary of literature concerning globalisation's influence on the nature of teachers' work will now be provided. Attention will be drawn particularly to how globalisation influences the work in which teachers engage, which ultimately influences their professional learning. In addition the contextual nature of teacher professional learning, according to literature, will be discussed; and suggestions concerning how teacher professional learning ought to be taking place in an era of globalisation will be alluded to.

### **The influence of globalisation on teacher professional learning taking place through the work teachers engage in:**

Tonna (2007) argues that very often when states allow "globalisation" to influence teacher learning a paradox emerges: the intention is to support teacher advancement through learning; however the result in some instances appears to be a limited form of learning. This kind of learning can be linked to the way "globalisation" is conceived of, and the role one assigns to teachers in relation to it, often resulting in teacher learning which is limited to fit the role assigned to teachers as a result of "globalisation." Tonna's (2007) contention finds support in the assertion put forward by Zeichner (1983, p. 3) earlier, that, "our models of both research and practice with respect to teacher learning tend to be limited in number and narrow in scope and are too closely tied to paradigmatic orientations that are dominant at particular points in time." Tonna (2007) asserts that globalisation engulfs nations in a whirlwind-like global market, as its effects, particularly on education are inescapable. Tonna's (2007) assertion may gain clarity if one were to view it while bearing in mind Brown and Lauder's (1996) argument that in the current global economy the wealth of nations remains highly dependent on the upgrading of the quality of human resources; and so practicing teachers are supposedly

upgraded through their professional learning. In addition to Brown and Lauder's (1996) and Tonna's (2007) arguments, Smyth and Shacklock (1998) claim that teachers become far too engaged in doing economic work, and lose sight of all other aspects of teacher work, not to mention their own learning. The influence of "globalisation" on teacher professional learning thus appears to be very contentious.

Lewin (2003) highlights that many teacher education programmes, including both those aimed at initial teacher education and those aimed at teachers' professional learning seem to assume that in order to meet the demands inherent in a global economy everything considered relevant at the time of the programme has to be taught in the programme concerned, and as a result many programmes are grossly overloaded. Overloaded programmes, Smyth and Shacklock (1998) argue, lead to a partial grasp of core outcomes which ultimately means that poorly grasped methods of teaching result in the academic demise of many learners, as explained previously. Thus, learning programmes, and teacher professional learning in particular, merely through trying to include everything that is considered relevant in an age of globalisation (to supposedly keep up with global trends and enhance a nation's competitiveness) do in fact tend to harm both teachers and learners; the result is merely transmissive learning, which is a type of learning that neither supports professional autonomy nor links theory with practice (Kennedy, 2005). Thus, further exploration into the content of teacher education programmes is required so as to reduce or eliminate the harm being done by these programmes to both teachers and learners.

**Teacher professional learning which occurs "while doing" is contextual:**

Teacher professional learning, according to Day and Sachs (2004), is contextual and therefore the context in which teacher learning occurs should be considered as far as possible. Day and Sachs (2004) argue that many teachers consider their work and professional learning to be affected by their contextual settings and Ho and Law (2009) contend that presently there exists a need to rethink teacher education in terms of the need to be aware of the socio-political environment in which it operates, and within

which it makes education socially relevant. The socio-political environment to which Ho and Law (2009) refer is described by them as an environment in which a process of change results in uneven development and a partial and a contingent transformation of cultural, economic and political structures occurs. Ho and Law (2009) explain that these developments cause contradictory impacts on the economic, political, cultural, social and educational dimensions of human activities which poses challenges to the survival of nation states as competition for survival increases in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. Teachers have to work within this context, and so the nature of their work changes to suit contemporary trends. For instance, in order to equip learners to compete in a global market, entrepreneurial skills have been incorporated in the curricula of many schools (Adler, 2002).

Lewin (2003) calls for current teacher learning to take cognisance of the contextual settings of the teachers concerned rather than to be driven by global assumptions which are often false. The global assumptions for schooling to which Lewin (2003) refers include, *inter alia*, issues of social justice as well as an understanding of the commercial world. Brown and Lauder (1996) highlight that often basic skills, which are in greater demand such as reading and writing are overlooked. The nature of teachers' work, thus changes to such an extent that focus is shifted to satisfying the global assumptions of education. In a globally driven economic market schools often become consumed by attracting parents and learners through the discourses of global assumptions that invariably they lose sight of just what an impact their actions have on teachers' work which requires drastic change (Smyth and Shacklock, 1998). In most instances schools are either directly or indirectly influenced by "globalisation" to "get the job done" to meet the needs of supply and demand (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). In such instances, Evans (2002) claims that teacher learning becomes far more product-, rather than process-focused; and so teacher learning is relegated to the backseat to meet global needs and, more troubling, teachers conceive the nature of their profession as either not containing any professional learning, or simply containing it as a by-product of an agenda to satisfy global demands (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998). Teachers find themselves having to teach, and to engage in matters that are occurring across the globe and, they are also

alerted to so-called “greener pastures” (Manik, 2005). For example, South Africans are in the majority when compared to all foreign teachers in British classrooms (Manik, 2005). Consequently, there is much concern about the impact of the migration of teachers on the future of education in South Africa. Each year about 17 500 teachers are lost through natural attrition and only 2 500 people are being trained as teachers (Manik, 2005). Thus, teachers working in a developing country like South Africa are clearly exposed to the phenomenon of teacher recruitment, which results in teacher migration adding to “brain drain” in South Africa. These are but some of the surrounding and prevailing conditions/environments that tend to change the nature of South African teachers’ work. Locally, teachers do not only teach about issues and conditions abroad, but in some instances are themselves drawn to the conditions abroad, the same conditions about which they have to teach (Manik, 2005).

De Souza (1998) explains that the global and the local cannot be separated from each other as they both exist simultaneously and are constantly interweaving as increasingly local knowledge is shared globally. Capper *et al* (2000) have claimed that if it is as true for teachers as it is for students that understanding is shaped and determined by context, then teachers need to learn in a setting that not only allows for the provision of their pre-existing knowledge about teaching, but also allows for “a dynamic and ecological approach” (Hoban, 2005, p. 9) and such an approach needs to include the existing beliefs of teachers as well as providing an infrastructure to support them in further learning. Hoban (2005) believes that only when all players and landscapes that comprise the learning to teach environment are considered in concert will one gain a full appreciation of the inseparable web of relationships (local and global relations) that constitutes the learning to teach ecosystem. Lieberman and Mace (2008) advocate for teacher professional learning that takes place in an environment in which one never attempts to separate the global from the local, but rather attempts to merge the two as they argue, this is clearly how they exist in the world; the very world in which teachers attempt to equip learners to survive. On this point, as explained above, Lieberman and Mace (2008) suggest “learning communities” as spaces in which the two can be merged with teachers taking charge of their learning. Teacher professional learning should thus alert teachers

about the prevailing working conditions to which they will be exposed as a direct result of globalisation. In other words, teachers should be made aware of the ever changing nature of their work. And so teachers may be better equipped, or at the very least, be prepared to learn how, to deal with difficult decisions on a daily basis.

By producing these “well informed teachers” through the existence of teacher professional learning, teachers will be more suitable for these times of an ever growing, and evolving global market than teachers who are not informed about these conditions, but are nevertheless expected to perform on a daily basis.

### **How teacher professional learning ought to take place in light of its context:**

Focusing more specifically on the context of South Africa one must not lose sight of the reform and renewal agenda in respect of teacher learning across the world; teacher professional learning currently underway in South Africa is taking place in a space where there exists equally pressing needs for redress and repair (Adler, 2002). As noted by Adler (2002), apartheid produced a grossly unequal society and damaged the essential fabric of society, with consequences which require repair. It is thus not surprising that redress in education across all institutions in South Africa is therefore seen as an imperative.

In order to achieve the desired redress, the starting point would be in teacher education itself, more specifically, a teacher professional learning that takes place around issues of redress. Thus, in order to ensure such delivery, teachers must be exposed to learning that takes cognisance of issues of redress, and therefore equips them to educate others with respect to these issues. This claim is supported Adler *et al's* (1997) noting that the White Paper for Education (1997) identified teachers as key agents of change. In the context of South Africa, teachers must therefore learn how to educate for reform and renewal, a global trend, while at the same time educating for redress and repair, a local need.

### Theoretical framework:

In an age of globalisation the theoretical underpinning for teacher professional learning encompasses the following characteristics from the review of literature. One should note that characteristic of globalisation, multiple interpretations of teacher professional learning in an age of globalisation have been expressed below.

| Theorist                   | Characteristic  |
|----------------------------|---|
| Zeichner (1983)            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Models of both research and practice with respect to teacher learning tend to be limited in number, narrow in scope, and are too closely tied to paradigmatic orientations that are dominant at particular points in time.</li> </ul>  |
| Evans (2002)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher learning occurs in a learning-by-doing approach.</li> <li>- A focus on supply and demand means that teacher professional learning becomes far more product-, rather than process-focused.</li> </ul>   |
| Smith (2002)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers learn the identity expected of them in a global context.</li> <li>- Teachers do what is dictated to them, and this calls for very little professional learning.</li> </ul>  |
| Lewin (2003)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher professional learning is becoming grossly overloaded with trendy content.</li> </ul>   |
| Hoban (2005)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher learning is, at times, out of touch with demands inherent in a growing global economy; and remains distracted by social justice issues.</li> <li>- Teacher professional learning in an era of globalisation must be equipped to produce citizens capable of competing in a global market.</li> </ul> |
| Kennedy (2005)             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning programmes and teacher professional learning try to include everything that is considered relevant in an age of globalisation.</li> </ul>   |
| Manik (2005)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers are responding to a global trend of supply and demand.</li> </ul>   |
| Fraser <i>et al</i> (2007) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers should operate as both teachers and learners.</li> <li>- Teachers learn through experience.</li> </ul>  |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
|                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher learning is influenced by, and so becomes too dependent on, dominant global agendas such as business efficiency.</li> <li>- Teacher learning becomes too dependent on dominant global agendas.</li> </ul>   |
| Tonna (2007)              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The evolving nature of teacher learning makes it inseparable from the phenomenon of globalisation.</li> <li>- When globalisation influences teacher learning, the result is a limited form of learning.</li> </ul>  |
| Lieberman and Mace (2008) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers can be empowered to take charge of their professional learning.</li> <li>- Teacher professional learning should not separate global and local learning.</li> </ul>   |
| Henze <i>et al</i> (2009) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A focus on how teacher professional learning is taking place at present is necessary.</li> <li>- The four categories of teacher professional learning strategies are learning by doing, learning in interaction, learning by reading and learning by thinking.</li> </ul> |
| Ho and Law (2009)         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There exists a need to rethink teacher learning in terms of the current socio-political environment.</li> </ul>   |

### **Conclusion:**

In this chapter I have highlighted through literature, the key emergent themes centred on globalisation, teacher professional learning, and in some instances the relationship between the two. Globalisation has emerged as a contemporary phenomenon which forms an integral part of the context in which teacher professional learning is taking place. Globalisation appears to be linked to an increase in competition, which has resulted in the teaching profession coming under increasing strain, as teachers are now required to equip learners to compete in this new environment. Accordingly, teachers are required to learn how to fill this role of professionals who are tasked with equipping future generations for a globally competitive market, a role which is fairly new, and currently demanded of them. Thus teacher professional learning appears to bear some



relationship to globalisation. The next chapter explains the methodological approach adopted by me, in this study.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

#### **Introduction:**

In order to answer my research questions of “What are teachers’ conceptions of globalisation?” as well as, “What are teachers’ conceptions of professional learning and its relationship to globalisation?” the methodological approach which I adopted was a case study of practicing teachers exposed to global discourses through their postgraduate studies.

In this chapter the research methodology adopted in my study, the selection of participants and data collection procedure will be described, explained and justified. The ethical considerations and limitations of the study, as well as the paradigm in which the study is positioned will be outlined and discussed.

#### **The interpretivist paradigm:**

In my study, I explored teachers’ conceptions of “globalisation” and the relationship, if any, of this phenomenon to teachers’ professional learning; my study was thus situated within the interpretivist paradigm. Broadly speaking, the interpretivist paradigm, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994) is geared towards understanding and exploration.

A qualitative approach was adopted by me, in this study because qualitative research, in contrast to the quantitative approach, is an inquiry process of understanding (Creswell, 2009). From this perspective, a researcher develops a complex, holistic picture. Rather than getting a broad picture from a large number of participants (as would likely be the case with a quantitative approach), I sought a complex, holistic picture of teacher learning in respect of just six participants.

**Case studies:**

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) contend that case studies strive to portray a thick description of participant's lived experiences of thoughts about, and feelings for, a situation. This serves as a justification for my use of a case study as it was precisely the thick descriptions of the selected teachers' lived experiences of globalisation's influence on their professional learning, as conceived by them, which I wished to elicit.

Case studies according to Cohen *et al* (2011) can represent discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints of participants, and are thus capable of offering some support to alternative interpretations. In my study, I wished to explore six teachers' conceptions of globalisation's relation to professional learning; and I wished for this to be expressed by this particular group of practicing, and yet somewhat diverse teachers. A case study, was thus deemed appropriate for the purposes of eliciting what may be alternative interpretations concerning the influence of globalisation on teacher professional learning; as teachers whose conceptions differed from the majority of the group's conceptions were given due regard in that they were never dismissed, but recorded as equally important.

Cohen *et al* (2011) also describe case studies as a step to action in that they begin in a world of action, and contribute to it as their insights may be directly interpreted and put to use, for instance in respect of teacher development. I wished for my study to have some bearing on the minds of teacher education curriculum developers so that they may be cognisant of the environments in which teachers find themselves having to learn professionally when designing curricula for teacher learning, and in particular teacher professional learning in this era of globalisation. Furthermore, much data around teacher professional learning, in particular, what, how and where learning is taking place, and should be taking place was generated. Thus in respect of case studies being a step to action as expressed by Cohen *et al* (2011), and taking into consideration my intention for this study to have some bearing on the mind of those who strongly influence teacher learning at present, the use of a case study received further support and was thus deemed appropriate for my study.

**Focus groups:**

In my study, data was collected through a focus group discussion, and such discussion was voice recorded. As I wanted to obtain a rich understanding of teachers' conceptions of globalisation, and its relationship to teacher professional learning, a focus group seemed most appropriate. Gibbs (1997) argues that focus groups are a form of qualitative research and they help to explore topics with an emphasis on how views and attitudes change when respondents discuss answers with each other. The use of a focus group was appropriate as a link between the evolving views of respondents and Tonna's (2007) explanation of the constantly changing and evolving nature of both globalisation and teacher education, could be drawn. In essence, given that Tonna (2007) argues that with globalisation the world, and ideas about teacher education in particular, experience multiple changes that occur at some stages simultaneously; the generation of data that would be subjected to converging influences, possibly from other members of the focus group, resulted in constant evolution of such data. Furthermore, focus groups by nature, are interactive, capitalising on communication between participants (Hyden & Bulow, 2003). In essence, the researcher does not ask each person to respond to a question, instead participants are encouraged to talk to one another around the topic of focus, and so the data yielded is collective data, as opposed to an individual view (Kitzinger, 1995). This method of data collection was appropriate for a study focusing on globalisation, as the phenomenon of globalisation is associated with increased communication among many, despite distance and diversity, as well as simultaneous generation and sharing of ideas (Claassen, 1999). In addition, just as globalisation merges multiple ideas rather than focusing on an individual's single idea, Hyden and Bulow (2003) explain that focus groups promote interaction among participants, and this often results in the merging of ideas. A consequence of a focus group is that participants' collective agendas can dominate the discussion, instead of the researcher's agenda (White & Thomson, 1995). This can, as White and Thomson (1995) explain, be viewed as a limitation to focus groups because participants' agendas may result in the discussion going off topic, and so yielding data that cannot be used for the purposes intended by the study in question. In order to safeguard against such occurrence Cohen *et al* (2007) suggest that the researcher

ensure that the participants selected possess the particular characteristics, knowledge, and experience in the area of focus so as to increase the likelihood that a meaningful discussion will ensue. In the instance of my study, each of the six participants possessed the necessary characteristics to participate. In other words they had exposure to globalisation discourses, they were articulate, they all had agency to debate and express their views and they provided sufficient variation in terms of race, gender, experience and viewpoints. It was therefore considered unlikely that the discussion would veer so far off topic that the data produced would be useless in my study. Additionally, a focus group approach meant that subjectivity was neutralised. Some of the participants were known to me and were good friends. Thus, this approach meant that my presence was mooted and in some ways neutralised. The use of a focus group discussion resulted in the participants speaking to each other and not directly to me.

Cohen *et al* (2007) explain that focus groups require six to eight participants; my study thus included six participants in the focus group discussion. The use of a focus group was useful in this study as focus groups are economical on time, and produce a large amount of data in a short period of time (Gibbs, 1997). Further to this, focus groups shift the spotlight from the individual to the phenomenon under discussion, allowing for topics to be discussed beyond personal perspectives. Thus, participants who may not have seen a link between “globalisation” and professional learning with respect to their own professional learning, as did happen in my study, were less likely to feel discouraged from sharing their views with the group. This increased the possibility of a rich discussion, and generated rich data with a variety of views and conceptions emerging.

### **Selection of participants:**

Six practicing teachers engaged in MEd studies at UKZN participated in my study. They were each carefully selected because they are teachers who have been exposed to global discourses through their studies. For instance, they have been required to use information gathering technologies, and have been exposed to literature on teacher professional learning that does not only provide a global perspective on teacher learning, but in some

instances speaks directly about the relationships between teachers' professional learning and the phenomenon of "globalisation." It was thus expected that each of these participants were exposed to globalisation in some form. This therefore made it possible to consider exploring the links between globalisation and teacher professional learning based on the conceptions expressed by these participants. Further to the above, in view of present technological developments which appear to make the world a smaller place; the selection of teachers who showed a propensity to learn was appropriate for the purposes of this study.

In this study a refinement for the selection of participants took place in two ways, firstly through dimensional sampling, and then through the use of homogenous sampling. To explain dimensional sampling, it should first be noted that on the one hand Maree (2007) argues that quota sampling strives to represent significant characteristics of the wider population by presenting these in the proportions in which they can be found in the wider population. Cohen *et al* (2007) on the other hand claim that dimensional sampling is a further refinement of quota sampling in which some, but not all of the differing characteristics found in the wider population may be present. Homogenous sampling is explained by Creswell and Garrett (2008) as a type of sampling in which the researcher selects individuals or sites that possess a similar trait or characteristic to narrow the focus of a study.

I wished for the participants in my study to represent, as far as possible, the diversity amongst teachers. Quota sampling as a method for the selection of participants was thus initially considered. However, this would possibly have resulted in this study requiring a larger number of participants than the one initially intended, a further possible obstacle would have been my experiencing of difficulties in obtaining proportions representative of the wider population from students who were engaged in Master's studies. Thus considering Cohen *et al's* (2007) explanation of dimensional sampling, it seemed only logical to opt for dimensional sampling instead of quota sampling. I thus selected participants who differed in respect of gender and race as far as was possible; as well as participants who came from both high school and primary school teaching backgrounds.

Nevertheless, given that the aim of my study was to explore teachers' conceptions of globalisation and its relationship to their learning, as explained above, a commonality amongst the participants had to be that they were each exposed to global discourses in some form. The use of homogenous sampling was thus preferred by me as it ensured that my study's focus was narrowed down to globalisation in particular, and its influence on teacher professional learning, with specific reference to the six selected teachers. In addition, the deliberate selection of participants possessing particular characteristics, in this case the characteristic sought was that they were each exposed to global discourses in some form, is described as purposive sampling by Cohen *et al* (2007), with the purpose of such sampling also being to assist the researcher in narrowing the focus of the study, in this case the purpose was to narrow the focus of the study to teachers who are engaged in masters studies and are therefore exposed to global discourses. Purposive sampling was thus also employed in my study.

### **The research participants:**

The six teachers who participated in my study, all of whom are either primary or high school teachers in government schools, have been assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. The following pseudonyms thus refer: Joanne, Valerie, Sindisiwe, Beverly, Daina and Neville. A brief description of each of the participants follows:

Joanne:

Joanne is an intermediate phase teacher at a primary school, who teaches Mathematics, English, EMS and Arts and Culture. She has thirty three years of teaching experience and holds the qualifications of Bachelor of Education (Honours), Diploma in primary Education and Diploma in Remedial Education. She is a level one class teacher, currently engaged in Masters Studies at UKZN.

Valerie:

Valerie is an intermediate phase teacher at a primary school, who teaches Afrikaans as a second language, Mathematics as well as Arts and Culture. She has twenty six years of teaching experience and holds the qualifications of Bachelor of Arts, UHDE, Bachelor of Education and a Further Diploma in Educational Management. She is a level one class teacher currently engaged in Masters Studies at UKZN.

Sindisiwe:

Sindisiwe is a Grade three foundation phase teacher at a primary school, who teaches Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. She has twenty three years of teaching experience and holds the qualifications of Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Education (Honours). She is a department head at her school, and is currently engaged in Masters Studies at UKZN.

Beverly:

Beverly is an intermediate and senior phase teacher at a primary school, who teaches Afrikaans as a second language. She has twenty six years of teaching experience and holds the qualifications of Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Arts, Junior Secondary Education Diploma and Higher Education Diploma. She is a Head of Department at her school, and currently engaged in Masters Studies at UKZN.

Daina:

Daina is a senior phase and further education and training phase teacher at a high school, who teaches English as a first language. She has twenty seven years of teaching experience, and holds the qualifications of Bachelor of Education (Honours), Bachelor of Arts, Junior Secondary Education Diploma and a Post Graduate Education Diploma in



Educational Management. She is a level one class teacher, currently engaged in Masters Studies at UKZN.

Neville:

Neville is a senior phase and further education and training phase teacher at a high school, who teaches Civil Technology, Mechanical Technology and Engineering Graphics and Design. He has twenty nine years of teaching experience, and holds the qualifications of Junior Secondary Education Diploma, Further Education Diploma, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Technology. He is a head of department at his school, and currently engaged in Masters Studies at UKZN.

| <b>Participant</b> | <b>Qualifications</b>                              | <b>Teaching Background</b> | <b>Position</b>                | <b>Teaching Subjects</b>  |
|--------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Joanne</b>      | <b>BEd (hons), Dip Primary Ed, Dip Remedial Ed</b> | <b>Primary school</b>      | <b>Level one class teacher</b> | <b>Mathematics, English, EMS, Arts and Culture</b>                              |
| <b>Valerie</b>     | <b>BA, UHDE, BEd, FDE</b>                          | <b>Primary school</b>      | <b>Level one class teacher</b> | <b>Afrikaans, Mathematics, Arts and Culture</b>                                 |
| <b>Sindisiwe</b>   | <b>BEd, BEd (hons)</b>                             | <b>Primary school</b>      | <b>HOD</b>                     | <b>Literacy, Numeracy, Life Skills</b>  |
| <b>Beverly</b>     | <b>BEd, BA, JSED, HED</b>                          | <b>Primary school</b>      | <b>HOD</b>                     | <b>Afrikaans</b>  |
| <b>Daina</b>       | <b>BEd (hons), BA, JSED, PGED</b>                  | <b>High school</b>         | <b>Level one class teacher</b> | <b>English</b>  |
| <b>Neville</b>     | <b>JSED, FED, BA, BTech</b>                        | <b>High School</b>         | <b>HOD</b>                     | <b>Civil Technology, Mechanical Technology, Engineering Graphics and Design</b> |

### **Limitations of the study:**

This study was limited to globalisation, teacher professional learning and the relationship between the two as conceived by just six teachers, teaching in KwaZulu-Natal government schools and engaged in Masters Studies at the University of KwaZulu Natal.

Thus, the findings in this research cannot be generalised to all teachers. However, generalisations were not the main purpose of my study. The main purpose of this study was to explore teachers' conceptions of globalisation and its relationship to teacher professional learning. Perhaps a larger scale study across several continents, including more participants with a vast array of socio-economic backgrounds would reveal more insight into teachers' conceptions of globalisation, and its relationship to their professional learning. However, such a study was not possible in this instance due to financial and time constraints.

The use of a focus group discussion may, as explained by Cohen *et al* (2007), have resulted in certain participants dominating the discussion while other less outgoing participants' views may not have been shared as freely as one would have desired. To counter this, I intervened during the discussion calling on specific participants to share their views in instances where I noticed that they were not getting a chance to be heard. However, the rapid rate at which data was being produced may have resulted in some instances being overlooked.

### **The research approach in tabulated form:**

Data was collected in accordance with the following data collection plan:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Who were the sources of the data?</b>           | Practicing teachers engaged in MEd studies at UKZN.  |
| <b>How many of the data sources were accessed?</b> | Six teachers were engaged in a focus group discussion around the critical questions of my study. |
| <b>Where was the data collected?</b>               | In a place of convenience for participants (on UKZN premises).                                   |
| <b>How was the data collected?</b>                 | Data was collected through a focus group discussion, and such discussion was voice recorded.     |

**Validity:**

To ensure validity as far as possible in my study, I relied on voluntary participation as well as the depth, richness and scope of the data achieved. In view of the aim to gain insight, my views and perspectives of globalisation and teacher professional learning were minimised, and during the focus group discussions I did not offer interpretations or opinions. The data and findings of this study provide a glimpse of what some teachers say and think, and readers may decide to what extent the views expressed represents or digresses from their own, which is in line with Vithal's (2003) notion of generativity. Generativity, as a validity construct, inspires a reader to decide what and how the claims in a study pertain to their own context, or experience.

**Ethical issues:**

Consent was sought from the six participants who were engaged in a focus group discussion. Consent was obtained by voluntary signing of a form of informed consent in which the aim of my study was specified as well as the approximate duration of the focus group discussion and the method by which views would be recorded (see Appendix 2). Participants were assured that they would not be disadvantaged in any way should they have chosen not to participate or if they had at a later stage chosen to leave/withdraw from my study.

My study was non-invasive in that a focus group discussion centred on teachers' conceptions of "globalisation" and its relationship to their professional learning was neither likely to pry into participant's personal lives nor elicit views that one may have wished to keep private, however participation was on a voluntary basis; and pseudonyms were used in respect of each participant to ensure anonymity.

**Conclusion:**

In this chapter the selection of the participants has been explained and justified, and a brief biography of each participant has been provided. The appropriateness for the selection of participants who appear to be exposed to global discourses and demonstrate a propensity to learn in this age of globalisation for a study focusing on globalisation's relationship to teacher professional learning has been explained. The methodological approach has been highlighted and explained with great emphasis on my decision to use a single focus group discussion for the generation of data and the justification thereof. The limitations of this study and ethical considerations have also been highlighted. The following chapter focuses on analysing the data produced in the focus group discussion.

## **Chapter four**

### **Data analysis**

#### **Introduction:**

The focus of my study was on teachers' conceptions of globalisation and its relationship to teacher professional learning. The methodological approach was a case study of practicing teachers currently engaged in Master's studies who, through their studies, appeared to be exposed to global discourses.

This chapter comprises two themes; teachers' conceptions of globalisation and, teachers' conceptions of teacher professional learning. They are unequal in length in that more data was generated for the former, resulting in a longer analysis and discussion with a greater number of sub-themes for this theme as opposed to the latter theme, which is the shorter of the two. In each of the themes I have taken direct quotations from the spoken words of the participants and analysed them. The analysis is done thematically with eight sub-themes emerging in the first theme, and just four sub-themes emerging in respect of the second theme.

#### **Theme 1: TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF GLOBALISATION**

##### **Globalisation is economics linked to access to knowledge:**

*For me globalisation refers to the convergence of economics and academics. (Neville)*

*Globalisation refers to money and finances and free market. (Joanne)*

*Looking at education we have new technologies that teachers must be familiar with and it's global in a sense because everyone has access to knowledge. (Joanne)*

*It's coming down to what you can afford, only those who can afford a global education will be able to get it. So with globalisation everything is economics now. (Daina)*

In the focus group discussion, four conceptions of globalisation which are linked to economics and access to knowledge emerged. The first conception, expressed by Neville, is that globalisation refers to the convergence of economics and academics. If one were to take into consideration all of the comments made by Neville during the discussion, one would likely conclude that his use of the word “academics” may refer to the entire schooling enterprise consisting of both teaching and learning, as well as the learning of teachers. This interpretation can be supported by the fact that Neville, later goes on to discuss his feelings that teachers need to learn about new knowledge to impart that knowledge on learners, however, he feels that this is most likely to occur in what he considers wealthier schools. Remaining on the point of teachers needing to familiarise themselves with what is “new,” it must be noted that Joanne, above, makes mention of new technologies that teachers need to be familiar with. These new technologies, referred to by Joanne, could include, but are not limited to, the use of smart boards during teaching, and the use of the internet for the preparation of lesson material, given that Joanne later explains, “Us in the government schools seldom have access to modern technologies like smart boards, and working computers with the internet.” In the extract, above, Daina makes mention of a “global education” in light of Joanne’s reference to so-called “new technologies” one may be inclined to conclude that Daina’s conception of a “global education” may refer to an education that exposes one to the “new technologies” such as smart boards and the internet. However, as expressed by Daina, only those who can afford this type of education will get it. Such conception is supported by Joanne’s claim that globalisation refers to money, finances and the free market, as well as Neville’s claim that economics and academics converge. It thus becomes apparent that

the conception that globalisation is economics linked to access to knowledge is one shared by Daina, Neville and Joanne. The idea that globalisation refers to money, finances, the free market as well as the convergence of economics and academics has been expressed by Rizvi and Lingard (2000) who claim that with the convergence of economics and academics, with reference to those who are economically advantaged, comes greater opportunities for learning; learning that may otherwise have not been possible.

**Globalisation produces new kinds of learning:**

*A kid that you're teaching today doesn't have to stick in this country, he can go overseas. So even the teaching that we give, we have to equip that child to be able to fit in everywhere. (Beverly)*

The words of Beverly, above, suggest that a kind of learning produced by globalisation is one that promotes mobility of learners. Beverly goes on to explain:

*We have to equip our learners to be able to fit in everywhere. But former model c schools<sup>2</sup> are more globalised. (Beverly)*

*In the private schools the brighter kids are teaching themselves plus they are getting tutors from other schools. So when you come from our schools, the public schools, you cannot compete with the learners from the private schools. (Neville)*

The words of Neville imply that he is of the opinion that the kind of learning to which learners are exposed in the different kinds of schools results in varying products of each kind of school with the learners who come from the so called “private schools” possessing a greater competitive edge than those learners who do not. In essence, this

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<sup>2</sup> The participants in this study did not seem to view former model C schools as government schools, however, the focus of this study is not on teachers' conceptions of different types of schools, thus the analysis will not be taken further in respect of former school categories.

reality, according to Valerie has a tendency to create, if not at least to perpetuate a capitalist society, as she explains:

*We are actually creating a more capitalist society, privatisation, the children coming from those schools go into universities. (Valerie)*

Thus, according to Valerie, the different kinds of learning created by globalisation results in some having greater access to higher education than others. Valerie's conception is supported by Neville who believes that a larger number of learners in the ex-model C schools study for the university entrance exams than the numbers presented in other government schools, as he asserts:

*In an ex-model C school, more than 90% of the learners study for the university entry exams, but in our schools only a handful of learners do. (Neville)*

Valerie's idea that the kind of learning produced by globalisation is promoting the existence of a capitalist society is echoed by Daina who states:

*It's coming down to what you can afford, only those who can afford it will be able to get it. So everything is economics now. (Daina)*

Indeed the words of these teachers make clear the fact that they are of the belief that globalisation produces new kinds of learning. In particular, these teachers conceive that globalisation is producing a kind of learning that promotes mobility. Also, from the words above, these teachers appear to conceive that globalisation is producing through the learners, products of the different kinds of schools; there also exists a belief expressed by these teachers that learners from a particular kind of school appear to have greater access to higher education. In essence, the view expressed in the words above by Valerie and Daina; that globalisation, through its influence on education, is creating a capitalist society, is justified by Neville's conception that learners who attend the so called private



schools have greater access to higher education and receive a kind of learning that promotes mobility, as opposed to their public schools counterparts. Rizvi and Lingard (2000) have put forward a similar argument contending that the effects of globalisation on education are not evenly distributed, and as a result social stratification is promoted through education. This, Rizvi and Lingard (2000) argue, perpetuates a capitalist society. This contention was later supported by Ho and Law (2009) who attempt to highlight the social relevance of education by explaining the need for an understanding of varying contexts in respect of both teachers and learners as changes associated with globalisation, according to Ho and Law (2009) have occurred at varying rates in different contexts.

**Globalisation means that you are just getting a basic something:**

*Nowadays the government is not allowing the individual to go off and teach how the individual would like. Like if you are teaching Maths now, previously you could cater for all, the smarter and the slower learners would get something different but now you are forced to follow the syllabus and just give the basics. This is because of mass production. We are actually creating a more capitalist society. Privatisation helps parents who do not want their children just receiving the basics; the children coming from those private schools go into universities. But the public school children, the bulk of them just have the basics. (Valerie)*

*But we get given this reference to teach all children so we cannot even use our creativity to differentiate the children so what we do is, if the parents are economically viable they send the children to a better school, I'm talking about the ex-model C schools where they have varying abilities separated. But we're now in the public schools, we have all the children in one class, and they have to all be taught the same. (Joanne)*

In the words above, Valerie appears to be of the view that the government is preventing individual teachers from teaching how they would like to teach. She argues that instead,

teachers are forced to just teach the basics. She attributes this largely to mass production. Joanne supports this sentiment, claiming that teachers are not allowed to use their creativity, the issue of context is alluded to by Joanne, as she makes particular reference to the public schooling context, stating that in the public schools teachers have to teach all of the learners without differentiating in accordance with learners' abilities. This feeds into Valerie's claim that mass production is, in her opinion, forcing teachers to just give the basics, and so privatisation is viewed as a way of countering a learner's simply receiving the basics. A conclusion, at which one may arrive from these words, is simply that as conceived by these teachers, globalisation has resulted in a need for mass production, which in turn has led to teachers being forced by the government to just give the basics. However, parents, according to Valerie, who wish to afford their children more than just the basics, view the private sector of schooling as a likely source of more than just the basics in education. Thus, globalisation is viewed by these teachers as possibly pushing for privatisation in respect of education, with particular reference to people who wish to get more than just the basics for their children. The promoting of privatisation in education was discussed by Astiz, Alexander and Baker (2002) who claim that in the face of global forces, changes in education are occurring so rapidly that most governments can no longer keep up. Thus, in order to prevent the collapse of education systems, a growing trend appears to be decentralising of the responsibility of educational curricular through the privatisation of education.

### **Nothing much has changed with globalisation:**

In this sub-theme, the teachers who participated in this study are referring specifically to non-change in respect of outside influences on education. For instance, in the past influences on education according to Daina, came from the apartheid era government but nowadays influences are coming from a different source, as she explains:

*We have changed the curriculum to suit the state's ideals. In the past, the apartheid government dictated what and how we should teach. This is no longer the case. (Daina)*

Daina also conceives that present influences on education are now coming from a global source. Beverly however, is of the view that this so called “global source” remains unknown. Both teachers therefore arrive at the conclusion that nothing much has changed in respect of education being influenced from the outside, the only difference being that previously teachers knew exactly the origin of the influence, i.e. the apartheid era government; but nowadays the origin of a global influence is somewhat more difficult to pinpoint. The discussion above is justified through the words of the teachers in the following extracts:

*Nowadays, with globalisation, globally, the entire world dictates what and how we should be teaching. (Daina)*

*Nothing much has changed, we were dictated to in the apartheid era, locally by the government, now we are still being dictated to, but because of globalisation it happens globally, from a global source, so we don't know exactly where this influence is coming from. (Beverly)*

*So clearly nothing much has changed. Education is still being influenced, the source may have changed, but that's about it. (Daina)*

Based on the words above, it can be argued that when these specific teachers claim that nothing much has changed, they are not referring to all facets of education. Rather, they are referring specifically to what and how teaching is being influenced. This influence exists, according to Beverly and Daina, because what and how teachers should teach is still being dictated to them, albeit from a differing source. In turn, this influence on what and how teachers should be teaching has an influence on teacher professional learning as Neville explains:

*Because our learners are no longer just in competition locally; with globalisation, they are now forced to compete with the whole world. As teachers, we need to equip them to do so. So the teacher needs to learn all*

*the time, even if it means acquiring knowledge from abroad, so that he can keep up with changes and so deliver the education that is required at present. (Neville)*

Despite Daina and Beverly's view that with globalisation nothing much has changed as education still remains influenced with regard to how and what teachers should teach; Neville makes clear his conception that teachers need to learn all the time, even if the knowledge obtained is not local, in order to deliver the kind of education required by learners at present. Thus, it would appear that Neville is alluding to the obtaining of knowledge on the part of teachers from around the globe, and so the inference that teacher professional learning is influenced by globalisation can safely be drawn. The work of Tonna (2007) may support this inference as she argues that teacher professional learning and globalisation can not be discussed in isolation as teacher professional learning appears to be greatly influenced by the phenomenon of globalisation. Also, from Neville's words, the conception that knowledge included in contemporary teacher professional learning is sometimes imported from outside of South Africa emerges. This conception appears to correspond with Adler's (2002) claim that South Africa is no exception to the effects of globalisation, with knowledge from around the globe being imported at a startling rate. Hence, the next sub-theme, "globalisation is linked to retrogression in our context" justly follows.

### **Globalisation is linked to retrogression in our context:**

From the previous sub-theme it is evident that Daina, Beverly and Neville are of the view that globalisation has resulted in what and how teachers ought to teach receiving influence from across the globe. The participants have expressed the view that in some instances ideas from outside of South Africa have been imported. One such idea is that of outcomes-based education (OBE), which is alluded to in the present sub-theme.

The participants in this study conceive how globalisation is linked to failure within the education system in respect of both how teachers are expected to teach and what and how

teachers learn, as they appear to look at all parts of the system, for instance where the ideas about education originated from (in this instance OBE), how those ideas are cascaded; and ultimately the resulting retrogression.

*Look at OBE, studies have proven that it failed in other countries but we imported it and implemented it in our country just to make change, and it failed here. (Beverly)*

*OBE can not work in our context because we've got big numbers in a class, Forty in a class, the system of OBE just won't work, it was designed for smaller numbers. (Valerie)*

*I would suggest that if the department wants to implement something new they should go into an in-service programme perhaps for a few months and eh, that worked much better than cascading; so that is one of the reasons why OBE failed so miserably because the cascading of it was incorrect. (Daina)*

*The one and two day workshops are not sufficient. (Valerie)*

*When people went to these workshops and asked questions the facilitators themselves couldn't answer your questions and so there was so much of uncertainty. (Beverly)*

*Don't even tell me about subject advisors because sometimes they are not even trained themselves. There is the problem when it comes to implementing new ideas. (Sindisiwe)*

According to Beverly, despite OBE having failed in other countries it was imported into South Africa, where it failed as well. It is conceived by Valerie that a reason for the failure of OBE is that it does not suit the context of South African classrooms in which

large numbers of learners in each class is prevalent. OBE, according to Valerie, does not suit the South African classroom context because it was designed with smaller classes in mind. However, from the words above, Daina is of the conception that OBE failed due to the poor implementation of what was a new approach to teaching on the part of most teachers. This is evident in Daina's assertion that, "OBE failed so miserably because the cascading<sup>3</sup> of it was incorrect." Such assertion appears to be supported by Valerie who claims that the one and two day workshops are not sufficient.

In essence, even though Valerie appears to believe that implementation was also a problem resulting in the demise of OBE in South Africa, she pins the blame more specifically on the scarcity of workshops which are supposed to equip teachers to adopt, what was a newly imported idea. However, Beverly and Sindisiwe become even more specific as far as placing the blame for the failure which ensued, with Beverly suggesting a lack of required knowledge on the part of facilitators of the workshops, and Sindisiwe claiming that some subject advisors were lacking in training themselves. Beverly and Sindisiwe thus, in a sense, bring the force behind the failure of OBE in South Africa to life, in that they shift the blame away from inanimate things like workshops and classroom contexts, as was alluded to by Valerie and Daina, to people, in particular workshop facilitators and subject advisors.

In the following three extracts Daina, Sindisiwe and Beverly indicate how they each would have preferred the government to deal with the implementation of ideas from abroad so as to, at the very least minimise, or at most, eliminate, the failures concerning imported ideas, in particular OBE, that ensued.

*Even with ideal situations abroad OBE failed. But our government took it, and applied it in a non-ideal situation, it was guaranteed to fail. Our non-*

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<sup>3</sup> When Daina mentions "cascading" she is referring to the preferred mode of the department of education to use a model in which a core group of trainers trained a larger group and they in turn trained another group who then trained teachers. The information was thus relayed down various tiers and in the process underwent various interpretations and reinterpretations.

*ideal context should have been considered before attempting to implement it here. (Daina)*

*I think the Government went too far by looking at all these global trends<sup>4</sup>. Maybe they should have started with something simpler, and more familiar to South Africans. (Sindisiwe)*

*It's so sad that all these millions of Rands later, we have this generation that went through OBE and yet they can't read and can't think critically. So, the government should have just let us be. (Beverly)*

Linking with Valerie's earlier conception that the context of South African classrooms resulted in the failure of OBE is Daina's suggested alternative approach concerning the implementation of OBE in South Africa. Daina suggests that the context of South African classrooms should have been considered before the implementation of OBE. Thus, an implication is that Valerie's belief that OBE was not designed for the large numbers of learners per class, as is often prevalent in South Africa, should, according to Daina have been taken into consideration prior to the implementation of an idea that originated abroad where class numbers are not as large as what is experienced in South Africa. In addition to Daina's suggestion concerning the consideration of class size, on the one hand Sindisiwe claims that an approach more familiar to what South Africans were accustomed should have rather been adopted, whereas on the other hand Beverly believes that, in her words, "the government should have just let us be" suggesting that non-change was ultimately preferred by her. In essence, it emerges, from the words above that Daina would have preferred more consideration being given to the South African classroom context before the implementation of ideas from abroad, whereas Sindisiwe conceives that when implementing ideas from outside of South Africa, changes should have been less drastic, while Beverly appears to prefer no change at all in this age of globalisation. These claims can be connected to the work of Jansen (1999) in which

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<sup>4</sup> When Sindisiwe speaks about "global trends" she is referring specifically to approaches to teaching which were initially being implemented overseas, and later caught on in South Africa, in particular OBE refers.

he elaborates on his prediction that OBE would fail, listing the lack of consideration of the South African classroom context as one of the reasons for his prediction.

In the following extracts the conception that globalisation is linked to retrogression emerges as the participants in this study express the view that those teachers who have embraced the changes, despite how poorly implemented they may have been, find themselves in a frustrating position, a position in which they have gone full circle, only to land back where they had begun in the first place.

*Now we are moving backwards. The government is going back and forth.*

*This is very frustrating for us who wish to change. (Sindisiwe)*

*That's right. In fact the Department should have just let us leave things as they were, because we could now just be using our journals from back then, the same journals we threw away, because that's what we've gone back to. (Beverly)*

*We've gone full circle. (Joanne)*

Sindisiwe expresses her conception that teachers who wish to change are being frustrated at present because they find themselves having to go back and forth. Beverly, who had expressed her preference of no change earlier, now offers a justification for such preference. She explains that had the government not implemented change, only to simply, in her view, go back to how things were initially, she could have still been in a position to use her journals from the past, which would have assisted her with teaching at present. The claim on the part of Joanne that, “we've gone full circle” suggests that she is also of the view that with respect to education, one has landed right back where one had begun. It is thus apparent that Sindisiwe, Beverly and Joanne are of the view that since changes associated with globalisation have resulted in one landing back where one began, globalisation is linked to retrogression. This conception can be supported by Tonna (2007) who indicates that many individuals may view the influence of



globalisation on education in a negative light as global forces can be limiting in respect of the advancement of teacher skills and knowledge because changes effected in respect of what teachers should know and how they should teach in the hope of keeping up with global trends often receive very little state support. Tonna (2007) argues that in effect, teachers are then left with no alternative but to revert to what they know best. In essence, globalisation results in retrogression.

**Globalisation is linked to limitations and inequity:**

*We get given this reference on how to teach. We cannot even use our creativity in the government schools to differentiate the children so we are limited in our teaching. So what the parents do is, if the parents are economically viable they send the children to a better school where teachers can differentiate. (Joanne)*

*You are forced to follow the syllabus and just give the basics, because with globalisation the government wants to push out the numbers. This is because of mass production. (Valerie)*

*In trying to meet supply and demand we are so limited in the public schools that you cannot compete with the children from the private schools.....So our children are going into a globally competitive environment, and they are not equipped to compete there. (Neville)*

From the extracts above, it would appear that in addition to teachers who participated in this study feeling frustrated as a result of having landed right back where they begun (as expressed in the previous sub-theme), it is also felt that with globalisation, the government, in trying to compete globally, is forcing changes on teachers, which effectively means that they are forced to teach in a certain way; this results in a feeling of limitation in respect of how teachers do their work. These teachers who participated in this study, all of whom teach in the public schools, find this particularly frustrating.

Valerie explains that in trying to push out the numbers for purposes of mass production one is forced to just teach the basics. In addition Joanne believes that teachers in the public schools are not allowed to be creative in their teaching. She views this as a limitation on teachers, which results in inequity amongst learners, as according to Joanne, parents who are economically viable send their children to schools where teachers are allowed to be more creative. Neville supports the views expressed by Joanne and Valerie, adding that he believes that in attempting to meet supply and demand his teaching is limited. Just like Joanne, Neville conceives that the result of this limitation placed on teachers is inequity on the part of learners, as he argues that children educated in the public schools are ill-equipped to survive in the global market. From the words of these teachers it would thus appear that they conceive that globalisation is linked to limitation in respect of how teachers do their work; as well as it being linked to inequity in respect of how well learners coming from varying economic backgrounds are being equipped to compete in, in the words of Neville, “a globally competitive environment.” In support of the conception that globalisation limits how teachers do their work, cognisance must be taken of Zeichner’s (1983) claim that models of practices in teaching tend to be too closely tied to paradigmatic orientations that are dominant at particular points in time. Indeed paradigmatic orientations associated with globalisation such as orientations focused on what and how teaching is occurring globally, are dominant at present (Tonna, 2007). With respect to the conception that globalisation is linked to inequity in respect of how well learners from varying economic backgrounds are being equipped to compete globally; Rizvi and Lingard (2000) appear to support this conception as they contend that since the effects of globalisation are unevenly distributed a capitalist society is perpetuated. Rizvi and Lingard (2000) argue further that in respect of education, the perpetuation of a capitalist society means that learners coming from an economically advantaged background appear to receive a greater benefit than their less economically advantaged counterparts. Thus, the conception that globalisation is linked to limitations and inequity receives literary support.

### **Globalised schools attract wealthier classes:**

*Economics – it all boils down to economics. If parents can afford to send their kids to schools that equip them to compete globally, they will send them there, but in the public schools parents cannot even pay the basic school fees. (Joanne)*

*Schools that perform well in this globalisation era will attract parents. Schools that produce these learners that can represent the schools internationally are attractive; but our learners in the government schools cannot even begin to compete. So people who can afford better for their children will get something better. (Daina)*

*The school needs to market themselves to try and say why is my school better than the other school. For instance, a school may say that we offer access to the internet, a world class library etc. But of course parents must be able to pay for this. (Beverly)*

Evident in the extracts above is the conception that in this era of globalisation the upper classes tend to benefit, as they can afford to buy opportunities for their children to gain the knowledge and skills required for survival contemporarily; as Joanne explains, “If parents can afford to send their kids to schools that equip them to compete globally, they will send them there.” This conception is supported by Daina who argues that, “people who can afford better for their children will get something better.” Thus the implication that a capitalist society is sustained, by those who can afford to send their children to schools that market themselves as being globalised, is evident in the words of these teachers. In addition Beverly expresses a conception that schools, when marketing themselves, need to become more competitive so as to attract parents and learners to them, rather than leaving it to chance, as was done in the past. She suggests that schools may advertise what services they are able to offer to learners as a marketing strategy. Nevertheless, Beverly indicates that parents must be in a position to pay for these

services, thus supporting the implication made by Daina and Joanne that a capitalist society is maintained. One can thus infer that a sort of funnelling of learners is suggested by these teachers, as they each suggest that only those who can afford to buy opportunities come through, and are therefore able to benefit from a school that offers, or at least markets itself as offering, opportunities for learners to be equipped to, in the words of Joanne, “compete globally.” It is therefore apparent that it is conceived by these teachers that globalisation, according to them, means that globalised schools attract wealthier classes. The implication inherent in this conception, that a capitalist society is sustained, enables one to draw a link between the conception forming the heading of this sub-theme (globalised schools attract wealthier classes), and a conception expressed in the previous sub-theme; that of globalisation being linked to inequity. In addition to the link between these two sub-themes, as expressed in the previous sub-theme Rizvi and Lingard (2000) support the idea that globalisation sustains a capitalist society.

**Globalisation means that people have a choice:**

*What’s important is that now people have a choice of schools. And the schools compete with each other. But it’s difficult to get in to the better schools, so these better schools get to choose the cream of the crop. So what happens now if you take an ex model-C school they got the best kids there. And us, at the public schools, tend to get those kids that are not so good. (Neville)*

Following from Neville’s words above, it is important to note that globalisation, according to him, has resulted in greater choice for parents and learners, as well as greater choice for schools, as Neville explains, “better schools get to choose the cream of the crop.” Parents and learners find that schools which compete with each other offer a variety of services from which parents and learners are able to choose when deciding on which school to attend.<sup>5</sup> One therefore gets a sense that even though, according to

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<sup>5</sup> The variety of services offered by schools to entice parents and learners are explained by Beverly in the previous sub-theme.

Neville (and expressed by Beverly in the previous sub-theme), these so-called “better schools”<sup>6</sup> may offer these services in order to compete for learners, indirectly learners who are fortunate enough to attend such schools may be in a position to acquire greater skills and knowledge that may better equip them for a global market. However, this greater choice associated with globalisation, according to Neville does not only apply in respect of parents and learners, but rather schools themselves are placed in a position of choice in respect of choosing learners to attend them. This, in the words of Neville means that, “these better schools get to choose the cream of the crop.” Such conception is supported by Soudien (2004) who claims that as a result of the post 1994 flight of learners towards historically advantaged schools<sup>7</sup> in South Africa, such schools are in a better position to choose their learners than the historically underprivileged schools who currently experience a flight of learners away from them. Thus, inequity amongst learners is sustained, with learners who are excluded from the historically advantaged schools, perhaps by funnelling of learners as expressed earlier, possibly being limited in respect of which schools they may attend. Accordingly this sub-theme can be directly linked to, and act in support of, a previous sub-theme, which is that of “globalisation is linked to limitations and inequity.”

## **THEME 2: TEACHERS’ CONCEPTIONS OF “TEACHER PROFESSIONAL LEARNING”**

### **Teacher professional learning is learning and relearning together:**

*At present the teacher must learn all the time in order to keep up with the changes that are taking place locally and globally. (Beverly)*

*You basically have to learn and relearn everything, because there may be minor or significant changes. (Valerie)*

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<sup>6</sup> When the teachers involved in this study refer to “better schools” they are referring to any school that is not a former government school of colour, in particular they refer to former model C schools and private schools.

<sup>7</sup> Soudien’s (2004) reference to historically advantaged schools refers to former white’s only public and private schools.

*Also, in order to keep up with changes constant networking.....like forming communities of practice is needed. (Joanne)*

Based on the words of Beverly, Valerie and Joanne above, it would appear as though they are each aware that the world is constantly changing, and the phenomenon of globalisation appears to be exacerbating change. Three conceptions concerning the on-going nature of teacher professional learning emerged; keeping abreast with new information, learning and relearning as well as constant networking. With respect to keeping abreast with new information, the fact that Beverly expresses a view that the teacher must learn all the time in order to keep up with change, but neither makes clear what change nor what the teacher must learn enables me to speculate that the changes to which she refers could be in respect of both content knowledge and pedagogical approaches. Thus, when Beverly speaks of changes and one having to learn all the time, she could be implying that teachers need to keep abreast with new information in their particular subjects as well as new information concerning how teachers ought to teach, for instance the adoption of OBE, which was alluded to earlier. Similarly, when Valerie speaks of one having to learn and relearn everything, she also does not make clear to what her “everything” refers. Thus, given the fact that issues which were discussed in the focus group discussion centred on, *inter alia*, teachers’ content knowledge as well as teachers’ pedagogical approaches, one can safely infer that the learning and relearning of “everything” to which Valerie refers may likely include teachers having to learn and relearn content knowledge as well as approaches to teaching. It would therefore also appear as though teacher professional learning is conceived as on-going in nature, from Valerie’s perspective. This supports Beverly’s view that a teacher must learn all the time in order to keep up. Thus both Beverly and Valerie seem to view teacher professional learning as on-going. However, Joanne conceives a constant dependence on others, in particular, other teachers, in order for teacher professional learning to occur contemporarily. She thus conceives that constant networking is required for teacher professional learning to occur. Hence, despite the on-going nature of teacher professional learning as conceived by Beverly who believes the teacher must learn all the time in order to keep up and Valerie who believes that teachers must learn and relearn, Joanne

conceives a dependence on others for teacher professional learning in the form of constant networking. Accordingly, from the perspectives of the three teachers mentioned above, teacher professional learning in this era of globalisation would appear to be learning and relearning together. Taking into account Evans's (2002) notion that teachers learn by doing as well as Fraser *et al's* (2007) and Henze *et al's* (2009) claim that teachers learn through experience, in conjunction with Lieberman and Mace's (2008) contention that teacher professional learning best occurs in communities of practice where teachers can learn on an ongoing basis through the experiences of each other; it would appear that the conception expressed above, that of teacher professional learning being learning and relearning, is fully supported in available literature.

The view that communities of practice are needed to aid constant learning, suggests that rather than learning in isolation, Joanne may prefer the assistance of colleagues if learning is to take place on an on-going basis. Colleagues are more often encountered in the place of work (i.e. the schools). The issue of "where learning" takes place, thus becomes relevant. It is therefore appropriate for the situated nature of teacher professional learning to now be discussed.

### **Teacher professional learning is situated learning:**

*Teacher professional learning depends on where you are. Teacher professional learning should take place in spaces that welcome and cater for knowledge from a variety of sources. Otherwise these spaces are not conducive to teacher professional learning. (Sindisiwe)*

*I would say that workshops is where teacher professional learning should take place, but it's not working because when you get back, the schooling context is different.....so you have to work with people within a community of practice. (Valerie)*

*If you are going to produce the kind of learner that can fit into a global village you'd have to look at advancing skills, technological skills, that we may not have in the country, so we'd have to get outside help. (Neville)*

In the extract above, Sindisiwe speaks specifically about the context in which she believes teacher professional learning should be taking place. She makes clear her conception that spaces which do not cater for knowledge coming from a variety of sources are non-conducive to teacher professional learning. She mentions a variety of sources implying a belief that teacher professional learning should take place in spaces in which anyone who has knowledge to share, should be welcome to do so. Thus, knowledge coming from spaces outside of South Africa, would, based on Sindisiwe's words, be welcomed.

In continuing to unpack the situated nature of teacher professional learning, Valerie's words suggest that she is of the view that teacher professional learning is situated learning in that one may learn one thing in a workshop, however, these are usually ideal situations. Thus, the putting of this learning into practice when in the classroom, in Valerie's view emerges as problematic. In addition to Valerie's conception concerning teacher professional learning being situated learning, Neville speaks more specifically about the learning of skills that will ultimately equip our learners for a global village. In correspondence with Neville's idea, Hoban (2005) contends that a direct consequence of globalisation is that schools find themselves dealing with increasing political, cultural and social diversity, while knowledge continues to grow exponentially causing greater competitiveness between states and individuals, which ultimately means that schools, and teachers working within the schools are required to possess skills that enable them to equip learners to survive in this era of increased competition. Neville's belief that skills must be learned to equip learners for a global village is thus supported by the writings of Hoban (2005), as explained above.

From the extracts above, it becomes apparent that Sindisiwe has spoken about welcoming knowledge from a variety of sources, which may lead one to wonder exactly from where



this knowledge will come. Appropriately, for this discussion, Neville appears to answer this question stating that one may need to look outside of our country to acquire the skills needed for survival in, what he refers to as a global village. An implication inherent in Neville's words is thus that in order to survive in this global village, knowledge and skills must be obtained from within the global village. It therefore emerges that from the perspectives of these three teachers, i.e. Sindisiwe, Valerie and Neville, teacher professional learning at present is situated learning because it does not only take place within the schooling context but is also determined by where one gets one's training and acquires one's knowledge and skills to impart on learners. Accordingly, on this idea of teacher professional learning being situated learning (an idea supported by Lewin (2003) who explains that current teacher education curricular need to take cognisance of the specific contexts of teachers so as to avoid proceeding along assumptions concerning how new teacher knowledge and skills will be applied in varying contexts, as such assumptions are often demonstrably false) it would appear that in the view of these teachers, where teacher professional learning takes place is significant, as Valerie explains:

*Talking about "where." Teacher professional learning must happen where knowledge from around the globe can be shared. (Valerie)*

The above quotation highlights the necessity for spaces in which knowledge can be shared from a variety of sources, thus likely constituting knowledge from around the globe. This implies a need for constant networking and the existence of communities of practice as expressed in the previous sub-theme by Joanne who stated, "constant networking..... like forming communities of practice is needed." The idea of communities of practice as a means by which a space can be created in which teacher learning can occur is an idea that was put forward by Wenger (1998) who describes communities of practice as a space in which teachers can share knowledge and accordingly learn from each other. Thus, in respect of where teacher professional learning should be taking place, Joanne's opinion that it should take place in a space in which teachers learn from each other and share knowledge from around the globe, is an

opinion that appears to receive some support in literature. This is given additional support by Sindisiwe who, during the focus group discussion, as expressed in a quotation of her words above, argued that teacher professional learning is heavily dependent on where one is, as spaces for teacher professional learning, according to Sindisiwe, must be conducive to learning in that they should welcome and cater for knowledge from a variety of sources. An implication here is that knowledge from around the globe must be accommodated in spaces of teacher professional learning, and this will likely be the case in communities of practice as Lieberman and Mace (2008) identify communities of practice as spaces in which teachers are enabled to learn from each other, and share with each other strategies which have been successful for each of them through simple collaboration. During the focus group discussion it was asserted by Beverly that it is, in her view, pointless having such spaces that cater for teacher professional learning if they lack guidance from an individual or individuals who possess the requisite expertise to adequately facilitate teacher professional learning. The next sub-theme justly follows.

**Teacher professional learning is dependent on expertise:**

*You need people with expertise..... there must be people there to give the answers and to give you guidance. (Beverly)*

*So they must facilitate properly otherwise we are not getting the information that we require. (Valerie)*

In addition to, in Valerie's view, requiring expertise, she makes mention of a need for others, for teacher professional learning to take place. Valerie explains:

*To learn professionally, you have to work with people within a community of practice. (Valerie)*

*But even with the communities of practice as I said you must have people with expertise because there's no use if everyone there doesn't know what they're doing. (Beverly)*

*Sometimes learning is informal, however it is best when planned and formal by people who are knowledgeable. (Sindisiwe)*

The extracts above suggest that Valerie and Beverly conceive a need for spaces of learning to have within them, and be made up of, person or persons who possess the requisite expertise to assist the process of teacher professional learning. However, evident in their words is the existence of a dependency on others to learn. Thus, suggesting that they may not see the potential within themselves to simply learn on their own. Valerie's words, "they must facilitate properly" and Beverly's claim that, "there must be people there to give the answers" suggests that these two teachers possibly situate themselves as consumers of knowledge simply waiting to receive it from, as they have explained, "one with expertise." This idea of teachers simply consuming knowledge is, to a degree, supported by Fraser *et al* (2007) who call for teachers to continuously view themselves not just as teachers, but as learners, as well, ready to receive knowledge from others. In addition to this, Sindisiwe's contention that learning is best when it is delivered by people who are knowledgeable, supports the idea of dependency on others to learn and a notion of being a consumer of knowledge, in that it does not only suggest a dependency on others to learn, but also suggests a placement of greater value on received knowledge as opposed to knowledge obtained through self discovery. This contradicts Evan's (2002) claim that teachers' professional learning must involve teachers' investigating of their own practices to construct their own theories of teaching; rather than simply being dependent on others for their development. Nevertheless, Valerie's claim that in order to learn professionally one would have to work within a community of practice appears to contrast with the conceived competitive nature of globalisation, which was expressed in the previous theme concerning teachers' conceptions of globalisation. And Beverly's response to Valerie's claim that even with communities of practice there must be people with expertise makes clear that it is

conceived by these teachers that there is therefore little point in having a space for teacher professional learning, such as communities of practice, if such spaces were to exist with little or no expertise. Accordingly, from the perspectives of these teachers, professional learning is dependent on expertise. Such perspective is supported by Shulman (1997) who argues that apart from teachers learning from their own experience, it is important for the wisdom of practice in experienced teachers to be mined so as to develop more powerful theories of practice which can be shared with less experienced teachers. Thus, if individuals possessing this wisdom of practice were to be present in the communities of practice when teacher learning is taking place, Beverly's call for expertise to make possible teacher professional learning would be satisfied.

**Teacher professional learning is (not) learning through DoE workshops:**

*Workshops are a waste of time as people just want to take from you, rather than give anything to you. (Beverly)*

*The one and two day workshops are not sufficient. Teacher professional learning depends on where the learning takes place. But workshops are not working because when you get back, the schooling context is different. (Valerie)*

*The department told us to learn one thing, which was outdated, so what we had to learn was irrelevant to what learners were learning in schools. We therefore need proper training, because what we are doing is trying to give learners knowledge that we don't even have. How do you impart that knowledge to learners if you don't have it yourself? (Sindisiwe)*

In the extracts above, Beverly, Valerie and Sindisiwe paint an elaborate picture of what, in their view, is happening in workshops being run by the DoE at present. In essence, the impression given by these teachers is that the learning taking place in these workshops is out of touch with what is required. In fact, Beverly expresses that in her opinion

workshops are a waste of time, thus according to Beverly, although the DoE is running these workshops, teachers are not learning anything of value, which may very well be as good as simply not learning at all. Valerie, in her words, raises the issue of context. She expresses a conception that the teacher professional learning provided by the DoE does not appear, in her view, to take cognisance of the context in which teachers are required to teach. She mentions that the schooling context differs, somewhat from the context for which the workshops prepare one, thus resulting in the workshops, in her opinion, not working. To exemplify further just how far removed from what is required contemporarily the learning provided by the DoE is conceived to be by these teachers, Sindisiwe explains that she was instructed to learn content that was outdated, and thus rendered irrelevant in respect of the learners whom she was expected to teach. It thus becomes apparent, that when these teachers express the view that teacher professional learning is out of touch; what is meant by them could be that teachers do not appear to be learning what is required in this era of globalisation, possibly because the context in which they are required to apply their knowledge at present, is not given due regard. This disjointedness between the context in which teachers are expected to teach, and the learning which they receive through the DoE, according to these teachers mentioned above, could be construed as teacher professional learning that is in fact, as good as not learning through the DoE. As learning that is not suitable for one's context is rather pointless. This view is supported by Ramirez (2003) who contends that despite globally obtained new knowledge being packaged as a reform, often older, local knowledge remains the key to understanding local structures. Further support of this view that learning that is not suitable for one's context is pointless is offered by Lewin (2003) who, as explained in the sub-theme "teacher professional learning is situated learning," argues that current teacher education curricular need to take cognisance of the specific contexts of teachers so as to avoid making false assumptions about how teachers may apply their knowledge and skills in their various contexts.

**Conclusion:**

In this chapter two themes which emerged from a focus group discussion were analysed. The first theme being, “Teachers’ conceptions of globalisation” under which the following sub-themes emerged: globalisation is economics linked to access to knowledge, globalisation produces new kinds of learning, globalisation means that you are just getting a basic something, nothing much has changed with globalisation, globalisation is linked to retrogression in our context, globalisation is linked to limitations and inequity, globalised schools attract wealthier classes, and, globalisation means that people have a choice. The second theme was “Teachers’ conceptions of teacher professional learning, under which the following sub-themes emerged; teacher professional learning is learning and relearning together, teacher professional learning is situated learning, teacher professional learning is dependent on expertise, teacher professional learning is learning, or not learning through DoE workshops. The next chapter will discuss in greater detail the emergent findings based on the sub-themes, mentioned in this analysis chapter.

## **Chapter five**

### **Conclusion**

#### **Introduction**

I commenced this study with the aim of exploring teachers' conceptions of globalisation; desiring to fathom the relationship between these conceptions of globalisation and teacher professional learning. As a rationale for this study, having for as long as I can remember, being a geographer at heart, and having taught and learnt in this era of "globalisation" myself, while observing instances of disregard for spatial awareness on the part of most teachers, I was left intrigued in exploring how teachers' professional learning takes place contemporarily, and hopeful that a study exploring how teachers learn professionally in this age of globalisation would have some bearing on the minds of teacher education curriculum developers so that they may be cognisant of the environments in which teachers find themselves having to learn professionally when designing curricula for teacher learning, and in particular teacher professional learning.

In this chapter, points which emerged from the literature review and appeared pertinent to the focus and purpose of this study will be highlighted, also the significance of the methodological approach followed will be reiterated; in addition, all of the emergent findings based on the sub-themes in the analyses chapter will be pulled together and thus discussed in an integrated way. Four integrated meta-themes are discussed, namely: globalisation, teacher professional learning, retrogression and inequity; globalisation, teacher professional learning and contradictions; globalisation, contexts and teacher professional learning; as well as globalisation, teacher professional learning and not learning.

**Connections to literature:**

From the literature consulted for the completion of this study a number of themes emerged, as listed in the Review chapter of this study. On the point of literature, in this chapter I will highlight a few of the main ideas which emerged. In some instances ideas highlighted will correspond directly with the themes mentioned in the review chapter. However, in other instances ideas highlighted may be pulled from various themes and bound into a single and simplified combined theme in the paragraphs that follow. Essentially, I will, by focusing on a few emergent ideas from contemporary literature, briefly shed light on how the selected literature has supported, guided and accordingly framed my study.

**Globalisation's relationship to teacher professional learning and why such a focus is required:**

The literature enabled me, in my study to exemplify how it is that one may be inclined to contend that a relationship between globalisation and teacher professional learning exists. On this point Brown and Lauder (1996) claim that in this current era a nation's economic prosperity is dependent on the educational upliftment of its citizens. Thus, one can deduce that teachers, who are the primary providers of education, ought to be uplifted educationally themselves. One way of doing this is through teacher professional learning as suggested by Lieberman and Mace (2008). A relationship between globalisation and teacher professional learning thus becomes apparent.

In addition to the above, Henze *et al* (2009) claim that theories and models of teacher learning already exist, but many of these prescribe how teachers should learn, neglecting how the process is taking place contemporarily. A focus on how teacher professional learning is taking place in this era of globalisation is thus necessitated.



### **Teacher professional learning's ongoing nature in an age of globalisation:**

The literature consulted highlighted that there is an existing claim amongst authors that teacher professional learning should be taking place in this era of globalisation. Wilson and Berne (1999) contended that teacher professional learning is an ongoing process of teacher development, and should therefore be happening constantly, while Evans (2002), Fraser *et al* (2007) as well as Henze *et al* (2009) argued that teachers need to learn through experience. An implication inherent in the claims put forward by these authors would thus be that teacher professional learning should, because of its on-going nature, be taking place at present. Such implication served to support the participant's conception, expressed in this study, that teacher professional learning at present is on-going; and accordingly a need to study how teacher professional learning may be taking place at present was also justified through the literary claims highlighted above.

### **The non-isolation of teacher professional learning from globalisation and its contextual nature:**

Tonna's (2007) theory on globalisation and teacher education, in its simplest form, is that the two cannot be separated from each other as teacher education has an evolving nature which falls subject to the laws of supply and demand, which are laws inherent in the phenomenon of globalisation. Thus, to discuss teacher education, and in the case of this study, teacher professional learning which is a part of teacher education, without alluding to globalisation makes little sense. Accordingly, in light of Tonna's (2007) theory, a study on teacher professional learning and globalisation's relationship to such learning would appear to make a great deal of sense.

Teacher professional learning currently underway in South Africa, due to the legacy of apartheid, is taking place in a space where there exists equally pressing needs for redress and repair (Adler, 2002). Teachers have been identified as key agents of change. Thus, taking into consideration Day and Sachs (2004) claim that teacher professional learning is contextual, as well as Ho and Law's (2009) contention that presently there exists a need

to rethink teacher education in terms of the need to be aware of the socio-political environment in which it operates, a study focusing on how exactly a cohort of South African teachers learn professionally at present, would appear to receive further support in existing literature.

### **Methodological reflections:**

I simply wanted a once off focus group discussion, as I had no desire to arrive at an individual teacher's conceptions of globalisation and its relationship to such teacher's specific professional learning. Rather, I desired to fathom how a cohort of teachers, in this instance six teachers in particular, who were engaged in masters studies and therefore exposed to global discourses, conceived globalisation as a phenomenon and its relationship to teacher professional learning. A single focus group discussion, although it may prima facie seem inadequate, was preferred by me for the following reasons. Tonna (2007) proffers that a tenet of globalisation is that the world and everything in it is constantly evolving. This, Tonna (2007) argues is often due to simultaneous external influences whose origins may be globally situated. I thus desired that the data used in my study be generated in a similar fashion, i.e. it be generated simultaneously in conditions in which it may be exposed to external influences, in this case the influences of other participant's thinking around the topic, and so the data while being generated would thus be subjected to the possibility of constant evolution. In support of this idea, Gibbs (1997) argues that focus groups are a form of qualitative research that helps to explore topics with an emphasis on how views and attitudes change when respondents discuss answers with each other. Thus, the use of a single focus group discussion was rendered more than adequate in this case, and it ultimately proved to generate rich data.

### **Meta-Themes emerging from the study:**

From the focus group discussion, eight conceptions concerning globalisation emerged; which indicated that the teachers concerned conceived that globalisation is linked to access to knowledge, as well as the production of new kinds of learning. It also became

evident that the participants in this study conceived that with globalisation, nothing much has changed in respect of who or what influences education, and teacher professional learning in particular; the teachers involved also conceived that as far as learning for both learners and teachers is concerned, one appears to just get the basics. It was conceived further that globalisation is linked to retrogression, inequality, greater choices and the attracting of wealthier classes to what was expressed by the teachers in this study as schools that are either private or semi-private, with poorer classes in most instances being forced into the so called government schools. All of the above, in reference to teachers' conceptions of teacher professional learning, was conceived as having a bearing on teacher professional learning; as a dominant mode of teacher learning expressed by the participants was that of context. Indeed, each of the conceptions concerning globalisation, according to the six teachers in this study, had some influence on the context in which teachers are required to learn professionally at present. In addition, further conceptions concerning professional learning, such as it being linked to learning and relearning in situated spaces, where teachers are dependent on experts, in most instances through the Department of Education workshops emerged. The four meta-themes will now be discussed in detail to bring the findings of this study to a close.

### **Globalisation, teacher professional learning, retrogression and inequity:**

Through literature, it emerged that globalisation when deposited by the new liberals can be seen as a way of improving the quality of life. In the case of education, the quality of life in this era could be improved, according to the teachers involved in my study, through increasing educational opportunities for students and providing greater access to knowledge and opportunities to gain knowledge. However, also emerging from the spoken words of the participants is a conception that in some instances quite the opposite is happening. It thus emerged that with globalisation, some may be moving backwards, as opposed to the generally conceived improvement of one's life. Conceptions of retrogression for instance, support this finding. To elaborate, it should be noted that there exist some schools in South Africa that come with an historical advantage and are usually situated in spaces that are closer to the middle and upper class members of society, and

are therefore able to attract learners from homes that have access to cultural capital. For instance, learners coming from these kinds of homes have likely had access to technologies such as the internet and computers; they may in some instances have been overseas, thus obtaining a glimpse of the globally competitive market. Often the parents of these learners are fully aware of how a schooling system operates and can therefore provide ample assistance with homework and other projects etc. However, in South Africa there also exist some schools in which learners' parents have never attended any formal schooling, and are therefore in a difficult position in respect of assisting learners with, for example, homework and projects. This position may be exacerbated by the possibility that schools in these spaces may be riddled with teachers who are very limited and restricted in that they can only speak about matters concerning a very local context such as, but not limited to, HIV and AIDS, and poverty because of not having been exposed to the advantages of being able to access knowledge relevant in a global context. On the opposite end of the spectrum there are schools which are able to facilitate job opportunities, provide career information, focus on getting learners into university and make them aware of the possibilities of immigration, which will thus make the world a smaller space. In respect of the inequity, it was found that those who have access to education relevant to the current global context have an advantage and are therefore on a progressive, advantageous trajectory. By contrast, those who do not have access to globally relevant education, and who are on the receiving end of inequity, experience globalisation as a form of retrogression.

### **Globalisation, teacher professional learning, variations and contradictions:**

Globalisation, teacher professional learning, variations and contradictions also emerged as a meta-theme. To elaborate, from the spoken words of the participants, it appeared as if they conceived in respect of education that globalisation tends to produce new kinds of learning. In particular, that globalisation is producing a kind of learning that promotes mobility. There is also a conception that globalisation suggests going back to the basics. The participants concerned in my study conceived that in an era of globalisation, teachers are forced to simply teach the basics rather than being enabled to operate freely, and

therefore be in a position to promote new kinds of learning. They attributed this position to a present need for mass production. Teachers, in their work, as explained by the participants, are therefore limited to a technocratic function, and so their professional learning may very well be limited in that they may only learn how to perform this function. Thus a clear contradiction, between the conception that globalisation produces new kinds of learning, and the conception that globalisation means that one is just getting the basics, emerges.

The teachers involved in my study conceived that with globalisation, nothing much has changed in respect of teacher professional learning. They expressed a belief that this is because teacher professional learning, despite its existence in an age of globalisation, still remains heavily influenced by external influences and often by political agendas. However, the teachers concerned in this study later go on to claim that with globalisation changes are often made merely for the sake of change. They refer specifically to changes in respect of what and how teachers are expected to teach, claiming that those who do take the time to learn about, and so familiarise themselves with, these changes are often left frustrated as they find themselves going back and forth as the changes are not implemented properly, but merely implemented for the sake of change. This clearly contradicts the conception that with globalisation nothing much has changed. Once again, the conceptions expressed by the six teachers concerned, at first glance, appear to be contradictory. However, perhaps it is not so much a contradiction as it may be an expression of a variety of conceptions: that both change and non-change are simultaneous because it depends on where one is located. The participants differ in terms of race, gender, context and experiences. It is not surprising, therefore, that these differentiated findings emerged, which may in some instances be best described as variations, rather than contradictions.

In the data analysis chapter, one of the earliest conceptions expressed by the participants under the first sub-theme was that with respect to education in this era, because of globalisation everyone now has access to knowledge. However, under that same sub-theme some participants highlight the fact that because globalisation is linked to

economics, only those who can afford education at present, in particular the kind of education that equips one for survival in this era, will get it. Later conceptions that globalisation is linked to inequity and therefore only attracts the wealthier classes also emerged subsequent to the conception that with globalisation everyone has access to knowledge. As explained in the first meta-theme in this chapter, there are people and schools on opposite ends of the spectrum as far as education which is relevant for this age is concerned. As expressed in the analysis chapter it was conceived by the participants in my study that parents who can afford to buy opportunities for their children by sending them to schools that appear more globalised, in that they offer skills and knowledge relevant for a globalised age, will do so. Attendance at these schools appears to come at a far greater monetary expense than schools that merely offer basic education so as to meet the demands of mass production in respect of an adult working class. Thus, on the one end of the spectrum are these schools and learners who can afford to attend them, being better equipped for survival in a global era, as opposed to learners coming from somewhat more restricted financial backgrounds on the opposite end of the spectrum. Hence, depending on the context to which one may refer, conceptions concerning access to knowledge can be expected to vary, and at times they may contradict each other.

### **Globalisation, contexts and teacher professional learning:**

Throughout the data the issue of context emerged, and the relevance of it in this study, thus became apparent. Two kinds of contexts could be identified. The first referred to the world as one context, in other words, a global village; while the second referred to multiple contexts within the global village. The two emergent understandings of context, when juxtaposed reveal yet another contradiction. However, this contradiction is separated from the others which were expressed in the previous meta-theme as context emerged as a common thread in most of the expressed conceptions, thus to discuss it with the other contradictions would not do it justice. With reference to the second understanding of context, that of it including multiple contexts within the global village, an implication here is that teacher professional learning must not only be connected to a single global space, but rather it should be connected to multiple contexts. Thus when

the participants spoke about situated learning, each of the multiple contexts would logically require a different kind of learning. This contradicts the conception that teacher professional learning in a time of globalisation is learning and relearning together, as this togetherness implies a sort of common learning, and yet the situated learning in respect of multiple contexts implies a different kind of learning for each context, depending on what the context requires. This finding can be supported by Amin and Ramrathan's (2009) claim that different kinds of contexts require different teacher skills, which implies a need for a different kind of teacher professional learning. The relevance of contexts to this study is thus revealed, as different contexts in this age of globalisation were conceived as resulting in different kinds of teacher professional learning.

### **Globalisation, teacher professional learning and not learning:**

This study focused specifically on teachers who were engaged in Masters studies. However, what emerged was that it does not matter what one's credentials are as a teacher, when it comes to teacher professional learning. This is because, according to the participants in this study, teachers, regardless of their credentials, engage in two kinds of learning. The one kind is where they learn, while the other is where they do not learn. To elaborate on this, it emerged from the spoken words of the six participants that some things learned through what they considered their professional learning were things that they did not know, for instance, new policies on education. However, things that they did not learn were things relevant to their specific contexts. For instance, they did not learn how to get beyond the basics. They spoke about globalisation and learning, but were unable to say to exactly what learning they referred. They did not mention how any learning from their studies enabled them to develop, and in essence, survive in an era of globalisation; it may have been present, but it appeared as though they were not specifically aware of it. Learning for these teachers was linked only to situated learning in that they made constant reference to context and learning for one's specific context. So one may deduce that even where learning was received, for instance through their studies, the six teachers may not have learned fully how to adapt this learning to their contexts, an element to which they constantly referred as significant for their learning.

The six teachers in this study expressed that their professional learning was dependent on others, thus they went as far as suggesting a great need for an expert to facilitate their learning. However, in respect of what is not learned, it would appear that they did not learn to be independent or self-reliant. Accordingly, when they spoke about the lack of learning in the DoE workshops they appeared to allow their learning to be limited to the context in which it was taking place, as learning to be self-dependent would likely enable one to learn despite the limitations inherent in one's learning context. Thus, for the six teachers in this study, teaching and learning in an era of globalisation sometimes resulted in learning and sometimes it did not.

### **Conclusion:**

The aim of this chapter was to highlight and summarise some of the significant points which emerged in the previous chapters, and so bring this study to a coherent conclusion. Concerning the discourses of globalisation and teacher professional learning amongst the six teachers involved in this study, what is evident is that perhaps it is too soon for these teachers to draw a link between what they have learned through readings, their studies in general, and the effects of globalisation on teacher professional learning. Perhaps these teachers are still incubating the very many, and up until recently, the un-thought-of ideas and effects associated with globalisation and its relationship to teacher professional learning. But what is abundantly clear is that these teachers have very many conceptions, and there does exist an idea of how context, a context in which globalisation and its effects are present, is implicated in teacher professional learning. In this context, these teachers have made it clear that there needs to be learning and relearning; and yet perhaps the biggest challenge faced by these teachers concerned in this study in respect of their professional learning, is the need to move away from the idea of being reliant on experts, as well as, and even more particularly, the DoE, as they make it clear that they are aware that the DoE, in most instances, does not have the expertise that they so desperately seek.

The world and everything in it, including education, is changing at an alarming rate. Thus, the contexts in which teachers have to learn professionally are also changing.



Common sense would dictate that if teachers do not change in order to keep up with our constantly evolving world, they will be left in the past, and thus rendered through their own accord unable and ill-equipped to provide learners with the requisite knowledge and skills to survive in a contemporary global village. There is therefore not simply a requirement, but rather a demand for teachers to constantly learn, and in some instances even relearn where need be in order to possess teacher knowledge and skills required in this age of globalisation. To meet this need for teachers to constantly learn and relearn may, at times, require guidance from someone with expertise. However, expertise is not always readily available, and accordingly teachers may need to take charge of their own professional learning by moving away from a position of dependency to a position of being active agents in their own professional learning and development.

From my own experience, and from the words of the teachers in this study, the work of a teacher and everyday life of a teacher is not easy. In order to ease the process by which teachers may learn professionally, at present, requires further study focusing on how teacher professional learning is in fact taking place, rather than simply having studies as Henze *et al* (2009) indicate, which recommend how teacher professional learning should ideally be taking place.

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15 September 2011

Mr WC Cafun (204500332)  
School of Education & Development  
Faculty of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Cafun

**PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0839/011M**

**PROJECT TITLE: The relationship between teachers' conceptions of "Globalisation" and professional learning**

In response to your application dated 6 September 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)  
**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

cc. Supervisor: Dr N Amin  
cc: Mr N Memela/Mrs S Naicker, Faculty Research Office, Edgewood Campus



**APPENDIX 2****Information Letter**

Dear Teacher

The aim of this study is to explore teachers' conceptions of "Globalisation" and its relationship to teacher professional learning. The study is supervised by Dr. Nyna Amin (tel 031 260 7255), a lecturer at the school of Education Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

I am an M.Ed student at UKZN, and this study forms part of my degree.

I would like to facilitate a focus group discussion with you and five other teachers which should last approximately 45-60 minutes. To minimize interference with schooling activities this focus group discussion will be conducted off the school premises and outside of schooling hours. I will record your views in writing and may also use a voice recorder to record said views. The data will be anonymous i.e. it will not be possible for it to be linked to your name as well as the name of your school. The data will be used in my Master's dissertation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal titled, *The relationship between teachers' conceptions of "Globalisation" and professional learning*.

Neither you nor your school will be disadvantaged if you choose not to participate or if you choose to leave/withdraw from the study at any stage. If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, please contact Dr. Nyna Amin: Tel: 031 260 7255: email: amin@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

Wade Cafun

### Consent Form

I \_\_\_\_\_, have read the letter of information which explains the purpose of this research, and the steps that will be taken to protect my confidentiality. I fully understand the terms under which I will participate in this study; and I understand that to sign this form means that I have agreed to them. I know that I can contact Dr. Nyna Amin if I have any questions, concerns or complaints. I am fully aware that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.

I, the undersigned, agree to participate in this study.

-----  
Participant's Name

-----  
Participant's Signature

-----  
Date

**APPENDIX 3****Focus Group Transcription**

Wade: I'd like to thank all of you very much for agreeing to be a part of this focus group discussion. My study aims to explore teachers' conceptions of globalisation and its relationship to Teacher Professional Learning. So whatever you say can neither be deemed right nor wrong.

I'd just like to remind you that the data obtained from this focus group discussion will be anonymous i.e. it will not be possible for it to be linked to your name as well as the name of your school. The data will be used in my dissertation. Neither you nor your school will be disadvantaged if you choose not to participate or if you choose to leave/withdraw from the study at any stage.

I would like to voice record this discussion to make the subsequent transcription easier. Is everyone ok with that?

All: Yes.

Wade: What are your conceptions of globalisation? What comes to mind when someone says "globalisation"? Anyone, please feel free to answer.

Neville: For me personally it seems to be a convergence of economics and academics in all spheres of life. Previously there was an independence but that no longer exists.

Joanne: For me globalisation will refer to money and finances and free market. You stop looking at it from a South African perspective and start looking at it from an international perspective and how it's going to help improve the economic conditions. Looking at education we have new technologies that teachers must be familiar with and it's global in a sense because everyone has access to knowledge.

Beverly: In other words the world has become smaller. So you're not isolated now, whatever you need you can get it internationally. In other words a kid that you're teaching today doesn't have to stick in this country, he can go overseas. So even the teaching that we give, we have to equip that child to be able to fit in everywhere. So your teaching is geared back to that, are you preparing the child for that kind of environment?

Sindisiwe: Teachers from South Africa are learning from other teachers elsewhere. Teachers are working in collaboration and coming together so now they can think. They have to think about what is happening in other countries if we have to interact with them.

Valerie: The theories about education are converging. Basically what is happening is we are getting a "one-size fits all" model and everyone is just doing the bare minimum to fit this model. You are not allowed to go over and above so people don't become thinking individuals you just getting a basic something.

Daina: The state is influencing teachers' work. It is happening and it is happening in SA as well because we have changed the curriculum to suite their ideals. What was in the apartheid era what was taught then is now scaled down to what is being dictated globally. I am not saying that in the apartheid days the state didn't dictate, they did, but now they are also dictating, nothing much has changed.

Joanne: And also their ideologies – the state ideologies are being transferred to the teachers because if you look at the changes from 1994 to now, every four years there's a change in the curriculum. They either rewrite it not considering the people who are at ground level. Every time you get a new minister of education then there's new ideals.

Valerie: Yes, every time you get a new minister, things change. Now they want to bring in CAPS – so we are moving away from the outcomes to CAPS. CAPS is basically preplanned, we're doing preplanned lessons, we're doing preplanned work.

Sindisiwe: And the government is going back and forth. Right now we are talking about going back to subjects. We were talking about learning areas, now we are going back to subjects. And this impacts on our work as teachers because now we have to adapt. We're going to CAPS and CAPS we don't know. For me four years is too much almost every year there's another change. Right now even in the workshops they are telling us about CAPS. Ask me in two years – it will be something different.

Valerie: With CAPS there are preplanned lessons they are not letting the teacher teach the way they want to – not allowing the teacher to be an individual.

Wade: I also like that, you say that teachers can't be an individual. Could we elaborate?

Valerie: Yes...

Neville: To me there is a political agenda to it all. You must understand that the entire world is dominated by the Europeans, and previously for them a benefit for them was to have other countries uneducated so they could get the maximum out of those environments. But now the thinking has changed because you cannot deal with people that are uneducated. So the benefit is there if all the environments are educated and that is why they are putting so much pressure now on education.

Valerie: But in education, there's basic education, everyone is getting the basics. They are not allowing the individual to go off. Like if you are teaching Maths now, previously you could cater for all, the smarter and the slower learners would get something different but now you are forced to follow the syllabus and just give the basics. This is because of mass production.

Neville: But when we're thinking about that mentality, we are thinking about the schools that we are coming from. The better schools are still promoting that old system of teaching themselves. The brighter kids are teaching themselves plus they are getting

tutors from other schools. So when you come from our schools – the public schools you cannot compete with them.

Valerie: We are actually creating a more capitalist society, privatization, the children coming from those schools go into universities. The public school children, the bulk of them don't have the basics.

Neville: Even if you take my school, the number of children that write the entry test for university, at my school there's just a handful of them. And yet if you take where my daughter is now – an ex-model C school, more than 90% of them study for that.

Daina: Its coming down to what you can afford, only those who can afford it will be able to get it. So everything is economics now.

Neville: So we are guiding our children towards those kinds of environments and the working class and poorer people are pushed into the public system.

Joanne: On the one hand the states says, "I will provide you with the curriculum; I will provide you with the lesson plans," but in each of our classrooms in the public schools we have children with varying abilities we have the gifted child, the middle average child, we have the child with learning disabilities. But we get given this reference to teach all children so we cannot even use our creativity to differentiate the children so what we do is, if the parents are economically viable they send the children to a better school, talking about the ex-model C school where they have varying abilities separated. But we're now in the public schools we have all the children in one class. We cannot be creative.

Wade: And those so-called better schools – are they doing anything to attract learners?

Joanne: Economics – it all boils down to economics. If they can afford it, they will send them there but in the public schools parents do not pay the school fees.

Valerie: Before we just had Indian schools, White schools, but now a lot of the Indian teachers took their children and put them in model C schools. In the so-called Indian schools, we have the black children coming into our schools. So each one is trying to push them to different places, where they can afford. If you can afford the model C schools, you send your children to those schools thinking that they're getting a better education.

Wade: That is from the perspective of the parents, but what I'm asking is how does the school itself encourage the parents to send their children to that school? In light of globalisation does the school do anything?

Beverly: The school needs to market themselves to try and say why is my school better than the other school. I provide these over and above the normal schooling curriculum, I provide computer lessons, I provide music lessons or Art lessons or something like that to try and promote parents sending their children – some kind of trigger that will entice the parents to send their children there.

Daina: One should look at the matric results if they were 100%, 90% - so if the school has good results, the following year there will be a large influx. Schools that perform well in this globalisation era will attract parents.

Neville: What's important is that now people have a choice. Better children are coming and these better schools get to choose the cream of the crop. So what happens now if you take an ex model-C school they got the best kids there. What happens is we tend to get those that are not so good.

Daina: It's also because of the service that you provide at the schools and if your school has a good reputation of providing wonderful results, what happens is the best teachers apply there and therefore you are able to afford to supply those kinds of services to the parents – so it's a marketing strategy.

Beverly: And another thing we do, is the school offers scholarships so that also entices the best pupils, you know they get the best pupils. In terms of sport scholarships and so on, so you know you get the best sports people there.

Wade: So now with all of that said, what are your conceptions of teacher professional learning –so what comes to your mind when someone says “Teacher Professional Learning?”

Beverly: So together with all those changes the teacher needs to know what those changes are and be able to apply those changes. So the professional learning would come in where the teacher must learn all the time to try and keep up with those changes that are taking place and be able to deliver education that is expected.

Sindisiwe: And it depends where the professional learning takes place, we have eh, the department organizes workshops for us as teachers so that we can be able to share our experiences and we will be working with others, that’s how we learn. It will also depend on where you are.

Joanne: Also networking – if you get a couple of schools in your area in your zone, and common problems can be ironed out and you sit and talk about it; informal discussions – about how you going to manage the different problems we are faced with. Like forming communities of practice.

Beverly: But on the other hand also you need people with expertise that know exactly the problems. I remember last year the criticism on OBE, the facilitation especially. When people went to these workshops and asked questions the facilitators themselves couldn’t answer your questions and so there was so much of uncertainty - so that’s another important thing – there are people who have the expertise – when there’s questions and problems arise, there must be people there to give the answers and to give you guidance.



Daina: I would suggest.....

Valerie: Ascertaining of information that must work. So they must facilitate properly otherwise we are not getting the information that we require.

Wade: What was that, that Daina would suggest?

Daina: Yes, I would suggest that we go back to the old system where if the department wants to implement something new they should go into an in-service programme perhaps for a few months and eh, that worked much better than cascading so that is one of the reasons why OBE failed so miserably because the cascading of it was incorrect.

Valerie: The one and two day workshops are not sufficient. There's a problem with how teacher professional learning is taking place.

Wade: Problem? How so?

Sindisiwe: That's correct. That is right, it depends on what and where the learning takes place.

Joanne: And who conducts the learning.

Sindisiwe: Yes, that's right.

Neville: It's also important about who the school sends because when you send one individual and he's coming back with a scanty knowledge of what's happening so the problem is exacerbated because now no-one knows.

Joanne: Timing must also be considered.

Wade: I want to go back to what Sindisiwe said about where teacher learning takes place. So where would be a good place for Teacher Professional Learning to take place at present?

Valerie: I would say the workshops but it's not working because when you get back the schooling context is different and you can't apply what they said there in the school context. So you have to work with people within a community of practice.

Beverly: But even with the communities of practice as I said you must have people with expertise because there's no use if everyone there doesn't know what they're doing, you know what I'm saying.

Sindisiwe: Because sometimes learning is informal so what I told you, you may think is right but it's not right, so it should be planned and formal by people who are knowledgeable, not anyone.

Beverly: You find even these cluster groups, and if you go there you just wonder because you go there with all your stuff and people are just there to take what they can get from you and you're not getting anything out of it. So you ask yourself now am I just wasting my time, so that's why there must be people there with expertise who can guide the whole process through.

Valerie: I think you need to go back to when we had proper subject advisors and they know exactly what needs to be done. We had people who knew their stuff and they knew exactly what they wanted and they showed you how to get it. But nowadays I don't think the people are properly qualified.

Daina: Expertise is the problem, I think.

Wade: Earlier on Valerie said that we are teaching just the basics to push the learners out there, can we expend on this?

Valerie: Because basically we look at now they are going on about the .... Results. Most of our schools are scoring say 30% for Maths so we are regarded as an under-performing school. So they just want us to push those results up to 40 or say 50%. So basically they are not interested in creating the idea that you people will be able to be academically inclined. They just want the basics so those people can go out and work because we want to bring the economy up in this country.

Wade: In your opinion what should teachers be learning to teach the learners. What should they be learning?

Valerie: Teachers if you're teaching Maths you've got to know you have to go over and above your subject content knowledge – that's very important. They should be an expert at that. We need to go back to specializations because lots of us teachers in the primary schools are not specialists and they're teaching stuff. They themselves are learning it first and then teaching it. Half the time they have no idea what they are doing at all. They have to go learn it and then teach it.

Sindisiwe: There are people who are specialists in that and who are not teaching that.

Valerie: That's another problem. You study, you train in one field, right, you train in Maths field but you go into the school and you are teaching English, so you basically have to learn and relearn everything.

Neville: Talking about my experience because I went overseas and there was such an advancement in technology it was frightening. What they are doing there and what we are doing. So if you are going to produce the kind of learner that can fit into a global village you'd have to look at advancing the technological skills and the Maths the Sciences, IT skills because everything else tends to be pertinent to the environment - if you taking your Geography and your History it tends to be local but those things you need to have the kind of skill that's going to make you fit in. And if you notice most of

the things that we've done in the country we've had to get outside help whether it was with the world cup or whatever. We didn't have those skills within the country and that boils down to the teaching. Are we ready to teach at that level where we've got these things and we don't so that is why we were looking outside for help.

Joanne: The professional learning should make the teacher a specialist of these learning areas and to improve his skills he has to improve his qualifications more over go for higher qualifications in his subject or he has to find ways and means of improving his own skills so that these skills will be entrusted to his pupils.

Neville: Sorry to come in again. If you take my experience, when I was studying, we did wood work and metal work and things like that. There was no opportunity for advancement. Beverly will tell you, we couldn't study anything that would advance our skills in those learning areas, so when we went to do a degree we did a BA degree in things like History, because there was nothing else, so what happened is we didn't improve our skills in our teaching areas because what we learned was just academic and couldn't be applied to what we were teaching.

Sindisiwe: The department told us to learn one thing which was outdated, but what we had to do was irrelevant to what learners were learning in schools.

Valerie: What the department needs to do with education is simply that they need to look at supply and demand. You are supplying a certain lot of teachers, but the demand is different. For instance they are demanding specialists but supplying generalists. Look at the foundation phase, which is such an important area, it's a specialized area, but we are lacking teachers in that area. So, we need to meet supply and demand. Don't we? Otherwise our learning may be irrelevant?

Joanne: Definitely.

Valerie: Yes.

Sindisiwe: Yes.

Wade: Beverly is shaking her head.

Beverly: Irrelevant? In what sense? Because if you look at Art now, the way we are teaching now we are going back to what we learned years ago. We are going back to basics, and what we started off teaching.

Valerie: I think that can only be said for some subjects. Because when it comes to Science and things like that, there are many changes. And because of all the changes we find everyone was following a different syllabus, there was no set syllabus, because people just wanted to change with the times but they didn't know how. So now they've gone to a set plan, lesson plans are given to you.

Beverly: I suppose in the new subjects, ja! But in the older ones, everybody has gone back to the basics. To what we were teaching then.

Sindisiwe: Now we are moving backwards.

Beverly: That's right. In fact they should have just let us leave it as it is because we could now just be using our journals from back then, because that's what we've gone back to.

Joanne: We've gone full circle.

Beverly: That's what it is, we've gone back to our subjects. We've gone back to the old way of drilling, timetables and things like that. And those are the things that worked. And it's so sad that all these millions of Rands later, and this generation that went through it can't read and can't think critically. So, they should have just let us be.

Valerie: But then if you want to move further in terms of things like Technology, then teachers need to advance their learning, and we are the old teachers, so we need to improve our skills in those areas to keep up with the world.

Wade: I was going to ask about that, this backward movement that you speak about, is it happening both here and abroad?

Neville: Well, we are still trying to move towards the west, now they are using thinking that is moving towards the East. But previously all the information came from the West. Now you find the advancement's in the East, so there's a lot of networking with the Asians. And there's such a huge Asian population in Australia, in fact even if you look at our country now, you find there are a lot of them.

Valerie: The power is moving away from the West. From America and Britain to China and India. So the technology, how they have improved it, we are moving towards that now and trying to put our basic needs according to what they are doing.

Sindisiwe: But if you look at economics, if you are to have money, funding for our schools, for our teachers then these one day workshops, maybe they won't be one day workshops, maybe they will be a month or so. Because we need proper training, because what we are doing is trying to give learners knowledge that we don't even have. How do you impart that knowledge to learners if you don't have it? Don't even tell me about subject advisors because sometimes they are not even trained themselves. There is the problem. For me, I would think that South Africa would need to have....I think they went too far by looking at all these global trends. Maybe they should have started by collaborating with, and looking at countries that are better than South Africa, but not too far. Right now we are jumping, going back, OBE, we don't know.

Valerie: Teacher professional Learning is jumping, in trying to keep up with the times. The curriculum is changing and then the teachers' needs now need to meet that, and they are changing. You just get used to one thing, and there's another change.

Beverly: And also from the point that you made, we are borrowing from all the other countries. OBE, we took a system that failed in other countries. You know what I'm saying, they should look at something that is really working in another country. And obviously we can't use every aspect of it, but implement it to suit our..... adapt it to what will work for us. Look at OBE, studies have proven that it failed in other countries but we implemented it in our country just to make change.

Valerie: and now we've also got big numbers in a class, Forty in a class, the system won't work.

Daina: Even with ideal situations it failed. We're taking it and putting it into a non-ideal situation, it's guaranteed to fail.

Sindisiwe: And let me tell you, an experienced teacher, they do not want to change, Change, what change?

Wade: I know it seems pretty soon, but believe it or not we've been going for a while, so I'd like to bring this discussion to a close. What I'd like to do before we close is just go around the room and ask everybody if there's just a concluding comment that you would like to make. I think I'll start with Beverly.

Beverly: Ja! It's a lot to think about especially after teaching for all these years. And, yes, you're right change is hard, but we have to change in order for us to survive. And all of us have been in this profession for years, and you know we are passionate about our jobs. And together with all of the changes come a lot of frustrations as well, for those of us that have been here for years, the change is very hard. But we are trying to improve ourselves, we're trying to do all this learning and move with the times, and trying to get used to all the new technologies and things. So we're making our effort. But it's sometimes very hard and very frustrating.

Wade: Thanks for that. Sindisiwe.

Sindisiwe: It is good for South Africa to be thinking globally, because we are taking our kids from South Africa to other countries. We must look at how we can be able to meet the demands of what's outside South Africa, because we are from different backgrounds, different.....so we must think whether the change that we are trying to make will make us be proud and gain knowledge from that change. So, we must check whether we are learning professionally or we are losing the battle.

Wade: Thank you. Joanne.

Joanne: It seems as though we are moving back and forth in the education system. Not everybody is going to become a Scientist, a Doctor and study medicine, we must look at what we need in the economy, what skills are needed, and then we have to bring about a curriculum that suits the needs of the community and the state in general. If we are just going to make changes in the curriculum and confuse the children even further, and basically most of the children are not even literate, they are not literate in Grade seven, and how they landed in Grade Seven is another question to be answered. So if we are going to compete in the global market we have to change our education system.

Wade: Thanks. Valerie.

Valerie: Basically what Joanne said, I agree with. I think our government needs to find a system and make it work, one way to do it is don't keep changing it all the time. And then they have to get that gap, I think it's a gap between higher education institutions and what is happening in schools. They need to bridge that gap, so that they can provide teachers who can go out there and know exactly what's happening, I think there's a big gap there.

Wade: Thank you. Neville.



Neville: For me, I feel that politics is dominating in the country. Because if you're looking at the rest of the world, the country is a power house, an economic power house. But in South Africa politics is dominating and that is why economics and the business sector is getting the back seat. And that is a problem because we are not creating the kind of child to go out and supply that job market. And that is the biggest mistake in the country. Economics needs to dominate.

Wade: Thanks. Let's get a concluding comment from Daina.

Daina: I think that change is good, I think that South Africa is actually doing the right thing by looking at the global village. The thing is that now they need to reconstruct our education system so that we can actually compete within that global village. One of the most important things that this country has missed, I think, is the very low literacy levels in our country. We have maybe more than fifty percent that can't really read, and basically education is what's going to lift up the country, so we should go back to basics, I think. And the other thing is that our teachers now need to be specialized in what they are doing. You've got to go back to specializations as well.

