



**AN EXPLORATION OF BUSINESS STUDIES TEACHERS' INTEGRATION OF
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TO EQUIP GRADE 12
LEARNERS WITH CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS**

By

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own independent work. It is submitted for the Doctor of Philosophy in Education at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.



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15 JANUARY 2024

ABSTRACT

Business studies is a subject that in South African schools to equip learners with skills that would enable them to operate effectively in contemporary business environment, either as employers or employees. However, there is a general concern that learners who are produced by these schools do not possess skills that are relevant to current business environments. This is partly due to the impact of technological developments that continue to cause a shift in skills needed by businesses. Therefore, there is a need for an exploration on how best business studies teachers integrate ICTs in their classrooms to equip learners with skills that are required by the contemporary business environment. This study explored ICT integration by business studies teachers to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills that are required by the contemporary business environment.

Social Constructivism Theory and Functional Context Theory were adopted as the theoretical lenses of this study. Social Constructivists emphasize the need for interaction, collaboration, active learning, and autonomous learning in the learning context for meaningful learning to occur. Functional Context Theory, on the other hand, advocates for a learning environment that reflects the world for which learners are being prepared for. The proponents of this theory advise teachers to integrate resources that learners would use upon joining the real world of work.

This is a qualitative study underpinned by the interpretive research paradigm. A multi case study research design was deemed suitable for this particular study. Face-to-face individual interviews and classroom observations were adopted to collect data. Six Business Studies teachers who use ICTs to teach were selected from six secondary schools located in Kwa-Zulu Natal province of South Africa were

purposively sampled. Data that was collected were analyzed using hybrid thematic analysis.

Findings of the study were that:

- i. teachers see value in ICT integration in their business studies pedagogical practices.
- ii. teachers see ICTs as tools that assist in exposing learners to authentic learning activities that help them to acquire critical business skills needed by the contemporary business environment.
- iii. business studies teachers adopted various learner-centred teaching methods to create learning environments that promote the acquisition of critical business skills.
- iv. most teachers integrated different ICTs to nurture learners' critical business skills.
- v. teachers mainly relied on their personal teaching experiences and their generic technological skills.

Based on the findings of this study, Technology Integration Model for Business Studies teachers was developed. The developed framework can play a role in helping business studies teachers integrate ICTs in a systematic way that would lead to learners' acquisition of critical business skills.

Based on the key findings highlighted above, the study recommends that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) should develop coherent professional development programmes to expose all business studies teachers to novel pedagogies, learning activities and ICTs that can be used to nurture learners' critical

business skills. This will help to reduce teachers' over reliance on their teaching experiences and what they think is suitable for learners to acquire critical business skills, which sometimes can be inconsistent with the objectives of the business studies curriculum.

Keywords: Business studies, Critical business skills, Teachers, Teaching methods, ICT integration

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my one and only son, Ntokomalo Lukhona Gcabashe. You are really a blessing to me mfan'wami. I wish you to grow and take one lesson from this project. One lesson contained in this whole study is that *hard work pays off!!* I wish you nothing but a good life, Mhlathuze! Daddy loves you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BS	Business Studies
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
FCT	Functional Context Theory
FET	Further Education and Training
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IWB	Interactive Whiteboard
KZN DoE	Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TLI	Teacher Laptop Initiative
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The ubiquity of technology around the globe continues to affect different aspects of life, including education. In response to the increasing infiltration of technology in education, different countries have structured their curricula to be amenable to ICT integration (Bayaga et al., 2021). Amongst these countries are the United Kingdom (Francom, 2020) and Malaysia (Tamin & Mohamad, 2020) who introduced technology to transform education and establish a knowledge society. Saba et al. (2023) postulate that the ability to use technology has become a determinant of every society's growth and progress. The ability to use technology is now perceived as a key feature of 21st-century society. As a result, different countries endeavour to invest in ICT integration in schools to produce individuals who can operate effectively in the contemporary economy. Developing countries such as South Africa continue to invest billions of rands in various ICTs to support teaching and learning (Mathende & Beach, 2022). The common rationale for investing in ICT integration is its role in preparing the future workforce (Li, 2022).

South Africa is a relatively advanced country in terms of advancements in technology compared to other African countries (Lembani et al., 2020). In South Africa, developments of technology continue to change workplaces, working conditions, businesses and the exchange and handling of information (Buhalis *et al.*, 2019). However, society is lagging in acquiring the skills and knowledge required by the knowledge economy created by advancements in technology (Phale et al., 2021). Also, millions of young people in South Africa are either unemployed or underemployed, while

employers have jobs they cannot fill (Gabobegwe, 2022). There is, therefore, a general call that schools should prepare learners for a life in a modern world that is driven by technological innovations (Haleem et al., 2022).

In order to respond to these calls, the South African government rolled out initiatives to provide ICTs to schools to be integrated by teachers in their pedagogical practices to equip learners with skills demanded by the contemporary business environment. In addition to rolling out ICTs, the government continues to reform and review the curriculum to ensure that schools equip learners with skills demanded by the contemporary business environment. As part of curriculum reform, subjects such as business studies that are meant to prepare learners for the contemporary business environment were designed. Business studies was introduced into the curriculum of secondary schools as part of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) (Grade 8-9) in 2000 (Phakathi, 2018). Grades 10, 11 and 12 have had a business studies curriculum since 2006, and the first Grade 12 learners sat for their first business studies examination in 2008. The business studies curriculum was developed to match the demands of the contemporary business world in terms of technology, growth, and knowledge development (Dube, 2019). The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document summarises the main purpose of the business studies curriculum. According to the CAPS document, business studies was designed to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are beneficial for learners to engage in business activities meaningfully, responsibly, and productively in the contemporary business environment (DBE, 2011). Briefly, the main aim of business studies is to equip learners with skills that would enable them to meaningfully participate in the contemporary business environment as business practitioners.

Although business studies aims to prepare learners for the real business world, studies indicate that learners produced by South African schools still lack skills demanded by contemporary businesses (Ramnund-Mansingh & Reddy, 2021). South Africa's young adults leave school without the necessary business skills to survive in the contemporary business world (Ramnund-Mansingh & Reddy, 2021). This means that the learning outcomes of the business studies curriculum are yet to be fully realized in South Africa. This is also confirmed by the low business activities among South Africans compared to other developing countries (Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring, 2012).

Furthermore, Ramraj and Marimuthu (2021) posit that the mismatch between the expectations of the contemporary business environment and what is taught in schools affects learners' acquisition of critical business skills. Seemingly, some South African young people lack both entrepreneurial skills that should assist them in starting their own business ventures and skills that would enable them to secure jobs in the contemporary business world.

Business studies curriculum in its current form has been blamed for not adequately exposing learners to the real business world (Dube, 2019). This deprives learners of an opportunity to learn skills required in the contemporary business world. Mandilas et al. (2014) suggest that the business studies curriculum should keep up with developments in contemporary business environments and provide learners with an effective skill "toolkit" that addresses and marches in lockstep with changes in the business environment. Business studies curriculum should play a significant role in providing learners with knowledge and skills that would enable them to handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems that dominate the contemporary business world (America & Skelly, 2021).

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since its inception, business studies content has been continuously altered to respond to the demands of the contemporary business environment. However, the positive impact of business studies is yet to be seen in South Africa. This is due to the fact that most South African youths leave school without acquiring the critical business skills they need to secure jobs and establish their business ventures (Moila et al., 2019). This is evidenced by the souring unemployment rate that continues to engulf South African youth. In the last quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate in South Africa was 32.7%, with the youth unemployment rate well above 66% in the last three months of 2021 (Stats SA, 2022). Also, South African youths have a very low uptake of establishing businesses compared to other developing countries (Global Entrepreneurship Monitoring, 2012). Stats SA (2018) also revealed that many business ventures that young South Africans start get closed due to a lack of requisite entrepreneurial skills to sustain businesses in a contemporary business environment. The preceding discussion paints a gloomy picture of the state of many young people in South Africa, their abilities to secure employment, and their ability to establish and sustain business ventures.

Studies attribute this to the mismatch between what is taught in schools and the reality in the contemporary business environment as the main cause of high unemployment and failure to establish and sustain businesses for young people in South Africa. For example, Gomes and Yasin (2011) posit that the mismatch between the expectations of the contemporary business environment and what is taught in schools leads to schools failing to equip learners with suitable skills needed by businesses. In other words, schools are not able to equip learners with critical business skills because they are not aware of what is expected of them by the contemporary business environment. The mismatch in expectations between businesses and schools might be emanating from the resources that are used in schools to nurture learners' skills. Many schools

(especially rural-based schools) lack proper ICTs to nurture learners' critical business skills (Ritah, 2022). As a result, these schools end up producing learners who lack critical business skills that would enable them to secure employment or establish and sustain their own business ventures. Interestingly, such learners are expected to enter the business environment and compete with other young people from affluent schools and from the global arena to secure employment opportunities. Being under prepared for the contemporary business environment disadvantages learners who come from rural settings compared to their counterparts from affluent and well resourced schools when it comes to accessing job opportunities. For this reason, this study explores how business studies teachers from a rural setting integrate ICTs in their pedagogical practices to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills that can help them operate effectively in the contemporary business environment.

1.3. RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The decision to embark on this study was motivated by three reasons. Firstly, the reviewed literature indicates that studies have been conducted on ICT integration in business studies teaching (Chidiebere, 2020); however, there is no empirical evidence as to how business studies teachers integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills. Therefore, this study played a major role in providing empirical evidence on how teachers integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills needed in the contemporary business environment.

Secondly, there have been attempts by the Department of Basic Education to tailor the curriculum towards the needs of the contemporary business environment, including introducing business studies as a subject in secondary schools and continuously revising the subject's content to match the demands of the contemporary business environment

(Khoza, 2019). However, the full potentialities of business studies on producing 'work-ready' young people are yet to be unleashed in South Africa. Therefore, this study contributes to examining business studies teachers' pedagogical practices in technology-enhanced classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills.

Finally, the South African government has made some strides in promoting ICT integration in teaching and learning in South African schools. This includes acquiring and providing ICTs to schools and developing policies that are aimed at entrenching ICT integration in South African schools. Despite such initiatives, there has been little research that focuses on investigating teachers for specific subjects on their ICT integration to nurture learners' skills espoused in the curriculum. This study, therefore, explored how business studies teachers integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills as envisaged by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

1.4. RESEARCH AIM

The aim of the study is to explore how business studies teachers integrate ICTs into their instructional practices to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills. By achieving this, they would be preparing them for the contemporary business world. The findings of this study contributes to the knowledge of the skills that business studies teachers should be imparting to learners so that they are relevant to the contemporary business environment.

1.4.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following research objectives are designed to achieve the aim of the study:

- To explore business studies teachers' views on ICT integration to nurture learners' critical business skills.
- To explore teachers' use of different teaching methods while integrating ICTs to create conducive learning environments for learners to acquire critical business skills.
- To determine how business studies teachers integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills required to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment.

1.4.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This particular study aims to answer the following research questions:

1.4.2.1. Main Research Question

- How do business studies teachers integrate ICTs to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills needed to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment?

1.4.2.2. Sub-Research Questions

- What are teachers' views on ICT integration to nurture learners' critical business skills?
- How do teachers employ different teaching methods while integrating ICTs to create learning environments that support the nurturing of critical business skills?
- How do business studies teachers integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills that are required by the contemporary business environment?

1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1: this chapter provides an overview of the entire thesis. The introduction and the background of the study are outlined in this chapter. This chapter also provides a discussion of the problem statement for this study. The main research aim, question, objectives, and the research questions that guided this research are also presented in this chapter.

Chapter 2: A literature review of the existing studies related to the phenomenon that is investigated in this study is conducted in this chapter. The literature review helped in understanding the phenomenon under investigation and in engaging with the data.

Chapter 3: Two theories that underpin this study, which are Social Constructivism Theory and Functional Context Theory, are discussed in detail in this chapter. This chapter also presents the conceptual framework that is formulated for this study.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, the research methodology of this study is discussed. The research approach, research paradigm, and research design are discussed. The process that is followed in conducting this study is also outlined. The research population, sampling and sampling technique, data collection methods, data analysis technique, trustworthiness principles and ethical issues are outlined as well.

Chapter 5: In this chapter, the biographical information of the participants is discussed. Research sites are also outlined in this chapter. Furthermore, the empirical findings that were generated through interviews are presented. Key themes that emerged during data analysis are used to present the findings of the study.

Chapter 6: This chapter focuses on presenting the findings of the study that were generated through classroom observations.

Chapter 7: This chapter focuses on discussing extensively the findings of the study presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. The literature review and the theoretical underpinnings of this study are used to support the discussion of findings.

Chapter 8: The overview of this study is presented in this chapter. This chapter also focuses on summarising the key findings of the study, the contribution of this study, recommendations, and the limitations, as well as the conclusions of the study.

1.6. DEFINITION OF KEY OPERATIONAL TERMS

Business studies curriculum: Tanner (1991) defined curriculum as a planned and guided learning experience and learning outcomes formulated through systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experiences under the auspices of the school for learners' wilful growth in personal-social competence. This study defines business studies curriculum as the content of business studies subject designed to equip learners with skills that enable them to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment. The term business studies curriculum is used interchangeably with business studies content. The business studies curriculum or content is divided into four main components: business environment, business venture, business role and business operations (DBE, 2011). Each component contributes 25% towards the entire curriculum/content of business studies.

Business studies: this is the subject that deals with the activities that take place in and around the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services (Kimotho, 2016). It also deals with equipping learners with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are critical to and relevant to the world of work (DBE, 2011). Business studies is a subject that provides human capital for businesses and industries (Christian, 2019). In

other words, business studies as a subject is designed to prepare learners for the world beyond school by equipping them with skills needed by the business environment.

Contemporary business environment: is defined as the business environment that is dominated by advancements in technology that have impacted the way in which businesses operate. The contemporary business environment is characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (Frutos- Juarez & Osorio, 2013). The uncertainty in a contemporary business environment is caused by the continuous changes in both internal and external factors that directly and indirectly affect business operations. To cope with uncertainties, businesses are looking for a workforce with skills that can enable them to survive and operate in the contemporary business environment.

Critical business skills are the skills that are acquired through systematic, deliberate, and sustained effort to carry out job functions smoothly, adaptively, effectively, and efficiently in the contemporary business world (Tokarcikova et al., 2020). Critical business skills encourage individuals to adapt to uncertain and fluctuating conditions (Lent, 2018). Critical business skills are a combination of soft skills and hardcore skills that enable individuals to easily cope with changing situations, especially those conditions that are impacted by the advancements in technology.

Technology integration: this refers to the incorporation of all ICTs to support teaching and to boost learners' learning (Shelly et al., 2008). Na-Allah (2019) perceives technology integration as a deliberate, conscious, and regular application of ICTs by both teachers and learners for the facilitation and enhancement of all aspects of the teaching and learning process. This study views technology integration as a conscious act of a teacher to select and integrate ICTs in the classroom to enhance learners' learning and facilitate the acquisition of critical business skills. The term technology

integration will be used interchangeably with the term ICT integration throughout the study.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to a combination of networks, hardware, and software, as well as the means of communication, collaboration and engagements that enable the processing, management, and exchange of information (DoE, 2004). This study defines ICT as technological devices adopted by business studies teachers in their classrooms to support their instructional practices. The term technology will be used interchangeably with ICTs throughout the study.

Learning: Learning involves a change in a person's behaviour, insights, and perceptions. These changes may result in added knowledge or the ability to complete the task he/she could not do before (du Plessis et al., 2007). Learning also denotes one's ability to acquire knowledge and skills that help to perform a particular task. It cannot be confined within a classroom setting, but it happens both outside and inside the classroom. Learning can also occur when one engages in formal and informal education. This study argues that one can learn from different individuals and tools, including peers, parents, teachers, and engaging with technology. Learning with technology means a learner can interact with different ICTs to acquire knowledge and skills (Mukhari, 2016).

Teaching: this is a human undertaking with an aim to help learners learn (du Plessis et al., 2007). Mukhari (2016) adds that teaching is a process that helps learners acquire skills, values and attitudes that enable them to grow into useful members of society. Teachers who engage in the teaching process should consider the goals and aspirations of the curriculum in order to produce the calibre of learners that are envisaged by the curriculum. Teachers are professionally trained to educate and train learners at an educational institution in order to satisfy the needs of the prescribed curriculum (ELRC, 2003).

1.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on presenting the general introduction and background of this study. The problem statement and the rationale for this particular study were also discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the research aim, questions, and objectives of the study. Finally, the chapter ended with the definition of key operational terms.

The next chapter focuses on reviewing the existing literature on different aspects of the study that will help to understand technology integration in teaching business studies.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the introduction and the background of this study. This study explores business studies teachers' integration of ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills. To understand the phenomenon comprehensively, local and international studies were reviewed in this chapter. Existing studies focusing on the critical business skills that are the focus of this study were reviewed. To further understand the phenomenon, it is important to review the literature that focus on the teaching methods that business studies teachers can implement while integrating ICTs to create learning environments that foster the learners' acquisition of critical business skills. Existing studies that focused on the role of ICT integration in business studies and pedagogical practices were reviewed. Finally, studies that explored contextual issues that influence ICT integration were reviewed.

2.2. CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

The contemporary business world demands a set of distinct skills from the young people who join the economy after matriculating. In the field of Business Education, these skills have been identified as critical business skills (Azih & Wagbara, 2018). Azih and Wagbara (2018) identified a list of critical business skills that business studies matriculants need as members of the contemporary economy. These skills include communication, collaboration, leadership, professionalism, adaptability, problem-solving, creative thinking, entrepreneurial, technological, work ethics, analytical, critical thinking, planning, and organizing skills.

For this study, only five critical business skills from the list above were explored to accomplish the main aim of the study. These skills are entrepreneurial skills, communication skills, creative thinking skills, technological skills, and problem-solving skills. Five critical business skills selected for this study are closely related to business studies learning outcomes espoused in the South African business studies Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document.

The table below shows the relationship between critical business skills and business studies FET phase learning outcomes as espoused in the CAPS document.

Table 2.1.: *Depicting the relationship between critical business skills and Business studies learning outcomes.*

Critical business skills	Business studies learning outcomes
Entrepreneurial skills	<i>Aims to equip learners with knowledge and skills that will enable them to establish and manage their own businesses (DBE, 2011).</i>
Communication Skills	<i>To produce learners who can communicate and work well with others to accomplish business goals (DBE, 2011).</i>
Creative thinking skills	<i>To use creative thinking to solve business-related problems, take risks and identify business opportunities (DBE, 2011).</i>
Problem-solving skills	<i>The subject aims to equip learners with problem-solving skills that they will employ to solve business-related problems as both employers and employees (DBE, 2011).</i>
Technological skills	<i>To produce learners who can use technology effectively and critically (DBE, 2011).</i>

It is clear from Table 2.1. above that, critical business skills that are the focus of this study are closely related to business studies learning outcomes stated in the business

studies official curriculum. Business studies official curriculum (CAPS) document stipulates a set of learning outcomes that should be accomplished through daily lessons. Each lesson should serve as a building block towards achieving the stipulated learning outcomes of business studies (DBE, 2011). This is in line with the development of critical business skills because critical business skills cannot be developed overnight, but every lesson should expose learners to learning activities and experiences that would nurture their critical business skills.

The next section discusses in detail five critical business skills that were identified for this study.

2.1.1. ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

Equipping learners with entrepreneurial skills is part of business studies objectives in South Africa. According to DBE (2011), business studies aims to produce learners who have entrepreneurial skills, and can identify and solve problems, and make decisions using creative thinking. Despite this specific aim, South African schools seem to be struggling with equipping learners with the required entrepreneurial skills. Statistics South Africa (2018) indicates that many businesses started by young people get closed due to a lack of requisite entrepreneurial skills required to sustain businesses. Furthermore, the contributing factor to the failure of small and medium business enterprises in South Africa might be the lack of a culture of entrepreneurship amongst South Africans. Entrepreneurship in South Africa is still in its developmental state (Fatoki, 2014). This suggests that entrepreneurship is not well established amongst the South African population. Therefore, it is important for the business studies curriculum to equip learners with entrepreneurial skills to engrain the culture of entrepreneurship amongst the South African populace.

Presently, South Africa does not have a stand-alone entrepreneurship education rather, South Africa's entrepreneurship education is embedded in Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) that is offered to learners in the senior phase (Grades 7-9) and business studies that is offered mainly to commerce learners at the Further Education and Training phase (Grades 10-12). Both subjects have been criticized for having entrepreneurship education that is theory-based and more slanted towards business management practices (Du Toit, 2016). This leaves learners with little opportunity to apply their entrepreneurship knowledge and skills in the real business world (Du Toit, 2016).

Entrepreneurship education still needs to be strengthened in South Africa for it to effectively equip learners with entrepreneurial skills. Du Toit (2016) contends that entrepreneurship education should prepare learners to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real-life learning experiences. If this is the case, learners need to be taught entrepreneurship education intensively. Gamede and Uleanya (2017) recommend that entrepreneurship be taught to all South African learners in the Further Education and Training Phase, and they are of the view that it would be of great value to the country. Gamede and Uleanya's (2017) recommendation means that entrepreneurship education in South Africa should not be limited to learners who are doing commercial subjects.

According to Badawi et al. (2019), the inculcation of entrepreneurial skills impels learners to put theory into practice, transcending the mere understanding of what entrepreneurship is about. This insinuates that if entrepreneurial skills are well taught, learners are encouraged to establish their own business ventures. Entrepreneurial skills allow an individual to exploit an idea and create a business enterprise (small or big) not only for personal gains but also for social and economic gains (Olagunju, 2004). For

learners to develop their entrepreneurial skills, they are required to have hands-on experiences with a variety of skills related to success in entrepreneurial endeavours (Badawi et al., 2019). This means entrepreneurial skills should be instilled in learners through hands-on activities in the classroom; this may include, but is not limited to, the development of business plans and the writing of business proposals as part of learning activities in business studies classrooms.

Furthermore, the literature indicates that entrepreneurial skills should be coupled with technological skills (Adekunle & Sunday, 2020; Okoye, 2018). In other words, entrepreneurs that are produced in schools should possess technological skills to survive in the contemporary business environment. Neil (2016) contends that entrepreneurs need to have technological skills that will assist them in conducting their businesses in the present digital world. Technological skills are important for novice and seasoned entrepreneurs in this ever-changing business environment influenced by technological advancements. There is a need for prospective entrepreneurs to be exposed and adequately equipped with both entrepreneurial and technological skills (Okoye, 2018). Put differently, business studies teachers should ensure that when equipping learners with entrepreneurial skills, they also equip them with technological skills.

Okoye (2018) postulates that teachers should make use of ICTs to impart entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to learners. For example, as part of a Grade 12 formal assignment, a teacher can give learners a task to make use of business environment analysis tools such as SWOT analysis, PORTERS' Five Model and PESTLE analysis for a strategic plan of a particular business. As part of completing the formal assignment, learners could be asked to make use of technology, such as the internet, to search for strategic plans of different businesses so that they can complete

the assignment. In so doing, learners' entrepreneurial skills (ability to critically analyze three business environments using analysis tools) are sharpened while their technological skills (ability to use computers and the internet) are also developed.

2.1.2. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication skills are among the most important skills in the contemporary business world. Contemporary businesses consider communication skills as the most important skills and for individuals' success in a business career, business communication skills are indispensable (Chatterjee, 2018). Communication skills enable one to generate, transmit, receive, and interpret messages in interpersonal, group, public and mass communication contexts through verbal and written formats (Markovic & Salamzadeh, 2018). Businesses require employees with sound communication skills that enable each employee to effectively communicate in different contexts in a business setting. At the present moment, the literature points out that communication skills among employees are lacking in a contemporary business environment. Conrad and Newberry (2012) state that there is a gap in communication skills desired by contemporary businesses and those possessed by young people joining the business world. This is despite the emphasis of the business studies curriculum that learners should be taught communication skills.

The lack of communication skills for learners entering the contemporary business environment suggests a mismatch between school communication skills and those required by businesses. Conrad and Newberry (2012) advised that teachers must understand and teach communication skills considered important in businesses. Ober and Hillson (2003) categorized communication skills into three categories, which include organizational communication skills, leadership communication skills and interpersonal

communication skills. Organizational communication skills are those skills that business practitioners use to effectively communicate with all internal and external stakeholders, such as suppliers and shareholders. Furthermore, Ober and Hillson (2003) defines leadership communication skills as the skills that allow business leadership to effectively communicate with the employees. Finally, interpersonal communication skills are regarded as the skills that allow business practitioners to effectively communicate with external and internal constituents on a personal, intimate, one-one basis, exchanging thoughts in face-to-face verbal and non-verbal contexts by sharing information and providing feedback (Ober & Hillson, 2003). Business studies learners should possess the aforementioned communication skill sets in order for them to survive in the contemporary business environment.

Communication skills that are offered to learners should be tailored to the demands of the contemporary business environment. The standard communication skills, which include reading, writing, listening and oral presentation (Al-Musalli, 2019), are deemed inadequate for learners who are aspiring to become business practitioners in the contemporary business world. These communication skills alone fail to capture the nuances of skilled business practitioners in the contemporary business world (Conrad & Newberry, 2012). In addition to the basic communication skills, learners should be equipped with technological skills that will assist them in facilitating communication in contemporary business contexts. To achieve this, teachers should adopt technological tools in their classrooms as part of preparing learners for the contemporary business environment.

Communication in contemporary businesses is technology-enhanced, which means businesses make use of different ICTs to communicate with different stakeholders. Technological platforms such as emails and intranets dominate communication in

businesses (Chatterjee, 2018). The integration of technology in business studies classrooms would assist learners in developing communication skills relevant to the contemporary business environment. Chatterjee (2018) further asserts that when learners use technology such as email, they develop their communication skills. Teachers can also encourage learners to communicate with them through emails. In the process, learners will develop communication skills. Business letter writing and report writing can also be taught using technology, where learners can be encouraged to use computers to write business letters and reports. By doing so, teachers would expose learners to business communication processes in the real business world.

2.1.3. CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS

According to Henriksen et al. (2016), creative thinking skills are essential for the 21st century success as societal problems become more interdependent and complex. Thus, equipping learners with creative thinking skills is important for their survival in the contemporary business world (DBE, 2011). This is because business studies learners are perceived as individuals who should provide solutions to societal problems of modern society. For example, they can use their creative thinking skills to establish business ventures that can create job opportunities for themselves and others, thus solving the problem of high unemployment in the country. Gafour and Gafour (2020) perceive creative thinking skills as the capacity to produce a new project or an idea based on imagination.

Furthermore, scholars emphasize the need for creative thinking skills to be fostered in classrooms to prepare learners for the contemporary business environment (Harris & de Bruin, 2018; Sanders, 2016). Rahayuningsih et al. (2021) state that business studies learners should be taught creativity by stressing the importance of cognitive flexibility,

making learners comfortable with uncertain situations or undefined problems. This suggests that learners should be taught creative thinking skills that will help them adapt to the contemporary business world characterized by different uncertainties. Teachers have the responsibility to enhance learners' creativity in the classroom and beyond. Mathews et al. (2019) stipulate that encouraging creativity in the classroom is the primary task of a teacher. Creative thinking is achievable by all learners regardless of their academic attainment if conditions are conducive for them to acquire creative thinking skills (Mathews et al., 2019). This insinuates that teachers should develop a conducive classroom environment that would promote creative thinking among business studies learners.

The integration of technology in business studies classrooms can also assist in promoting creative thinking among learners. Several studies have concluded that creative thinking skills can be enhanced through the integration of ICT in teaching and learning. For example, Aderonmu et al. (2014) conducted a study in Nigeria that investigated the application of technology by Science, Technology and Mathematics teachers to develop learners' creative thinking skills. The study found that 73.6% of the respondents confirmed that integrating technology in teaching positively impacted learners' creativity. Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015) note that creative activities with technology can include developing ideas, making collaborations, communication, and evaluation. In other words, ICTs can be used by learners to come up with innovative business ideas. For example, the learner can make use of the computer to design their own business logos. After designing their business logos, they can share them with their peers' using emails or social network sites for their input and contribution to those ideas. The exercise of this nature not only fosters creativity but also collaboration and communication among learners.

In addition, learners can make use of scanners, cameras, and graphic software to capture and manipulate images and create and extract meaning in visual parts (Nikolopoulou, 2018). As learners manipulate images and pictures using ICTs, their creative thinking skills are enhanced because they get an opportunity to explore different ideas that inform their learning. It can be inferred that ICT integration enables learners to engage in hands-on activities that may enhance their creative thinking skills. Forte-Celaya et al. (2021) argue that learners' creative thinking skills cannot be enhanced without being actively involved in activities meant to promote their creative thinking skills. Equipping learners with creative thinking skills requires teachers to understand and appreciate the role of technology in enhancing learners' creative thinking skills.

Nikolopoulou (2018) argues that access to technology alone cannot deliver creativity nor enhance learners' creative thinking skills. Technology only provides opportunities that afford interaction, participation and active demonstration of imagination that has the potential to enhance learners' creative thinking skills (Nikolopoulou, 2018). Learners need to be equipped with knowledge and skills in using technology in a manner that enhances their creative thinking. Teachers can play a pivotal role in facilitating the acquisition of creative thinking skills by learners through ICT integration in their business studies classrooms.

2.1.4. PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Problem-solving skills have been part of the main objectives of different education systems since human immemorial. Riyadi and Nikmaturrohman (2021) mentioned that developing problem-solving skills is the primary goal of the curriculum in any school. In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education, through a business studies curriculum, aims to produce learners who can creatively solve complex business problems (DBE,

2011). Similarly, the business studies curriculum aims to equip learners with problem-solving skills that would enable them to solve complex business-related problems. Nowadays, both big and small businesses encounter challenges that are multifaceted, and they require business practitioners to apply complex problem-solving skills when resolving them. Gunawan et al. (2020) state that problem-solving skills should be the focus of contemporary educational goals. This is because learners who are being produced by schools are expected to enter the contemporary business world that is characterized by complex problems.

Mainly, the root cause of the complex challenges plaguing contemporary businesses is technological advancements (Baloch et al., 2021). To deal with the contemporary business complex challenges, young people who enter the contemporary economy should be equipped with problem-solving skills. Problem-solving skills elevate one to the level of being able to obtain proper information that will lead them to a solution and apply it to the problem (Hidayati & Wagiran, 2020). Further to that, Riyadi and Nikmaturrohmah (2021) add that problem-solving skills help learners improve their analytical abilities and apply them to various situations. This suggests that learners with problem-solving skills can analyze the information gathered to solve a problem before deciding.

It can be argued that ICT integration can play a role in supporting individuals in the contemporary business world in problem-solving. As a result, business studies teachers should integrate ICTs when teaching problem-solving skills to expose learners to the real business world. Rahmi and Jumadi (2019) mentioned that ICT integration can provide opportunities for learners to be more creative and help them search for various logical reasons from different sources to solve real business problems. To improve learners' problem-solving skills, teachers should give practical business problems where problem-solving skills are applied when finding a solution to the problem. Both teachers

and learners can integrate ICTs such as the internet to find information that will assist them in solving a problem. Crebert et al. (2011) advise teachers to teach learners to clearly identify, define, and discuss the problem before eventually focusing on possible solutions. In summary, teachers should discuss with learners the ways to identify the problem especially from a real business scenario. After that, learners can use ICTs to gather information that will assist them in finding a solution to a particular problem. During the process, teachers should facilitate how learners arrive at the possible solutions to the problem.

2.1.5. TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS

Technological advancements have affected contemporary businesses by bringing many changes to how businesses function. According to Alao et al. (2020), the emergence of new ICTs such as the computer, automated teller machine, reprographic machines, micrographic machines, accounting machines and modern telephonic systems have revolutionized the contemporary business environment. Due to the changes in business operations because of advancements in technology, it can be concluded that skills required by the contemporary business environment are different from those skills that were needed by business practitioners two decades ago. This view is supported by Chigbuson et al. (2018), who assert that the changing trends in the contemporary business environment due to advancements in technology have increased the complexity of skills required by the contemporary business environment from both employers and employees.

Technological skills have been seen as the necessary skills that individuals should possess in order to function effectively in the contemporary business environment. Studies indicate that individuals lacking technological skills find it difficult to survive in

the contemporary business environment dominated by technology. This is also confirmed by Elsaadani (2015), who mentioned that business practitioners who are not able to utilize ICTs in their professional and personal lives have limited chances of succeeding in the contemporary business environment. Esene and Mgbonyebi (2015) suggested that future business practitioners should obtain the kind of education that would equip them with technological skills that would enable them to be highly functional in the contemporary business environment.

Since the business studies curriculum aims to prepare learners for the world of work, there is a common view that the subject should equip learners with technological skills (Alao et al., 2020; Ekwere, 2020; Okoye, 2017). Teachers should integrate various ICTs in their classrooms to impart technological skills to learners (Okoye, 2017). Furthermore, ICT integration in business studies goes a long way in developing learners' technological skills needed in establishing and managing a business venture (Okoye, 2017). This insinuates that ICT integration in the classroom may have a lasting impact on learners to the extent that technological skills acquired during secondary school years may be useful for an individual as a business practitioner in the future. Hence, ICTs integrated in business studies classrooms should expose learners to various technologies used in business organizations (Okoye, 2017).

Technological skills acquired by learners at schools not only assist them after schooling as prospective business practitioners but also during their school years. Technological skills enable learners to process assignments and maintain communication with their peers (Alao et al., 2020). Furthermore, learners who possess technological skills can use the internet to search for information to enrich what they learned from the classroom or complete assessments (Osmani et al., 2020).

In overall, this section has presented existing literature on the five critical business skills that are the focus of this study. It emerged from literature that all five critical business skills that are investigated in this study are crucial for business studies learners to acquire while at school in order for them to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment. It also transpired from the literature that ICT integration can play a valuable role in supporting teachers' pedagogical practices when teaching critical business skills. Therefore, business studies teachers in South Africa should employ different ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills that are required in the contemporary business world. The next section discusses the two main teaching approaches that can be followed when teaching business studies to nurture learners' critical business skills. The section concludes by discussing teaching methods that can be used by business studies teachers while integrating ICTs to create conducive learning environments for learners to acquire critical business skills.

2.3. TEACHING APPROACHES FOR TEACHING BUSINESS STUDIES

Approaches to teaching business studies are discussed in this section to understand how business studies teachers can adopt these approaches to create a learning environment that promotes the acquisition of critical business skills. After the discussion of teaching approaches, different teaching methods are discussed to shed light on teaching methods that can be adopted by business studies teachers in their classrooms to create the learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills. Nezamedini et al. (2013) define the term teaching approach as a set of explicit or implicit beliefs about teaching and teacher's work, including underlying assumptions. There are two main teaching approaches that are adopted when teaching business studies, which are the teacher-centered approach and learner- centered approach (Killen, 2015).

According to Chekwube (2016), teacher-centred approach refers to a pre-technology education context in which the teacher is the sender or the source, the educational materials are the information, and the learner is the receiver of the information. In other words, teacher centred- approach is dominated by the teacher acting as a dispenser of knowledge to learners while learners remain passive recipients of knowledge. The teacher-centred approach is based on rote learning and memorization (Muganga & Senkusu, 2019). In this approach, the teacher plays a leading role and retains full control over the classroom activities (Baghoussi, 2021). From this, one may conclude that a teacher-centered approach is not always an ideal approach to be adopted in business studies classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. This is because teacher-centered approach is associated with several shortcomings, including failure to stimulate learners' inquiry and critical thinking skills (Pereira & Sithole, 2020). To equip learners with skills, in the present era, teachers need to move away from adopting a teaching approach that promotes rote learning or memory learning to interactive and task-based approaches (Dikeocha 2019). There is a common view among local and international scholars that learner-centered teaching approach is an effective approach that needs to be adopted by business studies teachers to create a conducive environment for meaningful learning to occur (Mamman, & Oyinloye, 2016; Okoye, 2021).

Learner-centered teaching approach can be defined as a teaching approach that enables active learner participation during the lesson, learner commitment towards the learning process and the construction of own knowledge (du Plessis, 2020). Darsih (2018) views learner-centered teaching approach as an approach in which learners have control over the learning process. It can be deduced from the above discussion that learner-centered teaching approach puts the learner at the center of the teaching and learning process. In the environment where learner-centered approach is adopted, the

role of a teacher changes from being the source of information, as is the case with teacher-centered teaching approach, to that of being a facilitator of learning (Pereira & Sithole, 2020). In other words, the teacher guides and coaches learners towards discovering new knowledge and making meaning from what they are learning.

Lee et al. (2021) mention that in learner-centered approach, all learning activities, such as content covered and assessments, are aimed at improving learners' skills acquisition. In business studies classrooms, learning activities should be designed to equip learners with critical business skills that are demanded by the contemporary business environment. Okoye (2021) states that for learners to acquire skills, they need to engage in authentic and relatable problem-solving activities. Furthermore, Mamman and Oyinloye (2016) assert that adopting a learner-centered teaching approach is no longer an option for business studies teachers but a must if learners are to acquire critical business skills needed in the contemporary business world. The need for the adoption of learner-centered approach in business studies teaching is also compounded by the era of technological innovations and changes in the contemporary business world (Okoye, 2021). The technologies that teachers need to integrate in their classroom practices should be compatible with learner-centred teaching approach.

Despite the extensive justifications for the need for teachers to adopt learner-centered teaching approach in their classroom practices (Mamman & Oyinloye, 2016; Okoye, 2021). There are studies that indicate that some business studies teachers do not fully embrace learner-centred teaching approach in their classroom practices. For example, the study that was conducted in Nigeria by Dikeocha et al. (2019) found that business studies teachers do not fully adopt teaching methods that promote a learner-centred approach. Teachers' reluctance to adopt a learner-centred teaching approach in their classroom practices is due to the high-stake examination demands that require them to

cover the content as soon as they can (Lee et al., 2021). Congruently, Baghoussi (2021) found that teachers stick to a teacher-centred approach to cover the syllabus and make learners memorize the content as much as possible so that they will be able to regurgitate the content during the examination. From the above discussion, it can be inferred that some teachers still prefer teacher-centred approaches due to the demands of summative assessments that require learners to reproduce what they have learned.

Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that different curricula from various countries embrace and promote learner-centred teaching approaches. For example, South Africa's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) promotes the principles of learner-centred approach to teaching (Majola, 2020). In the same vein, the Algerian government adopted the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) that embeds learner-centered approach principles in teaching and learning (Baghoussi, 2021). Similarly, the Ghanaian curriculum is designed purposefully to promote learner-centred approach to teaching (Agyei et al., 2019). Designing curricula that embrace learner-centred approaches in various countries is an indication that many countries acknowledge the need to shift from teacher-centered approach to learner-centred approach to teaching. This is because different curricula around the globe advocate for learners to be equipped with skills that would enable them to survive in the contemporary business environment (Baghoussi, 2021).

Teaching methods that promote learner-centredness in teaching and learning business studies are discussed in the following section.

2.3.1. TEACHING METHODS THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED TO NURTURE LEARNERS' CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

Teaching methods comprise the principles and techniques used for instruction (Mamman & Oyinloye, 2016). Moreover, Cerghit (2006) defines teaching methods as an assembly or the system of processes or modes of execution of the operations involved in the learning process, integrated into a single flow of action to achieve the learning objectives. In short, the two definitions above suggest that teaching methods are the ways used by the teacher to execute instructional duties to achieve learning objectives. Teaching methods adopted during the teaching and learning process can promote teacher-centred or learner-centred teaching approaches. Teaching methods that promote learner-centred teaching can hone learners' critical business skills since it makes learners to be actively involved during learning activities (Mamman & Oyinloye, 2016). In the following section, seven teaching methods that promote both technology integration and learner-centeredness in business studies classrooms are discussed. These teaching methods include the Problem-based learning method, collaborative learning method, case-based teaching method, Brainstorming teaching method, Flipped classroom teaching method, field trip teaching method and business simulation games.

2.3.1.1. Problem-based teaching method

The problem-based teaching method is a learner-centred instructional method that is situated in complex and meaningful problems that are cast in authentic settings (Mamman & Oyinyole, 2016). For example, in business studies lessons, business-related problems can be used to teach learners to nurture their problem-solving skills. In this method, learners deal with messy and ill-structured problems as a small group or individually. In the problem-based teaching method, the teacher presents concepts and principles to the class and gives learners an opportunity of applying them to solve a real

business problem (Gidado & Abdullahi, 2016). For example, in a business studies Grade 12 classroom, the teacher can teach concepts such as SWOT analysis, POTERS' FIVE Forces Model, PESTLE analysis as the analysis tool that is used to scan the three business environments (micro, market and macro environment, respectively). To reinforce learning through problem-based teaching method, a real business case study or scenario that focuses on the impact of mass looting that took place in South Africa on July 2021 on a big business can be given to learners. Learners can be asked to apply the three-business environment scanning tools (SWOT, PORTERS' Five Model and PESTLE analysis tool) to discuss the challenges facing businesses concerned and recommend practical solutions to problems. An exercise of this nature can empower learners to conduct research, integrate theory and practice and apply knowledge and skills to develop viable solutions to a defined problem (Savery, 2015).

Mike (2012) avers that pedagogical value in problem-based teaching methods includes exposing learners to real-world challenges, higher-order thinking skills, interdisciplinary learning, interdependent learning, information mining skills and teamwork. It also provides an opportunity for learners to independently solve problems with less teacher intervention. In the process of active engagement in the problem-solving process, learners develop critical business skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills as learners work towards solving a problem (Mabaso, 2020). Furthermore, problem-based teaching improves learner enthusiasm towards learning because as learners discover solutions to problems, new abilities start showing up and learning occurs as they collaboratively or individually find solutions to problems before them (Savery, 2015). In summary, adopting the Problem-Based teaching method in business studies classrooms can create a conducive learning environment for learners' critical business skills to develop.

2.3.1.2. Collaborative learning method

Collaborative learning is a learner-centred instructional method of teaching and learning that involves a group of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product (Sithole, 2018). Collaborative learning equips learners with problem-solving skills, innovation, and lifelong learning (Nakagawa et al., 2017). In other words, when learners engage in collaborative learning, they get to share ideas with their peers in a group during the collaboration process. In support of this view, Yusuf et al. (2018) assert that in collaborative learning, each member is not only responsible for learning what is taught but also for helping other members to learn and create an atmosphere of achievement among group members. The collaborative learning method helps learners to test their own understanding and examine the understanding of others (Ekpenyong & Edokpolor, 2016). It also enables learners to evaluate each other's understanding of the topic or the concept. Based on the discussion above, it can be suggested that business studies learners may acquire critical business skills needed in the contemporary business world when the collaborative learning method is implemented in their classrooms. Nwosu and Akaraka (2020) note that collaborative learning improves and nurtures a variety of skills necessary for future success in the workplace. Skills such as communication and collaboration skills can be nurtured through the adoption of collaborative learning in business studies classrooms.

Furthermore, the collaborative learning method has been found to be compatible with ICT integration in teaching and learning. Nwosu and Okoro (2020) indicate that technological platforms such as Blackboard, Blogs, and Social media networks, amongst others, can be integrated into instructional settings to support collaboration among learners. ICT integration enables learners to create collaborative learning environments or communities of practice that allow them to carry out group activities that are related

to the real-world setting (Garcia-Valcarcel et al., 2014). ICT integration in business studies classrooms enables learners to virtually collaborate using platforms such as Blackboard, Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft Teams, among others, to engage in discussions about a particular topic. In the same vein, ICT integration promotes interaction between the teacher and the learners, and this may result in an extended period of teaching and learning (Garcia-Valcarcel et al., 2014). This means business studies teachers are able to maintain continued interaction between themselves and learners, consequently guiding learners throughout their virtual discussions and construction of knowledge.

2.3.1.3. Case-based teaching method

The case-based teaching method is also known as a scenario-based teaching method, where real or imagined business scenarios are utilized to teach business studies (Mamman & Oyinloye, 2016). Case-based teaching methods present realistic, complex, and contextually rich situations, often involving a dilemma, conflict, or problem that one or more characters in the case must negotiate (Beckisheva et al., 2015). Case-based teaching method can expose learners to business-related scenarios that many businesses grapple with on a daily basis. It links theory and application to real and possible business circumstances (Liu et al., 2017; Mamman & Oyinloye, 2016). The utilization of the case-based teaching method enables learners to apply the concepts learnt in business studies classrooms when solving real business problems presented to them through real business cases.

Furthermore, scholars have confirmed that the case-based teaching method exposes learners to the real business world by bringing real business scenarios from outside into the classroom (Liu et al., 2017; Luo et al., 2018). It prepares learners for what they will encounter in their future professions by exposing them to similar scenarios that provide

vicarious participation in professional realities (Rong & Choi, 2019). The sentiments highlighted above insinuate that the application of the case-based teaching method familiarizes learners with the realities that exist in the real business world. For example, the teacher can give learners a real business scenario where a certain company is challenged in labour court by an employee accusing it of breaching the provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997, for not allowing a father of a baby to take a paternity leave on the basis that he is not married. A scenario of this nature is real and different companies deal with such cases regularly, and this can expose learners to the real business world and further expand learners' understanding of the impact of recent legislations on business operations.

The case-based teaching method is associated with several benefits for business studies learners. One of the benefits of the case-based teaching method for learners is its ability to train and develop their problem-solving skills oriented to authentic problems from the real business environment (Pertwi et al., 2020). Case-based teaching method also enable learners to imagine, probe, relate, reason, and become better at understanding various aspects and nuances of business management and engage more deeply in problem-solving and decision-making experiences (Puri, 2020). When applied properly in a business studies classroom, the case-based teaching method can develop learners' critical business skills needed in the contemporary business world. This method also widens the conversation among learners, prompts new questions, invites quiet voices to speak up, and enriches the educational experiences for all learners (Hoffer, 2020). The conversation among learners enables them to provide solutions from different perspectives concerning one problem emanating from a given scenario (Liu et al., 2017). The engagement amongst learners, as they attempt to contribute solutions to a real business problem, can facilitate deep learning of business studies concepts.

Despite the benefits of the case-based teaching method highlighted above, Puri (2020) remarked on a few limitations associated with this method of teaching. Firstly, preparing a case study can be time-consuming (Puri, 2020). However, this should not dissuade business studies teachers from adopting case-based teaching methods in their classrooms. Rather than designing case studies from the scratch, teachers can extract the existing scenarios from business newspapers, business websites and other sources. After extracting the scenario, the teacher would need to assess the suitability of the scenario for the learners' age and the content to be delivered. Secondly, the poor application of the case-based teaching method could lead to protracted class discussions that may distract both teachers and learners from lesson objectives and the rationale for applying the case-based teaching method (Puri, 2020). For business studies teachers to overcome protracted discussions, they should keep the class discussions focused on finding solutions to the problem faced by the business; the teacher should steer the discussion, and create an environment that enables learners to analyze the business scenario and arrive at a solution to the problem (Puri, 2020).

Considering the assertions highlighted in the literature review on the effectiveness of the case-based teaching method in business studies, one may conclude that the case-based teaching method can succeed in creating a learning environment that can nurture critical business skills. Beckisheva et al. (2015) confirmed that the case-based teaching method sharpens learners' critical business skills, such as problem-solving skills by exposing them to the real business world. However, the compatibility between the case-based teaching method and ICT integration is not clearly spelt out in the literature reviewed. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that ICT integration in business studies instructional practices can enhance the application of case-based teaching methods. ICT integration can enable both teachers and learners to access different sources (Goh & Sigala, 2020), such as business websites, electronic business newspapers and electronic magazines,

where they can extract real business scenarios they can apply to enhance the learning of business studies concepts.

2.3.1.4. Brainstorming teaching method

The brainstorming teaching method is a learner-centred teaching method that promotes thinking among learners (Dikeocha et al., 2019). This teaching method emphasizes learners' generation of new ideas and solutions through intensive and active thinking (George & Odiye, 2020). The above assertions imply that in the brainstorming teaching method, learners are encouraged to think and generate new ideas and possible solutions to a problem or topic being discussed in the classroom. Kassem (2018) indicates that learners think better when they are encouraged to think instead of the teacher thinking for them. In brainstorming teaching methods, effective learning cannot happen without learners' meaningful involvement in active thinking and sharing of ideas. This notion is also supported by Al-Sumarraie and Hurmazan (2018) by asserting that learners should be encouraged to engage in innovative thinking for them to generate new ideas that would enable them to make valuable contributions towards group discussions.

The main purpose of the brainstorming teaching method is to generate as many ideas as possible and solutions towards a particular problem (Unin & Bearing, 2016), hence the need for learners to engage in active thinking. The brainstorming teaching method provides a conducive environment to allow learners to think freely and come up with new ideas to solve a particular problem. This is because the implementation of the brainstorming teaching method usually involves a small group, and group members are free to propose relevant ideas for the topic and for solving a problem (Al-Samarraie et al., 2018). In the small group, it is easy for all learners to actively think and share their ideas with the group members. Furthermore, brainstorming teaching methods can be less threatening for learners to raise new ideas because each learner brings forward any

idea without being criticized or the idea being evaluated. Masri (2019) mentioned that in this method of teaching, the evaluation of ideas and criticizing is reserved for a later stage; the atmosphere can enable learners to express their ideas, concepts, thoughts, and knowledge freely.

The application of the brainstorming teaching method nurtures learners' critical business skills (Briggs, 2019; Kimotho, 2016). According to Kimotho (2016), the brainstorming teaching method provokes business studies learners' creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Briggs (2019) expands on this view by stating that the brainstorming teaching method promotes exploration, analysis, and problem-solving skills and a sense of cooperation as well as group cohesiveness among learners. In addition, Al-Summarai et al. (2018) indicated that the brainstorming teaching method enhances learners' creative thinking skills and communication skills. This is because teaching activities in brainstorming are based on interaction and communication among learners and between the teacher and the learners.

Furthermore, brainstorming teaching method is compatible with the integration of ICT in teaching and learning. Unlike in the past, where brainstorming used to be confined to the four walls of the classroom, today, with rapid developments in technology, there are tools and applications that allow brainstorming among learners to take place over the internet (Panagiotis & Triantaphyllia, 2020). This means that business studies learners can engage in brainstorming activities using online platforms. The new applications such as blogs, wikis, and social media sites allow learners to interact for an extended period (Panagiotis & Triantaphyllia, 2020). Business studies teachers can use such applications to encourage learners to engage in brainstorming and enable them to generate ideas in the comfort of their homes. Ideas produced by the learners over online platforms such as WhatsApp can be reclassified and refined in the classroom. Based on the preceding

discussions, it can be concluded that business studies learners' critical business skills can be nurtured in a classroom where brainstorming is adopted.

2.3.1.5. Flipped learning teaching method

Adopting flipped learning teaching method in learner-centred environment has become one of the most innovative pedagogical methods in today's education (Hoshang et al., 2021). In other words, flipped learning is viewed as an innovative teaching method that promotes a learner-centred approach. This is because the flipped learning teaching method makes learners autonomous and responsible for their own learning (Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020). Bates and Galloway (2012) view the flipped learning teaching method as a practice where the content and learning materials are delivered to learners for self-study in advance before the lesson through electronic resources and the classroom time is used to solve problems that learners are still having after self-study. This view suggests that in the flipped learning teaching method, learning materials are made available to learners through various ICTs and platforms prior to class time for them to work on them before class time, and the class time is reserved for solving problems experienced by learners during the self-study. Dorji and Dorji (2022) perceive the flipped learning teaching method as a method that uses a blended learning approach that involves providing learning materials through online and offline instructional design that allows learners to acquire the pre-notional concepts prior to the commencement of classroom teaching.

When adopting flipped learning as a teaching method, teachers can provide learners with resources such as pre-recorded videos, YouTube links or videos and articles before class time so that they can read, watch, and listen to the content (Dorji & Dorji, 2022; Schmidt, 2016). Doğan et al. (2021) introduced a different view that suggests that flipped learning teaching method is not confined to electronic resources but also printed

materials that can be used in flipped learning. These scholars explicitly stated that teachers can disseminate printed handouts to learners for self-study and consequently have group discussions in class to enhance learners' learning (Det al., 2021). Since the flipped learning teaching method is not confined only to electronic materials, even teachers who teach in low-resourced schools can adopt the flipped learning teaching method.

The flipped learning teaching method has several benefits for both teachers and learners. This teaching method allows learners to regulate the content they are exposed to, the pace at which they consume it and the period for which they are involved in it (Sandhu et al., 2021). This statement insinuates that the flipped learning teaching method gives learners control over the content provided to them by the teacher. This improves learners' sense of responsibility and commitment towards their learning and knowledge acquisition (Dorji & Dorji, 2022). Several studies have found that the effective application of the flipped learning teaching method equips learners with skills, including collaborative and cooperative skills (Ferriman, 2015), critical and independent thinking skills (Flores et al., 2016), communication skills (Nguyen & Dao, 2019), and problem-solving skills (Pruitt, 2013). Based on the assertions above, it can be concluded that the flipped learning teaching method can promote critical business skills among learners.

The flipped learning teaching method has gained traction in business studies classrooms (Gcabashe, 2023; Shih & Tsai, 2020). This is due to its ability to foster practical knowledge and apply skills such as communication, collaboration, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills needed in the real business world (Prince & Walker, 2021). To promote critical business skills, teachers should provide learners with the opportunity to practice and explore new concepts through learner-centred activities that focus on skills

application and productive collaboration (Gillboy et al., 2015). Thus, business studies teachers should adopt the flipped learning teaching method in their classrooms.

Scholars have also explored the role of the teacher in the flipped learning teaching method (Izagirre-Olaizola & Morandeira-Arca, 2020; Pruitt, 2013). Teacher's role in the flipped learning teaching method is to facilitate learners' self-directed learning rather than being a dispenser of knowledge (Pruit, 2013). Furthermore, Izagirre-Olaizola and Morandeira-Arca (2020) noted that teachers should facilitate interactions and discussions among learners to ensure that higher-order thinking levels of understanding are reinforced. They should also design new learning experiences using technological resources. Studies reviewed in this section show a significant role that is played by the teacher in promoting learners' effective and meaningful learning in a flipped classroom. The scholars maintain that even though flipped learning teaching method is viewed as a learner-centred method, teachers should play a key role in designing instructional materials such as educational videos and making them available to learners. Teachers also play a crucial role in facilitating learners' learning and the acquisition of skills during classroom activities.

Although the flipped learning teaching method is perceived as an effective teaching method by several scholars (Dorji & Dorji, 2022; Nguyen & Dao, 2019), there are limitations that have been identified with regard to the application of the flipped learning teaching method. Le Roux and Nagel (2021) are of the view that the flipped learning teaching method may fail due to monotonous and impersonal video lectures that can lead to loss of interest and poor class attendance among learners. This view suggests that when the flipped learning teaching method is poorly implemented, teachers can provide video-recorded lectures that do not arouse learners' interest towards learning. When implemented in a context where learners lack the culture of learning, the flipped

learning teaching method may result in other learners not attending classes. Therefore, business studies teachers should instill a culture of learning and independence to learners before adopting the flipped learning teaching method. Furthermore, Roehl et al. (2013) cited the lack of ICTs such as computers and smart cell phones to enable learners to watch educational videos outside the classroom as a hindrance to the implementation of the flipped learning teaching method.

Based on the literature reviewed in this section, it can be concluded that the flipped learning teaching method in business studies classrooms can assist teachers in equipping learners with critical business skills. This is due to its ability to create a learning environment that enables active learning through hands-on classroom activities (Schmidt, 2016). The application of the flipped learning teaching method is also compatible with technology integration in business studies instructional practices because the method itself is mainly dependent on the integration of technology in the teaching and learning process.

2.3.1.6. Field trip teaching method

The field trip teaching method is an activity-based learning that allows learners to get first-hand information about learning activities to concretize their learning experiences (Estawul et al., 2016). Rugaiyah (2018) defines the field trip teaching method as the process of visiting or taking a trip to a place where learning materials are found. In business studies, teachers can organize a business visit where learners are exposed to real business settings. Business visits can provide learners with real business experiences, and this can help them understand how different companies or businesses operate (Omeodu & Doris, 2018). The main goal of adopting the field trip teaching method is to take learners out of the classroom so they can engage in the physical world for authentic or experiential learning (Cheng & Tsai, 2019). Musa et al. (2018) add that

field trips are planned for learners to experience theory in practice while boosting the interaction between the teacher and learners outside the classroom. This suggests that field trips can help business studies learners to observe or engage in business activities in their natural settings. For instance, during business visits, learners can observe all eight business functions and understand how each business function contributes to the operation of the entire business.

This teaching method is associated with various benefits for learners (Behrendt & Frenklin, 2014). Field trips take learners to unique locations that cannot be duplicated in the classroom (Behrendt & Frenklin, 2014). For example, during business visits, business studies learners can be exposed to various machines used for production. This may enhance their understanding of production function as a concept that is studied in business studies. Rugaiyah (2018) indicates that through field trips, learners can easily understand and assimilate the subject concepts. In addition, field trips may assist learners in acquiring skills through engaging in authentic learning. This is supported by Onyiewi and Nguyen (2018), by mentioning that field trips enable learners to develop communication skills through interaction with business executives, employees, and other business stakeholders. The adoption of field trips develops learners' problem-solving skills (Onyiewi & Nguyen, 2018). To enhance learners problem-solving during field trips, business managers can include learners in the real business problem-solving process.

To strengthen field trips or business visits, schools should establish solid relationships with local businesses. Udegbumam et al. (2019) suggest that schools should develop partnerships with different industries to create an enabling environment for learners to acquire hands-on experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the world of work. The relationship of this nature between schools and businesses can work to the advantage

of learners because they can get early exposure to the world of work. Early exposure of learners to the world of work can give them first-hand experiences regarding the latest technologies used in businesses (Udegbumam et al., 2019). Exposing learners to the actual workplace while at school can also reduce the mismatch between skills possessed by learners produced by South African schools and the skills needed in the workplace (Dube, 2019). Furthermore, through partnerships between schools and industries, actual businesses can provide expertise to develop a desired atmosphere and provide a pool of resources to train learners in different critical business skills (Udegbumam et al., 2019).

Despite numerous benefits of field trips that have been elucidated in the preceding discussions, the field trip teaching method has been blamed for being expensive and difficult to plan (Rugaiyah, 2018). Given the limited financial resources in many South African schools, it can be difficult for teachers to adopt the field trip teaching method. To overcome this challenge, teachers can visit local businesses to minimize expenses. Udegbumam et al. (2019) mentioned that within local communities, there are businesses that have a highly skilled workforce, functional facilities and raw materials that could be useful in exposing learners to business operations. In other words, conducting field trips in local enterprises can be easy for teachers because all communities where schools are located have businesses that can help expose learners to actual business operations. Despite this, Onyeiwi and Nguyen (2018) indicated that business studies are loaded with content, leaving little or no time for outside classroom learning experiences. Although Onyeiwi and Nguyen's (2018) study was based in the United States of America, the same challenge has been raised in South Africa in relation to business studies content (Du Toit, 2016). To overcome this challenge, teachers can use ICTs such as computers to organize virtual field trips, and this can save time wasted on travelling (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). For example, to enable learners to observe how business

presentations are done, the teacher can collaborate with the local business and ask business managers to allow learners to view business presentations via live streaming in platforms such as YouTube, Facebook Live and other platforms.

2.3.1.7. Business simulation games

Another teaching method that is used to teach business studies is business simulation games. Business simulation games is a form of experiential learning that allows learners to practice critical business skills such as creative and problem solving skills (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). This suggests that adopting business simulation games helps to expose learners to activities that support the acquisition of critical business skills. This is because through business simulation games, learners are challenged through business-related problems and scenarios for them to solve (Heyworth-Thomas, 2023). This foster learners to find unique, innovative and original solutions to the challenges provided to them (Heyworth-Thomas, 2023). In short, adopting business simulation games assist in challenging learners to think and come up with solutions to the business challenges. As they think, and come up with solutions; their creative and problem-solving skills get to be enhanced which is important for business studies learners.

Furthermore, business simulation games help to improve learners' tacit knowledge and increase their motivation to learn (Humpherys et al., 2022). This might be due to the ability of business simulation games to provide instant feedback to learners showing the effects of their actions (Huang et la., 2022). In other words, when engaging in business simulation games, learners can be provided with the outcome of their actions immediately which enables them to assess their strengths and weaknesses. Business simulation games also allows learners and teachers to manipulate the content and monitor the results of their manipulation and this helps them to understand the real world experiences and practice (Fox et al., 2018). This suggests that business simulation games provide an opportunity for learners to explore different ways they can use to

manipulate the content and this may increase their creativity and thus, creative thinking skills.

Based on the literature reviewed above, it can be concluded that the seven teaching methods highlighted above can help business studies teachers to create a conducive environment to equip learners with critical business skills. Furthermore, it transpired from the literature that the teaching methods discussed above are compatible with technology integration in business studies classrooms. Therefore, the next section explores the existing literature on the role of ICT integration in business studies classrooms.

2.4. THE ROLE OF ICT INTEGRATION IN BUSINESS STUDIES CLASSROOMS

Technology has become an indispensable part of teaching and learning in business studies classrooms (Zafar, 2019). Business studies as a subject requires teachers to integrate various ICTs in their instructional practices to equip learners with critical business skills needed by the contemporary business environment. Govender and Maistry (2012) assert that the business studies curriculum lends itself to the integration of ICT in its pedagogical endeavour. This is because the subject is designed to prepare learners for the world beyond school, which is dominated by technology. As a result, schools are supposed to integrate different ICTs to develop learners' skills for the labour market (Chere-Masopha, 2018). Dwiono et al. (2018) added that ICT integration in business studies classrooms should somehow resemble the workplaces for which learners are being prepared. This suggests that business studies classrooms should reflect settings of occupations that learners are being prepared for. This can be achieved through ICTs integrated into the classrooms.

ICT integration in business studies classrooms has several benefits for both learners and teachers when integrated properly during teaching and learning. According to Makgati and Awolusi (2019), ICT integration in business studies instructional practices promotes collaboration among learners. Through the integration of ICTs, learners are offered an opportunity to work together and share ideas. For example, learners can use online group discussions or social media platform(s) to share ideas on a particular topic provided to them by the teacher. ICTs allow learners to carry out group activities that are integrated into the real world (Garcia-Valcarcel et al., 2014). Put differently, the integration of ICT in teaching and learning of business studies exposes learners to real-world scenarios. This is consistent with the demands of the business studies curriculum that encourages teachers to expose learners to real-world scenarios to better understand the concepts learnt in the classroom.

Furthermore, ICT integration in business studies classrooms helps learners to acquire cognitive skills. Mutisya (2020) asserts that the integration of ICT in teaching and learning is associated with increasing learners' creativity, ability to reflect on what has been learned and development of problem-solving skills. For example, business studies learners can be given a research project to investigate the causes of different industrial actions, such as go-slows and strikes in the workplace and come up with real solutions to the identified industrial action. Learners can make use of ICTs such as cell phones and the internet to get additional resources to complete the research project. Exercise of this nature can expose learners to real business problems and develop their problem-solving skills. This view is supported by Ghavifekr et al. (2016), stipulating that exposing learners to the real business world through modern ICTs enables them to easily adapt to the changing world upon entering the business world.

The integration of ICT in business studies classrooms also stimulates learners' active participation. ICT integration facilitates active participation and interaction in the classroom (Abdullah et al., 2012). In other words, ICT integration keeps learners engaged in learning activities. ICT integration also arouses learners' motivation towards the learning activities offered to them (Amosa et al., 2017). Learners who are motivated to learn are likely to actively participate in classroom activities. For example, business studies teachers can adopt flipped learning method where learning materials are shared before class time through different technological platforms such as WhatsApp. Learners get a chance to read or watch educational materials before coming to class. During the lesson, they can be involved in debates, oral presentations, or classroom presentations. Through this activity, learners can actively participate in learning activities.

Furthermore, the integration of ICT in business studies instructional practices can strengthen the interaction between teachers and learners. Hassan and Mirza (2020) assert that in a classroom where technology is integrated, the teacher openly communicates, discusses, encourages learners to learn and helps them to learn from different resources available. The introduction of technology in the teaching and learning process thus changed the relationship between the teacher and the learner to the extent that teachers and learners maintain continuous communication even beyond school hours. Teachers and learners have technology-based platforms such as WhatsApp groups where they continue to interact beyond the classroom. Such platforms enable teachers to provide individual attention to each learner without the time restriction that is experienced when technology is not integrated. For example, business studies teachers can provide clarity on homework or assignments given to learners via a WhatsApp voice note to learners using WhatsApp groups.

Despite the positive roles of ICT integration in the teaching and learning of business studies highlighted above, the literature also illuminates the downside of ICT integration in the teaching and learning of business studies. Khurshid et al. (2016) indicate that even though schools have a plethora of ICTs to use, some business studies teachers find it difficult to integrate them because they lack skills that can help them to take advantage of new technologies. In other words, some schools have a sufficient supply of ICTs, but teachers fail to properly embed them in their pedagogical practices. In some cases, when ICTs are integrated, business studies teachers continue to employ teacher-centred teaching methods. The study conducted by Azmi (2017) in Morocco found that teachers use technology alongside traditional classroom practices and technological tools are not fully incorporated into classroom learning activities. Similarly, South African teachers face the same challenge of maintaining a traditional teaching approach while integrating technology. Ndlovu and Lawrence (2012) note that some teachers use slideshows to present notes instead of the chalkboard and think that they are meaningfully integrating ICTs in their pedagogical practices. Based on the assertions above, some teachers still struggle to change their teaching approach to accommodate ICT integration. Adopting traditional teaching while integrating ICTs may deter teachers and learners from experiencing the value of technology in pedagogical practices.

Furthermore, some schools have ICTs that are outdated, especially schools located in rural and impoverished settings. For example, some schools still have fixed office telephones as the sole communication tool used in business, which can also be used by business studies teachers to nurture learners' communication skills. Integrating office-based telephones to teach business studies learners' communication skills cannot be deemed ideal. This is due to the emergence of modern communication tools such as emails, social network sites, and websites adopted by different businesses to facilitate communication. As the business world technology constantly changes to include new

features, classroom technology must adjust and move at the same speed (Dwiono et al., 2018). In summary, ICTs in schools should evolve at the same pace as the evolution of business world technology for schools to produce learners who are ready for the contemporary business world.

Moreover, teachers and learners may not be familiar with utilizing technology for instructional purposes. Learners mainly use different ICTs for general purposes such as social engagements and entertainment (Eguavoen, 2016). As a result, they may find utilizing technology for learning purposes strange and challenging to them. This is because integrating ICT for teaching and learning purposes differs from using any ICT tool for socializing or entertainment. For example, access to information for learning purposes requires learners to have the capability to evaluate and analyze the retrieved information before utilizing it. For teachers, ICT integration should enable them to create learning environments that promote and equip learners with advanced thinking capabilities (Ndlovu & Lawrence, 2012). This suggests that the integration of technology in teaching and learning must be informed by specific needs that are aimed at improving instructional practices, not integrating ICTs for the sake of it.

While ICT integration in the teaching and learning process advances critical business skills, it may hinder the development of some important skills. For example, the integration of technology in the classroom results in the decline of learners' writing skills (Ratheeswari, 2018). This is due to the excessive use of online chatting and the use of shortcuts when writing (Ratheeswari, 2018). For business studies learners, this can be a serious setback because writing skills are part of communication skills, a critical business skill required by the contemporary business world. With the use of social media such as WhatsApp groups for the class, learners might use shortcuts when engaging in discussions with their peers. Nevertheless, this must not hinder teachers from integrating

ICT, including social media, into their instructional practices. Teachers can use their teaching experiences and expertise to dissuade learners from using shortcuts when writing.

2.4.1. TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS INTEGRATED IN BUSINESS STUDIES CLASSROOMS

ICT tools that can be integrated into teaching such as the smartboards (De Vita, Verschaffel & Elen, 2017; Khosa & Molotsi, 2020), laptops and projectors can be used as basic technology to project instruction and thus play a valuable role in supporting business studies teachers' instructional practices. Teachers are then able to share content presented in different modal texts that can aid in enhancing learner understanding. A study by Khosa and Molotsi (2020) found that the integration of smartboards in business studies classrooms bring real life situations into the classrooms and enhance learners' active participation in the learning process. De Vita et al. (2017) acclaimed the integration of smartboards in teaching and learning for its ability to allow teachers to use programmed images, and use subject related software programs to augment teaching and learning. Furthermore, smartboards enables teachers to record and store the content taught which make it easy for them to access the content and use it in the future (Khosa & Molotsi, 2020). These affordances of smartboards do not only make business studies teachers' work easy but also learners can access the content taught in the previous lesson for revision.

Other digital tools and platforms that continue to gain traction in the teaching and learning of business studies are mobile devices such as cellphones and social media platforms. Various studies (Dintwa & Sithole, 2021; Gcabashe & Adebola, 2023; Nwanaka, 2024; Onwuagboke, Onwuagboke & Ifegbo, 2023) revealed that the integration of mobile devices and social media platforms play a role in supporting teaching and learning of business studies. In their study, Dintwa and Sithole (2021) found that mobile devices

and social media platforms such as WhatsApp and blogs enhanced the teaching and learning of business studies as Teachers share subject content with their learners through WhatsApp. They can for instance provide continuous support to learners through WhatsApp (Gcabashe & Adebola, 2023). Business studies teachers also use WhatsApp to promote collaborative learning among learners by creating WhatsApp groups where learners can work on . This is due to the capability of WhatsApp to allow the use of voice notes, calls, and videos (Onwuagboke et al., 2023) which allow learners to participate in online discussions with their peers and the teacher with preferred tools.

Other innovative technologies that can be integrated by business studies teachers to enhance their instructional practices are ICT packages such as Microsoft applications. Applications such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint can be integrated in business studies classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. Ogwu and Ogwu (2016) asserts that several business skills could be acquired by using applications such as MS-word, MS-excel and MS-Powerpoint. The Microsoft applications could be used to format text, insert symbols, save and retrieve documents, manage tables, draw graphs and keep data (Ogwu & Ogwu, 2016). For business studies learners, the abovementioned MS applications can be useful because data management is part of the important skills that learners as future business practitioners need to develop while at school. In addition, MS applications such as MS- Powerpoint and MS -Excel can be used by business studies teachers to equip learners with the presentation skills for them to be able to use such applications to present business information in future as business practitioners.

2.5. ISSUES INFLUENCING THE INTEGRATION OF ICT IN SCHOOLS

Despite the salient role that is played by ICT integration in nurturing learners' critical business skills, there are still issues or challenges that teachers still need to overcome in order to integrate technology in their classrooms. Issues such as the lack of ICT tools, lack of support from the school leadership, and the school culture that do not support ICT integration are some of the challenges that teachers continues to grapple with when integrating technology in their classrooms. Many schools in rural areas still lack proper ICT tools that can be integrated in teaching and learning to equip learners with critical business skills. Chisango et al. (2020) underscored that insufficient technology infrastructure remains a major challenge that teachers face when integrating technology in their classrooms. The lack of technological tools such as computers and poor connectivity makes it difficult for teachers to prepare for their lessons and search for additional resources from the internet (Santosa & Dang, 2022). This assertion suggests that the lack of proper technological tools in schools negatively affect teachers' technology integration because even teachers who have the skills to integrate technology are hindered from integrating them in their business studies classrooms. Tachie (2019) posits that an inadequate supply of technological tools in South African schools is a serious challenge for teachers who have the drive and capabilities to integrate technologies into their instructional practices.

Another challenge that remains a barrier to technology integration in some schools is the lack of support to teachers by the school leadership when integrating technology. Existing studies (Hart, 2023; Önalán & Kurt, 2020) have found that some school leaders do not support teachers' initiatives to integrate technology in their classrooms. A study that was conducted in Turkey by Önalán & Kurt (2020) concluded that there was a lack of support from school leadership which had negative implications for teachers'

integration of technology. Likewise, a conceptual study that was conducted by Hart (2023) in South Africa reported that not all school principals embrace technology integration in teaching and learning. Ugur and Koc (2019) agreed that some school principals are still apprehensive about the integration of technology in teaching and learning.

Studies reviewed above make it clear that the support from the school leadership have implications on teachers' attempts to integrate technology in teaching and learning. This is because the school leadership have a responsibility to ensure effective integration of technology in all subjects (Nhlumayo, 2024), including business studies. The author further stipulates that school principals must exercise their instructional leadership by ensuring that ICT is integrated into the curriculum. This suggests that school principals have a key role and influence in motivating teachers to integrate ICTs in their instructional practices. The school leadership can promote technology integration in their schools through organizing ICT training for teachers, budgeting for the acquisition of new ICT tools and appointing ICT co-ordinators in their schools to facilitate the integration of technology in teaching and learning.

The school culture influences technology integration by the teachers. Spiteri and Chang Rundgren (2020) asserted that the negative school culture tends to stifle teachers' attempts to integrate technology in teaching and learning. Similarly, Francom (2020) asserted that unaccommodating school culture prevents teachers from integrating ICTs into their pedagogical practices. From this, it can be inferred that a negative school culture can discourage teachers from integrating technology in their classrooms. For instance, business studies teachers who teach in schools that have negative school culture towards technology integration may struggle to integrate technology in their classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. That's why Nhlumayo (2024)

recommends that school leaders with negative attitudes towards ICT integration should alter their attitudes because they play an important role influencing teachers' attitudes towards technology integration, thus the school culture in general.

While there may be policies that support the integration of ICTs in South Africa such as the White Paper on e-Education (2004) explicit instruction on how the implementation should take place in specific subject teaching is not stipulated. It is therefore left to individual teachers to figure out how they will use these technologies to enhance teaching (Saubern et al., 2020). The curriculum tends to focus on the knowledge and skills to be acquired and whenever technology is mentioned there is no detail of how it should be used. For instance, the National Curriculum Statement, the CAPS document for business studies promotes the use of technology for 'electronic marketing (DoE, 2011 p. 28). However, there is no mention of a specific technology and how it should be used by the teacher or learners to engage in electronic marketing (Mbatha, 2020). It is thus not surprising that teachers either do not use technology to teach business studies due to internal and external reasons. If they do, they use it whichever way they see fit. Without systematised implementation of the curriculum where all classrooms have the same educational experience through technology, the digital divide is bound to widen.

2.6. GAPS IN LITERATURE

It emerged during the literature review that there is a paucity of studies that investigated the integration of ICT by business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills needed in the contemporary business environment in South Africa. The existing studies on ICT integration in education focuses on exploring teachers' experiences towards technology integration in education (Gunzo, 2020; Kafu-Quvane, 2021), role of ICT integration towards the teaching and learning process (Makgati & Awolisi, 2019; Munje & Jita, 2020; Tshelane, 2017); perceptions of teachers towards ICT

integration (Sikhakhane et al., 2021) and ICT integration training programmes offered to teachers (Dlamini & Mbatha, 2018; Moila, Makgato & Simelane-Mnisi, 2019). This reveals that the existing studies overlooked how technology can be integrated into teaching and learning to equip learners with critical business skills. Therefore, it was necessary for this study to explore business studies teachers' ICT integration to equip learners with the critical business skills needed in the contemporary business environment.

2.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the literature that is relevant to the focus of the study was reviewed to understand the phenomena under investigation broadly. Furthermore, the existing literature was reviewed to identify any emerging gap in literature given that this study focuses on ICT integration by business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills needed in the contemporary business environment, which is not a well-researched phenomenon in South Africa.

The next chapter presents and explains the theoretical and conceptual framework adopted to serve as the lens of this study.

CHAPTER 3

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided a literature review focusing on aspects covered in the study. This chapter provides a detailed discussion and explanation of theoretical frameworks employed in this study, namely, Social Constructivism Theory (SCT) and Functional Context Theory (FCT). The rationale for adopting two theoretical frameworks is that each theory covers aspects or provides information on ICT integration in business studies which other theories could not sufficiently cover or provide. Furthermore, a conceptual framework is developed to understand the relationship among the key concepts of this study.

3.2. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM THEORY

One of the theories that underpin this study is the Social Constructivism Theory. This theory is one of the branches of Constructivism Theory (Liu & Matthews, 2005). Social Constructivism Theory was propounded by Lev Vygotsky in the late 1920s (Akpan et al., 2020). This theory sees knowledge as what learners construct in collaboration with their peers, teachers, and other knowledgeable individuals (Akpan et al., 2020). This assertion suggests that learners do not create knowledge individually but with others, including their counterparts and teachers. Social Constructivism Theory emphasizes the social nature of knowledge, which cannot be attained solely through cognitive inquiry (Vygotsky, 1968). This assertion insinuates that business studies learners should socially construct knowledge for meaningful learning to occur. Akpan et al. (2020) further state that meaningful learning in the context of Social Constructivism happens when

learners engage in group work, share ideas, and invent something new to add to the existing knowledge.

Unlike Cognitive Constructivists, Social Constructivists do not put more emphasis on the importance of prior knowledge to knowledge construction during learning; however, they acknowledge prior knowledge as the basis for meaningful learning (Mwunda, 2014). Social Constructivism Theory requires learners to use their prior knowledge and experiences to formulate new, related, and adaptive concepts in learning (Mwunda, 2014). This means that Vygotsky, as the proponent of Social Constructivism Theory, perceives learners as individuals who come to class possessing knowledge from their social environments. For instance, a business studies teacher who subscribes to Social Constructivism Theory would perceive learners as individuals who come to class possessing a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. It is, therefore, important for such a teacher to create a learning environment that embraces learners' prior knowledge. In such an environment, the focus of teaching concentrates on guiding learners as they build and modify their existing mental models (Mukhari, 2016).

Interaction among learners is another potent factor for effective learning to occur in classrooms that promote social constructivism. Interaction between an individual learner with peers, teachers and other knowledgeable individuals is key in knowledge construction in a social constructivist environment (Mhlongo et al., 2017). It enables learners to learn how to articulate their ideas clearly as well as collaborate on tasks effectively by sharing ideas (Chand, 2016). In the context of this study, interaction among business studies learners with their peers, teachers and other knowledgeable individuals may enhance learners' problem-solving skills. This is because each learner contributes towards a solution to a problem; hence, learning tasks should foster learners to interact. Activities such as presenting specific concepts, problems, or scenarios, guided by

directed questions, may prompt interaction among learners (Akpan et al., 2020). Therefore, teachers should pose probing questions to learners to foster discussions and interaction during the teaching and learning process.

Teachers' role in a constructivist-based classroom is that of being a facilitator of learning (Mukhari, 2016). It is, therefore important for a teacher as a facilitator of learning activities to encourage interaction, knowledge sharing and hands-on experiences during teaching and learning. In this case, the teacher no longer acts as the sole transmitter of knowledge but as a coach, guide, and mentor (Dhindsa & Emran, 2006). For teachers to encourage interaction and active learners' engagement during knowledge construction, teaching methods that put the learner at the centre of learning activities should be adopted. Teachers should expose learners to teaching methods such as group activities, collaborative learning, and research-based learning to kindle their desire to construct knowledge on their own (Mhlongo et al., 2017). This assertion is in line with the business studies curriculum that encourages teachers to adopt learner-centred teaching methods that put learners at the centre of learning activities.

Mhlongo et al. (2017) further assert that teachers provide direction to learners during the process of teaching and learning. Sivan (1986) adds that in constructivist classrooms, teachers play an intermediary role where they regulate learners' interactivity to monitor their behaviour and bring appropriate context to learning activities. Mukhari (2016) mentioned that in constructivism, teachers should complement the constructive approach with the instructive approach in instances where learners need to be told about the rules and the foundational knowledge that are indispensable for meaningful learning to occur.

Social constructivists perceive learners as active participants during the teaching and learning process. Chand (2016) supports this assertion by indicating that constructivists

view a learner as a thinker, a creator, and a constructor of knowledge. Put differently, constructivists believe that learners should be at the centre of learning activities and be constructors of knowledge rather than the receivers of predetermined knowledge. During knowledge construction, learners get an opportunity to enhance their social and communication skills since ICTs create learning environments that emphasize collaboration and the exchange of ideas (Mercy, 2016). Furthermore, Social Constructivism Theory enables learners to develop reflective thinking skills, which help them to deeply analyze and understand the subject's concepts (Akpan et al., 2020). This insinuates that Social Constructivism Theory allows learners to acquire higher-order thinking skills, such as analyzing skills during the learning process. Social Constructivism Theory also fosters learners' creative thinking skills that make them relevant to today's working environment (Mercy, 2015). This notion suggests that adopting the principles of Social Constructivism Theory in the classroom setting can equip learners with critical business skills required by the contemporary business environment.

Several studies have concluded that Social Constructivism Theory is compatible with the ICT integration in teaching and learning (Kharade & Thakkar, 2012; Mhlongo et al., 2017; Mukhari, 2016; Mwunda, 2014). Mhlongo et al. (2017) noted that the social constructivist orientation in education offers multiple possibilities for ICT integration in education. Young (2003) concurs with the preceding assertion by indicating that Social Constructivism Theory helps to create a learning environment that provides content-relevant experiences by integrating ICTs to support learners' learning. ICT integration in a social constructivist enhanced classroom enables learners to collaborate amongst themselves inside and outside the classroom. Dhindsa and Emran (2006) mentioned that ICT integration in teaching and learning provides an environment that enables learners to learn in a collaborative setting where they cooperate, interact, and communicate amongst themselves and with subject experts. In the context of business

studies, ICT integration can enable learners to work cooperatively to complete the projects given to them by the teacher. Furthermore, ICT integration in business studies teaching can allow learners to communicate with different subject experts in different locations.

Social Constructivism Theory describes the role of ICT in education as learning with technology (Mukhari, 2016). Learning with technology is learners' interaction with technology, necessitating the engagement of creativity, higher-order- thinking skills and problem-solving skills (Dema & Moeller, 2012). This statement implies that learners' engagement with technology during teaching and learning may result in skills acquisition. This is because ICT integration allows learners to surf the internet to access new information, collaborate with their peers through different platforms during learning, and access various learning materials (Mukhari, 2016). Learning with technology means making technology an integral part of classroom learning activities, and ICTs are used by both learners and teachers to facilitate knowledge acquisition (Jonassen & Reeves, 1996). In other words, learning with technology promotes the use of technology by both teachers and learners during teaching and learning.

Besides, ICT integration in a constructivist enhanced learning environment grants learners a certain degree of autonomy. Adopting technology in teaching and learning makes it possible for learners to learn independently and for the teacher to give general guidance on a concept and supervise them as they work together to solve a particular problem (Ogutu, 2014). Addam (2014) argues that learners should have opportunities to plan and organize their own learning and problem-solving and learn collaboratively with others. With the pervasiveness of technological platforms such as social media that enable continuous collaboration among learners, collaborative and independent learning among learners can occur without restrictions.

Despite the positive assertions associated with Social Constructivism Theory in the education context, some scholars have identified several shortcomings associated with this theory. For example, Mukhari (2016) pointed out that Social Constructivism Theory lacks clear guidelines on how learners can approach learning activities, given the volumes of information available on the internet, which may confuse them. In other words, Social Constructivism Theory promotes the use of technology, such as the Internet, by learners to access information independently. However, it does not provide a clear direction on how learners can make use of the information discovered. In addition, Mercy (2016) contends that Social Constructivism Theory eliminates standard testing and grading for personal study, making it difficult for learners to be assessed properly by their teachers because there is no traditional assessment. This may create confusion among teachers on how to assess learners prior to, during and after the teaching and learning process.

Several studies have adopted Social Constructivism theory as the lens to understand ICT integration in education. In South Africa, Ramorola (2010) conducted a study that examined and described teachers' and learners' experiences of integrating ICT effectively in teaching and learning in secondary schools. The study indicated that technology adoption enabled teachers to use teaching methods such as cooperative learning, which is promoted by Social Constructivism Theory. Furthermore, Addam (2014) explored how technology is integrated into teaching and learning by Mathematics, Science and Technology lecturers. The study found that ICTs were purposefully integrated with the subject content; however, teaching and learning activities promoted the regurgitation and reproduction of information by the students. The two studies reviewed above indicate that the principles of social constructivism theory are not fully realized in the South African teaching and learning process. A study conducted by Ndlela et al. (2020) in Botswana focused on the effectiveness of teaching methods used to

teach business subjects in secondary schools. The study found that teachers adopt traditional methods of teaching and they do not employ teaching methods that are promoted by social constructivists.

Despite the shortcomings of the Social Constructivism Theory mentioned above, this theory helped the researcher to understand how business studies teachers can use different teaching methods in their technology-enhanced classrooms to create learning environments that are conducive to the acquisition of critical business skills by learners. This is because Social Constructivism Theory advocates for learning environment that promote active learning, collaboration among learners, recognition of learner's prior knowledge, learner participation, knowledge construction, and meaning-making. These constructs of Social Constructivism Theory assisted the researcher in understanding raw data better during data analysis.

Nevertheless, Social Constructivism Theory proved inadequate in helping the researcher understand how business studies teachers can integrate ICTs to equip them with critical business skills that would enable them to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment. Therefore, the Functional Context Theory (FCT) was adopted as the second theoretical lens to help close the gap identified above.

3.3. FUNCTIONAL CONTEXT THEORY

Functional Context Theory (FCT) was introduced by Sticht in 1975. FCT stresses the importance of making learning relevant to the present experiences of learners and the future work context for which they are being prepared (Podolskij, 2012). In other words, FCT suggests that learning environments, content and learning materials used to teach learners should be relevant to the real world that learners are being prepared for. The proponents of FCT believe that having a learning context that reflects the real world would help learners easily transfer knowledge and skills gained from the classroom to

the real work environment (Anudo & Awuor, 2020). FCT stipulations are in accord with the business studies curriculum that aims to prepare learners for the contemporary world of work. As a result, this study advances that business studies teachers should integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills that would enable them to operate in the contemporary business world for which learners are being prepared for.

Sticht (1975) identified four principles of FCT that guide teachers' instructional practices in the classroom, supported by this theory. The first principle stipulates that **instruction must reach the lesson's goals and allow learners to use their existing knowledge to make sense of the new knowledge**. In other words, teachers should ensure that the predetermined lesson objectives are met and recognize learners' prior knowledge to help facilitate learners' understanding of the new knowledge. The second principle emphasizes that teachers should integrate learning resources that match the **content learners are learning**. Put differently, teachers should ensure that they select resources that are relevant to what they are teaching. In the context of this study, business studies teachers should select ICTs that are relevant to the content they are teaching. This would help to facilitate learners' understanding of the content taught. The third principle states that teachers should possess **sound content knowledge for the subject they are teaching**. Finally, the fourth principle indicates that the **assessments used by the teachers to assess learners' learning should recognize the context where learning takes place**. In other words, the assessments should not be detached from the context where learning takes place since the proponents of FCT believe that the context directly and indirectly influence learners' learning.

The proponents of FCT also emphasize that learning materials adopted in the classroom informed by the principles of FCT should be relevant to the real world of work (Anudo et al., 2020). In simple terms, this statement suggests that teachers should use in their

classrooms learning materials or resources that learners are more likely to use upon joining the world of work. Using the learning materials that the learner will use after the learning enhances the transfer of learning from the classroom to the real world (Podolskij, 2012). Similarly, this study believes that the integration of ICTs by business studies teachers in their classrooms should expose learners to different technologies used by businesses in their operations. Exposure of learners to such technologies will not only familiarise learners with technologies but also equip learners with critical business skills that would accelerate their adaptation to the contemporary business world.

To ensure that learners are exposed to the real world, FCT further proposes that teachers adopt authentic learning activities. Haryanto and Arty (2019) postulate that real-life experiences and events should be used in classrooms to make the learning process and the skills acquired easily transferable to the real world of work. The authors further argue that adopting authentic learning activities enables learners to share their experiences and opinions with others. This insinuates that the proponents of FCT hold a view that authentic learning activities expose learners to the real world and enable them to share ideas with others. Based on the above discussion, one may conclude that FCT advocates for the teaching and learning environment that exposes learners to tools used in the real work environment and the skills acquired by the world beyond schooling. The early exposure of learners to resources and tools used in the real world of work and the teaching of skills needed by the world of work may accelerate learners' employability (Sticht, 1975).

Sticht (1975) identified several benefits of adopting the principles of FCT in the teaching and learning process. He endorsed FCT for advocating for learner-centred learning environment where learners are put at the centre of learning activities. Having learners

actively involved in learning enables them to act out and practically engage in activities likely to enrich their learning (Ewing & Cooper, 2021). In the context of FCT, learner-centred learning environments may enable learners to use resources and tools they will use in the world beyond school. Another benefit of FCT is that this theory advocates for the learning environment underpinned by the principles of FCT to expose learners to people who are engaged in a particular occupation or career (Sticht, 1975). This assertion suggests that teachers can invite people already involved in certain occupations (s) to help learners better understand different occupations before joining the world of work. An exercise of this nature can be valuable for business studies learners because they can see people from the world beyond school for which they are being prepared.

Furthermore, the proponents of FCT indicate that the teaching and learning process supported by FCT assists learners to acquire skills applicable to different occupations. Nowadays, most occupations are borderless, which fosters employers to demand workers who possess skills that would enable them to easily switch between different jobs (OECD, 2017). Critical business skills are understood to be skills that enable individuals to thrive in different occupations. In other words, individuals who are equipped with creative thinking, problem-solving, technological, entrepreneurial and communication skills are likely to succeed in various occupations available in today's economy.

The Functional Context Theory was deemed suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to ascertain whether business studies teachers' integration of various ICT was helpful in equipping learners with critical business skills that are required by the contemporary business environment. Furthermore, this theory advocates for learning that prepares learners for the world beyond school; adopting FCT as the lens of this

study helped the researcher to reflect on the learning environments that were observed during the course of this study.

Section 3.4. below gives a detailed explanation of the conceptual framework that was developed from this study.

3.4. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

This section discusses a conceptual framework designed for this study. The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 3.1. illustrates key concepts of the study. The conceptual framework also indicates how concepts that are contained in Figure 3.1. relates to each other. The conceptual framework is made up of the following key concepts: teaching methods, learning context, ICT integration, and critical business skills.

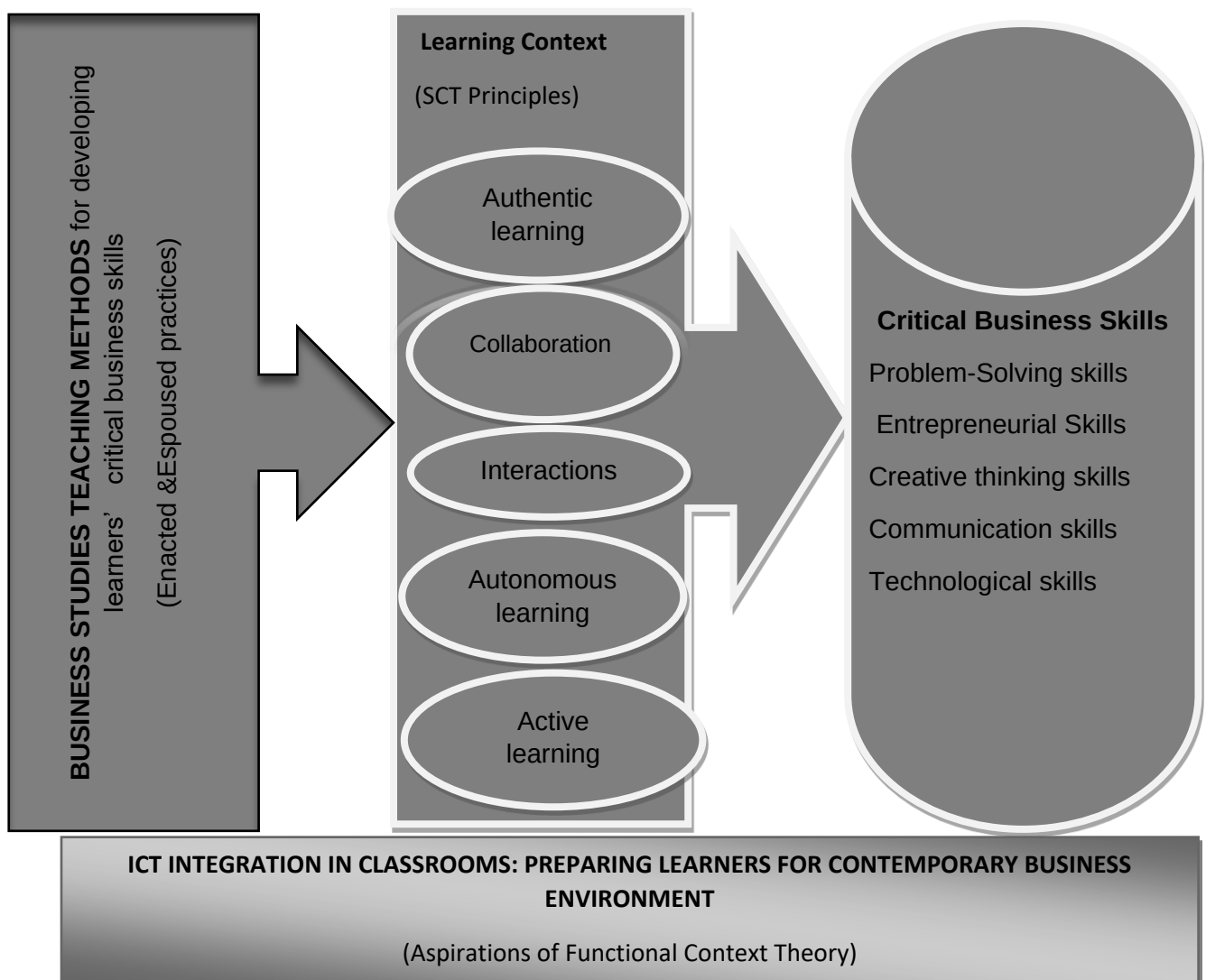


Figure 3.1.: *Conceptual framework*

The conceptual framework in Figure 3.1. above depicts key elements in the integration of ICTs in business studies classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. This study aimed to explore business studies teachers' ICT integration to nurture Grade 12 learners' critical business skills that are needed in the contemporary business environment. The first construct of this Conceptual Framework depicts teaching methods that teachers need to adopt in their technology-enhanced business studies classrooms. This study argues that teaching methods adopted by the teachers create a specific learning context. Therefore, this study argues that learner-centred teaching methods that are commended for teaching business studies create a learning environment that is characterized by the principles of Social Constructivism Theory, as depicted in the second column. This study advocates for business studies classrooms to be characterized by active learning, autonomous learning, collaborative learning, authentic learning, and interaction among learners. The classroom that is characterized by the principles of Social Constructivism Theory may help to facilitate the acquisition of critical business skills by learners. At the bottom of this Conceptual Framework is the construct that suggests that business studies teachers should integrate different ICTs to nurture learners' critical business skills that are needed in the contemporary business environment. This aligns with the aspirations of the Functional Context Theory, which advocates for teachers to integrate resources that learners would encounter in the workplace upon completing their studies. In essence, this study suggests that the combination of learner-centred teaching methods, ICTs integrated into the lesson and the learning context that is characterized by the principles of Social Constructivism theory may lead to learners' acquisition of critical business skills.

3.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined two theoretical frameworks underpinning this study and the conceptual framework developed using the study's key concepts. The next chapter presents the research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 4

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an overview of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks adopted in this study. This present chapter provides an overview of the research methodology used in this study. The research paradigm, research approach, research design, study population, sample and sampling technique, data collection methods, data analysis, trustworthiness of research findings, and ethical issues are all discussed in this chapter. All these elements contribute to the achievement of the purpose and objectives of this study. Below is a detailed explanation of the research paradigm adopted in this study.

4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is a perspective, thinking or a shared set of beliefs that inform the meaning and interpretation of the research data (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) view the research paradigm as a particular worldview that defines, for the researchers who hold this view, what is acceptable to research and how this should be done. In other words, a research paradigm is a set of values and beliefs that guide the researchers who subscribe to a certain research paradigm. Each research paradigm has its ontology, epistemology, and methodology, through which the basic assumptions, beliefs, norms, and values of a paradigm are expressed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are several paradigms discussed in the literature. However, they are all grounded into three main categories, which are positivism, interpretivism and critical paradigm (Candy, 1989). All three main research paradigms are briefly discussed below. Reasons for selecting or not selecting a particular research paradigm(s) are also discussed.

4.2.1. POSITIVISM PARADIGM

The positivism paradigm is characterized by the belief that the results of the inquiry must be quantified, the use of the theory to predict or control the outcomes and the outcomes of the inquiry can be generalized across the contexts (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Put differently, the context where the study is conducted does not matter. Hence the results of the research can be generalised across contexts. The positivist research paradigm emphasizes the rationalistic view of knowledge, which can be discovered only through scientific methods (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). As a result, positivists disregard interaction as a source of knowledge construction (Singh, 2022).

Positivism research paradigm was deemed unsuitable for this study. This is because positivists believe that the truth is detached from the contexts where the inquiry is happening. For this study, the context where the research was conducted may have played a pivotal role in influencing business studies teachers' ICT integration and their views towards ICT integration. Furthermore, the positivism paradigm is premised on the belief that the research subjects should be controlled in order for specific results to be generated (Park et al., 2020). This is contrary to this study; the researcher investigated business studies teachers in their natural settings (their schools and classrooms) to understand the phenomenon under investigation. Due to the fact that the positivism research paradigm was deemed irrelevant for this study, the researcher further explored the critical research paradigm.

4.2.2. CRITICAL PARADIGM

The critical research paradigm focuses on social justice issues and seeks to address the political, social, and economic issues that lead to social oppression, conflict, struggle, and power struggles at whatever level these might occur (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In other words, studies that adopt a critical paradigm primarily intend to liberate or

emancipate the participants from social injustices or oppression in their social structures. Callaghan (2016) asserts that in a critical paradigm, people understand how society functions and the methods by which unsatisfactory aspects can be changed. Through such inquiries, the researcher attempts to alert the participants about their rights and the power they have so they can change the existing state of affairs (injustices) in their social structures.

Based on the characteristics of the critical paradigm outlined above, this paradigm was deemed unsuitable for this study. This is due to the fact that the critical paradigm fits in studies that explore issues of power and injustices in social structures. Furthermore, the critical paradigm suggests that research is meant to resolve society's issues (Riyami, 2015). Although this is the case, in many countries, including South Africa, the power of teachers is limited to their schools and classrooms (Riyami, 2015). Therefore, the results of this study will not have an immediate and wide influence on the whole society. Thus, a critical paradigm was deemed unsuitable for this study. Finally, the interpretive paradigm was explored in detail to establish its suitability for this study.

4.2.3. INTERPRETIVISM PARADIGM

The interpretivism paradigm places an emphasis on understanding the subjective world of human experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This simply suggests that studies that fall under the interpretivism paradigm are interested in understanding the personal experiences of the participants in relation to the phenomenon under investigation. The data generated in studies underpinned by the interpretivism paradigm is subjective because they intend to focus on individuals and their interpretations of the world as they see it (Reeves & Hedberg, 2003). The characteristics of the interpretivism paradigm include a belief that context is vital for knowledge, which means contextual factors need

to be taken into consideration in any systematic pursuit of understanding (Morgan, 2007). Furthermore, Lincoln et al. (1985) note that studies within the interpretivism paradigm are value-laden, which suggests that the values and beliefs of the participants and, to a certain extent, those of a researcher influence the findings of an inquiry. In this study, the role of the values and beliefs of the participants and that of the researcher cannot be totally ruled out.

Furthermore, the interpretivism paradigm is affirmed for its strength to afford participants the opportunity to raise their voices, concerns, and practices in order to be heard, and at the same time, enables the researcher to get insight and in-depth information (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This study provided a platform for business studies teachers to reflect on their abilities to integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills. Through individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to gain in-depth data from the participants. Interpretivists also believe that reality is socially constructed by active people in the process of research (Thaanyane, 2010). This insinuates that reality is constructed through interaction between the researcher and participants during the investigation. In other words, the reality is not independent of people as the positivists view it. In studies underpinned by the interpretivism paradigm, researchers rely heavily on the views of the participants regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007).

4.2.3.1. Ontology

Burton et al. (2008) state that ontology defines reality. According to the interpretive paradigm, reality is considered a continuously changing construct with various dimensions (Burton et al., 2008). This means interpretivists hold a view that reality is not fixed. The interpretivism paradigm maintains that there are many truths and multiple realities due to the fact that external reality is variable (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In

keeping with this view, this study attempted to understand the phenomena under investigation through the eyes of the participants without manipulating them to behave in a particular manner.

4.2.3.2. Epistemology

According to the interpretive paradigm, knowledge is created democratically, meaning knowledge is socially constructed (Burton et al., 2008). Through knowledge construction, individuals create subjective accounts and meanings of their experiences, which allows for various perspectives to be considered (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the participants constructed their own knowledge based on their experiences in relation to ICT integration in business studies teaching to nurture learners' critical business skills.

4.2.3.3. Methodology

Methodology includes practices employed by the researcher to gain knowledge (Krauss, 2005). Creswell (2009) noted that in the interpretivism paradigm, knowledge is mainly gained by means of interacting with the participants and asking them open-ended questions. Hence, interviews were employed in this study. A detailed account of the data collection methods used in this study is provided in section 4.6.1. (semi-structured interviews) and 4.6.2. (Classroom observations) respectively.

4.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

The research approach represents a logical plan for getting from *here* to *there*, where *here* is considered as the initial set of questions to be answered, and *there* is a set of answers to the questions (Williams, 2007). In other words, the research approach refers to a strategy that helps the researcher to answer the research questions. In this study, the qualitative research approach was deemed suitable. According to Creswell (2014), there are three research approaches: qualitative research, quantitative research, and

mixed methods research approach. A qualitative research design was employed for this study, and it is discussed in detail below.

4.3.1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative research is the investigation process where the researcher seeks to understand the behaviour of the participants by studying them in their natural settings and their actions to make a thematic analysis and write a report on their views (Angrosino, 2016). This definition is in line with the purpose of this study; this study explored ICT integration by business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills. The participants were studied through individual face-to-face interviews and non-participatory classroom observations in their natural settings (classrooms). Creswell (2013) further alluded that qualitative research enables the researcher to examine the participants to get an understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Through participants recounting their lived experiences, opinions, and their understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, the researcher gets to understand the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants. Hence, Cypress (2018) perceives qualitative research as an inquiry that entails research that elicits participants' accounts of meaning, experiences, and perceptions.

The qualitative research approach has the ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue (Anderson, 2006). Thus, employing a qualitative research approach in this study helped the researcher to understand how business studies teachers integrate ICTs in their classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. Furthermore, the qualitative research approach affords a researcher an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences and perspectives on their social realities (Eyisi, 2016). Data collection methods such as

observations and interviews play a critical role in achieving this. For this reason, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) note that data collection methods used in qualitative research capture the richness and complexity of the behaviour that occurs in the natural setting from the participants' perspectives.

4.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan that the researcher employ to obtain answers to research questions (Wanza, 2012). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define a research design as a procedure for conducting a study. From these two definitions, it can be deduced that a research design is a research plan that guides a researcher when conducting a study. The research design dictates which research approach, data collection methods, and data analysis technique (s) a researcher should adopt in a study (Creswell & Clark, 2007). It is, therefore important for a researcher to cautiously select the suitable research design to guide him/her when conducting a study. For this study, a case study research design was deemed suitable.

4.4.1. CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN

It is clear from the literature that there is no single definition of a case study research design. Several authors have defined a case study research design differently. For example, Yin (2003) describes a case study research design as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when boundaries between a phenomenon and the context are not clear. Ridder (2017) perceives a case study research design as a detailed and intensive study of a single case, usually by a combination of methods such as interviews, document analysis and observations to obtain a thick description of the phenomenon. Based on the definitions adopted in this study, a case study research design is an empirical inquiry that

investigates a particular phenomenon or “case” and results in in-depth and detailed results. Yin (2003) categorized case studies into three, which are explanatory case study, exploratory case study and multi-case study research design. This study adopted a multi-case study design to investigate ICT integration by business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills. DeVaus (2001) mentioned that the multi-case study research provides details about particular phenomenon within the parameters of its context. For this study, the use of multi-case study helped to provide thick details on how business studies teachers from six secondary schools integrate technology to equip learners with critical business skills.

Studies that adopt a case study research design are characterized by a close relationship between the phenomenon and the context. In other words, the phenomenon is not isolated from its context; rather, the phenomenon interests precisely because of its relation to the context (Rashid et al., 2019). This study investigated business studies teachers’ ICT integration to equip learners with critical business skills. The study occurred in schools located in a predominantly rural district in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The researcher believes that the context (rural school) cannot be isolated from how business studies teachers integrate ICTs in their classrooms. The rural school setting has its own peculiar challenges that can be studied through a case study research design. Yin (2003) further asserts that a study that adopts a case study design should not aim to manipulate the behaviour of the participants. Correspondingly, business studies teachers were investigated in their natural setting (classrooms) without any manipulated or controlled behaviour (Coimbra & Martins, 2013). The present study relied on individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews and non-participatory classroom observations to investigate the phenomenon under investigation.

Quite a few advantages and strengths have been associated with adopting a case study research design in a qualitative study. Cohen et al. (2011) stated that employing a case study research design enables the researcher to capture the reality of the lived experiences of the participants. This is true; adopting a case study research design in this study allowed the researcher to understand the lived experiences of business studies teachers in relation to ICT integration in their classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. Another advantage of the case study research design was put forward by Rule and John (2011), who postulated that case study research design enables a researcher to sample very few participants. For this study, only six business studies teachers were selected, but in-depth and thick descriptions of the phenomenon were obtained.

In addition, Starman (2013) stipulates that case study research design has the ability to get unexpected findings that may be missed when other rigid methods like structured questionnaires are used. This assertion corresponds with that of Rauch et al. (2014), who indicated that case study research design generates evidence and findings that would be impossible to reveal using quantitative methods. This was evident also in this study; the adoption of the case study research design enabled the researcher to observe business studies teachers' integration of ICT in real time, and the researcher observed actions that were unexpected from the teachers. During face-to-face individual interviews with teachers, some views that were not expected by the researcher were generated. This is due to the fact that the case study research design allows flexibility for researchers to study the phenomenon and the context as they unfold (Cronin, 2014).

In spite of the advantages and strengths identified in the literature associated with the case study research design, a number of critics have been levelled against the case study research design. Case study research design has been criticized for allowing

researcher's subjectivity and bias. Cohen and Morrison (2007) postulate that case study research design is not open to cross-checking; it might be selective, biased, and subjective. Recognizing this shortcoming of case study research design throughout the study assisted the researcher in avoiding any form of biases and subjectivity that could compromise the trustworthiness of the study's findings. Yin (2003) further suggests that the findings that came out of a case study cannot be generalized to other contexts. Fortunately, there was no intention to generalize the findings of this study to other contexts. Hence, this shortcoming of the case study research design did not affect this study.

4.5. POPULATION

The population of the study is understood as a set of people who possess related features that are identified by a researcher to be important to the study (Hartas, 2015). Watson and Moritz (2000) perceive the population of the study as a group of individuals, organizations or cases that possess the same characteristics to which the findings of the study can be generalized. The population of this study was all twenty-one high schools that were supplied with ICTs as part of Operation Pakisa between 2016-2020 in the district where the study was conducted. Due to the size of the population, it was going to be arduous for the researcher to include all the teachers in the study; hence, a smaller sample was selected.

4.5.1. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A sample is a subset of the population considered for inclusion in the study (De Vos et al., 2011). A sample can also be defined as a small number of people drawn from a large population from which data is collected (Anderson, 2006). The nature of the phenomenon under investigation and the research questions guide the researcher on

the choice of a sample. A sample can be determined using probability or non-probability sampling techniques. Strydom (2005) mentioned that probability sampling involves randomization, while non-probability sampling does not involve randomization. Probability sampling entails random, stratified, systematic, cluster, and panel sampling techniques (Strydom, 2005). On the other hand, non-probability sampling is made up of purposive sampling, convenience sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling techniques (Strydom, 2005).

In this study, convenience sampling and purposive sampling techniques were adopted. A sample of six secondary schools located in one district in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province of South Africa were conveniently sampled. From the sampled schools, purposive sampling was adopted to sample one business studies teacher per school, and this resulted to a total of six participants. Purposive sampling is also known as judgemental sampling because it is based on the judgement of the researcher as to which participant will provide rich information to help the researcher answer the research questions (Etikan & Bala, 2017). The six participants of this study were selected because they have experience in integrating ICT in their business studies classrooms. Curtis and Lawson (2001) advise that the researcher should ensure that the chosen sample is likely to generate rich information on the type of investigated phenomenon. Kemper et al. (2003) mentioned that the purposive sampling technique allows the researcher to use a specific criterion to select participants. In accordance with this assertion, when selecting the participants, the researcher focused on the experiences of the participants in ICT integration in teaching, the researcher ensured that qualified business studies teachers were selected, and finally, for the participants to be selected, they were required to be teachers in the sampled schools. The use of the above-mentioned criterion assisted the researcher in selecting the participants that assisted him in obtaining rich data that helped him to answer the main research question.

4.6. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection methods are a process of gathering empirical data by administering data collection instruments by asking people questions or observing their behaviours (Creswell, 2012). Data obtained through different data instruments assist the researcher in obtaining empirical data that helps to answer the research questions of the study. This is supported by Rosenthal (2016), who claimed that data collection assists the researcher in obtaining evidence, which is then translated into rich information and produces new knowledge by providing credible answers to research questions. Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews and non-participatory classroom observations were used to collect data that helped in answering the research questions of the study. Flick (2009) alluded that the use of more than one data collection method promotes quality in a qualitative study. Discussed below is the individual face-to-face semi-structured interview and non-participatory classroom observation, respectively.

4.6.1. INDIVIDUAL FACE-TO-FACE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Semi-structured interview is a conversation between the researcher and the participant (s) whose intention is to understand the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants (Alshenqeeti, 2014). In this study, individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the participants. The use of individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to make follow-up questions in order to understand the phenomenon under investigation deeply. Cohen et al. (2011) assert that semi-structured interviews allow for a greater in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Semi-structured interviews contain a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, making it easy for the researcher to probe the participants further if needed (Raworth et al., 2012). During the interviews, there were several occasions where the researcher posed probing questions to the participants. This

exercise allowed the participants to provide further explanations on their points and clarify where the researcher needed more clarity.

The use of face-to-face individual semi-structured interviews also gives a researcher an opportunity to engage with a single participant at an agreed-upon time (Melissa & Lisa, 2019). This creates a platform for participants to freely express him/herself without worrying about other people. It is most likely for a participant to feel free to express his/her ideas to the researcher when interviewed individually. Cohen et al. (2011) encourage researchers to create an atmosphere that motivates the participants to share their explanations of the world they live in and give an explanation of the situations from their own perspectives. Through individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the researcher attempted to ensure that all participants felt at ease to share their experiences and their perceptions with regard to the phenomenon under investigation.

Anyanwu (2014) further suggests that the use of individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews to collect data is ideal because it builds trust between the researcher and the participants. For this study, building trust with the participants was important because one of the research objectives of the study was to solicit business teachers' views on the role of ICT integration in the development of learners' critical business skills. For an individual to divulge personal views to a researcher, mutual trust may play a significant role. Furthermore, the use of individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews is golden in a qualitative study because it allows the researcher to study the participant's social cues, such as voice and body language (Opdenakker, 2006). More than the words expressed by the participants during the interviews, body gestures and facial expressions were also important during the process, and body gestures and facial expressions played a crucial role in helping the researcher understand the phenomenon under investigation.

Although semi-structured interviews are commended for their ability to provide the researcher with rich and in-depth data, there are limitations associated with this data collection method. Kumar (2005) criticizes semi-structured interviews for their potential to generate biased and subjective data because the researcher may choose to interpret the participants' responses in a way that suits him. Knowing this shortcoming of the semi-structured interviews assisted the researcher in being cognisant when interpreting the responses of the participants to avoid any form of bias. Kumar (2005) further mentioned that the interaction between the researcher and the participant may positively or negatively affect the quality of data obtained from each participant. To ensure the quality of interviews and the responses from the participants, standard questions were asked to all participants, with few follow-up questions seeking clarity. The researcher indicated to the participants before the interviews started that they must feel at ease, and they were allowed to code-switch (use English and IsiZulu) as they expressed themselves during the interviews and this ensured quality interaction between the researcher and the participants.

Cohen et al. (2007) further stated that using semi-structured interviews can be time-consuming for the researcher. This is because data collected from the field needs to be transcribed, which might take time. The volumes of data collected by the researcher through semi-structured interviews might be too large, which might overwhelm the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). To avoid being overwhelmed by data transcription, the researcher ensured that he transcribed each interview immediately after finishing collection. This was also advantageous to the researcher because he transcribed data while it was still fresh in his mind.

4.6.2. NON- PARTICIPATORY CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Non-participatory classroom observations were adopted in this study as a method of data collection. Nieuwenhuis (2007) defines a non-participatory observation as a data collection method in which the researcher watches participants engaging in their daily activities without the active involvement of the researcher. Seale et al. (2015) add that during non-participatory observation, the researcher listens to what participants say to each other as they engage in conversations. For this study, business studies teachers were observed as they were delivering lessons using different ICTs to support their instructional practices. The researcher observed and listened to engagements between teachers and learners and among learners. Although the focus of the study was on teachers' ICT integration, learners' actions during the lesson were also observed because teachers' integration of ICTs had an impact on learners' learning process.

One lesson per teacher was observed in each school. Lessons lasted between 55 -60 minutes. During classroom observations, the researcher was seated at the back of the classroom and observed business studies teachers as they were teaching. The researcher used self-developed observation schedule to note the integration or lack thereof; of technology by business studies teachers to equip learners with technology integration. In addition, the researcher had a diary where he noted some of the occurrences that took place during the observed lessons. Pictures were also captured by the researcher during classroom observations through his phone. Observation discussion was held with each teacher after lesson observations to discuss what happened during the lesson. This assisted the researcher to add in the field notes some of the aspects that were omitted during classroom discussions.

Although critical business skills cannot be fully developed in one lesson, it is believed that each lesson should serve as a building block towards nurturing learners' critical

business skills. It is also believed that teachers should create a conducive learning environment for learners to develop critical business skills. Therefore, classroom observations aimed to observe how teachers integrated ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills and how they incorporated various learning activities to create a conducive learning environment to nurture learners' critical business skills.

Observing the context (business studies classrooms) in its totality assisted the researcher in understanding the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher observed the events and behaviours in the classroom as they unfolded (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). The researcher observed the setting where ICT integration was performed, each participant's use of ICTs during lesson introduction, lesson development up to the conclusion and finally, learners' involvement or lack thereof in the learning activities. The use of non-participant classroom observations allowed the researcher to describe and explain the classroom context and the activities that took place in the classroom as various ICTs were being integrated into the teaching and learning process. Kawulich (2005) postulates that using non-participatory observations enables the researcher to capture visual details and auditory and other sensory aspects of the classroom.

In addition, the use of non-participatory classroom observations allows the researcher to see the behaviour of the participants in real-life situations (Anderson, 2010). During lesson observations, learners' reactions as some teachers were asking them to make use of different ICTs were observed. Some of the behaviours or participants' reactions that transpired during the classroom observation were never mentioned by the teachers during the interviews. Cohen et al. (2007) attest to this by suggesting that non-participatory observations allow the researcher to see behaviour that may not have been talked about in the interviews because interviews are predetermined. As a result, the

researcher was able to verify the information that the participants shared during the interviews (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Evans (2003) observed that research of the non-participatory observation is likely to be strongly valid because the researcher is able to collect information about a certain phenomenon under investigation. One may argue that the combination of individual face-to-face interviews and non-participant observations assisted in improving the validity of the findings of the study.

Although non-participatory observations are associated with several strengths, some scholars have alluded to some shortcomings of this data collection method. Hancock et al. (2007) mentioned that the researcher's presence in the research situation might impact the participants' behaviour. This suggests that participants may alter their behaviour in an attempt to "please" the researcher. In this study, experienced business studies teachers participated, and they all have experience in integrating ICTs in their pedagogical practices. As a result, it was going to be difficult for them to act in a particular way due to the presence of the researcher. Further, all participants taught lessons per the Annual Teaching Plan during the classroom observations. The content was not altered during the lessons to specifically "appease" the researcher.

Another disadvantage of non-participatory observation is that classroom observations are time-consuming (Gillham, 2000). As much as classroom observations can be deemed as time-consuming, the researcher believed that classroom observations are needed to help accomplish the study's aim. The researcher thoroughly prepared before engaging in classroom observations. Firstly, the researcher developed the observation schedule that guided him during actual classroom observations (see Appendix M). This saved time for the researcher because he knew what to look for during classroom observations. The researcher also planned prior to each school visit for the classroom observations; when coming to school, he was informed at which period the observation

would take place. This also saved the researcher a lot of time because if there were challenges that occurred in the school that were likely to disturb the observations, the participants were able to inform the researcher beforehand and the observations were rescheduled. This happened in School B and School D, where business studies periods aimed at classroom observations coincided with load-shedding schedules and the teacher informed the researcher on time. Classroom observations were then rescheduled.

4.7. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

For the researcher to make meaning out of the raw data collected from the participants, he/she is required to engage in the data analysis process. This is a non-numerical interpretation and examination of the raw data for the purposes of discovering the underlying meaning and the patterns of relationships in a dataset (Babbie, 2010; Creswell, 2009). Before analyzing data, the researcher should read various data analysis techniques that exist in the literature (Busetto et al., 2020). In this study, before deciding on a specific data analysis technique, the researcher considered different qualitative data analysis techniques available in the literature. Based on the nature of the data collected, the researcher deemed it suitable to employ a hybrid thematic analysis technique. A detailed explanation of the hybrid thematic analysis technique and how it was applied in the study has been presented in the next section.

4.7.1. HYBRID THEMATIC ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

Hybrid thematic analysis involves using both pre-ordinate themes and themes that emerge from the data (Proudfoot, 2023). In other words, this technique entails both deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. This data analysis technique ensures that the voices of the participants are valued while simultaneously allowing for more theory-led analysis (Proudfoot, 2023). For this study, data obtained through

interviews was analyzed using an inductive approach, while data from classroom observations was analyzed following the deductive approach. Adopting hybrid thematic analysis enabled the researcher to maximize the use of both deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis, which helped him to extensively present what emerged from the participants' sentiments and what emerged from their practices. Swain (2018) asserts that hybrid thematic analysis is flexible but still systematic. This is because the researcher still needs to provide a trail of evidence to help demonstrate the credibility and veracity (Koch, 1994) as well as the competence of the data analysis process. So, adopting hybrid thematic analysis should not be viewed as an easy approach to analyzing data, but it should be informed by the nature of the data as well as the research objectives to be accomplished (Swain, 2018).

The two processes of data analysis are briefly discussed below.

4.7.1.1. Inductive approach to data analysis.

The researcher adopted an inductive approach to identify themes from the data collected through interviews. During the data analysis process, the researcher started by transcribing all six interview recordings that were collected from the participants. To ensure the accuracy of interview transcriptions, the researcher listened to each interview recording while reading the interview transcriptions. The transcription process assisted the researcher in having a deeper understanding of how business studies teachers integrate ICTs in their classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. After the transcriptions, the researcher read and reread the interview transcripts to understand all parts of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that during the process of reading and rereading data, the researcher should make notes of ideas that spring from his/her mind. The essence of this is for the researcher to understand data to such an extent that he/she is familiar with every part of the data before embarking on data analysis (Braun & Clarke,

2006). In accordance with this assertion, the researcher took notes while reading data transcripts to ensure that he understood each and every word contained in the dataset.

After transcribing the interviews and thorough reading of transcripts, the researcher engaged in developing the initial codes (posterior codes). The generation of codes involves assigning codes to the entire dataset systematically and collating relevant data to each code. Braun and Clarke (2006) indicated that codes are labels that identify a feature of the data. The researcher read the data set line-by-line and assigned codes. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that assigning codes line-by-line helps the researcher to segment data into units of meaning. Thus, coding line-by-line assisted the researcher in understanding the data better. Engaging in data coding also enabled the researcher to change the raw data into usable data by identifying themes, concepts and ideas that have some connections with each other (Casselberry & Nole, 2018). This is because the researcher was able to focus on specific characteristics of data (Nowell et al., 2017). However, this does not mean the researcher paid less attention to the data that was less relevant to the research questions.

After the coding stage, the researcher developed themes from the codes assigned to the data. During the formulation of themes, a number of identical codes were combined to form one theme, while the codes with different meanings were developed into independent themes. Nowell et al. (2017) explained the process of developing themes as the researchers' attempt to bring meaning to the codes assigned to the data set. The researcher made use of a table where all the initial themes were recorded with the subthemes. Subthemes play a critical role in thematic data analysis because the subthemes inform the quality of the main themes (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Making use of subthemes helped the researcher to explicitly show the relationship between themes and the data as a whole.

To ensure the quality of themes developed from the codes, the researcher engaged in looking for errors, mistakes or omissions that might have happened when developing themes. The errors and mistakes detected were corrected, while the omissions were fitted into relevant themes. The researcher also ensured that the subthemes and themes were refined accordingly. The final stage in the process of data analysis is the interpretation of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At this stage, the researcher is required to make logical conclusions from the data presented as themes. The researcher made sense of what the themes and the sub-themes mean with regard to business studies teachers' integration of ICTs in their classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills.

4.7.1.2. Deductive approach to data analysis

Hybrid thematic analysis enables the researcher to pre-determine themes *priori* in line with the research objectives, theoretical frameworks and conceptual frameworks adopted in the study (Swain, 2018). The deductive approach in hybrid thematic analysis follows three phases that are used to analyse data (Swain, 2018). The first phase encompasses three stages which constitutes the preparation of a table/spreadsheet, creation of *priori* codes/themes, and familiarising with raw data. The second phase is made up of two stages which includes the addition of codes and themes into the table/spreadsheet, and summaries of raw data from interviews or observations into the table/spreadsheet. The final phase constitutes two stages which involves cutting and pasting of text into a Microsoft Word document and collapsing the codes into family codes.

In this study the researcher used pre-determined ideas from the existing theoretical framework and the critical business skills that were the focus of this study. Five tenets of Social Constructivism Theory and critical business skills that are the focus of this study were incorporated into the classroom observation tool. This helped the researcher to use

these two main constructs (SCT tenets and critical business skills) as his lens during the classroom observation. As a result, all observed classroom activities were analyzed following the themes determined prior. During data analysis, the researcher developed a table on a Word document; on the first column of the table, all the pre-determined themes were listed. From the two main pre-determined themes, the researcher identified ten codes that helped him to break data into smaller units of analysis.

From the raw data captured in the observation tool and through field notes, the researcher allocated each classroom activity recorded during classroom observations next to the code. Furthermore, words, phrases and sentences from the field notes were allocated to the relevant codes. This helped the researcher to have a complete overview of the data in one table and he was able to read through the data to ensure that all activities that were generated through classroom observations were captured. As he was reading through the data presented in the table, the researcher was able to identify repetitions, inconsistencies, and some errors in the raw data. Some repetitions in the data were merged, while inconsistencies and errors were fixed. After that, he developed the sub-themes by grouping the different codes listed in the table. The main themes and the sub-themes were then used to present the findings that are presented in Chapter 6.

4.8. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness in a qualitative study is defined as the extent of truth and accuracy of the findings and the interpretation of the findings of the study (Creswell, 2005). It is, therefore, the responsibility of every researcher to ensure that the research findings of the study are trustworthy so that they can be interpreted, applied, and benefit other researchers and other interested parties (Sanjari et al., 2014). To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher adopted four principles of trustworthiness that were developed by Lincoln and Guba (2005). These principles encompass

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, and they are discussed below. In addition, triangulation was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

4.8.1. CREDIBILITY

Credibility focuses on the question of how congruent the findings of the study are with reality (Shenton, 2004). To ensure credibility in this study, the researcher outlined the context of the study in section 5.2.1. The researcher is also familiar with the context where the study was conducted because he previously worked within the district where the study was conducted. Thus, the participants were familiar to the researcher and there is a high possibility that the participants acted naturally during data collection. The researcher's familiarity with the context where the study took place also enabled him to select participants who are experienced in integrating ICTs in business studies classrooms.

Furthermore, Leedy and Ormord (2005) asserted that the researcher's prolonged stay in the field strengthens the credibility of the results of the inquiry. Despite the elongated exposure to the study context, the researcher visited the fields more than three times. During the visit, both prior and post-data collection, the researcher kept a notebook where events that had the potential to enhance the research findings were recorded. For example, when the researcher saw the computer laboratory in the school, he asked permission to take pictures. After the data collection process, the researcher conducted a member check to ask the participants to confirm whether the transcriptions were true reflections of their perceptions. Houghton et al. (2013) advised that to ensure the credibility of qualitative research, the findings of the study should be accepted and confirmed by the participants of the study.

4.8.2. TRANSFERABILITY

Transferability is concerned with the ability of the findings of the study to be applied in other contexts beyond the context where the study was conducted. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that qualitative researchers should provide thick details of the context and time in which the study was conducted. This helps the reader to judge whether the findings of the study can be transferred or applied in other settings with similar characteristics as the setting where the study was conducted. To ensure the transferability of the results of the study, the researcher gave thick descriptions of the context where the study was conducted in section 5.2.1. Furthermore, the study generated more nuanced insights on technology integration by business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills in a rural setting where access to digital tools is limited to what is available in the schools. The insights gained in this study can be applied in classrooms where there is basic ICT infrastructure. Therefore, some of the technology integration practices shared by the participants of this study can be adopted by business studies teachers who intend to integrate digital technology in their classroom teaching to equip learners with critical business skills.

4.8.3. DEPENDABILITY

Dependability is concerned with ensuring the stability of the research findings over time (Bistch, 2005). This simply means dependability is premised on the idea that if the study can be repeated with the same participants and contexts, similar findings can be obtained (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). In an attempt to obtain dependability in this study, the researcher employed individual semi-structured interviews and non-participatory observations to collect data. Shenton (2004) argues that adopting more than one data

collection method helps the researcher to achieve dependability of the findings because the data collection methods complement each other.

4.8.4. CONFIRMABILITY

Confirmability answers the question of how neutral the findings of the study are. The principle of confirmability demands that the findings of the study be shaped by the participants, not by the researcher (Ang et al., 2016). Creswell (2005) stated that the research findings and interpretations of the findings should not be the figments of the researchers' imaginations but be derived from the participants. As the researcher approached the data collection process, he was cognizant of a potential influence that he may have on the research. Recognizing this possibility assisted the researcher in refraining from actions that could influence the participants' behaviour during data collection. For example, when conducting individual semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, the researcher recognized that he used to teach business studies previously in the Grade where the study was conducted. During the data collection process, the researcher refrained from showing any understanding or knowledge of business studies that had the potential to influence the participants' behaviour(s). Further to that, the findings, conclusions, and interpretations in this study were presented based solely on the collected data from the participants and research settings (classrooms/ schools).

4.8.5. TRIANGULATION

Triangulation is an approach to research that uses a combination of more than one data collection methods in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings (De Vos et al., 2011). To ensure triangulation in this study, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were employed to collect data from the participants. This helped

the researcher to add to the richness of data collected and cross-check the findings in order to ensure the credibility of findings.

4.9. ETHICAL ISSUES

Research ethics encompasses doing what is legally and morally correct in research. Bickman and Rog (2009) define research ethics as the norms that distinguish between right or wrong, and acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when dealing with research participants. Since this study involved human beings as the participants, it was crucial for the researcher to uphold ethics related to the research that involved human beings. Creswell (2003) notes that every researcher is responsible for respecting the rights, needs, values, and desires of the research participants. In accordance with this assertion, the researcher ensured that all research ethics were adhered to. Firstly, the researcher asked for permission to conduct research from the Department of Education in Kwa-Zulu Natal. After the permission was granted by the KZN DoE, the researcher asked permission from schools to allow him to conduct research. The researcher wrote letters seeking permission to conduct the study with school principals and the permissions was received from all six schools. The school principals signed the consent forms as an indication that they granted permission to the researcher to conduct the study in their respective schools.

Upon receiving the permissions from the above-mentioned institutions, the researcher applied for Ethical Clearance to the Wits Human Research Ethics Committee. All relevant documentation, including the research proposal, was submitted to the committee for review. Subsequently, the Ethical Clearance Certificate was granted. After the receipt of the Ethical Clearance, the researcher embarked on data collection. Before and during the data collection process, the researcher respected the rights of the participants. The participants were informed that data will be used for the purposes of

the study only and the principle of anonymity will be ensured when transcribing data and reporting the findings. Following this, pseudonyms (Teacher 1-6) were used when transcribing data and reporting the findings. The researcher also indicated to the participants that their participation was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage. The researcher also indicated to the participants that access to raw data will be limited to the researcher and the research supervisor only. They were also informed that data generated will be stored in password-protected laptops for five years, and then after, it will be destroyed as per the University of Witwatersrand's rules.

4.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the methodology of the study. Detailed explanations of the research approach, research paradigm, and research design are provided. The chapter also presented the study population, sample and sampling technique employed in the study. Data collection methods, data analysis techniques and the trustworthiness of the research findings were discussed. Finally, this chapter outlined the ethical issues that were observed in the study. The next chapter presents the outcomes of the fieldwork.

CHAPTER 5

5. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the methodology employed to explore this study. The present chapter provides a detailed overview of the research sites and the participants. Furthermore, data that was generated through individual face-to-face interviews is presented in this chapter.

5.2. PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

This section presents the research sites and participants.

5.2.1. THE RESEARCH SITES

The profiles of the six selected schools are presented in this section. Table 5.1. is used to present the background information of the selected schools. Table 5.1. constitutes the names of the schools where the study was conducted. The names of the schools are indicated as Schools A-F, which are pseudonyms that were created to protect the schools. Quintile is a school category that each sampled school falls under. In South Africa, schools are categorized into five quintiles, with quintile 1 indicating resource-constrained schools and quintile 5 indicating well-resourced schools (van Dyk & White, 2019). Furthermore, schools in South Africa are further categorized into public and private schools. Public schools are funded by the government, while private schools are mainly funded through charging school fees. Many public schools in South Africa do not charge school fees, while private schools charge school fees. The school enrolment column shows the number of learners enrolled in each school. The final column depicts the number of different ICTs available in each school for teaching and learning purposes. A short summary of each research site follows the table.

Table 5.1.: Background information of the selected schools

School Name	Quintile	School Type	No Fee/Fee	Learners' Enrolment	Technological (Hardware) tools
School A	1	Public	No fee	425	8 Desktop computers, 3 Laptops, 40 Tablets, and 1 Data projector
School B	1	Public	No fee	624	40 laptops, 8 desktop computers, 2 Data projectors, Whiteboard
School C	4	Private	Fee	722	80 laptops, 60 tablets, 8 Interactive Whiteboards and 12 TV screens.
School D	1	Public	No fee	800	20 Laptops, 4 Desktop computers, and 4 data projectors.
School E	4	Private	Fee	1500	30 laptops, 70 tablets, 8 Interactive Whiteboards and 15 Data projectors.
School F	2	Public	No fee	504	40 Laptops, 40 Tablets, 3 Data projectors and 3 Interactive Whiteboards.

Schools selected for this study ranged from medium to big size schools. School A is a medium-sized school with an enrolment of 425 learners and fifteen teachers. School A has one class per Grade, and it mainly offers commercial subjects. School B has two streams, which is the science and commerce stream. The principal indicated that the school is still growing, and it plans to introduce the third stream, the humanities stream. School C is an independent school that falls under quintile four. This is a fee-paying school with 722 learners and 40 teachers. This school is located next to the rural township. It has several streams, including the 'standard' streams (commerce, humanities, and science) and technical subject specializations.

School D is a public school that falls under the category of no fee-paying schools. It is located near the shopping centre. The school service learners that are mainly from working-class families. School E is an independent school that can be considered a well-resourced school. It has computers, laptops, tablets for learners, a data projector, printers, etc. The school principal indicated that the school purchased the ICTs using its funds. This is a big school with learners from different sections of the district where it is located. It has learners' residences, which makes it easier for it to attract learners from far places. A variety of streams is offered in the school and there is a mixture of subjects from different streams. Finally, School F is a public school that offers humanities and commerce streams. This school mainly accommodates learners from poor families who depend on social grants. The principal indicated that the school benefits from the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

The provision of ICTs for the schools sampled for this study mainly comes from both the government and the private sector. The four public schools (School A, B, D and F) received a number of ICTs from government as part of Operation Pakisa, between 2016 and 2020. The private sector also donate some ICTs to school through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects. It emerged from this study that both public and private schools have received donations from private sector. It was also notable that public schools mainly rely on donations from the private sector and from the government to receive ICTs, while private schools have money to acquire more ICTs, and not only rely on donations. Having means to acquire more ICTs may be the cause for private schools to have more ICTs than public schools that were sampled for this study.

5.2.2. PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION

This section presents the demographic data of the participants of this study. Table 5.2. below has six columns, with the first column representing the pseudonyms (Teacher A-F) of the teachers sampled for the study. School (A-F) represents organizations (schools) where the teachers were sampled. The third column depicts the gender of each participant. All participants identified themselves either as males or females. The age group indicates the ages of the participants. The education level of the participants is shown under the highest qualification column. Finally, the teaching experience includes the years the participants have served as business studies teachers, including their experience in integrating technology in their classrooms.

Table 5.2: Participants' profiles

Participants	Schools	Gender	Age Group	Highest Qualification	Teaching experience
Teacher A	A	Male	30-40	Bed Honours	9 years
Teacher B	B	Female	30-40	Bachelor of Education	9 years
Teacher C	C	Male	40-50	Bed Honours	10 years
Teacher D	D	Female	30-40	PGCE	15 years
Teacher E	E	Female	50-60	Diploma	28 years
Teacher F	F	Female	40-50	Bachelor of Education	20 years

The demographic data is presented in Table 5.2. above, it is clear that teachers who participated in this study are experienced in teaching business studies. All sampled teachers have teaching experience ranging from nine to twenty-eight years. Their rich experience was valuable for this study, especially when discussing teaching methods.

The age of the teachers is remarkable as well. The sample comprised teachers who are regarded as young and those who are regarded as experienced in the profession. Although the study was not designed to compare ICT integration skills between teachers of different ages, but it is believed that eliciting views from teachers of different ages allowed the researcher to obtain rich data.

It is noteworthy to highlight the gender of the participants. The sample consists of two male teachers and four female teachers. This means views from both genders were represented. Finally, all teachers who were sampled possessed teaching qualifications, including a Diploma, Bachelor of Education, Post Graduate Certificate in Education and Honours in Education. One of their major subjects is business studies. This means all the participants were qualified to teach business studies. They were all qualified to teach in the FET phase and they all teach business studies in Grades 10-12.

5.3. DATA PRESENTATION

The themes that emerged during data analysis were used to present the findings of the study. Three main themes emerged after a thorough synthesis and analysis of raw data that was collected through individual face-to-face interviews. These themes are as follows: Teachers' views on the role of ICT in nurturing critical business skills, ICT integration to nurture critical business skills and teaching methods to promote the acquisition of critical business skills. These three main themes are responding to the following research questions of this study:

5.3.1. Main Research Question

- How do business studies teachers integrate ICTs in their pedagogical practices to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills that are needed to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment?

5.3.1.1. Research Questions

- What are teachers' views on ICT integration in nurturing learners' critical business skills?
- How do teachers employ different teaching methods while integrating ICTs to create learning environments that support the nurturing of critical business skills?
- How do business studies teachers integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills that are required by the contemporary business environment?

It is important to note that as per the research ethics discussed in Chapter 4, pseudonyms were used when presenting the views of the teachers who participated in this study. The participants are identified as follows:

Research sites (schools) are denoted as **School A- School F**

The participants (teachers) are denoted as **Teacher A- Teacher F**

Teachers' pseudonyms are related to the school they emanate from. For example, Teacher A comes from School A, Teacher B from School B, and Teacher C from School C, among others.

5.3. THE ROLE OF ICT INTEGRATION IN NURTURING LEARNERS' CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

This theme reports participants' views on the role of ICT integration in nurturing business studies learners' critical business skills. It transpired from the interviews that most business studies teachers see value in integrating ICTs in their business studies classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. Teachers' responses suggested that integrating ICTs in their classrooms enables them to create learning environments that support learner participation and authentic learning which makes it easy for learners to acquire critical business skills. The participants' commentaries are elucidated in the sub-themes below.

5.3.1. ICT INTEGRATION ALLOWS LEARNER PARTICIPATION

Teachers who participated in this study mentioned that ICT integration helps to create learning environments that promote learner participation. For example, Teacher B indicated:

ICT integration gives learners an opportunity to access computers or phones during the lesson; they participate in learning activities, ask questions from the teacher and also acquire information from their phones and computers.

The utterance by Teacher B suggests that when ICTs are integrated into a business studies classroom, learners are able to fully participate in the lesson. Having learners participating in the lesson can help them to acquire critical business skills because they can act out and explore different learning activities as they engage in various tasks in the classroom.

Teacher A further added that:

ICT integration fosters learners to participate in the lesson because when integrating technology, I get time to ask questions to learners based on what I taught, and they get time to ask clarity-seeking questions during the lesson.

From Teacher A's utterances, it can be deduced that he believes that ICT integration promotes learner participation in learning activities. From this, it can be assumed that ICT integration creates a conducive learning environment for learners to be open and free to participate in learning activities. Such an environment enables Teacher A to ask learners questions to propel them to think and contribute to learning activities. In reverse, the learning environment encourages learners to be free to ask clarity-seeking questions from the teacher to understand the concept better.

Similarly, Teacher F integrates ICTs to kick-start learning activities that promote learner participation. She stated that she integrates ICT to kickstart discussions in her classroom. She said:

I use a data projector to display scenarios from different businesses to show learners how businesses operate and allow them to compare businesses and discuss differences, management styles or forms of ownership.

It is clear from the assertion by Teacher F that integrating ICTs assists her in exposing learners to learning activities that demand higher-order thinking skills, such as evaluation and analysis. As learners compare and contrast different management styles or forms of ownership, they apply their evaluation and analysis skills. The application of higher-order thinking skills may promote a conducive environment for learners to develop critical business skills.

From the participants' commentaries above, it can be suggested that they find ICT integration useful in their classrooms because it exposes learners to different ICTs. Having access to different ICTs helps to facilitate teachers' instructional practices and learners' learning. The availability of technologies in the classroom helps teachers to design different learning activities that promote active learning among learners. As learners engage in learning activities, they seek guidance from the teacher by asking questions, as submitted by both Teacher A and B in the excerpts above. The teacher may also provide support to learners by asking them leading questions to scaffold them to discover more knowledge on their own. The classroom environment that supports learners to discover new knowledge independently may be favourable for learners to develop critical business skills such as creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

5.3.2. ICT INTEGRATION ALLOWS AUTHENTIC LEARNING

As teachers were giving their accounts, it also appeared that they were of the view that ICT integration in business studies classrooms enables them to expose learners to authentic learning activities. Teachers declared that ICT integration in business studies classrooms helps learners to see actual objects or entities they have never seen before. For example, Teacher E stated:

ICTs such as videos and data projectors assist me in showing learners production systems that happen in the production factories on how each production system is done or works.

It is clear from the excerpt above that integrating ICT in business studies classrooms makes learning more real for learners. Teacher E integrates ICT to expose learners to the real business world. Showing learners business activities that occur in real business not only enables learners to see real business activities but also exposes them to the business world they are being prepared for. Learners get to see the process followed when engaging in production and the equipment used during production.

Teacher D also shared her views on how she took advantage of technology in her business studies classroom to ensure that authentic learning occurs. She said:

I once asked learners to create an application where they had to show their products. They did multimedia messages, so it was a photo of the product and the information such as the price of the product and the ingredients used to make a product displayed in the application created by learners.

It was interesting to learn from Teacher D that some business studies teachers engage learners in activities that foster them to create applications. For learners who are curious, this can be their future undertaking and they can make a living out of it.

Furthermore, to expose learners to authentic learning activities during business studies lessons, teachers indicated that they make use of technology to show them how different businesses incorporate new technologies in their daily operations.

ICT integration helps me to show learners how businesses incorporate new technologies in their operations such as production function, marketing function, etc. – Teacher C

Teacher C's assertion above suggests that business studies teachers integrate ICTs to expose learners to the real business world. Such early exposure to the business world may help learners to be familiar with business settings and this may help them after their schooling when joining the business environment as business practitioners to adapt quickly.

It is clear from the discussions above that business studies teachers capitalize on ICT integration to expose learners to authentic learning activities from different angles. It emerged that teachers integrate ICTs to engage learners in authentic learning activities that enhance their understanding of the concepts they learn in the classroom and to engage in projects that have the potential to impact society beyond the classroom, such as the creation of new applications. Finally, it transpired that teachers integrate ICT to engage learners in activities that may have a long-lasting impact on their lives beyond school, either as business owners, employers, or employees. Integrating ICT in business studies classrooms to design learning activities that foster authentic learning may support learners' acquisition of critical business skills. Through authentic learning, skills such as technological skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, entrepreneurial skills and creative thinking skills can be nurtured because authentic learning exposes learners to real business activities.

5.4. ICT INTEGRATION TO NURTURE CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

This theme reports how teachers integrate different ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. During interviews, teachers admitted that they are not familiar with the concept of "critical business skills". Nevertheless, they are familiar with the skills that are investigated in the study. They mentioned that in the previous curriculum, some of these skills were part of what was called SKAVs (Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes and Values). In the current curriculum, critical business skills are embedded in the learning objectives of business studies subject as indicated in Chapter 2. Teachers mentioned that critical business skills that were identified in this study were vital for learners to survive in the contemporary business environment. Most of the teachers who participated in the study attempted to integrate different ICTs to enhance learners' critical business skills. This notion is presented in sub-themes below.

5.4.1. ICT INTEGRATION TO NURTURE LEARNERS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS

During interviews, teachers acknowledged that communication skills in the business are vital for both employers and employees. As a result, they are of the view that they have a responsibility to equip learners with communication skills that would enable them to operate effectively as business practitioners in the contemporary business environment. For example, Teacher C mentioned:

You know, communication skills are very important in the business. Both employer and employees need to learn communication skills.

Teacher C's assertion indicates that she recognizes the importance of communication for business practitioners in the contemporary business environment.

When they were asked to reflect on how they integrate ICTs to nurture learners' communication skills, teachers pointed out they mainly integrate WhatsApp to enhance learners' communication skills. Teacher A noted:

Okay, with the communication skills, I normally emphasize to learners the importance of using a recent communication platform, which could be the creation of a WhatsApp group.

It can be deduced from Teacher A's comments that he encourages learners to make use of recent communication applications such as WhatsApp, but it is not clear how he integrates such communication platform in his instructional practices to develop learners' communication skills. As teachers integrate ICTs to nurture communication skills, they should bear in mind that they need to develop learners' communication skills that should be useful to the contemporary business environment.

Asked to reflect on the same subject, Teacher C had this to say:

I use WhatsApp to develop learners' communication skills because learners are learning to engage in more formal and informal ways, and they get an opportunity to communicate with others, enhancing their communication skills.

Teacher C's utterances show that he encourages learners to use WhatsApp to communicate because it exposes them to both formal and informal ways of communication. For business practitioners, engaging in formal and informal ways of communication is necessary because they deal with various stakeholders who prefer various methods of communication. It is, therefore, important for teachers to develop learners' skills to communicate in both formal and informal settings.

In the same vein, Teacher D mentioned that she integrates WhatsApp to enhance learners' communication skills:

With communication skills, I use WhatsApp since we have a group, and learners are able to communicate via WhatsApp directly using their cell phones. It also helps learners to catch up with the lesson if they were absent because they contact their peers for homework or the content covered in the classroom.

Based on the responses provided by the teachers above, teachers rely on integrating WhatsApp to enhance learners' communication skills. WhatsApp is regarded by many as a tool to socialize (chat for pleasure), not as a tool that can be used to enhance learners' communication skills that can be used for business purposes. They believe that emails, business memos, etc., are the ideal communication methods that are used in the business context. Hence, teachers should develop learners' skills in the above-mentioned communication methods. On the other hand, there are people who believe that WhatsApp can be used for business communication purposes and it's a much cheaper and easily accessible communication tool that can make business communication flow quicker and more smoothly. As a result, they believe that learners should be taught skills to communicate formal business information through social media platforms such as WhatsApp. Amid the opposing beliefs that have been brought forward, it is important to note that given the context (rural setting) in which this study was conducted, one may appreciate that teachers integrate WhatsApp as a tool to develop learners' communication skills. This is despite the fact that one cannot be certain about the ability of WhatsApp to equip learners with communication skills that are useful for the contemporary business world. Also, from teachers' commentaries, it was not clear how they integrated WhatsApp to nurture learners' communication skills. Nevertheless, communicating over WhatsApp with others can help business studies learners to acquire skills to communicate business information over the internet, which is a skill an individual develops over time.

5.4.2. ICT INTEGRATION TO NURTURE LEARNERS' CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS

During the interviews, teachers reflected on how they integrate ICT to enhance learners' creative thinking skills. They acknowledged that creative thinking skills are one of the critical skills in a highly competitive business environment. One's ability to develop novel ideas is important for survival in the contemporary business environment. This is now exacerbated by the pervasiveness of technology that help individuals to come up with innovative ideas easily and quickly. Considering this notion, teachers emphasized the importance of integrating ICTs to nurture learners' creative thinking skills. Teacher A stated:

With an understanding that as future businesspeople, learners need to have an element to start something new or have different solutions to a challenge. So, I make use of technology to display different business related challenges so that learners can come up with novel ideas to solve them. I also make use of brainstorming to get learners thinking about innovative solutions to a business problem.

From Teacher A's sentiments, it is clear that he integrate ICTs to expose learners to learning activities that foster them to engage in creative thinking. It can be assumed from Teacher A's commentary that he integrates ICT in his classrooms to display various business-related challenges, which requires learners to engage in creative thinking to come up with solutions to business-related problems. Teacher A integrates ICT to design activities that foster learners to explore innovative ideas. Integrating ICT in this way can encourage learners to see technology as a tool that can help them explore innovative ideas that they would not explore without the use of technology.

Teacher B also gave an account of how she integrates ICTs to enhance learners' creative thinking skills. She alluded:

I normally give them assignments that force them to think creatively; as they do the assignment, their creative thinking skills develop. The one I remember is when I gave them a task to develop a business plan where they were needed to come up with the name of the business and create a logo and the slogan (motto) of the business. As part of the business plan, they were supposed to develop a budget where they outlined the money expected (income) and the expenditure. Then, in total, they were needed to indicate the money they would need to start their businesses (capital). As learners do this assignment, they use different ICTs, so I use it to develop their creativity.

From this, it appears that Teacher B integrates ICT in her business studies classroom to foster learners to engage in learning activities that propel them to be creative. Learners are encouraged to make use of ICTs to come up with business-related inventions that are important for future business practitioners. Inventing the business name and logo and proposing the business concept require creativity from learners and engaging in this activity requires one to make use of various ICTs. Hence, exposing learners to the activities of this nature by Teacher B should be commended.

Overall, both Teachers A and B found ICT integration useful in supporting learners' creativity. As Teacher A stated, technology can be used to stimulate innovative thinking among learners as ICTs were used to display business-related problems for learners to suggest solutions to a problem. Furthermore, Teacher B suggested that learners used ICTs to produce inventions such as new business logos. Given the views provided by the teachers on this, one may conclude that business studies teachers made strides to integrate ICTs to nurture learners' creative thinking skills.

However, it transpired from the interviews that some teachers integrate ICTs in a rudimentary manner in their attempts to equip learners with creative thinking skills. It

emerged from this sub-theme that teachers mainly used technology to display learning activities that were meant to foster learners' creative thinking skills. This basic integration of ICT can be attributed to contextual factors such as limited access to the internet. Some schools, such as School D, and School F, did not have access to the internet. As a result, this may have deprived some teachers from accessing more advanced learning activities, such as educational games that can be used to enhance learners' creative thinking skills. Nevertheless, the commentaries provided by teachers on how they integrate ICTs to nurture learners' creative thinking skills indicate that they understand the role that ICTs can play in sparking creativity among business studies learners.

5.4.3. ICT INTEGRATION TO NURTURE LEARNERS' PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

This sub-theme reports on how business studies teachers integrate ICT to equip learners with problem-solving skills. It emerged from this theme that teachers use different ICTs and learning activities to nurture learners' problem-solving skills.

Teacher D narrated how she integrates ICT to equip learners with problem-solving skills. She mentioned that she uses assignments that will require the use of ICTs to help learners acquire problem-solving skills.

So, with problem-solving skills, I give learners activities where they must go home and think about the new products they want to invent. Especially when we talk about business strategies and marketing strategy, I once gave them a task to look at the existing products and decide on how they can do product development where they can recommend some features to be added to the product to attract the consumers. Although learners do not do the products practically, they write a report and present it to the class. In the process, they use their cell phones or computers to do this task.

It appears from the teacher's sentiments above that she gives learners practical learning activities that have the potential to nurture their problem-solving skills. Although the activity mentioned by Teacher D above is not a clear-cut business-related problem, this activity may encourage learners to apply their problem-solving skills to complete it. This is because this learning activity requires learners to evaluate a particular product and think about the features that can be added to enhance the product. Various ICTs can be used at different stages of engaging in this learning activity. As a result, learners' problem-solving skills can be enhanced while completing this learning activity.

In his classroom, Teacher C makes use of computer games to equip learners with problem-solving skills.

You know, I have attempted integrating different ICTs to enhance problem-solving skills. You know, there is a computer game called Brain Blast. That game is so interesting because it helps learners to think outside the box. When I teach about problem-solving techniques in Grade 12, I use that game to help learners generate different ideas for a problem.

From the commentaries above, Teacher C stated that he integrates computer games to support his instructional practices to enhance learners' problem-solving skills. Engaging learners in learning activities that are internet-based can help them to continue to engage in problem-solving activities even after school, which nurtures their problem-solving skills.

Overall, teachers' commentaries reported above show that business studies teachers are aware of learning activities that foster learners' problem-solving skills. They also take advantage of different ICTs to support these learning activities to promote learners' acquisition of problem-solving skills. It also emerged in this sub-theme that teachers use games to enhance learners' problem-solving skills. Incorporating games in business

studies classrooms may enhance learners' ability to think critically while engaging in the educational game. The ability to think enhanced through engaging in a particular educational game may help learners solve business-related challenges incorporated by teachers in the classroom to develop their problem-solving skills.

5.4.4. ICT INTEGRATION TO NURTURE LEARNERS' ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

In this sub-theme, teachers shared their experiences in integrating ICTs to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills. They indicated that although the business studies curriculum stresses that learners should be equipped with entrepreneurial skills, it is unclear how technology can be used to support nurturing learners' entrepreneurial skills. They revealed that they use their understanding that entrepreneurship in this day and age requires one to be familiar with technology to survive as an entrepreneur. Due to this, they infuse different ICTs to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills. Teacher B said:

You know, I try to use technology to develop learners' entrepreneurial skills, but as I said earlier, there is no guidance on how I can go about doing it. But because I understand that for entrepreneurs of today, technology has become so important, unlike before. So, to encourage entrepreneurship among learners, I start very early like ... as early as Grade 9 in EMS and again in Grades 10 and 11, where I ask them to use computers to design advertisements, invitation cards and posters. I then check those things they designed and some I advise them to sell those to their friends or in the community so that how I teach them entrepreneurial skills.

The assertion by Teacher B indicates that she nurtures learners' entrepreneurship skills by creating awareness to not only perceive technology as a tool to complete learning activities but also to create and promote business ideas. Having learners design inventions/products using ICTs in the early stages of their lives would shape and develop

their entrepreneurial skills. This is because this activity creates awareness in business studies learners about their ability to invent products and sell them to others.

Similarly, Teacher A believes that integrating various ICTs in business studies classrooms can propel learners to explore business ideas that have the potential to nurture entrepreneurial skills. He said:

I believe allowing learners to use technology in business studies would motivate them to explore different business ideas using their cell phones, computers and other resources.

From Teacher A's assertion, it can be deduced that he believes that exposing learners to the use of different ICTs can enhance their entrepreneurial skills because learners can use ICTs to explore business ideas. However, one can sense from Teacher A's commentary that he believes learners should be left alone to use technology to explore novel business ideas. Leaving learners to use ICTs on their own to explore business ideas may not work with most learners. This is because some learners may still be preoccupied with the idea that ICTs are used for socialization purposes. So, as such, learners still need guidance from their business studies teachers on how they can exploit ICTs at their disposal to explore business ideas. Hence, mere access to technology cannot be deemed an 'enabler' for business studies learners to engage in business-related activities.

Teacher D also explained how she integrates ICT to promote entrepreneurial skills among learners. She narrated:

Since business studies is meant to provide learners with entrepreneurial skills, I teach them how they can establish their own businesses; there is a chapter that they do in Grade 11 called Establishing a business venture. It includes different

aspects of starting a business, so we make use of ICT to develop business-related documents such as business plans and budgets. In this process, I believe that learners entrepreneurial skills are developed.

The excerpt above shows that Teacher D encourages learners to use different ICTs to complete learning activities that enhance their entrepreneurial skills. Encouraging learners to make use of ICTs to develop documents such as business plans may help them to put the theory into practice. Engaging learners in activities of this nature presents a shift in how business studies used to be taught. Previously, learners were taught ways to establish the business without having them create actual business plans that showcase their business ideas.

Teacher F added:

The curriculum teaches learners about the qualities of entrepreneurship and one of the qualities is the ability to adapt to changes. I normally tell learners to use technology to start their businesses. I remember two of my learners who were here last year; they were selling sweets and chips and advertising their products on Facebook... you see, that is an entrepreneurship skill.

From the sentiments of Teacher F, it can be inferred that she recognizes that technological developments cause shifts in how different businesses operate. As a result, she encourages learners to embrace change in how they engage in business-related activities. Encouraging business studies learners to embrace change may help create awareness among them to understand how technological development led to changes in business operations. Furthermore, Teacher F encourages learners to use technology to establish small businesses. This may help learners see technology's power in advancing business processes.

It is evident from the excerpts above that teachers integrate ICTs with an aim to develop learners' entrepreneurial skills. It also surfaced that teachers understand that entrepreneurial skills are broad. Hence, different activities should be used when attempting to develop learners' entrepreneurial skills. As indicated, teachers expose learners to ICTs that enable them to create work, such as business advertisements, to nurture their entrepreneurial skills. Engaging learners in such activities may encourage them to establish their own small businesses and use technology to support their business operations.

5.4.5. ICT INTEGRATION TO NURTURE LEARNERS' TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS

During deliberations with the teachers, it surfaced that they believed that technological skills are important for learners to survive in the contemporary business environment. They mentioned that all learners they teach in their business studies classrooms also do Computer Application Technology (CAT) or Information Technology (IT), so they normally come to class with basic technology skills. However, they believe that they still have a responsibility as business studies teachers to teach learners technological skills so that they can produce learners who possess skills that would enable them to survive in the contemporary business environment. Their sentiments are captured below.

In our school, learners who do business studies also do CAT, but I still have to allow them to use ICTs so that I can be sure that they are able to use ICT. I let them use computers, where software such as Excel and PowerPoint are used. -

Teacher A

From the assertion above, it can be deduced that Teacher A leaves learners to make use of ICTs to engage in learning activities. It can be assumed that the teacher believes that learners have pre-requisite skills to use ICTs to support their learning activities. Leaving learners to use technology independently may not be deemed ideal for learners

to acquire the technological skills they need to operate in the contemporary business environment. Therefore, teachers should actively guide learners to use technology to support their learning activities. This would help learners develop technological skills appropriate for the business context.

Teacher C also shared similar sentiments.

Although I do not teach CAT or IT, as a business studies teacher, I do teach my learners some skills to use technology. Remember, these are future businesspeople, so when giving them tasks, I give them tasks that will foster them to use technology. For example, in Term 2, I gave them research and they used computers, laptops, and cell phones to finish that research project. Even when they were presenting, I allowed them to use slides and data projector to present in the class.

Similarly, Teacher D and Teacher E mentioned that they use research assignments to foster learners to make use of technology to complete the assessment and come back to class for presentations. Teacher E said:

There is a research and presentation aspect where they make use of data projectors and laptops to do presentations; I think that improves learners' ability to use technologies.

It is understood from the teachers' sentiments that they believe that by giving learners tasks that foster them to use technology, learners develop technological skills. It is also noticed from the teachers' comments that most teachers let learners use ICTs on their own to complete learning activities. From their responses, it is not clear how teachers assist learners in acquiring technological skills. This may be attributed to the fact that since learners do CAT/IT, teachers believe that they already have the ability to use ICTs

to engage in learning activities. Hence, they leave them to use technology independently. However, letting learners to use ICTs independently cannot be deemed ideal for business studies learners. This is because business studies learners need appropriate technological skills that would enable them to process business information, present business information and gather, analyze, and present business information. Business studies learners need to develop skills to identify important business information that can help them make business-related decisions; such information needs to be processed through different software such as Excel and graphs to make it easily accessible and easy to consume. So, business studies teachers need to actively engage in equipping learners with such skills for them to develop sound technological skills that are needed by the contemporary business environment.

Overall, this theme reported on how business studies teachers integrate different ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills. They reported that the business studies curriculum identified several skills to be acquired by learners to be relevant to the contemporary business environment. As a result, they integrate different ICTs to ensure that learners are equipped with the skills espoused in the curriculum. Ironically, teachers indicated that there is no clear guidance on how to integrate ICTs in their classrooms to enhance learners' critical business skills. They mainly relied on their teaching experience and their basic technological skills to integrate technology to equip learners with critical business skills.

5.5. TEACHING METHODS TO PROMOTE THE ACQUISITION OF CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

Several teaching methods were identified by business studies teachers as the methods they employ in their classrooms to create learning environments that are amenable to the acquisition of critical business skills by learners. These methods include brainstorming, field trips, case-based teaching method, problem-based teaching, and collaborative learning. Some teachers mentioned that they find these teaching methods helpful in supporting learning activities that are meant to nurture learners' critical business skills. They detailed various teaching methods they adopt in their classrooms in the sub-themes below.

5.5.1. PROBLEM-BASED TEACHING METHOD

Business studies teachers also shared how they employ problem-based teaching method in their business studies classrooms to create learning environments that support learners' acquisition of critical business skills. All teachers who participated in this study use problem-based teaching in their classrooms. They highlighted the benefits associated with using Problem-Based teaching method when teaching business studies. Teacher A elaborated:

Since I am teaching business studies, in most cases, I end up using different real business scenarios, where in those scenarios, learners must understand them before attempting to solve the business-related problem. I normally use a laptop and a projector to display a scenario to show learners that a certain business is experiencing a certain challenge, so they are required to solve the problem following problem-solving steps, which include defining the problem up to taking a proper solution to solve a specific business problem.

From Teacher A's assertion, it can be inferred that he implemented a problem-based teaching method to enhance learners' problem-solving skills. He employs this teaching method to engage learners in a systematic problem-solving process by following particular steps.

Teacher B also explained how she adopted a problem-based teaching method in her business studies classroom:

I normally give learners tasks where they need to go and actually do research to solve a real business problem using their cell phones and computers to search for solutions to a problem and they come back with the solutions to share with the rest of the class.

Based on the expressions presented above, it is evident that business studies teachers integrate ICTs to support Problem-based teaching in different ways. Teacher A reported that technology can be used to display business-related problems and ask learners to work on the solutions. As learners work towards finding the solutions to the business problem, they follow systematic ways of solving business problems. Teacher A articulated that business practitioners follow certain steps when solving business problems. Hence, business studies teachers such as Teacher A expose learners to certain steps when solving business problems. Also, business practitioners need to see the value of technology in the problem-solving process. Therefore, teachers such as Teacher B encourage learners to make use of technology to explore more solutions to business problems. Using technology to solve business problems may expose learners to important sources such as journals, websites and videos that are useful in solving business problems. Exposing learners to such sources can be helpful to learners even in the future when they join the business environment as business practitioners; they will know which source to consult to get plausible solutions to real business problems.

5.5.2. COLLABORATIVE LEARNING METHOD

Collaborative learning method seemed to be popular among business studies teachers. They all indicated that they employ collaborative learning on a regular basis. They stated that it benefits learners to learn from one another. Teacher B uttered:

I use collaborative learning in my classrooms most of the time. Collaborative learning helps learners work together to do things in the class as they learn. In business studies, collaboration among learners is prioritized ... so, I ensure I include learning activities that will make learners work together.

From Teacher B's sentiments, it can be deduced that the teacher adopt a collaborative learning method to encourage learners to work together when engaging in learning activities. Instilling the culture of working together among business studies learners is important because collaboration is among the skills that are needed in the contemporary business environment. By entrenching the culture of collaboration among learners, Teacher B may help learners develop collaboration skills that will help them adapt to the world's demands beyond school.

Also, Teacher C detailed how he adopted collaborative learning methods in his business studies classroom. He said:

I normally use collaborative learning when I give them a class activity or a task where they are supposed to work together to complete the task. I will say I use it for class activities only because collaborative learning or group work is not encouraged in business studies formal tasks.

Teacher C supported his statement and said:

Collaborative learning in business studies assignments is no longer used for formal assignments because it promotes plagiarism among learners. And

sometimes you find that other learners do not do the assignment because other group members will complete it, and they just get marks for free.

From the teachers' comments, it is evident that he only uses the collaborative learning method when engaging learners on formative assessments. He noted that engaging learners in collaborative learning when completing formal assessments is discouraged because it allows learners to plagiarise. This is because some learners do not actively participate in completing the activity and insist their names be included in the assessment to obtain marks.

However, Teacher F differed with Teacher C's views:

Business studies promotes collaborative learning; hence, teachers should enforce collaborative learning among learners. I use collaborative learning for both informal and formal assignments. For example, in term 2, we had a presentation, which was a formal task; I asked learners to prepare the oral presentations in groups, but the written presentation was done individually.

Based on the teachers' sentiments presented above, it is evident that both Teacher C and Teacher F confused collaborative learning with group work. Collaborative learning should be perceived as a teaching method that aims at having learners share ideas and learn from one another. On the other hand, group work should be seen as an activity where learners work together to complete a given task. Essentially, collaborative learning should be used to create an environment to enable learners to learn from one another. This is apparent from Teacher B's sentiments as she was explaining how she adopts collaborative learning in her business studies classroom. Having said that, one may expect business studies teachers to perceive collaborative learning and group work as one thing. This is because both include groups and only depend on the purposes and

functions of each group. Nevertheless, it transpired from the findings that most teachers use collaborative learning to teach business studies.

Teachers also confirmed that collaborative learning is compatible with ICT integration. They indicated that integrating ICT helps learners to collaborate outside the classroom. They stated that they take advantage of technology in their classrooms when collaborative learning is used. Teacher A highlighted:

I usually share the content on WhatsApp group, especially the content we haven't yet covered and ask learners to study on their own and share what they understand through sending voice notes in a WhatsApp group. When we get to class during my period, I start from there and correct some misconceptions that learners in the group have. I think that assists because when they come to class, the topic is not new to them, so it becomes easy for them to participate in the class.

From Teacher A's comments, it can be inferred that he capitalizes on the capabilities of WhatsApp to allow learners to share ideas through voice notes. Through sharing voice notes, learners are able to showcase their understanding of the concept being discussed and their peers learn from them. Furthermore, from the learners' contributions, the teacher is able to determine the learner's understanding of the content. Due to this, the teacher can plan an appropriate approach to be adopted during class to reinforce the content discussed on WhatsApp and address learners' misconceptions.

Teacher C added that:

I use WhatsApp group to support collaboration among learners because on WhatsApp, learners support one another and learn together. In there, learners

become a team and ensure that they ask questions from one another to make sure that they understand whatever they are learning.

This excerpt shows that ICT integration helps Teacher C to propel learners to work collaboratively, which may enhance their communication skills. Technology-based platforms such as WhatsApp provide features that support learners' collaboration, such as the sharing of voice notes and videos.

Based on Teacher A and Teacher C's commentaries, it can be concluded that teachers heavily rely on WhatsApp to support collaborative learning among learners. Teachers' dependence on WhatsApp to support collaboration among learners can be understood in the context (rural context) where the study was conducted. Some teachers indicated that they do not have internet access (Wi-fi) in their schools; hence, using more advanced ICTs can be a challenge. WhatsApp is the only platform that both teachers and learners can easily access.

5.5.3. CASE-BASED TEACHING METHOD

Business studies teachers also adopt case-based teaching methods in their classrooms to support learning activities that promote the acquisition of critical business skills. They reckoned that the business studies curriculum dictates a case-based teaching method to be adopted to clarify most of the concepts of business studies. They added that each topic in business studies requires the use of case studies to elucidate the concept being taught. Hence, the subject lends itself to the adoption of a case-based teaching method. Teacher D mentioned:

Every day, I use case-based teaching method in business studies; like in every topic, I always get a case study or case studies to enhance learners' understanding of the topic.

Teacher E also confirmed that the case-based teaching method is common among business studies teachers. She stated:

In business studies, there is no way that you can avoid case-based teaching methods.

Based on the comments made by both Teacher D and Teacher E, it is evident that business studies teachers adopt case-based teaching methods regularly in their classrooms. They also alluded that the adoption of a case-based teaching method ensures the practicality of business studies content. This teaching method is also praised by teachers for ensuring that the content is current and fresh. In this regard, Teacher F noted:

The use of case-based teaching method ensures that we teach recent content to learners. For example, we had COVID-19 that affected businesses, so textbooks do not have that content. I then used case studies to teach learners about the effects of COVID-19 on businesses.

Teacher B added that the use of case-based teaching methods exposes learners to real business-related problems. She said:

We use case-based teaching methods to expose learners to practical business problems, such as the floods that were experienced in Kwa-Zulu Natal province recently. I relied on a case-based teaching method to teach learners about the business environments. This is good because that is what learners know and hear from the news, so I took the cases of real businesses to clarify the content.

Furthermore, Teacher A uses the case-based method to equip learners with analytical skills while preparing them for the examination. He noted that business studies assessments, especially tests and examinations, have many case studies that need learners to showcase their analytical skills. He then adopts a case-based teaching

method to teach learners different business cases and how to read, understand and analyze case studies for the purposes of attempting it during assessments. He said:

Business studies make use of different case studies to test learners' knowledge of a particular content. So, I adopted a case-based teaching method to train them on how to answer the questions from the case study. If a learner does not understand the case study, he/she can fail business studies test or examination because you need to have analytical skills and apply them when reading the case study.

It is evident from the excerpt above that Teacher A uses a case-based teaching method to equip learners with analytical skills. Above that, they use the case-based teaching method to prepare learners for business studies assessments. This is because case studies are the backbone of business studies content. This is exacerbated by the nature of business studies as a subject. The subject is designed to prepare learners for the real business world, so through case studies, learners are exposed to the problems of the real business world. Hence, the case-based teaching method is inevitable.

During interviews, teachers were also asked how they integrate ICTs in their classrooms when a case-based teaching method is employed. They unanimously agreed that the case-based teaching method is compatible with ICT integration. Teacher F stated that she integrate ICTs to get recent case studies that are business-related to use them to reinforce the content taught.

I use the internet to get the latest information like COVID-19 and how it affects businesses and use case studies to clarify the content.

Teacher B also remarked that ICT integration helps her to replace case studies that are contained in textbooks with more contextually relevant and real business cases. She pronounced:

Our textbooks sometimes contain case studies that are not relevant to our context. Remember, we are in a rural-based school, so textbooks are designed for people who come from different backgrounds. Using ICTs such as the computer, I take the case-study written in the textbook and edit it to fit the context of my school and the learners. There are things that learners cannot understand because they are not exposed, but if I change and use what they know, they understand better.

The compatibility of case-based teaching methods and ICT integration in business studies classrooms enables Teacher B to alter the contents of case studies to suit her context. In other words, Teacher B does not rely entirely on case studies contained in textbooks, so she integrates ICT to manoeuvre the contents of case studies and come up with rich case studies that can help to nurture learners' critical business skills.

Teacher D added that she will now take advantage of technology and case-based teaching. She remarked:

Going forward, I will ask learners to look for different case studies that we can use to enhance the content. After collecting the case studies from the learners, I will check for the relevance of each case study and keep them in a folder. When I set an informal test, I will incorporate the case study from the one or two learners.

This is a creative idea to involve learners in learning activities and make them take responsibility for their learning. More than involving learners in learning, Teacher D's idea has the potential to make learners take pride in their learning. For example, learners

who see their case studies incorporated into the assessment will feel valued. Furthermore, such initiative has the potential to make learners appreciate technology in their education. Nowadays, learners have cell phones, so they access the internet. Rather than accessing the internet for social purposes, they will access the internet with the aim of looking for the relevant business case study that can be submitted to the class so the teacher can use it to enhance learning activities.

In summary, this sub-theme reported that business studies teachers implement case-based teaching in their technology-enhanced classrooms to create learning environments that promote the acquisition of critical business skills. Teachers highlighted the benefits of integrating ICTs while implementing the case-based teaching method. It emerged from the findings that the use of the case study teaching method helps teachers design business-related case studies that are context-sensitive, which helps learners easily understand the content taught. It also transpired that ICT integration helps teachers to access real business case studies that are recent and relevant to the content taught. Judging from these findings, one may conclude that implementing the case-based teaching method in technology-enhanced business studies classrooms can help to nurture learners' critical business skills such as problem-solving.

5.5.4. BRAINSTORMING TEACHING METHOD

It appeared during the interviews that the brainstorming teaching method is popular among business studies teachers. They showed enthusiasm as they explained how they employ this teaching method in their classrooms. They further indicated the benefits of adopting the brainstorming teaching method in their classrooms. Among the benefits of adopting the brainstorming teaching method in business studies classrooms is that it

gives learners of different abilities a chance to work together to share ideas and learn from one another.

Teacher D explained:

I use the brainstorming method where I put learners into groups, and learners brainstorm as a group. They suggest solutions to business-related problems, and I encourage all learners to participate. Learners who are shy and those who are outspoken get a chance to work together and share ideas.

Teacher D's assertion implies that brainstorming enables her to combine learners of different abilities to solve a business-related problem. She believes that grouping learners of different abilities encourages them to participate in a learning activity by suggesting solutions to a business-related problem. This suggests that learners of different abilities get a chance to learn from one another. This is a conducive environment for learners to interact, which is integral in facilitating learners' nurturing of communication and problem-solving skills.

Furthermore, Teacher C added:

Brainstorming technique is good for me because learners get to mix, and they are free to ask questions from each other. It is unlike when I, as a teacher, do a verbal presentation, instructing learners because a learner who is left behind or do not understand may be shy to ask a question or stop me. Brainstorming is free for all learners to participate.

Similar to Teacher D, Teacher C stressed that brainstorming enables learners to participate equally in learning activities. This is because, during brainstorming, all learners get a chance to contribute ideas towards the business-related problem being discussed.

Teacher E mentioned that she enjoys listening to learners engaging with their peers during brainstorming sessions. She emphasized that this method creates a learning environment where each learner's abilities are revealed.

I really enjoy listening to the ideas they share with their group mates and the class.

They come up with fantastic ideas and you get different viewpoints since learners come from different backgrounds with different experiences.

Based on the teachers' responses presented above, it is evident that the brainstorming teaching method evolves around the learner. In other words, the learner takes centre stage in learning activities. Learners engage in thinking and participate in discussions as they suggest solutions to a given problem. As Teacher C insinuated, learners learn from one another by asking questions from their peers, which also enhances their learning. Teacher E also highlighted that as learners share ideas during brainstorming sessions, they get to share their prior knowledge concerning the topic being discussed.

Teacher E further highlighted that the brainstorming teaching method works well in the technology-enhanced business studies classroom. She said:

You know, brainstorming works also when used with technology. In our school, we have Wi-fi, so since we have computers, I sometimes give learners a real business problem, especially when we are doing an environmental issues chapter. I search for stories where big businesses are involved in environmental issues such as land pollution. I give them a link to follow so they can see the story. After reading a story, I then ask them to look for a different but related story on the internet and think about the solutions the business can do to resolve the environmental issue.

From Teacher E's sentiments, it can be inferred that the brainstorming teaching method is amenable to ICT integration. Because of this, Teacher E takes advantage of ICT integration to expose learners to different real business challenges for them to engage in solving real business problems through brainstorming. Exposing learners to real business-related problem help them understand the daily challenges that businesses face.

Teacher B added that the integration of ICT has made it easier for teachers and learners to not limit brainstorming within the four walls of the classroom. She indicated that since business studies are allocated one hour per day for four days a week. This time allocation is inadequate for meaningful brainstorming due to the loaded business studies content. She said she makes use of technological platforms such as WhatsApp to further engage learners in brainstorming.

Due to time limitations, we sometimes finish our brainstorming discussions on WhatsApp Group with learners in the afternoon. They send voice notes in a group to share their proposed solutions with their peers. I find that to be working because there is no time limitations and learners like to talk when they are behind their phones, so for me, it is more efficient in the WhatsApp group than in the classroom.

It is apparent from Teacher B's assertion that she takes advantage of ICTs at her disposal to engage learners in brainstorming sessions. This allows learners to have elongated sessions to solve real business problems by sharing ideas or solutions in a platform such as WhatsApp.

Despite their preference for brainstorming teaching methods, business studies teachers also mentioned the shortcomings when employing brainstorming in their classrooms. For example, Teacher E and Teacher F said:

In bigger classes, brainstorming method does not work well. It causes chaos, it better in smaller classes. In bigger classes it needs more control.

Teacher F noted:

Brainstorming method does not work in my grade 12B class since they are forty-five; even if I try, I spend a lot of time asking learners to be orderly while in my Grade 12 A it works well because in there, they are fifteen.

It is clear from the teachers' expressions above that employing brainstorming is not always helping learners to learn meaningfully. As Teacher E stated, this method may create chaos in big classrooms. The brainstorming method works well in smaller classes because a teacher in a smaller class can be able to guide and facilitate learners' discussions more effectively than in bigger classes.

Teacher D also added that brainstorming sessions are sometimes dominated by outspoken learners. She said:

Talkative learners sometimes dominate brainstorming sessions and quiet learners remain quiet and end up being left behind.

From Teacher D's commentary, it can be deduced that learners who are outspoken tend to outdo those who are shy. This may lead to some learners not fully participating in learning activities because they are reserved. This may result in imbalances in the classroom because this will mean only those talkative learners will benefit from brainstorming sessions.

To overcome this, Teacher B advised that teachers should facilitate learners' generation of ideas and how they share their ideas with the rest of the class. She said:

To ensure that all learners are engaged in brainstorming, a teacher should walk around checking whether they are contributing solutions to the problem. A teacher should try to allocate time for learners to think individually, share ideas as a group, and share ideas with the rest of the class.

Teacher E also provided some advice to teachers on how they can prevent certain learners from dominating brainstorming sessions; she keeps on changing the groups so learners are exposed to different people in the class. She stated:

I sometimes group them according to their abilities. For example, those who are talkative, I group them together and those who are less talkative are grouped together. By doing this, I know those who are less talkative encourage each other to talk because they can't always remain silent. The other day, I mix them; those who are talkative are mixed with those who are less talkative. So, that gives me a chance to get all learners thinking and sharing their ideas with their peers in relation to a particular business problem.

From this, it is apparent that Teacher E continuously changes groups in her classroom. This helps learners to be exposed to different learners with different capabilities, personalities, and ideas. Besides exposing learners to different peers, it also helps them to acquire skills to deal with people who think differently and come from various backgrounds. The ability to deal with different people is important for business studies learners to acquire during the early stages of their lives because the contemporary business environment is characterized by diverse stakeholders. Hence, learners have to acquire skills to deal with diverse individuals.

In summarizing this sub-theme, it can be concluded that implementing the brainstorming teaching method in business studies classrooms helps teachers expose learners to learning activities that have the potential to nurture their problem-solving skills. This is

because, during brainstorming, learners are required to work together to brainstorm possible solutions to a business-related problem presented to them. Also, this theme reported that teachers found brainstorming teaching methods to be amenable to technology integration. As Teacher B pointed out, using brainstorming as a teaching method, teachers capitalize on technology to enhance their teaching of business studies. It was also revealed that adopting a brainstorming teaching method helps teachers create an environment where learners of different abilities can work together and learn from one another. Employing brainstorming in a technology-enhanced business studies classroom alters the role of the teacher from being the source of knowledge to that of the facilitator of learning, as Teacher B implied in her response.

5.5.5. FLIPPED LEARNING TEACHING METHOD

On this sub-theme, business studies teachers recounted how they adopted the flipped learning teaching method in their classrooms. Some teachers indicated that this is the new teaching method, and they are not familiar with it. For example, Teacher F indicated that she never heard about the flipped learning method during training as a teacher. On the other hand, Teacher D conceded that he normally uses some elements of the flipped learning method, but he was unaware that she was using flipped learning. She remarked:

I always give learners YouTube videos and sometimes record a lesson, share the video with them on WhatsApp, and ask them to prepare for the next lesson. I started using this teaching method during COVID-19 lockdowns and now use it regularly.

She added that she was not aware that she was employing a flipped learning teaching method.

I will be honest; I was not aware that I use the flipped learning method. Today I learnt. I will continue using it because it has proved to be working for my learners.

Furthermore, Teacher D commended flipped learning for prompting learners to actively engage in classroom discussions. In other words, this means that watching educational videos prior to class time gives learners a clue of what will be learnt in the classroom in the next lesson. This put them in a position to meaningfully participate in classroom discussions.

It helps learners to actively engage in the lesson because they come prepared.

On the contrary, Teacher E indicated that she attempted to apply the flipped learning teaching method in her business studies classroom. However, it did not work because her learners were not cooperating. She indicated that she shared videos with them through WhatsApp and asked them to prepare for the next lesson, but when they arrived in class, they came with excuses and were unprepared for the lesson. She stated:

I tried it, but it doesn't work because learners don't come prepared, and they come up with excuses. They say there was too much homework, so they did not get time to watch the videos I sent, while others complain about the lack of data to download and watch the video.

The cases presented above indicate opposing feedback from teachers on their implementation of flipped learning in their classrooms. It appears from Teacher D's sentiments that the outbreak of COVID-19 encouraged her to explore some elements of the flipped learning teaching method and she found them to be working in her classroom. On the other hand, Teacher E found flipped learning teaching method to be less favourable amongst her learners. She indicated that learners do not watch videos and recordings shared by the teacher to help them prepare for the next class as flipped

learning demands. Lack of cooperation from the side of the learners may discourage Teacher E from exploring further implementing flipped learning.

Teacher B shared similar views as Teacher E on learners who come to class unprepared, citing failure to access educational videos shared by the teacher due to lack of data and network in their areas. Despite these challenges, Teacher B indicated that she stresses that learners download the videos while they are at school. They make use of computers in the library and the learning centre to download those videos and store them on their cell phones.

I make things easy for them by saying that they must use their study time after school to go to the learning centre or library to download the videos and save them in their cell phones so they can watch the video later at home.

In this sub-theme, it transpired that not all business studies teachers are familiar with the flipped learning method. This theme also reported that some teachers try to use the flipped learning method, but learners do not cooperate. This suggests that some learners lack the culture of learning and inquisitiveness because learners who are curious would be prompted to watch the video to see what is in store for them for the next lesson. On the other hand, the problem might be with the teachers who fail to arouse learners' interest in watching videos. The contents of the videos might also be an issue; teachers might be recording videos that do not interest learners for the sake of keeping them busy watching the video so that in the next lesson, they can engage in classroom activities.

Based on the teachers' commentaries presented above, it is not clear how business studies teachers incorporate the flipped learning teaching method in their classrooms to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills. This might be attributed to the fact that most teachers were not familiar with the flipped learning method. As a result, they do not implement it regularly in their classrooms. Only

Teacher C mentioned that he adopts some elements of the flipped learning method in his classrooms to create a learning environment that supports active participation by learners. From Teacher C's assertions, it can be deduced that flipped learning teaching method has the capability to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills. This is because it promotes active participation of learners during teaching and learning, and critical business skills such as communication, problem-solving, technological, and creative thinking skills can be developed well when learners are actively involved in learning activities.

5.5.6. FIELD TRIP TEACHING METHOD

It was evident from the interviews that teachers stopped using field trips as a teaching method during Covid-19. They all blamed the outbreak of COVID-19 as a cause for them to abandon field trips. Teachers appeared to be more inclined to physical excursions where they had to travel with learners to a certain place as part of the field trip. Hence, the disruption caused by COVID-19 greatly affected them. Teacher' inclination towards physical field trips may be attributed to their experiences in the teaching profession. All teachers who participated in this study joined the teaching profession long before COVID-19 (see section 5.2.2.). As a result, they were exposed to physical field trips for the greater part of their teaching experiences. Even though they can integrate ICTs into their classrooms for teaching purposes, they never thought about conducting virtual field trips to supplement or replace physical field trips. Nevertheless, they sounded familiar with the adoption of field trips as a teaching method in business studies.

Teacher D narrated how she used to adopt field trips in her instructional practices:

I used to do it before COVID-19; I took learners to places like factories to show them how different products are produced. For example, I once took them to the

shoe factory to show them how shoes are made from leather to finished products. I also took them to a shopping centre to show them how different businesses operate.

Teacher D capitalized on the location of her school. As indicated, her school is located next to the rural township (see section 5.1.1). She decided to take learners to local stores in a shopping centre. She indicated that such field trips were aimed at reinforcing the content of business strategies. Some of the strategies that were reinforced are intensive business strategy and diversification business strategy.

*The trip helped learners understand business strategies better because as we were walking around the shopping centre, I showed them marketing strategies used by businesses, which form part of the strategy that we learn in business studies, which is market penetration. I also talked about diversification strategies during the field trip, so it helped learners so much. – **Teacher D***

It can be deduced from Teacher D's commentaries that she found field trips useful in enhancing her instructional practices. She implemented field trips to concretize business studies content that some learners find difficult to comprehend when taught only in textbooks. For example, learners may struggle with understanding and differentiating different business strategies that are taught in Grade 12 because they might be complicated; thus, employing field trips can make this content easy to comprehend.

Teacher A added that there are benefits to engaging learners on field trips in business studies. He alluded that field trips give learners the exposure they need to understand how businesses operate and better understand the content taught.

Some of the learners do not have access to different businesses, so field trips are the only exposure learners get to visit real factories where products are made

from scratch because I am sure most factories will not allow any person to walk in and have a look on what they do so the school makes arrangements and learners get first-hand experience on how the product is made and they can see it for themselves.

Based on Teacher A's response, it is evident that field trips provide learners with a unique chance to visit various businesses to get first-hand experience on how they operate. Beyond observing business operations, learners can get a chance to interact with different people who work in the business, including business owners, managers, and employees of the business. Recognizing such benefits, Teacher F indicated that she is considering bringing back the field trip teaching method in her business studies teaching. She appreciated that since the restrictions of COVID-19 have been lifted, it would be appropriate for her to engage learners in field trips once again. She said:

Yes, definitely, next year I am planning to go back to conducting field trips for my learners.

Teacher E shared similar sentiments; she said she is considering bringing back field trips but mentioned that the great challenge for her in conducting field trips is the disturbance it causes in the school timetable. She said field trips take a lot of time, which affects other teachers' periods. She alluded:

We often find that the curriculum is loaded and there is so much that needs to be covered and you take away from other teachers' time for teaching and they get upset. So, it can be very difficult to do field trips because it impacts other teachers' time and we normally do field trips during the week and most of the weekends here, many shops do not open. Only a few shops open, and they close very early.

It is clear from the teachers' responses that they face some challenges when trying to adopt field trips. To avoid the challenges associated with field trips, teachers reminisced during the interviews on how ICT can be used to replace physical field trips. From their responses, they highlighted some of the business studies content that can be easily reinforced through virtual field trips. For example, Teacher E stated:

I once organized a field trip to two local businesses where I wanted learners to understand the forms of ownership better. Learners engaged with the sole trader and the partners who owned the partnership business. They learnt about how these two kinds of businesses are formed. They noticed some similarities and some differences in there. Maybe I can consider conducting such online because we have the internet. I can connect with the business owners online through video conference and have learners listen and ask questions from the guests.

The view expressed above was also shared by Teacher A, who agreed that such initiatives can even save time and money spent on field trips, but he noted that there are physical learning experiences that online learning experiences cannot replace. He said:

As much as the online field trip is cheap and saves time, but you know, our learners like to go out and watch, talk to people in the business.... That, on its own is a learning experience that you cannot get through the online.

Although Teacher E and Teacher A seemed to be supporting the idea of migrating field trips to online platforms, there were dissenting voices. For example, Teacher B and Teacher F indicated that migrating field trips online is not feasible for them. They cited a lack of internet connectivity in their schools as the potential hindrance to such initiatives.

*Even though we have technological tools in our school, we do not have internet. Doing such things requires internet and data- **Teacher B***

In summary, this sub-theme reported that business studies teachers are familiar with field trips as a teaching method. From their assertions, one may sense that they found the implementation of field trips useful to teach business studies. This is because this method of teaching exposes learners to real businesses and it enables them to interact with business owners. Engaging with business owners may help to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills because they can learn from business owners how the business enterprise is established and sustained. Furthermore, this sub-theme reported that teachers from the schools that have access to the internet see the possibility of migrating some of the learning activities to online platforms, while those in schools that lack internet expressed difficulty with adopting virtual field trips.

In concluding this theme, it is important to note that teachers employ a variety of teaching methods to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills by learners. It is evident from the findings that most teachers adopt teaching methods that are recommended by CAPS for teaching business studies. As teachers were providing accounts of how they employ different teaching methods, it transpired that learning activities that promoted learner-centred activities were implemented in business studies classrooms and this had the potential to create learning environments that support the development of critical business skills among learners. They also indicated that most of the teaching methods they adopt in their classrooms are compatible with ICT integration. It was fascinating to listen to teachers explaining how they implement different teaching methods while integrating ICTs in their classrooms to enhance learners' critical business skills.

Table 5.3. below is a summary of the key findings from interviews that are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

5.5. SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS

Table 5.3.: Summary of the Key Findings from the Interviews

Main themes	Sub-themes	Key findings
Teachers' views on technology integration	• Learner participation • Authentic learning	• ICT integration encourages learners to participate in learning activities. • ICT integration exposes learners to authentic learning activities.
Technology integration to nurture learners' critical business skills	• Communication skills • Creative thinking skills • Problem-solving skills • Entrepreneurial skills • Technological skills	• Teachers rely on WhatsApp to enhance learners' communication skills. • ICTs are integrated to promote novelty and innovation among business studies learners. • Teachers integrate ICTs to expose learners to practical activities to nurture their problem-solving skills. • Teachers encourage learners to use technology to engage in entrepreneurial activities, which has the potential to nurture their entrepreneurial skills. • Teachers enable learners to use different technologies with the aim of nurturing their technological skills.

Teaching methods incorporated by the teachers	• Brainstorming teaching method • Flipped learning method. • Problem-based teaching method • Collaborative learning method	• Business studies teachers adopt brainstorming to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. • Very few teachers adopt the flipped learning teaching method in their classrooms to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills. • Teachers employ problem-based teaching methods to enhance learners' problem-solving skills. • Business studies teachers incorporate collaborative learning to enhance learners' communication skills.
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5.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the presentation of data that was gathered through semi-structured individual interviews. Three main themes emerged from the data analysis process. The first theme was on the views of business studies teachers on ICT integration to nurture learners' critical business skills. The findings indicated that business studies teachers believe that ICT integration promote authentic learning and learner participation, which helps them to easily engage in learning activities that enhance their critical business skills. The second theme alluded to ICT integration by business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills. The findings indicated that teachers integrate different ICTs to equip learners with different critical business skills. The third theme was concerned with teaching methods adopted by teachers in their classrooms to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills by learners. The study found that teachers employ several teaching methods to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills by learners.

The next chapter focuses on the presentation of the findings that were generated through classroom observations.

CHAPTER 6

6. PRESENTATION OF DATA FROM OBSERVATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the findings that were gathered through individual semi-structured interviews with business studies teachers. This chapter presents the findings that were generated through non-participatory classroom observations. Six teachers were observed in their classrooms teaching business studies while integrating different ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. Data presented in this chapter answers the following research questions:

- How do business studies teachers integrate ICT into their instructional practices to equip learners with critical business skills that are required by the contemporary business environment?
- How do business studies teachers integrate ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills that are required by the contemporary business environment?

Two main themes were used to report the findings of the data that was generated through classroom observations. The themes are as follows: Fostering learners' critical business skills and creating a learning environment that promotes the acquisition of critical business skills.

6.2. FOSTERING LEARNERS' CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

This theme reports the findings on how business studies teachers integrated various ICTs to design learning activities that had the potential to nurture learners' critical business skills. Teachers enacted practices are captured in the sub-themes below. The sub-theme was formulated from the five critical business skills that are the focus of this study.

6.2.1. Fostering communication skills in business studies classrooms

It emerged from classroom observations that teachers mainly adopted a collaborative learning method to support learning activities meant to nurture learners' communication skills. Teachers A, B, D and E gave learners classroom activities that required them to collaborate and discuss some aspects of the content during the lesson. For example, in Teachers B and E classrooms, learners were asked to discuss the success/failure factors of a company. The collaborative learning method allowed learners to interact among themselves, either as pairs or in small groups. Engaging in discussions enabled learners to communicate with their peers as they were discussing the success/failure factors of a company.

Furthermore, Teacher D gave learners a class activity to discuss the characteristics of a private company. In addition to the collaborative learning method, she adopted some elements of flipped learning. Learners were provided with educational videos before class time to watch and take some notes. The educational video was shared over the subject's WhatsApp group. Teacher D indicated that she took the video from the *iWhiz* learning educational application. As learners were engaging in class discussions, they were also posing questions to the teacher and their peers to seek clarity on some areas.

The picture below depicts the application called *iWhiz*, which Teacher D uses in her classroom to get educational videos she uses to support her instructional practices.



Image 1: iWhiz learning application used by Teacher D

Below is the excerpt from Teacher D's lesson where she facilitates classroom discussions.

Teacher: Okay, now I want us to speak about the characteristics of a private company. I hope you watched the video I sent to the group yesterday. I will give you 7 minutes to discuss with your friend next to you.... how we see this business as a private company.

Class: (learners voices discussing ...many voices...).

(After 7 minutes, the teacher indicated to learners that the time was up.)

Teacher: People, time is up.... Now tell me what you were discussing. I will choose anyone to stand up and talk to us about your discussions. Ok N ...(calling learner's name), you are the first to talk.

Learner: Okay, mem, we discussed that the name of the company ends with (PTY) LTD....mmmhmm, which means..

Teacher: (interjected)...What does (PTY) LTD stand for?

Learner: Oh it stands for Propriety Limited.

Teacher: What else have you discussed?

Learner: We also said that a private company is managed by a board of directors and is owned by shareholders. Eehhhmmmm.... The private company is a legal entity meaning it is independent from the shareholders. Endeeee...mmmmhmmm it pays tax to SARS.....hmmmmhmm and the private comp.... company has limited liability.

Teacher: Ok, thank you, N..... (calling learner's name)..now, I want us to talk about these characteristics in detail.... I will call your name, you come and you tell us, what does a legal entity mean.....angithi you watched the video?

Class: Yes.

Learner: (Raises the hand)

Teacher: Yes Z... (calling learner's name).

Learner: *I watched the video, and I was confused a little bit; the video said the private company pays a company tax of 28%, but in my notes, it says companies pay 27% ... I am confused.*

Teacher: *Yes, remember the company tax has been revised to 27% and the video was done before the minister of finance's announcement. So, the correct company tax rate is 27%.*

It is clear from this excerpt that accessing learning materials prior to the lesson assisted learners in being prepared for the lessons and the engagements that characterized the lesson. The adoption of flipped learning in Teacher D's classroom helped learners to engage in learning activities that had the potential to enhance their communication skills.

In Teachers C and F's classrooms, learning activities that could have helped to develop learners' communication skills were not explicit. This is because both teachers' instructional approach was teacher-centred, with a lot of activities revolving around the teacher. Teacher C dominated his lesson with a telling method where content notes were depicted in a data projector and the teacher focused on explaining notes to learners. Teacher F also maintained a similar style of teaching as Teacher C, and she projected a PDF document containing notes that were prepared by the Department of Basic Education. Learners communicated only with a teacher when he/she asked questions to check whether they understood the content being delivered.

The image below shows Teacher F introducing the lesson while waiting for an electronic document containing notes to open on the projector behind him.

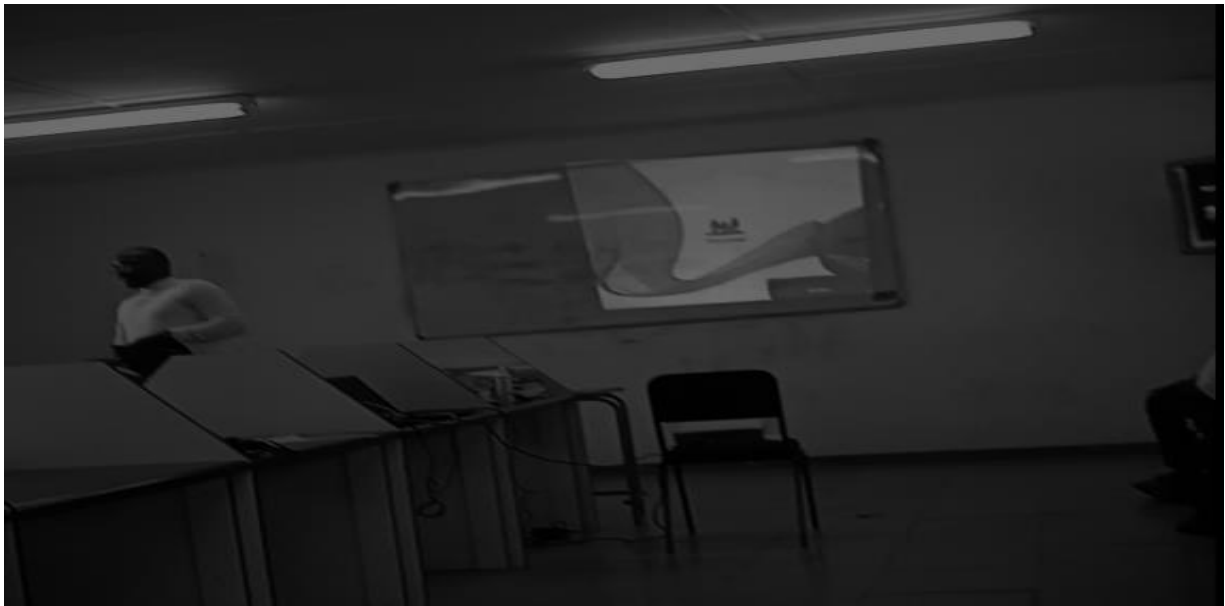


Image 2: Teacher F using the telling method in his classroom

It also transpired during classroom observations that most of the learning activities that had the potential to nurture learners' communication skills required learners to communicate verbally only. In other words, learning activities only promoted learners' verbal communication skills. Only Teacher F gave learners a classroom activity that required them to write. The teacher depicted on a data projector an essay question extracted from the previous question paper where learners were asked to write a report evaluating the private company as a form of ownership. In this essay, learners were asked to assume the role of being business consultants and advise the owners of a partnership who are considering venturing into a private company.

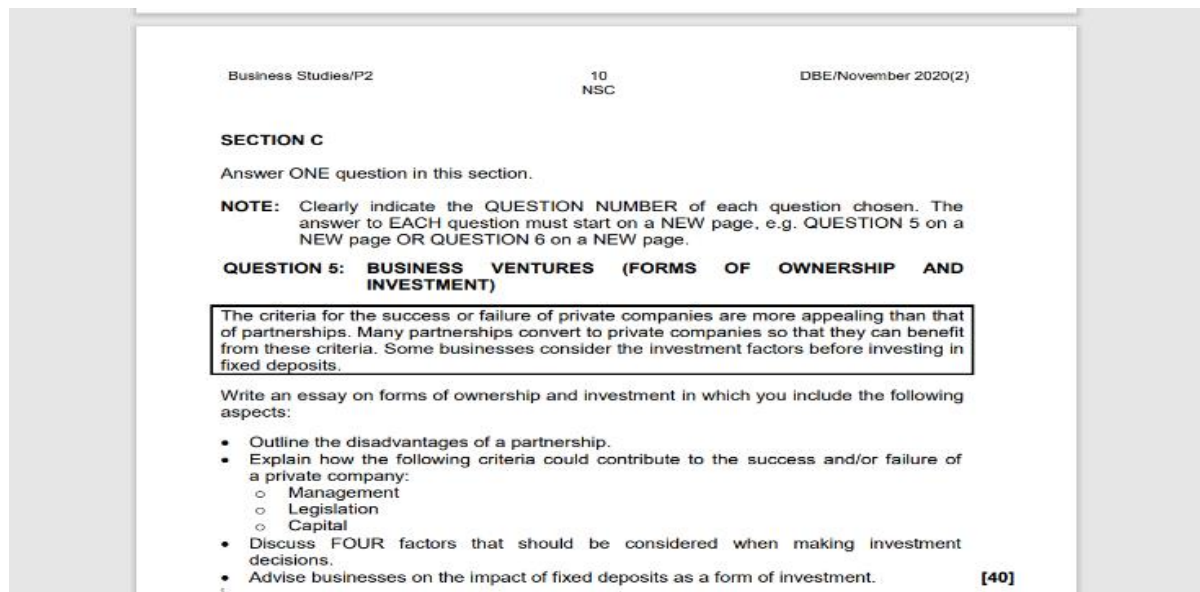


Image 3: Essay question used by Teacher F

It emerged from the classroom observations that the essay question projected by Teacher F on the data projector was unrelated to the lesson's contents. It can be assumed that the teacher extracted the question on the basis that all the questions asked on the essay question are based on the content that has been previously covered in other lessons. This was also evident in learners' reactions as Teacher F was giving them the class activity. Learners seemed to be familiar with the content and they all engaged in the activity.

From the findings presented above, it can be argued that teachers relied on classroom discussions to enhance learners' communication skills within the classroom. The classroom discussions that occurred in the classroom were not supported by technology. The findings of this nature can be expected in the context where teachers mainly rely on WhatsApp to enhance learners' communication skills, as indicated in Chapter 5. This finding implies that teachers who lack advanced technology resources may be deprived of integrating ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' communication skills that are needed by the contemporary business environment.

6.2.2. Fostering creative thinking skills in business studies classrooms

This theme reports how teachers integrated ICTs to equip learners with creative thinking skills. It emerged from the data from classroom observations that most teachers integrated ICTs mainly to depict content, videos and pictures that were meant to stimulate learners' creative thinking skills. For example, during the lesson introduction, Teacher B used a data projector to depict a mind map that contained six success/failure factors of a public company. Based on the diagram depicted on a data projector, she asked learners to think about the success/failure factors of a company. Think-pair-share strategy was adopted during this learning activity because learners had to think individually and share their ideas with their classmates. This learning activity appeared to be suitable to spark creative thinking among learners. This is because learners had to look at the mind-map and discuss how each factor can be a success/failure factor in the company.

From this exercise, some learners were able to successfully discuss the success/failure factors of a public company as a form of ownership. This appeared when they were responding to questions posed by the teacher. On the other hand, some learners struggled to articulate how each factor can be a success/failure factor for the company. Due to the strategy (think-pair-share) adopted by Teacher B, it seemed that some learners were able to correct one another during the process of completing this learning activity. This was observed in learners' facial expressions as they were discussing with their peers seated next to them.

In some instances, the teacher scaffolded learners to arrive at the correct answer by asking leading questions and providing cues. Asking learners leading questions and providing cues appeared to be helpful in facilitating learners' creative thinking because learners had to think in order for them to provide answers to teachers' questions.

The excerpt below is an example of how Teacher B scaffolded some of the learners in her classroom:

Teacher B: *Yes, you are saying capital is a success factor because many people contribute through buying shares, right? And you say the business can raise more money to start its operations.... So, from this, you can give me a failure factor...*

Pair of learners... *(quiet)*

Teacher B: *Think guys...think..... ok I'll come back to you... and you will tell me the failure factor (Teacher B moved to the other pair and came back later)*

Pair of learners: *.....(The learners talked amongst themselves in the absence of the teacher).*

Teacher B: *ya, I am back. Look, L and T (learners' names) did the same factor and they said the public company can raise huge capital and it can use that money to buy assets. So, from this, what can be the failure, may be if the company fail to raise this huge capital we are talking about?*

One learner from the pair: *.....(silence)... ohh Miss, if the company fails to raise enough money, it cannot buy the assets needed.*

Teacher B: *Yes! We say that starting a company needs a huge capital. If the company fails to raise this capital, it means it cannot get enough money to start its operations.*

From this excerpt, it is clear that Teacher B's use of scaffolding helped some learners who seemed to be struggling with the content to arrive at the answer on their own. This is because Teacher B used leading questions to encourage learners to think creatively to arrive at the answer.

Furthermore, Teachers A and E attempted to engage learners in activities that fostered creative thinking. Teacher A depicted a real business problem and asked learners to suggest solutions to the problem. Although this exercise had the potential to promote learners' creative thinking skills, it was hampered by the way the teacher administered it. He used identical business scenarios for both teaching and assessment purposes. The scenario that was used for teaching purposes required similar solutions as the one that was used during the assessment process. As a result, solving a business problem became very simple and easy for many learners. In the end, learners ended up not engaging on creative thinking as per the teacher's idea behind the learning task. On a

positive note, repeating identical business-related scenarios served as a reinforcement to some learners who did not participate in the first activity. This appeared when two learners who seemed to be withdrawn during the first activity started to focus and participated in the second activity.

On the other hand, Teacher E played an educational video before introducing the new content. She then asked learners to identify some of the success/factors of a private company that were contained in the short video. Learners suggested answers and the teacher provided feedback to learners to indicate whether their answers were correct or not. She then clarified learners' misconceptions during the lesson delivery. The only factor that appeared to be a drawback in Teacher E's learning activity was time limitations. She ended up not soliciting other learners' answers due to time constraints.

Teacher E's lesson excerpt:

Teacher E: *Ok, let's watch this video for 5 minutes; as you watch this video, you will tell me what you saw at the end.*

Class: *Silence while watching the video.*

Teacher E: *Ok, Grade 12, the video is over now, so raise your hands and tell me what you saw in the video.*

Learner: *I see managers of the business talking about the problems that are faced by their business.*

Teacher E: *mmmhhh, what are those problems they are discussing?*

Learner: *Loss of profit mem.*

Teacher E: *yes, loss of profit..... because of?*

Class: *murmurings.... (Not clear)*

Teacher E: *one person at a time, please!*

Learner: *Loss of profit because of government taxes.....*

Teacher E: *Good...yes, the managers there are talking about the reduced profit because of the increase in government taxes.... I will write this here (far right of the white board) ... then what else the managers talked about?*

In this excerpt, Teacher E used an educational video as a precursor to the discussions in the classroom. Through the engagements with the learners, the teacher sought to

establish their ability to think creatively as they were recounting what they watched from the educational video. Through posing questions to learners, Teacher E wanted them to creatively relate what they saw in the video and the content she was about to deliver.

In Teacher D's classroom, she asked learners to do short presentations where they recounted what they observed from the educational video that was shared with them. This exercise required learners to use their ability to think creatively to recount the success/failure factors. Some learners provided practical examples as they recounted what they learnt from the educational video. However, the researcher was not sure whether some of the examples were provided in the educational video or notes that were shared with learners prior to class. This is because the teacher provided an educational video extracted from *IWhiz Learning application* where the teacher in the video provided the lesson about the success/failure factors of the company. Although Teacher D replayed the video in the classroom, she jumped to other parts of it; the researcher could not ascertain whether the practical examples were from the educational video or whether learners were able to independently construct their own examples based on what they learnt. Nevertheless, it was interesting to see the teacher posing questions to learners who were doing oral presentations because it prompted learners to think and provide more insights about what they observed from the video.

Furthermore, it was interesting to observe Teacher D asking questions that mainly ranged between middle and higher-order levels. Some of the questions that were asked by Teacher D asked how and why each factor was a success/failure factor for the company. Such questions fostered learners to articulate how, for example, the legislation factor can be a success factor for a public company and how it can also be a failure factor for a company. Although this factor might have been covered in the educational video provided to learners before the lesson, most learners were able to provide different

answers and examples, which is an indication that they were well-versed in the content. Despite some of the learners who seemed to be performing well in their oral presentations, some of the learners struggled with answering questions and Teacher D tried to scaffold them to channel them in the right direction.

For Teacher C and Teacher F, there were very limited instances where ICTs were integrated to support learning activities that had the potential to promote learners' creative thinking skills. Teacher F had a learning activity where learners were required to write an essay based on the content taught. It is the only time that learners had to apply high-order thinking because, according to Bloom's taxonomy, the essay questions were pitched at analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels. By adopting this type of learning activity, the teacher indicated that she was preparing them for the examination. Below is the excerpt from her lesson:

Teacher F: “Grade 12, now I will show you the previous question paper so that you can see how the form of ownership is asked in the examination. I will give you 15 minutes to write this essay quickly because I want you to know how to write an essay”.

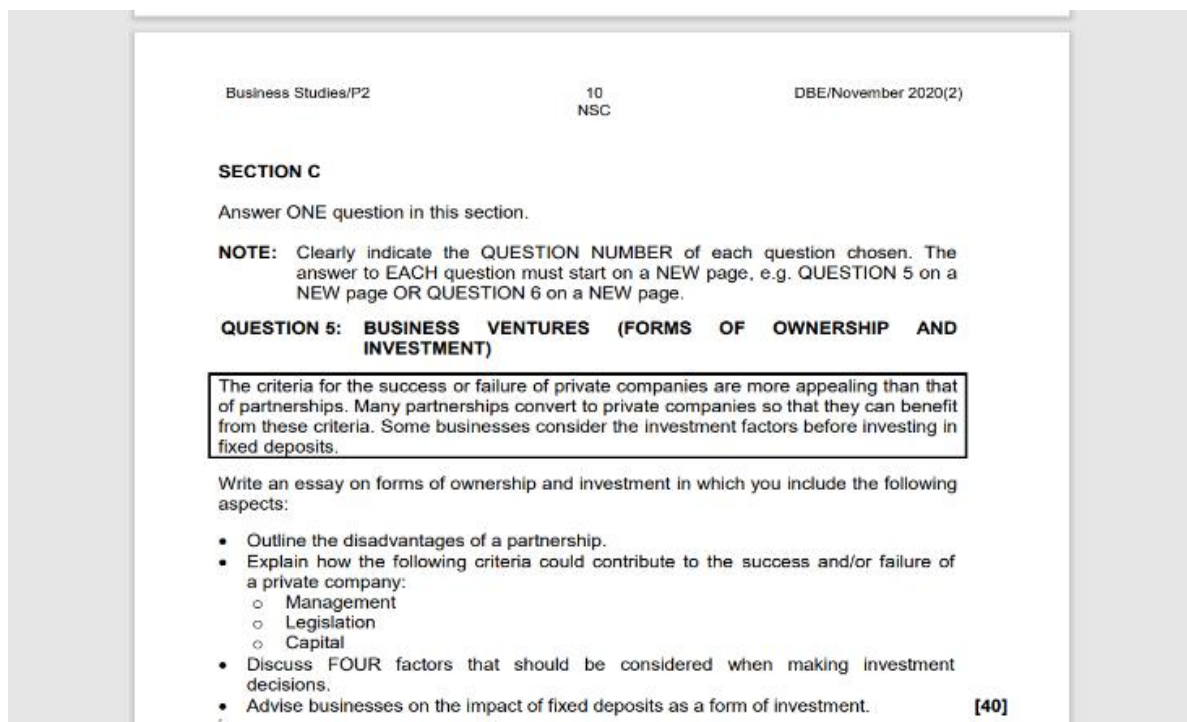


Image 4: Essay question used by Teacher F

The excerpt from Teacher F's lesson shows that more than anything, the teacher wanted to prepare learners for the examination, not basically to equip learners with certain skill (s). Nonetheless, some of the questions contained in the essay question provided by the teacher had the potential to nurture learners' creative thinking skills. The last bullet in the essay question asks learners to *advise a business on the impact of fixed deposits as a form of investment*. This question has the potential to encourage learners to think creatively because when responding to this question, they need to cover both the positive and negative impacts of fixed deposits on the business. Further, learners would be required to apply their analytical skills as they answer the question.

Similarly, Teacher C's lesson was mainly dominated by a teacher-centred approach. The teacher adopted oral assessment through question and answer. His questions posed to learners were aimed at checking learners' understanding of the content taught. Such questions required learners to recall simple facts already taught in the lesson. For example, the teacher asked learners to differentiate between a private company and a public company. Although this was not the main focus of his lesson, he covered this when introducing the lesson. Learners were able to simply indicate that the private company's name ends with (PTY) LTD, while the name of the public company ends with LTD. An exercise of this nature cannot be perceived as a learning activity that had the potential to foster creative thinking among Grade 12 learners. Teacher C did not ask questions related to the content that he covered in the classroom; may be that would have fostered learners to think creatively. He covered the characteristics of a private company. Since his assessment was oral, he should have attempted to ask higher-order questions, such as asking learners to discuss the implications of limited liabilities as a characteristic of a private company for the shareholders of the private company.

Overall, the findings presented in this sub-theme indicate that most business studies teachers integrated ICTs to demonstrate or display learning activities that was meant to stimulate creative thinking among learners. This finding implies that teachers find technology useful in helping them to show educational materials, such as educational videos and pictures, that would be difficult to integrate without integrating ICTs. Nevertheless, restricting ICT integration to depicting and displaying learning materials cannot be perceived as ideal for business studies classrooms. More advanced learning activities should have been conducted through ICT integration, especially since other schools had access to the internet.

6.2.3. Fostering problem-solving skills in business studies classrooms

During classroom observations, it appeared that most participants provided learning activities requiring learners to apply some problem-solving skills. Some of the learning activities required learners to apply problem-solving in a subtle and indirect manner. For example, Teacher F adopted a learning activity where learners were required to write an essay. Below is a picture showing an essay question that was used by Teacher F that had the potential to nurture learners' problem-solving skills.

SECTION C

Answer ONE question in this section.

NOTE: Clearly indicate the QUESTION NUMBER of each question chosen. The answer to EACH question must start on a NEW page, e.g. QUESTION 5 on a NEW page OR QUESTION 6 on a NEW page.

QUESTION 5: BUSINESS VENTURES (FORMS OF OWNERSHIP AND INVESTMENT)

The criteria for the success or failure of private companies are more appealing than that of partnerships. Many partnerships convert to private companies so that they can benefit from these criteria. Some businesses consider the investment factors before investing in fixed deposits.

Write an essay on forms of ownership and investment in which you include the following aspects:

- Outline the disadvantages of a partnership.
- Explain how the following criteria could contribute to the success and/or failure of a private company:
 - Management
 - Legislation
 - Capital
- Discuss FOUR factors that should be considered when making investment decisions.
- Advise businesses on the impact of fixed deposits as a form of investment.

[40]***Image 5: Essay question used by Teacher F***

One of the questions contained in the essay required learners to provide some advice to business partners on whether to venture into a private company or not. One of the aspects that learners had to cover when answering the essay question was to evaluate the success/ failure factors of a private company as a form of ownership. In this activity, learners were not given a clear business-related problem, but to answer the question, they were required to apply their analytical skills. Through this learning activity, learners' problem-solving skills might be enhanced because to provide advice to the potential investor, they need to apply their analytical skills by considering different factors associated with investing in a private company.

In her class, Teacher B adopted a learning activity where the business-related problem was explicit to learners and they were required to engage in a problem-solving process. Through a business-related problem, Teacher B attempted to show learners how taxation, profitability, legislation, and capacity can be a success/ failure factor for a company. Teacher B played an educational video where she depicted a company that

was struggling to generate profit. She then asked learners to discuss what might be the factors that could have led to the company's financial hardships. She also asked learners to suggest solutions to make the company generate profit again. Learners engaged in discussions to suggest solutions and shared their suggestions with the rest of the class. The teacher gave them time to engage in identifying the problem, suggest solutions and choose the best solutions. They then engaged in the problem-solving process collectively as small groups and shared their suggested solutions with the rest of the class. Plausible solutions were then chosen, and the teacher asked learners to determine how each suggested solution could improve the capacity and profitability of the company.

From this, learners' problem-solving skills were likely to be enhanced because the teacher gave them a task to work together to suggest the causes of financial hardships for the company that was depicted in the video. Learners had to engage in critical thinking and relate what they had already learnt in previous lessons to what they saw in the video. This learning activity also allowed learners to solve a problem collectively with their peers, which is a good exercise that is needed in the contemporary business environment.

Furthermore, Teacher A also adopted a similar style where discussions between the teacher and learners dominated the lesson. However, his learning activity which had the potential to foster learners' problem-solving skills was done individually. After teaching new content, Teacher A asked learners to follow the active link to a business-related problem. He then asked learners to engage in suggesting solutions to a business problem. Although the nature of the real business problem had the potential to propel learners to engage in problem-solving process, the task became easy for many learners. This is because the real business problem-solving used as a learning activity was

identical to the real business problem used as an example during the teaching and learning process.

During the lesson, Teacher A used a scenario of a company that polluted land and it was fined R500 000, and learners were given a chance to suggest solutions to the company. Similarly, for assessment of learning purposes, the teacher provided a similar case study; the only difference in the case study used for assessment of learning focused on the company polluting air during the production process. Solutions that were identical to those that were suggested during the lesson were also applicable and relevant to the current scenario. Only two learners came up with a different suggestion by suggesting that *“the company needs to have continuous training to its staff members where they are taught about the importance of abiding by the environmental policies that regulate companies on emissions that pollute the environment”*. Nevertheless, both scenarios used in the lesson had the potential to foster learners’ problem-solving skills and creative thinking skills.

In Teachers C and E's classrooms, some elements of problem-solving were visible but not central. Both teachers used case studies that were contained in the previous question papers to engage learners in problem-solving. Teacher E gave learners three minutes to read a case study and brainstorm for five minutes. The teacher’s instructions were clear to all learners, but many learners failed to engage in problem-solving exercises until the end. This was due to inadequate time Teacher E allocated for the activity. Very few learners managed to suggest solutions as part of the brainstorming session. From the observations, it appeared that Teacher E failed to decide on allocating reasonable time for learners to go through the case study. Given the length of the case study, learners should have been given more time to read. Also, the kind of learning environment where the lesson took place was not conducive for all learners to easily see

the texts from the PDF that was projected by Teacher E on the overhead projector. Nevertheless, the teacher was able to facilitate a brainstorming session despite the time constraints she faced since this learning activity happened towards the end of the lesson. Furthermore, in Teacher D's classroom, more than one case study that required learners to engage in problem-solving was used. The teacher facilitated learners' discussions as they were engaging in problem-solving, but, in some cases, Teacher D's lesson nearly degenerated because of her poor handling when facilitating class discussions and problem-solving processes. This might be due to the strategy adopted by the teacher where all learning activities required learners to solve business-related problems in pairs or as the whole class. In some instances, this ended up causing chaos in the class and it became difficult for some learners to actively engage in the problem-solving process. Only those outspoken learners ended up participating in problem-solving and provided some solutions.

From this, it is clear that Teacher D wanted to expose learners to different business-related problems through short case studies that covered different success/failure factors of a private company. Although this was somehow a commendable idea, the teacher failed to allocate enough time for learners to read, critically analyse and recommend solutions to each business-related problem presented through case studies. The issue of limited time was also compounded by the fact that the teacher adopted a collaborative problem-solving approach in all the scenarios. As a result, most learners ended up not participating effectively in problem-solving because the teacher focused on a few pairs or groups that could quickly read each case study, think about the possible answers and raise their hands. After a few groups suggested the solutions to the business-related problem, the teacher would just recite the solution suggested by learners for the whole class to hear and go on to the next scenario. She did not ascertain

from the class whether all learners understood what was taught through a certain scenario, and this could leave some learners behind and the atmosphere in the class seemed to be not conducive for them to stop the teacher and seek clarity.

Based on the findings presented above, implications can be drawn in relation to the teaching of business studies while integrating ICTs to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. Firstly, it can be deduced from the findings that most business studies teachers understand learning activities that help to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. They also understand different ICTs that can be used to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. However, some teachers still find it difficult to strike a balance between time allocated for teaching and adopting different tasks that support learners' problem-solving skills. From this, it can be concluded that most teachers appreciated and applied different activities that enhance learners' problem-solving skills.

6.2.4. Fostering entrepreneurial skills in business studies classrooms

This theme reports the findings obtained through classroom observations where business studies teachers were observed how they integrated ICTs to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills. As mentioned in Chapter 2, entrepreneurial skills required by the contemporary business environment are not only limited to individuals gaining skills to establish a business venture. The entrepreneurial skills required by the contemporary business environment involve comprehensive, nuanced, and soft skills. Therefore, classroom observations focused on examining teachers' integration of ICTs to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills comprehensively. As a result, learning activities that promoted some qualities of an entrepreneur were observed.

During classroom observations, it appeared that some of the learning activities employed by teachers had the potential to promote and instil a sense of invention among learners. For example, activities that fostered learners to suggest solutions to a business-related

problem employed by Teachers A promoted learners' ability to be innovative. As learners were proposing solutions, one could tell that some of the suggestions were well thought by learners, and they showed some degree of innovation from them. Teacher A continuously encouraged learners to generate more solutions to a given business-related problem. Although this proved to be an effective learning activity that had the potential to develop learners' innovative thinking, the activity was limited to a few learners. Teacher A focused on those learners who raised their hands and some who did not raise their hands were not persuaded to hear their suggested solutions.

Excerpt from Teacher A's lesson:

Teacher A: *OK guys, since you have read the scenario, tell me what the solutions to the problem faced by the business can be.... raise your hands, please...*

Learner: *OK, sir, the business has polluted the environment and it is taken to court and it is facing the problem of being fined R 500 000.*

Teacher A: *Yes, so how can the business resolve this problem?*

Learner: *the business should pay the money and avoid polluting the environment...*

Teacher A: *Yes, what others are saying.... how can the business avoid polluting land and the fines? Yes Z.... (Calling learners 'name)*

Learner: *The business should use environmentally friendly materials when producing the product and try to recycle their waste products.*

Teacher A: *Yes, good omunye futhi.... Khuluma Nt (calling learners' surname)*

Learner: *Yes, meneer, the business must have CSR programmes to clean the environment.*

Teacher A: *very good to those who have given us answers; due to time, I want us to move on.....*

From Teacher A's lesson excerpt above, it is clear that the teacher pushed learners to think about more ways the business can deal with environmental issues and avoid being fined in future. Encouraging learners to come up with more solutions to a problem ended up enabling them to link different content taught in business studies. For example, the suggestion provided by one learner for the business to offer Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes that are aimed at conserving nature showed that the learner was able to use the knowledge gained from the chapter learnt previously and

apply it in a different chapter. Such learning experiences can only be possible if the learning context allows learners to actively participate in learning activities like in Teacher A's lesson.

Teacher B also adopted learning activities that had the potential to develop learners' ability to make decisions. The nominal group technique was adopted to solve business-related problems. As part of the nominal group technique process, learners had a chance to decide on a suitable solution to a business problem. Through this exercise, learners were able to reach a consensus on a suitable solution to be used to resolve a business-related problem. Teacher B was able to facilitate the process of using the nominal group technique to solve a business-related problem. She allowed learners to actively participate in the process and provided various solutions to a business-related problem and some were eliminated and the whole class ended up reaching a consensus on one solution that was deemed to be plausible.

From this, it is clear that Teacher B wanted to teach learners decision-making process in the business through this learning activity. During the process, the teacher kept encouraging learners to suggest solutions and later, towards the end of the problem-solving process, indicated that learners needed to agree to one solution. Although Teacher B did not explicitly explain to learners why other solutions were eliminated, learners appeared familiar with the nominal group technique. This learning activity had the potential to reinforce learners' ability to solve a problem collectively and reach a consensus on a particular solution to a problem. For business studies learners, this is an ability that they need to develop as potential entrepreneurs while at school. This is because upon joining the contemporary business environment as entrepreneurs, learners will need to engage in problem-solving with different people and they will need to reach a consensus on a particular business-related problem.

Furthermore, the adoption of classroom discussions in Teacher D and E's classrooms exposed learners to learning activities that had the potential to enhance their inner discipline. This is because, during discussions, learners were fostered to tolerate their counterparts' differing views and counter arguments. Teacher D encouraged learners not to laugh at each other's contributions (ideas) during classroom discussions but to embrace and learn from each other. Teacher E also emphasized that learners should respect each other's views during discussions. The indication that learners respected and embraced each other's views was noticed during classroom presentations in Teacher E's classroom. The class remained intact and well-behaved during oral presentations and learners expressed their differing views when the chance was given to them by Teacher E.

Teacher D and Teacher E's reinforcement of inner discipline among learners during learning activities was commendable. This is because inner discipline is one of the useful qualities of an entrepreneur that needs to be nurtured during learners' early stages of life. As future entrepreneurs, business studies learners would be interacting with different stakeholders in their line of work who will be coming up with different ideas from them. Due to this, learners, as future entrepreneurs, need to develop inner discipline in order to effectively deal with people with different views so they can be successful entrepreneurs.

From this section, it is important to underscore that it was difficult to directly link the integration of ICTs in business studies classrooms to the learning activities that had the potential to promote entrepreneurial skills. This might be due to the soft nature of entrepreneurial skills (qualities) that the researcher focused on during classroom observations. Nevertheless, the learning activities that were incorporated by the teachers had the potential to enhance learners' entrepreneurship skills in their lessons.

6.2.5. Fostering technological skills in business studies classrooms

This sub-theme reports on what transpired in business studies classrooms as teachers were integrating ICTs to equip learners with technological skills. It transpired that some teachers involved learners in using ICTs, while in other classes, the use of ICTs was limited to teachers. Teachers A, B, D, and E allowed learners to use technology in different phases of their lessons. Teacher A allowed learners to use desktops to access a case study that was used to assess them. Although Teacher A allowed learners to utilize ICTs during the lesson, the use of ICTs was more linear and minimal. Learners followed the link that was embedded in an electronic Word document containing notes and they accessed the link, read the case study, and engaged in classroom discussions. Learning activities that transpired after reading a case study were performed without much use of ICT.

From Teacher A's instruction to learners, it was obvious that the teacher wanted learners to use desktops for one thing, which was to read the case study. He said, *"You see, at the bottom of the page, there is a link; you will click on it and the case study will appear. You will read the case study and then you will tell us what happened in the business and what solutions the business can take to avoid the same problem in the future"*. Most learners did as per the teacher's instructions and read the case study. However, some learners changed windows on a desktop after reading the case study and opening other files saved on a laptop. This was heard as the teacher reprimanded them while walking around the classroom monitoring the reading session. It was an interesting act for those learners because it showed that they were willing to explore ICTs at their disposal, but the teacher limited them to only reading the case study.

This observation from Teacher A's classroom was interesting because it appeared that the teacher wanted to limit learners to using ICTs only to read the case study. On the

other hand, learners were willing to explore ICTs even further. This finding implies that Teacher A viewed learners as individuals who can only use ICT in a linear manner, whereas learners were willing to explore more functionalities of the media integrated to support their learning. Having learners explore more computer functionalities was something to be expected by the teacher because learners who do business studies in his school also do Computer Applications Technology (CAT), so they are familiar with using different technology functionalities. Instead, Teacher A should have capitalized on learners' technological skills to encourage them to use desktops not only to read the scenario but also to engage in other activities, such as writing the solutions using the computer.

Similarly, Teacher B and Teacher E allowed learners to use ICTs in their classrooms during oral presentations. In Teacher B's classroom, learners were using a data projector and an Interactive whiteboard to support their oral presentations. Some of the learners that were presenting were using IWB to write certain points with the aim of emphasizing those points. In Teacher E's classroom, learners used data projectors and a manual whiteboard to write some notes while presenting. It was noticed from Teacher B and E's classrooms that not all learners who were presenting were keen to use ICTs in their oral presentations. Some learners relied on their handwritten discussion points to engage in oral presentations. In Teacher D's classroom, learners were allowed to use desktop computers and their cell phones during the lesson. Some learners used their cell phones to watch the educational video shared by the teacher prior to the class and the video was meant to be watched by learners at home in preparation for the lesson. The use of cell phones and desktops in Teacher D's classroom was not uniform among learners, as some of the learners chose to stick to their printed notes during the lesson.

The pictures below depict learners from Teacher B and D's classrooms using laptops during teaching and learning.

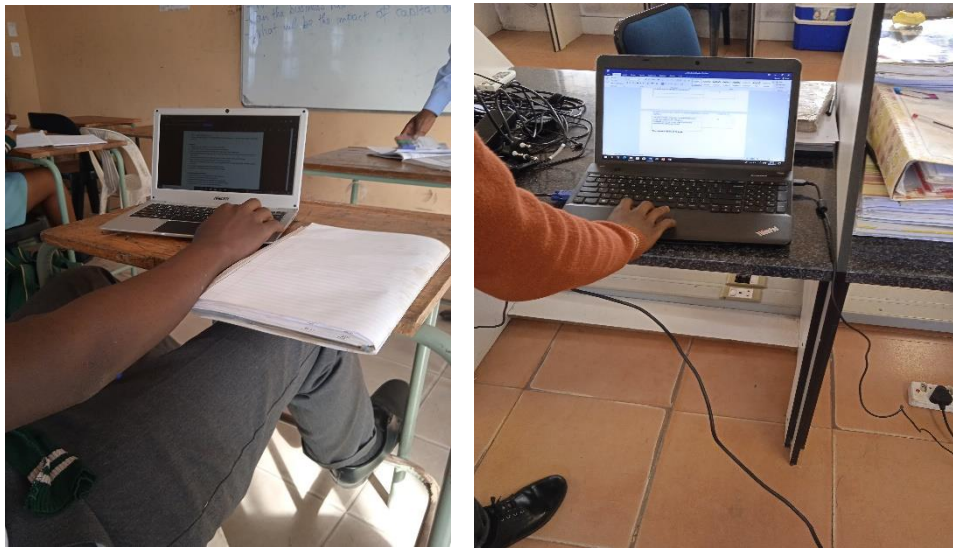


Image 6: Learners using ICTs in Teachers B & D's classroom

The two pictures above show learners from Teachers B and D's classrooms using ICTs during the lesson. Some learners used ICTs to access case studies, while others used them to support their oral presentations. Although learners were allowed to use ICTs, teachers seemed to be withdrawing from helping learners use technology effectively. For example, in Teacher A's classroom, he was not actively involved in helping learners to navigate ICTs they were using. This was a similar case with Teachers B and D, where they took a backseat as learners were using ICTs. As stated above, some learners chose not to use ICTs in their oral presentations and this might be because they were reluctant to try out technology and were not sure how to use it to present information. Nevertheless, it is important to indicate that those learners who opted to use technology did not encounter any challenges accessing case studies and doing their oral presentations. Similarly, learners who opted not to use technology to support their learning activities were able to present their work in the same way as those who used technology. The only difference was that those who used technology had the liberty to

manipulate fonts and other functions as they were presenting, especially in Teacher B's classroom.

In Teacher C and Teacher F's classrooms, there was no use of ICTs by learners. Only teachers had the liberty to utilize them throughout the lesson. This is despite Teacher F teaching in a classroom that was fitted with computers. The picture below shows the classroom where Teacher F taught his lesson.

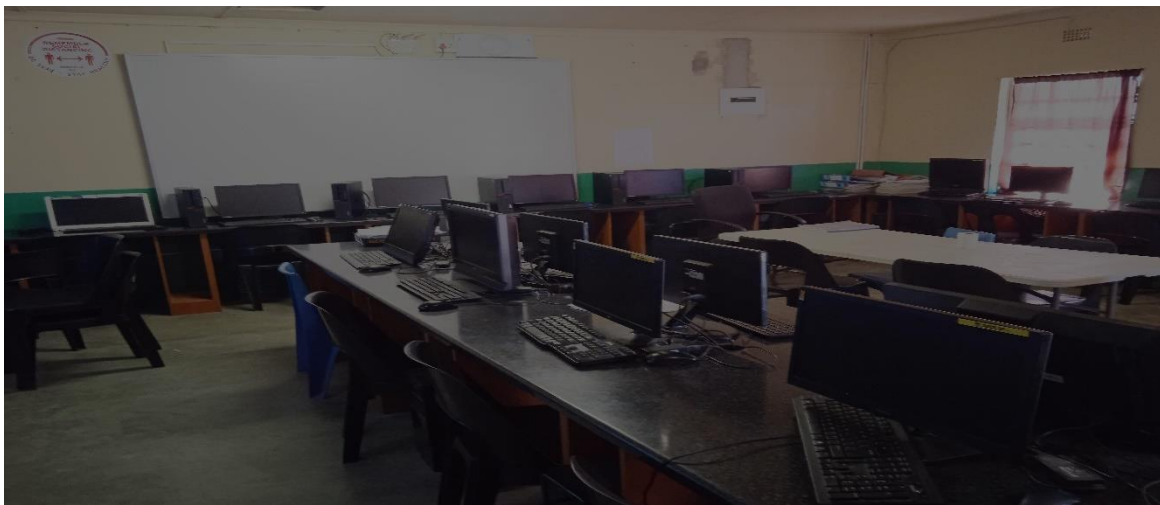


Image 7: Teacher F's classroom fitted with ICTs

ICTs that were in Teacher F's classroom were switched off while the teacher was teaching. This is despite the content taught by Teacher F was amenable to ICT integration. Like Teachers A, B, D and E, Teacher F should have incorporated learning activities that would allow learners to utilize ICTs to complete learning activities. This is because the ICTs fitted in his classroom were enough to accommodate all learners. Even when projecting learning activities contained in previous question papers, the teacher relied on his laptop and projector instead of allowing learners to view the questions on computers in front of them.

Furthermore, in Teacher C's school, business studies is taught in a traditional classroom fitted with a non-interactive whiteboard. Teacher C came in with the laptop and the

projector to the classroom. Learners were seated at desks with exercise books where they were writing notes and class activities. The teacher mainly used ICTs to depict notes and the previous question paper that contained learning activities that were meant to assess learners' understanding during the lesson. Although Teacher C taught in a classroom that was not fitted with ICTs, he should have made strides to allow learners to use technology to expose them to the actual use of ICTs.

From the data presented above, it is clear that Teachers C and F did not attempt to expose learners to the actual use of ICTs in their lessons. The teachers' failure to allow learners to make use of ICTs in their lessons might be the result of the teaching approach they adopted in their lessons, which was teacher-centred. It was clear from the observations that all the learning activities that were planned by both teachers to be incorporated into their lessons were predetermined to be led and controlled by the teacher. Excluding learners from using actual ICTs may deprive them of acquiring the technological skills that are needed in the contemporary business environment. This is because as learners engage in actual use of ICTs to support their learning, they are able to put their technological skills into practice and the teacher is able to guide them to develop technological skills that are needed by the contemporary business environment.

Overall, the findings presented in this sub-theme indicated that some teachers were willing to expose learners to ICTs to support their learning activities. On the other hand, there were those few teachers who limited the use of ICTs to themselves. Limiting the use of ICTs to the teacher cannot be deemed as ideal for learners to acquire technological skills because for learners to acquire technological skills, they need to be actively engaged in the use of actual ICTs. The study also revealed that teachers who allowed learners to make use of ICTs to perform certain learning activities took a backseat when learners were using ICTs. This might be due to the fact that teachers

believed that learners have prerequisite skills to operate different ICTs since they do business studies with CAT and IT. Arguably, technological skills learnt from CAT/ IT cannot be deemed adequate for business studies learners performing business-related tasks through technology. As a result, business studies teachers still have a responsibility to guide learners as they integrate ICTs to nurture the technological skills that are needed by learners to effectively operate in the contemporary business environment.

In concluding this theme, the findings from classroom observations have revealed different findings in relation to teachers' ICT integration practices to nurture learners' critical business skills. Generally, the findings indicate that business studies teachers integrated different ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. This is an indication that most teachers see the value of integrating different ICTs in business studies classrooms to equip them with critical business skills. These findings also show that business studies teachers recognise that they have to produce learners who have the skills to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment.

In spite of this, some inconsistencies in teachers' practices emerged during classroom observations. The study found that some teachers still rely on learning activities that are not supported by technology to nurture learners' critical business skills. Furthermore, some teachers limited the use of ICTs to themselves, and learners were not allowed to use ICTs to perform some of the learning activities. This finding suggests that teachers who did not allow learners to use ICTs lack an understanding of the impact the use of actual ICTs by learners can have to their technological skills.

The next theme reports on teachers' abilities to adopt learner-centred teaching methods and ICTs to create a conducive learning environment for the acquisition of critical business skills. The researcher is of the view that the context where critical business

skills are taught or nurtured may influence learners' acquisition of the skills. Hence, classroom observations also focused on the context where critical business skills were taught.

6.3. CREATION OF A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THAT PROMOTES THE ACQUISITION OF CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

Five principles of Social Constructivism Theory were used to formulate the sub-themes that were used to report the findings below. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Social Constructivism theorists advocate for a learning environment where learners are at the centre of learning activities. They also believe that learners should collaboratively construct knowledge with their peers under the guidance of a knowledgeable individual. Therefore, the researcher is of the view that for critical business skills to be meaningfully acquired by business studies learners, the learning context should reflect the elements of Social Constructivism Theory. Hence, he adopted five key principles of Social Constructivism Theory to report the findings that focus on the creation of learning environments that promoted the acquisition of critical business skills.

6.3.1. Learning environment that promotes collaboration

This sub-theme reports on the findings that focus on teachers' creation of a learning environment that promotes collaboration among learners. This is because some critical business skills can be taught well when there is collaboration among learners. Critical business skills such as communication, problem-solving, and creative thinking skills can be taught well in a context that is characterized by collaboration among learners. The researcher, therefore, observed how teachers created learning environments that fostered collaboration among learners in their classrooms. It emerged during classroom observations that teachers employed various methods of teaching to promote

The only teacher who attempted to create a learning environment that had the potential to promote creative thinking among learners was Teacher A. During discussions, he gave learners a real business problem to solve as a class. Although Teacher A used this learning activity as a way of reinforcing the content he was teaching, a learning activity of this nature had the potential to foster learners to engage in a creative thinking process. In Teachers B and E's classrooms, learning activities that were employed in conjunction with collaborative learning methods seemed not to be promoting creative thinking among learners. For example, Teacher B provided learners with a real business problem to discuss and come up with solutions. Most of the solutions were readily available in textbooks and most of the learners did not spend much time thinking about the solutions to a business problem. Similarly, Teacher D and Teacher E used educational videos where learners' discussions were based. The solutions to the problem presented through the educational videos were accessible to learners through textbooks and notes prepared by the KZN DoE.

It also transpired from the classroom observations that very few teachers managed to create learning environments that fostered learners to solve business-related problems collaboratively. Even though the collaborative learning method enabled learners to work together, some teachers did not provide learners with business-related problems to solve collaboratively. For example, teachers such as Teacher A and Teacher F created a learning environment that fostered learners to solve business-related problems individually. Also, Teacher D and Teacher E's lessons did not feature much of learning activities that promoted collaborative problem-solving by learners. Teacher B was the only participant who created a learning environment that promoted collaborative problem-solving by learners. After playing an educational video containing a business-related problem, Teacher B asked learners to work together to solve the business-related problem.

Judging from the picture painted in the preceding paragraphs, one may infer that some teachers attempted to create learning environments that fostered learners to work collaboratively to engage in learning activities. The collaborative learning method was a common method of teaching that was adopted by teachers to create a learning environment that fostered collaboration among learners. Some of the teachers capitalised on the affordances of collaborative learning to easily enable collaboration among learners. The findings further revealed that not all teachers succeeded in creating conducive learning environments that allowed the acquisition of certain critical business skills, despite them adopting collaborative learning methods of teaching. The findings indicate that in some classrooms, there were very few elements of learning activities that fostered collaboration among learners, and this hampered learners' participation in certain learning activities collaboratively to acquire certain critical business skills.

6.3.2. Learning environment that promotes interaction among learners

Interaction among learners during the teaching and learning process is among the key elements that need to be ensured by teachers to ensure learners' acquisition of certain critical business skills. Critical business skills such as communication skills and entrepreneurial skills can be nurtured when interaction is promoted in the learning context. Teachers who participated in the study endeavoured to create learning environments that promoted interactions. Collaborative learning method and question and answer method of teaching were popular teaching methods that were used by the teachers to encourage interaction. Teacher A employed both the question-and-answer method of teaching and the collaborative learning method to create a learning environment that promoted interaction among learners. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher adopted the question and answer method to promote interaction. It was also

noticed during observations that the interaction was confined to the teacher and learners willing to answer the questions.

Similarly, Teacher C adopted the question-and-answer method in his classroom. Although the interaction was visible, the environment created through the question-and-answer method was not ideal for effective interaction and subsequently, the acquisition of critical business skills. This is because most of the interactions in the classroom were linear and direct between the teacher and individual learners responding to questions asked by him. As a result, it was difficult to conclude that the interactions in Teachers A and C's classrooms could promote communication and entrepreneurial skills.

The image below shows Teacher C standing in front of the classroom, posing questions to learners.

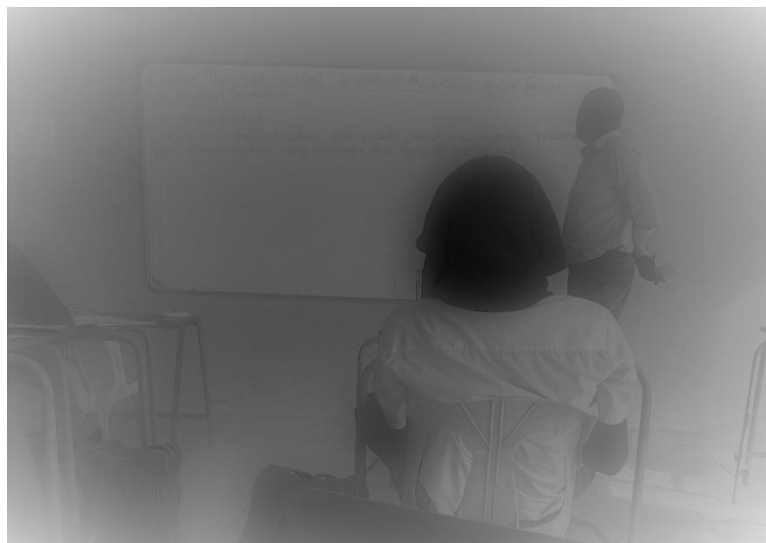


Image 9: Teacher C using the question-and-answer method.

The picture above shows Teacher C standing in front of the class, posing questions to learners. As learners were responding to questions asked, the teacher wrote those answers on the whiteboard. In some instances, Teacher C would give more explanations of the content from the answer provided by the learner. In some cases, he asked clarity-seeking questions, which allowed learners to have more interactions with the teacher.

As the teacher asked more questions, learners got a chance to show their communication skills in a formal way during their interactions with the teacher. Despite this, the interactions that were visible in the classroom remained linear and the interactions among learners themselves were limited.

Teachers who managed to create conducive learning contexts for the advancement of learners' critical business skills through interactions were Teachers B, D and E. All three teachers employed collaborative learning method to promote interactions among learners. In all three classrooms (Teachers B, D and E's classrooms), interactions among learners were visible. Teacher B also ensured interaction among learners by moving around the class to ensure that learners were interacting with their peers. As a result, the learning context that was conducive for communication skills to be nurtured through interactions was created.

Teacher B also employed collaborative learning method to create a learning environment that had the potential to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills. She engaged learners in learning activities that promoted interaction among themselves and these learning activities had the potential to enhance learners' entrepreneurial skills. This is because she gave learners real business problems to solve in groups. As they were solving the problem, learners came up with innovative solutions to problems. During problem-solving, learners' inner discipline was also enhanced. This is due to Teacher B's explicit actions when she encouraged learners to embrace each other's different viewpoints, emphasizing each learner should focus on learning from their peers.

Furthermore, in Teacher D and Teacher E's classrooms, the learning activities meant to foster learners' entrepreneurial skills were not plausible enough. This is because most of the learning activities were not challenging to learners. As a result, there was no need for learners to engage in any innovation, invention, and decision-making. The only

entrepreneurial element that was visible in Teachers D and E's classrooms was the development of inner discipline. This was because of the nature of discussions and interactions that took place among learners. The discussions and interactions required learners to maintain inner discipline and embrace different views expressed by their peers.

Overall, it can be concluded from the discussions above that most teachers adopted collaborative learning methods to create a learning environment that supported interactions among learners. From such learning environments, it was envisaged that learners' communication skills and entrepreneurial skills would be enhanced. However, the study discovered some inconsistencies in different classrooms, where some of the teachers were able to create learning environments that promoted interactions, which subsequently had the potential to nurture learners' critical business skills. On the other hand, some teachers did not manage to create learning environments that promoted interactions to foster skills such as entrepreneurial skills. From these findings, it can be insinuated that some teachers are still struggling to capitalize on the capabilities of interaction to nurture learners' critical business skills.

6.3.3. Learning environment that promotes active learning

For meaningful acquisition of critical business skills to take place in business studies classrooms, learners need to be actively involved in learning activities. Critical business skills such as problem-solving, creative thinking, communication and technological skills can be nurtured well in the learning context that is characterized by active learning. Hence, business studies teachers should incorporate learning activities that foster active learning to nurture learners' critical business skills. During lesson observations, it transpired that there were very few learning activities in some of the classrooms that promoted active learning among learners. The lack of learning activities that had the

potential to promote active learning was visible in Teacher C's classroom. This is because Teacher C adopted a direct teaching method, which did not create a conducive learning environment for learners to actively engage in learning activities. The adoption of a teacher-centred approach deprived learners of an opportunity to engage in activities that had the potential to nurture their critical business skills.

It was evident from classroom observations that Teacher C dominated the learning activities that took place in the classroom. The only way active learning was enforced in Teacher C's classroom was through the question-and-answer method. In other words, learners actively participated in the lesson by responding to questions that the teacher asked. This could not be deemed as plausible for business studies learners to acquire critical business skills. This is because the acquisition of critical business skills needs well-coordinated learning activities that would foster active learning, subsequently resulting in skills acquisition. For example, teachers such as Teachers A, B, D and E managed to incorporate learning activities that fostered active learning in their classrooms, and this had the potential to nurture learners' critical business skills.

Teachers A, B, D and E made strides to create learning environments that enabled learners' technological skills to be nurtured. They allowed and encouraged learners to make use of different technological tools to perform different learning activities. Although Teachers A, B, D and E attempted to create learning environments that had the potential to promote the acquisition of some critical business skills, the level of learner's active involvement in the learning process differed from teacher to teacher. For example, Teachers A, B and E encouraged learners to use technological tools towards the end of the lesson. During the lesson, learners engaged in learning activities without using any form of technology. Learners in Teacher D's classroom used ICTs for the larger part of

the lesson. This means learners' exposure to ICTs was not equal among some classrooms that were observed.

Pertaining to the creation of a conducive learning environment for the development of communication skills, Teacher E and Teacher F seemed to be leading. Teacher E allowed learners to actively engage in learning activities that had the potential to nurture their communication skills. Learners engaged in classroom discussions and the learning environment allowed learners to engage with one another. She encouraged learners to use acceptable business registers (language) when dealing with business-related presentations. The excerpt below is an example of Teacher E's emphasis on an acceptable register to communicate business information:

Learner: *"The managers of a private company can decide to expand the business or buy more things with the profit of the business. Hence, this can be a success factor."*

Teacher E: *"No S... (name of the learners) ... we don't say managers of the business, but we call them the directors of a company and what they buy is not "things" but the assets of the company. So, start afresh that point and say it correctly".*

Learner: *Yes, mem, the directors can decide to expand the business and buy more assets with the profit made by the business. Hence, this is a success factor".*

Teaching learners the correct business register was possible because of the learning environment created by Teacher E that promoted active learning in the classroom. If learners did not actively participate in the learning activities, it was going to be difficult for Teacher E to provide learners with the correct register to be used in the business studies context. Furthermore, Teacher F also created a conducive learning environment for learners' communication skills to be nurtured by designing learning activities that allowed learners to practice communication skills required in business. She gave learners a task to write a report evaluating private companies as a form of ownership. A learning activity of this nature had the potential to nurture learners' written communication skills that are required by contemporary businesses.

Based on the findings presented above, it appeared that most of the teachers attempted to create a learning environment that promoted active learning by designing learning activities that fostered learners to actively engage in the learning process. Learning tasks devised by the teachers had the potential to develop learners' critical business skills, such as communication skills and technological skills. The next section reports on the findings that focus on teachers' creation of learning environments underpinned by autonomous learning to advance learners' critical business skills.

6.3.4. Learning environment that promotes autonomous learning

Autonomous learning does not only happen when learners are learning in isolation but also during interactions with their peers (Raya & Lamb, 2008). Interactions among learners were a prominent feature in most classrooms that were observed during the study. This is because many teachers have adopted collaborative learning method of teaching in their classrooms. As a result, the environment that teachers created was dominated by learners working together to engage in different learning activities. Despite this, the elements of autonomous learning among the learners were lacking in different classrooms. In most classrooms, teachers continuously interfered with learners' work, such as classroom discussions. Most teachers cited time constraints as their reasons for imposing time limitations on certain learning activities. For example, in Teacher A's lesson, the learning activity that was supposed to strengthen learners' autonomous learning, where they had to engage in a deep thinking process to resolve a business-related problem, not all learners got a chance to put forward their ideas.

Also, in Teacher B and Teacher E's classrooms, where learners engaged in pair and group discussions, the learning activity could have advanced learners' autonomous learning. However, the learning activity was stifled by time constraints. In Teacher B's classroom, some pairs ended up not sharing their ideas with the rest of the class, while

in Teacher E's classroom, one member was given a chance to represent the contributions (ideas) of the group. Teacher B and Teacher E continuously interfered with learners during discussions to speed up the discussion process because of time limitations. This not only hampered learners from working autonomously during discussions, but it also robbed learners from learning from their peers. To speed up the completion of learning activities where learners were supposed to work independently, Teacher C in his classroom ended up providing answers to learners so they could finish the learning activity.

The only classroom where conducive learning environment for learners to act autonomously was in Teacher D's classroom. The teacher created a learning environment that allowed learners to complete tasks autonomously under her guidance. She gave learners space to compare, explore, criticize, analyze, and check the new content they were learning. Although Teacher D's lesson was allocated 60 minutes like other teachers' lessons, she managed to design learning activities that enabled learners to engage in autonomous learning. This might be because most of the learning activities related to knowledge acquisition were done outside the classroom, leaving more time for the teacher to devise more learner-centred learning activities.

Furthermore, in Teacher F's classroom, the major learning activity that had the potential to reinforce learners' autonomous learning was done individually. Teacher F gave learners a task to write an evaluative report (essay) where they were supposed to evaluate a private company as a form of ownership. The teacher monitored learners as they were engaging in completing the activity. However, like in other lessons, the time was insufficient for learners to complete the learning activity. Very few learners indicated that they had finished writing and the teacher instructed them to submit their work to her. The lesson ended without some learners' work being assessed by the teacher.

The findings above indicate that very few teachers managed to create an environment promoting autonomous learning. Even though some attempted to adopt teaching methods that had the potential to enable learners to work autonomously, the time factor hampered their strides to meaningfully engage learners in autonomous learning. The failure to engage learners in meaningful autonomous learning robbed learners of opportunities to enhance some of their critical business skills. Critical business skills such as creative thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills will likely be enhanced through learning activities that learners have to engage in autonomously.

6.3.5. Learning environment that promotes authentic learning

As mentioned in the preceding sections, business studies as a subject is meant to prepare learners for the world of work. Therefore, one may expect that business studies learners be taught in a learning context that is characterized by learning activities that promote authentic learning. With the ICT that were integrated into classrooms that were observed, this expectation was emboldened even more. In accordance with these expectations, when conducting classroom observations, the researcher expected to see teachers creating learning environments that favoured more authentic learning activities. However, it transpired during observations that authentic learning activities were very limited. Although the participants integrated ICTs in their classrooms, but they did not capitalize on the capacity of ICT to expose learners to authentic learning activities.

Some teachers relied on case studies to create learning environments that were meant to foster authentic learning among learners. Teachers such as Teachers A, B, D, E and F depicted real business case studies and in most cases, learning activities were based on the case studies projected by the teachers. Similarly, Teacher B and Teacher E played educational videos that served as real business case studies to expose learners to authentic business environments. Teacher D indicated during interviews that they

integrate ICTs to design learning activities that expose learners to authentic learning. However, this was not seen in her classroom during the observations. This was despite the content that was taught by Teacher D's amenability to authentic learning. With the assistance of ICT, Teacher D would have easily designed deep authentic learning activities. Similarly, Teacher B and Teacher E's content was also amenable to authentic learning, but they did not create learning environments that supported authentic learning. The integration of ICTs in business studies classrooms would have helped teachers devise authentic learning activities, which would have assisted in nurturing learners' critical business skills. Skills such as technological skills, entrepreneurial skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills and creative thinking skills could be taught well in a learning context that promotes authentic learning.

Based on the findings presented above, most teachers relied on business case studies to create learning environments meant to promote authentic learning. Teachers did not capitalize on the power of technology to design authentic learning activities to nurture learners' critical business skills. The use of case studies to expose learners to authentic learning did little to nurture learners' critical business skills. Only skills such as problem-solving and creative thinking skills appeared to be advanced through the adoption of business case studies. Nevertheless, most of the teachers made some strides to create a learning environment that promoted authentic learning.

Table 6.3. below is a summary of the key findings from classroom observations discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Summary of the key findings from classroom observations

Table 6.3.: Summary of the Key Findings from Classroom Observations

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	FINDINGS
Technology integration to nurture learners' critical business skills	Communication skills	Teachers relied on learning activities that were based on classroom discussions to nurture learners' communication skills.
	Creative thinking skills	Teachers integrated various ICTs to administer learning activities that stimulated creative thinking among learners.
	Problem-solving skills	Teachers integrated ICTs to support learning activities that were meant to enhance learners' problem-solving skills.
	Entrepreneurial skills	There was a limited integration of ICTs by teachers to nurture learners' critical business skills.
	Technological skills	Some teachers allowed learners to use ICTs to complete learning activities as part of nurturing their technological skills.
Creation of a conducive learning environment to support the acquisition of critical business skills	Collaboration	Teachers created learning environments that fostered collaboration to nurture learners'

	Interaction Active learning Autonomous learning Authentic learning	communication and creative thinking skills. • The learning environments that were characterized by interaction among learners were created to foster learners' communication and entrepreneurial skills. • A learning environment that supported active learning fostered the acquisition of technological and communication skills. • Few teachers managed to create learning environments that fostered autonomous learning to foster problem-solving and communication skills among learners. • Teachers relied on case studies to create a learning environment that supported authentic learning to nurture learners' problem-solving and creative thinking skills.
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6.5. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings that were gathered through classroom observations.

The findings that shed light on teachers' ICT integration to equip learners with critical business skills were presented. Furthermore, this section further presented the findings that shed light on teachers' abilities or lack thereof, to create a conducive learning environment that promoted the acquisition of critical business skills were presented in this section. The next chapter focuses on the discussion of the key findings of the study.

CHAPTER 7

7. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore ICT integration by business studies teachers to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills required in the contemporary business environment. In the previous two chapters (Chapters 5 and 6), the findings of this study were presented, analyzed, and interpreted. This chapter focuses on the discussion of the key findings of the study. However, before engaging in the discussion of the findings, Table 7.1. summarizes the key findings that emerged from the interviews and classroom observations. The literature review presented in Chapter 2 and the frameworks discussed in Chapter 3 are used to discuss the key findings of the study. The discussion of the findings is guided by the main themes that emerged during data analysis.

The summary of the findings is presented in Table 7.1. below serves as the foundation for the extensive and detailed discussion of the key findings that emerged from this study.

7.2. Summary of the key findings from interviews and classroom observations

Table 7.1.: Summary of the key findings of the study

Themes	Key findings from interviews	Key findings from classroom observations
The role of technology integration in nurturing learners' critical business skills.	• Technology integration encourages learners to participate in learning activities. • Technology integration exposes learners to authentic learning activities.	Teachers' perceptions were elicited through interviews only, there were no findings from classroom observations.
Teaching methods adopted by business studies teachers to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills.	• Business studies teachers adopt brainstorming to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. • Teachers consider conducting virtual field trips given their benefits in exposing learners to real business environments. • Very few teachers adopt the flipped learning method to create a learning environment that supports the acquisition of critical business skills. • Teachers employ problem-based teaching method to enhance learners' problem-solving skills. • Business studies teachers incorporate collaborative learning method to enhance learners' communication skills.	At this level, this aspect was only probed through interviews, hence no findings from classroom observations.

Creation of learning environments that promote the acquisition of critical business skills	Only classroom observations were used to gather data for this aspect, hence no findings from the interviews.	• Teachers created learning environments that fostered collaboration to nurture learners' communication and creative thinking skills. • The learning environments that was characterized by interaction among learners created to foster learners' communication and entrepreneurial skills. • Learning environment that supported active learning fostered the acquisition of technological and communication skills. • Teachers managed to create learning environments that fostered autonomous learning to foster problem-solving and communication skills among learners, however learning activities were stifled by time constraints. • Teachers relied on case studies to create learning environment that supported authentic learning to nurture learners' problem-solving and creative thinking skills.
Technology integration to equip learners with critical business skills	• Teachers rely on WhatsApp to enhance learners' communication skills. • Technology is integrated to promote novelty and innovation among business studies learners. • Teachers integrate technology to expose learners to practical activities	• Teachers relied on learning activities that were based on classroom discussions to nurture learners' communication skills. • Teachers integrated various technologies to administer learning activities that stimulated creative thinking among learners.

	to nurture their problem-solving skills. • Teachers encouraged learners to use technology to engage in entrepreneurial activities, which has the potential to nurture their entrepreneurial skills. • Teachers enable learners to use different technologies with the aim of nurturing their technological skills.	• Teachers integrated technological tools to support learning activities that were meant to enhance learners' problem-solving skills. • There was a limited integration of technology by teachers to nurture learners' critical business skills. • Some teachers allowed learners to use technology to complete learning activities as part of nurturing their technological skills.
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7.2.1. Synthesis of the key findings

Table 7.1. above was designed to help in synthesizing the key findings that emerged from the individual interviews and the classroom observations. The themes that were used to report the findings that emanated from both data collection methods are presented against the findings that emerged from the study. Table 7.1. shows notable similarities and differences between the findings that emerged from the individual interviews and classroom observations. For example, the individual interviews revealed that teachers such as Teachers B and D integrate ICTs such as educational videos to support learning activities to nurture learners' creative thinking skills. A similar finding also emerged from the data that was gathered through classroom observations. Teachers B and D's ability to successfully integrate videos to nurture learners' creative thinking skills may be attributed to their age and experience in ICT integration. Both teachers are between 30 and 40 years old (see Section 5.2.2.) and were exposed to ICT while still being student teachers. Early exposure to ICTs could have played an important role in helping them to identify suitable ICTs to be integrated to enhance their instructional practices.

Furthermore, the findings from individual interviews showed that teachers such as Teachers A, B and E managed to integrate various ICTs to administer learning activities that supported the acquisition of problem-solving skills. This was also observed during classroom observations, where teachers integrated educational videos and case studies to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. Teachers' success in integrating ICTs to nurture learners' problem-solving skills can be attributed to their content knowledge and their experience in teaching business studies. Teachers A, B and E are qualified and experienced business studies teachers with their teaching experience ranging from 9-28 years (see Section 5.2.2.). Their vast knowledge and experience in teaching business

studies could have helped them to easily infuse technology in their content delivery to support learning activities that were meant to foster learners' problem-solving skills.

Also, during the interviews, teachers recognized that they have a responsibility to enhance learners' technological skills, and they indicated that they do this by allowing learners to make use of different technologies to engage in various learning activities. A similar finding also emerged during classroom observations where Teachers B, D and E allowed learners to use different ICTs during teaching and learning to nurture their technological skills. The learning environment that was created by the teachers was instrumental in enabling them to involve learners in the use of ICTs during the lesson (see Section 6.1.5.).

Furthermore, some notable different findings from the interviews and classroom observations transpired in this study. For example, from the individual interviews, it was found that teachers relied on mobile technology such as WhatsApp to enhance learners' communication skills. However, during classroom observations, it emerged that teachers relied on learning activities that were not supported by technology to nurture learners' communication skills. This incongruity between the findings might be due to the fact that teachers mainly integrate WhatsApp to administer learning activities that were not completed in the classroom, such as facilitating brainstorming among learners- *Teacher D*.

Finally, the findings from the interviews showed that teachers encourage learners to use technology to engage in learning activities that would enhance their entrepreneurial skills, such as designing business plans, but from classroom observations, it transpired that there was limited use of ICTs by learners to engage in learning activities that supported their acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. This might be due to the nature of learning activities that were adopted by teachers to nurture learners' entrepreneurial

skills. Most of the learning activities had the potential to nurture learners' soft skills, such as innovation, inner discipline and decision-making (see Section 6.1.4.). Furthermore, the interviews showed that teachers such as Teacher B still need guidance on how technology can be integrated to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills. At the current moment, they mainly rely on their content and technological knowledge to create learning activities that support the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills (see Section 5.5.4.).

7.3. THE ROLE ICT INTEGRATION IN NURTURING LEARNERS' CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

This study revealed that teachers believed that ICT integration plays a pertinent role in nurturing learners' critical business skills. They reckoned that ICT integration enhances learners' participation in learning activities. Na-Allah (2019) confirmed that the integration of ICTs in teaching and learning encourages learners' active participation in learning activities. The close examination of the findings further showed that teachers' inclination towards ICT integration was fostered by the ability of ICTs to stimulate learners' interest towards learning activities. The finding of this nature was also corroborated by the findings that emanated from classroom observations. During classroom observations, learners showed keen interest towards the lesson by participating in learning activities, especially in Teachers A, B, D and E's classrooms. Learners' active participation in learning activities might be due to the liberty to use ICTs to complete some of the learning activities, such as oral presentations, as observed in Teachers B and D's classrooms.

Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that teachers view technology as tools that promote authentic learning activities in the classroom. In other words, this finding suggests that by integrating ICTs, teachers can design learning activities that expose

learners to real business activities. Dube (2019) supports this by postulating that exposing business studies learners to authentic activities similar to the actual business or workplace while at school reduces a mismatch between skills needed in the workplace and those possessed by learners produced by schools. Exposing learners to real business activities through integrating ICTs is key for business studies as a subject since the subject is meant to prepare learners for the real world beyond school. This finding is in line with the aspirations of the Functional Context Theory that advocates for the integration of tools that are relevant to the real world that learners are being prepared for (Anudo & Awuor, 2020).

From the foregoing discussion, it can be inferred that business studies teachers see ICTs as tools that enrich learners' learning experiences. It is interesting to find that teachers from rural settings are now able to see the value of ICT in nurturing learners' critical business skills. This might be due to the fact that some teachers who participated in this study teach in the schools that benefitted from government ICT initiative called Operation Pakisa. On the other hand, some of the teachers teach in private schools that acquired ICTs for teachers to integrate in their instructional practices. Observing teachers from schools located in rural areas integrating ICTs in their classrooms contradict the general notion that teachers from rural schools are reluctant to integrate ICTs in their classrooms. Some studies that have been conducted in South Africa have found that teachers from rural schools do not integrate ICT in their classroom practices (Chisango et al., 2020; Zenda & Dlamini, 2023).

Furthermore, business studies teachers capitalized on the affordances of technology to expose learners to authentic learning activities and promote learner participation to support learning activities that nurture learners' critical business skills. Teachers such as Teachers A, B and D made strides to provide authentic learning activities to foster

learners' critical business skills. For example, Teachers B and D capitalized on the multimodality of technology when integrating educational videos to enhance learners' critical business skills. Both teachers integrated educational videos in their classrooms in conjunction with collaborative learning method and this helped to advance interactions, brainstorming and creative thinking among learners. By exposing learners to such learning activities, their critical business skills, such as problem-solving skills and creative thinking skills, were likely to be enhanced.

7.4. TEACHING METHODS TO PROMOTE THE ACQUISITION OF CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

The integration of ICT in teaching and learning is always coupled with certain teaching methods. Teaching methods adopted by the teacher can mainly be categorized under teacher-centred or learner-centred approaches to teaching. This study reported that teachers adopted a variety of teaching methods in their classrooms when teaching business studies. Teachers such as Teachers C and F dominated their pedagogical practices with teacher-centred pedagogy while integrating ICTs. Lee et al. (2021) mentioned that some teachers opt for teaching methods that appeal to a teacher-centred teaching approach due to high-stake examination demands that require them to cover the content as soon as possible. The nature of the conversation in the classroom also influences the teaching methods and the learning activities that occur in the classroom; hence, some teachers may adopt teacher-centred teaching methods while integrating ICTs. However, this was not the case with Teachers C and F since they adopted teacher-centred teaching methods even when delivering content that was amenable to learner-centred pedagogy and ICT integration. Several examples of Teacher C and Teacher F adopting teacher-centred pedagogy while delivering content that was amenable to learner-centred pedagogy and ICT integration were presented in Chapter 6.

Existing studies both locally and internationally, have reported that some teachers still adopt teacher-centred pedagogy while integrating ICTs to deliver the content. In Nigeria, Dikeocha et al. (2019) conducted a study highlighting that business studies teachers do not fully embrace learner-centred teaching in their technology-enhanced classrooms. Also, in South Africa, Ndlovu and Lawrence (2012) reported that some teachers integrate slideshows to present notes instead of the chalkboard and think they are meaningfully integrating technology in their classrooms. Although classroom conversations that fostered teachers from the above-mentioned studies cannot be ascertained, one can maintain that the findings of these studies corroborate with the finding of this present study, where some business studies teachers (Teacher C and F) dominated their technology-enhanced instruction with teacher-centred pedagogy. This finding suggests that some business studies teachers still believe in teacher-centred pedagogy despite the general call on business studies to adopt learner-centred pedagogy.

From the preceding discussions, it is interesting to note that teachers who dominated their pedagogical practices with teacher-centred pedagogy were also integrating ICTs into their classrooms. This is because, in most cases, teacher-centred pedagogy is associated with teachers who are reluctant to integrate ICT in their classroom practices (Cansiz & Cansiz, 2019). It is also important to underscore that both Teacher C and F mentioned during interviews that they possess some ICT integration skills, however they were among the teachers who indicated that they still need more guidance on integrating ICT in teaching business studies. Hence, the way they integrated ICTs in their classrooms may be attributed to their level of technology competency, which still needs to be developed.

Although Teacher C and Teacher F integrated ICTs alongside teacher-centred teaching methods, a larger number of the participants embraced learner-centred teaching

methods in their classrooms. Chief among learner-centred teaching methods that business studies teachers adopt in their classrooms are brainstorming teaching methods, case-based teaching methods, flipped learning methods of teaching, problem-based teaching methods, and collaborative learning methods, while most teachers expressed willingness to bring back field trips teaching methods in the near future. Each teaching method adopted by teachers is discussed below from the perspective of how teachers adopt these methods while integrating ICTs in their classrooms.

7.4.1. . Problem-based teaching method

Problem-based teaching method is one of the key and popular teaching methods that teachers use to teach business studies (Mohammed, 2019). The study showed that all teachers implemented problem-based teaching methods in their classrooms. They adopted this method in different ways, as others were implementing it to promote collective problem-solving among learners, while others used the problem-solving method to encourage learners to engage in problem-solving individually. In both ways, teachers attempted to use problem-based teaching to expose learners to real business problems to nurture their problem-solving skills. Mike (2012) recommends a problem-based teaching method for subjects such as business studies because it exposes learners to real-world challenges and nurtures their higher-order thinking skills. There is a common belief in literature that problem-based teaching nurtures learners' higher-order thinking skills. It can be argued that the use of a problem-based teaching method does not automatically nurture learners' higher-order thinking skills. The effectiveness of this teaching method depends on how the teacher implements it in the classroom. For example, some teachers implemented the problem-based teaching method in a manner that deprived learners of exploiting their problem-solving abilities (see Section 6.1.3).

Teachers also implemented problem-based teaching to encourage learners to engage in individual problem-solving. The literature supports this because engaging in problem-solving individually enables a learner to engage in critical thinking and reflection (Savery, 2015). Solving real business problems individually can help improve learners' self-esteem and problem-solving skills (Meintjes et al., 2015), hence the need for individual learners to be given an opportunity to engage in problem-solving individually. However, engaging in the problem-solving process individually is vehemently opposed by social constructivists; they believe that learners should engage in problem-solving collaboratively with others. Social constructivists maintain that as learners engage in problem-solving collaboratively, they share new ideas or solutions, subsequently constructing new knowledge. Mike (2012) further argues that engaging in problem-solving collaboratively improves learners' interdependent learning. Learners' interdependence in business studies classrooms is important because it creates a sense of teamwork among them.

It is also important to mention that teachers stated that the problem-solving teaching method is compatible with ICT integration. They believe that supporting problem-based teaching method with ICT integration help to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. This finding corroborates with that of the study that was conducted by Green (2018). Green (2018) found that the integration of ICT with problem-solving teaching method helps learners to acquire skills, including problem-solving skills. Therefore, this study concludes that implementing a problem-based teaching method helps learners to acquire problem-solving skills, which is a critical business skill for business studies learners to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment.

7.4.2. Collaborative learning method

The other teaching method that appeared to be resonating with business studies teachers was the collaborative learning method. It emerged that teachers implement the collaborative learning method regularly in their classrooms to nurture learners' communication skills. Some teachers' utterances showed that they believe that the collaborative learning method encourages learners to work together and learn from each other. In the process of learning together, learners interact with one another, enhancing their communication skills and being responsible for each other's learning. Yusuf et al. (2017) concur with this assertion and mentioned that the collaborative learning method encourages learners to not only be responsible for their individual learning but also to help their peers to learn and create an atmosphere of achievement among group members. This finding is profound because it is in accordance with the tenets of Social Constructivism Theory that suggest that learners should engage in knowledge construction with their peers and other knowledgeable individuals.

Teachers from this study implemented the collaborative learning method in different ways. Some indicated that they implement the collaborative learning method for learners to complete informal assessments, while others indicated that they implement the collaborative learning method during both formal and informal assessments. This finding was interesting because some teachers indicated that the reason behind their use of collaborative learning only for informal assessments was to avoid plagiarism among learners. In other words, these teachers do not use collaborative learning for formal assessments because they believe this method opens gates for learners to plagiarise from one another. This finding suggests that some teachers still question the reliability of some learner-centred pedagogies used to teach business studies. It is clear from this finding that some teachers are not well versed in using learner-centred teaching methods

to ensure that learners learn meaningfully without engaging in wrongdoings. Mukhari (2016) warned that some pedagogies that subscribe to the constructivist perspective do not provide clear guidance to teachers when it comes to other aspects of the teaching and learning process, such as conducting assessments. Constructivist orientation denounces standard testing and grading for differentiated assessment, but there is no guidance provided to teachers (Mukhari, 2016) on how to assess learners using the novel methods of assessments without compromising the quality of teaching and learning. This assertion is critical for business studies, where teachers are encouraged to shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred instruction. However, a serious dilemma teachers face is to lead the instruction in a learner-centred teaching approach but assess using traditional assessments that were designed based on the teaching approach that is considered conventional and irrelevant to contemporary pedagogical practices.

It also emerged from teachers' commentaries that they believe that the collaborative learning method is compatible with ICT integration. This is also affirmed by Nwosu and Akaraka (2020), who indicated that the ubiquity of technological platforms such as Blackboard, Blogs, and social media networks help facilitate collaboration among learners. Since schools where the study was conducted do not have formal Learning Management Systems (LMS) in place, teachers revealed that they mainly use WhatsApp to facilitate collaboration among learners. It appeared that teachers preferred to integrate WhatsApp to expand learners' collaboration beyond the four walls of the classroom. Technology in teaching and learning helps learners create collaborative learning communities that allow them to carry out their learning activities (Garcia-Valcarcel et al., 2014).

7.4.3. Case-based teaching method

Case-based teaching method is a frequently used teaching method in business studies classrooms. It was clear from the teachers' commentaries that the case-based teaching method is inevitable when teaching business studies. It emerged from the interviews that teachers implement the case-based teaching method almost every day in their lessons. This is due to the nature of the business studies curriculum and content that lends itself to the implementation of a case-based teaching method. Literature confirms that the case-based teaching method presents learners with practical and realistic situations (Beckisheva et al., 2015); teachers find it necessary to implement it in their classrooms. When teaching business studies, practical and realistic scenarios are key because teachers should always make attempts to expose learners to practical and real business situations.

This study also revealed ICT integration enabled teachers to access various case studies that can be used to expose learners to real business environments. For example, Teacher E used ICTs to access different case studies that helped to clarify the content taught. Goh and Sigala (2020) found that ICT integration is very helpful in helping teachers access rich and recent case studies. This implies that business studies teachers are no longer confined to case studies that are contained in prescribed textbooks, which sometimes get outdated and less relevant to the contemporary business environment. Furthermore, this study revealed that ICT integration enables teachers to alter case studies obtained from the internet to make their contents relevant to the context of their schools and to enhance learners' understanding of business studies concepts. Beckisheva et al. (2015) add that case-based teaching exposes learners to contextually rich situations. Contextually relevant case studies are key for

business studies learners to understand the real issues that contemporary businesses are grappling with daily.

With regard to the nurturing of critical business skills, the study revealed that the participants believe that the case-based teaching method nurtures learners' analytical and problem-solving skills. This is also supported by Pertiwi et al. (2020), by indicating that the case-based teaching method develops and trains learners' problem-solving skills since it's oriented to authentic problems from the real business environment. This was also evident in the current study because teachers used ICTs such data projector to depict business-related case studies. Learners were, therefore, required to read case studies and engage in problem-solving processes where they suggested different solutions to the problems that were faced by real businesses.

Overall, although the participants indicated that they regularly adopt a case-based teaching method in their classrooms, it appeared from the data that some participants perceived business scenarios as a panacea to exposing learners to the real business world. Vanoostveen et al. (2019) caution teachers that providing examples from a real-world situation to illustrate a concept or content being taught is not enough and cannot be deemed as fostering meaningful learning to learners. This view insinuates that teachers should not only rely on case studies but they should also incorporate other materials, such as visuals and audio, to expose learners to the real business world. With ICTs at their disposal, they can integrate them to expose learners to different learning activities to facilitate their exposure to real business environments. A decision to implement a case-based teaching method in the lesson should also be informed by the value that a particular case would bring to the lesson. In other words, teachers should not incorporate case-based teaching in any business studies content based on the

common belief that business studies as a subject is amenable to the case-based teaching method.

7.4.4. Brainstorming teaching method

The brainstorming teaching method is a learner-centred method that is seen as a teaching method that promotes thinking among learners. The findings from the interviews revealed that business studies teachers implement brainstorming teaching methods to encourage collective thinking among learners. In other words, they used a brainstorming teaching method to encourage learners to think as a group and share their ideas with their peers. This finding is in line with that of Briggs (2019), who found that brainstorming enables learners to explore, analyze and solve problems collaboratively. There is a sense of cooperation as well as group cohesiveness among them. This undertaking is aligned with the beliefs of social constructivists that support collaborative meaning-making among learners (Akpan et al., 2020). This method of teaching also has the ability to create a platform for free thinking. Free thinking during brainstorming fosters learners to come up with creative ideas towards solving real business problems (AlMutairi, 2015). This is because the evaluation of ideas and criticism is reserved for the later stage. This, therefore, creates a conducive environment for learners to freely share their thoughts with their peers.

The ubiquity of technology inside and out of the classroom also enables the implementation of brainstorming teaching methods by teachers to thrive. The study revealed that business studies teachers do not confine brainstorming sessions with learners in the physical classrooms but also appreciate the avenues provided by technology to conduct brainstorming over the internet. Panagiotis and Triantaphyllia (2020) agreed that nowadays, technology allows brainstorming among learners to take place over the Internet. The foregoing discussion indicates that some teachers embrace

the role that can be played by ICT integration in facilitating brainstorming among learners. If used appropriately, technology can enrich learners' brainstorming activities beyond the interaction that teachers mainly focused on in their commentaries. Some of the ICTs that learners had access to inside and outside their classrooms have internet connections. Learners can search for information on the internet to help them to contribute useful ideas to business-related problems that learners are tasked to brainstorm.

Despite positive views expressed by business studies teachers towards the implementation of brainstorming teaching methods in their classrooms, they also expressed some reservations. The study found that some teachers think that the brainstorming teaching method is time-consuming. Understandably, most of the teachers who participated in this study teach business studies in Grades 10-12, meaning they need to prepare an average of three lessons per day for all three grades. Their lesson preparation time might be constrained by this, so spending a lot of time preparing for one grade 12 lesson may be a challenge for them. This finding is supported by the assertion by Malkawi and Smadi (2018), who asserted that teachers should engage in thorough preparation before they implement the brainstorming teaching method. Usually, thorough preparation means teachers should spend more time on lesson preparation.

Another challenge with the implementation of the brainstorming method is the difficulty faced by teachers when trying to employ this method in big classes. The study found that the brainstorming method is viable in smaller classes compared to bigger classes. Teachers underscored that implementing brainstorming in bigger classes is difficult because it becomes difficult to manage the class. El-Summarai et al. (2018) posited that during brainstorming, all learners are expected to generate ideas. During the idea-

generation process, it is when teachers find it difficult to coordinate and monitor learners' discussions. This also transpired during lesson observations where Teacher D's lesson nearly degenerated due to poor coordination of brainstorming by the teacher. Teachers further indicated that during brainstorming, learners who are less talkative are overshadowed by the learners who are open and talkative. This ends up defeating the teacher's good intentions of adopting the brainstorming teaching method.

Based on the discussions above, it can be concluded that some teachers embraced ICTs when implementing the brainstorming teaching method in their classrooms. However, it appeared from their commentaries that they normally integrate ICTs to conduct brainstorming outside the classroom. Integrating ICTs to conduct brainstorming outside the classroom may be perceived as teachers making technology an 'add-on' tool instead of embedding it in their instructional practices to implement brainstorming. In other words, teachers use technology to supplement their instruction if they run out of time while implementing the brainstorming teaching method in their classrooms. Furthermore, from the teachers' commentaries, it emerged that they implemented a brainstorming teaching method to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. From this, it can be assumed that teachers find the brainstorming teaching method easy to use to nurture learners' problem-solving skills because it creates a conducive environment for learners to freely suggest solutions to a business-related problem, which in return enhances their abilities to solve problems. This was evident in several classrooms where teachers such as Teachers B, D and E adopted learning activities that required learners to engage in brainstorming. During brainstorming sessions, learners appeared to be able to think freely and share ideas amongst themselves and with the rest of the class.

7.4.5. Flipped learning method

This teaching method appeared to be less popular among the teachers. Some teachers were not even aware of this method of teaching. Teachers' lack of familiarity with this method of teaching was also visible during classroom observations. There is only one teacher who adopted flipped learning with some degree of confidence in her lesson and the majority of the teachers did not employ flipped learning in their classrooms. Nevertheless, it transpired from some participants' commentaries that during the outbreak of COVID-19, they implemented some elements of flipped learning in their instructional practices, even though they were not aware that they were implementing the elements of flipped learning. This is because most of the instructional activities were conducted through technology (Pakpahan, 2020). Teachers were then forced to design and disperse learning materials using various ICTs. The need for the flipped learning teaching method was also exacerbated by the platooning system that was adopted by many schools during COVID-19 lockdowns. The platooning system meant that learners had limited time for face-to-face tuition. Hence, some teachers chose to supplement their physical tuition with educational videos and recordings that were dispersed to learners using various ICTs. Flipped learning came in handy for many teachers since it embraces the idea of blending technology integration with physical interaction between teachers and learners (Pakpahan, 2020).

Teachers who had tried to implement some elements of the flipped learning method indicated that this method of teaching prompts learners to be hands-on in learning. This assertion is also echoed by Dorji and Dorji (2022) who mentioned that the flipped learning teaching method allows learners to be in charge of their learning. Cheng et al. (2016) assert that learners' sense of responsibility over their learning should not end with out-of-class learning activities but also during in-class activities. During in-class

activities, learners are expected to engage in debates and discussions to further simplify their understanding of the concepts being taught (Cheng et al., 2016). This statement insinuates that learners' active involvement in learning activities should be at the heart of the teaching and learning process when the flipped learning method is adopted. Engaging in learning activities such as debates as part of flipped learning can also enhance learners' acquisition of critical business skills such as communication, problem-solving and creative thinking skills.

Although some participants made attempts to incorporate flipped learning in their classrooms, there was a common view among teachers that learners do not cooperate. Most of the participants expressed concerns that some learners do not complete tasks that need to be finished outside the classroom or at home. As a result, learners come to class unprepared for the day's lesson. Learners' unpreparedness can have a crippling effect on the implementation of flipped learning. That's why Turan and AldaCinten (2020) advise teachers to teach learners to take responsibility for their own learning before engaging in the flipped learning teaching method. This simply means that teachers should teach learners self-directed learning so that they can independently engage in learning activities outside the classroom.

Another profound cause for learners' ill-preparedness when the flipped learning method is incorporated in business studies classrooms is the lack of access to technology. Some participants cited lack of access to the internet as one of the hindrances to learners' failure to access educational videos shared to them by the teachers. They noted that the platform that they mainly use to share educational materials for learners to prepare for the next lesson was WhatsApp, and this platform needs a smartphone, laptop or computer and data bundles for one to access the educational videos. Schmidt et al. (2016) recommend that teachers should consider the kind of ICTs learners have access

to before implementing the flipped learning method. Considering the kinds of ICTs that learners have access to might reduce issues of learners who come to class unprepared. Teachers can also provide learning materials in formats that do not require the internet or that do not require technology for learners to access. Dogan et al. (2021) argue that flipped learning method is not confined to technology, but also printed materials can be used in flipped learning teaching method.

Based on the foregoing discussions, it can be concluded that the flipped learning method is not yet engrained in most business studies teachers' instructional practices. This is despite the flipped learning method generally perceived as the teaching method that is amenable to technology integration. In addition, from their own remarks, the participants concurred that flipped learning promotes learner involvement in learning activities and the acquisition of critical business skills. One would expect flipped learning to be among the common methods of teaching business studies, given that all teachers integrated ICTs in their instructional practices. Teachers' low uptake of the flipped learning method can be attributed to learners' lack of cooperation when teachers attempt to implement flipped learning in their classrooms. Otherwise, some teachers may be avoiding implementing flipped learning in their classrooms because the restrictions of COVID-19 have been lifted and many schools have dropped platooning systems and reverted to physical instruction. Nevertheless, there is still a need for business studies teachers to adopt flipped learning, especially for grade 12 learners who need to be exposed to self-directed learning.

7.4.6. Field trip teaching method

Although this study found that most teachers stopped using the field trip teaching method due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, this teaching method appeared to be a common preference among the participants. Most teachers have been adopting physical

field trips for a long period in their teaching. That is why, during the outbreak of COVID-19, they stopped adopting it because of the requirements of social distancing. Nevertheless, they indicated that they still believe in field trips as a relevant teaching method for business studies. The study revealed that teachers are considering to bring back field trip in their near future because COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted. Interestingly, some teachers are considering to migrate field trips to virtual platforms. Behrendt and Franklin (2014) argue that teachers should familiarise themselves with organizing virtual field trips to save time and money. Teachers indicated virtual fieldtrips can help to enhance business studies content because business practitioners can be invited and participate to learners' learning virtually.

From the foregrounding discussion, it is clear that all participants have never integrated ICTs when adopting field trips in their classrooms. This may be attributed to their initial exposure to field trips. From their commentaries, one could tell that they have been exposed to physical field trips for a longer period of time. However, teachers such as Teachers A, D and E believe they could explore virtual field trips to teach business studies in the future. Pennisi (2020) asserts that virtual field trips are on the rise, especially after the hit of COVID-19. Teachers now make use of online videos and online laboratories to expose learners to real scenarios instead of sticking to physical field trips only. Despite this observation, in South Africa, many rural schools still lack the prerequisite technology to implement virtual field trips. As a result, many teachers still rely on physical field trips to expose learners to real business environments. In some cases, even schools that have some ICTs that can help to facilitate virtual field trips and lack internet connectivity. Hence, they find it difficult to engage in virtual field trips.

Nevertheless, it appeared from the study that field trips can play a vital role in nurturing learners' critical business skills. The study revealed that critical business skills, such as

communication skills and problem-solving skills, can be developed through exposing learners to field trips. This finding is also confirmed by the study that was conducted by Onyiewi and Nguyen (2018), which found that adopting field trips helps learners to develop problem-solving skills. This might be due to the fact that field trips can enable learners to observe business practitioners while engaging in actual problem-solving within the real business setting. As learners observe business practitioners engaging in solving business-related problems, they gain knowledge and skills in how related business problems are solved. Furthermore, Onyiewi et al. (2018) revealed that field trips enable learners to develop communication skills. This is because field trips can create an environment that is conducive for business studies learners to interact with business executives, employees, and other key stakeholders in the business environment. Hence, physical or virtual field trips should be engrained in business studies instructional practices to nurture learners' critical business skills.

7.4.7. Business simulation games

Another teaching method that is common in business studies classrooms is business simulation games. However it emerged from this study that teachers did not implement business simulation games in their classrooms. Even the teacher use used a technology-based game did not use business simulation games. This might be due to the lack of knowledge of such teaching method which is amenable to technology-enhanced business studies classrooms. This is because most teachers indicated that they relied on their personal experiences with technology integration to integrate technology in their classrooms. Furthermore, teachers choice not to implement business simulation games might be due to lack of suitable devices such as the internet and software that support the implementation of business simulation games. This is also supported by Heyworth-Thomas (2023) by indicating that there are costs that are associated with implementing

business simulation games. Costs for software licensing agreements might be a barrier to teachers' implementation of this method of teaching.

7.5. CREATION OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS THAT PROMOTE THE ACQUISITION OF CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

The environment where learning occurs is imperative for the acquisition of any skill. In this study, the learning context was deemed important to consider because for learners to acquire critical business skills, a conducive learning environment should be created. This study revealed that some teachers were able to create learning environments for some of the critical business skills to be nurtured and failed to create conducive learning environments for other skills to be nurtured. For example, some teachers managed to create learning environments that promoted communication skills and problem-solving skills and did not manage to create conducive learning environments that had the potential to foster technological skills. These inconsistencies in teachers' pedagogical practices made it difficult to determine some of the teachers' abilities to create learning environments that promoted the acquisition of critical business skills holistically.

According to social constructivists, a conducive learning environment should be characterized by collaborative learning, which consequently ensures learners' meaningful learning (Zhan, 2008). This study revealed that learning environments that fostered collaborative learning among learners were not fully created in some classrooms. Uribe et al. (2003) postulate that environments that promote collaborative learning are likely to nurture learners' creative thinking and reflexive skills. This assertion concurs with the findings of this study. This study found that in classrooms where learning environments were characterized by collaborative learning, learning activities that were implemented had the potential to nurture learners' problem-solving, communication and creative thinking skills. This was evident in Teachers B, D and E's

classrooms, where learners engaged in different learning activities that had the potential to nurture their problem-solving, communication and creative thinking skills.

Furthermore, this study identified interaction among learners as the key factor that should characterize business studies classrooms for learners to meaningfully develop critical business skills. Interaction among learners, peers and the teacher is the key determinant for knowledge construction by learners (Mhlongo et al., 2017). This study revealed that teachers such as Teachers B, D and E succeeded in creating a learning environment that facilitated interaction among learners. Learning activities that were incorporated into the classrooms had the potential to nurture learners' communication skills and problem-solving skills. Chand (2016) postulates that interaction among learners enables them to articulate their ideas to others, which is a useful ingredient for developing communication skills. Akpan et al. (2020) suggest that learning environments should be dominated by learning activities such as oral presentations and problem-solving for learners to develop communication and problem-solving skills.

It also transpired from this study that active learning is important for learners to acquire critical business skills. Kamarulzaman et al. (2018) revealed that engaging learners in active learning improves their problem-solving and creative thinking skills. In this study, it was found that in some classrooms, there was a lack of learning activities that had the potential to foster an active learning environment among learners. In other words, there was a dearth of active learning in some business studies classrooms. In classes where there were learning activities that fostered active learning, learners engaged in activities that fostered them to communicate among themselves. Social Constructivism Theory advocates for the active engagement of learners in learning activities. As a result, constructivists view a learner as a thinker, a creator, and a constructor of knowledge (Chand, 2016).

Similar findings emerged in relation to the creation of a learning environment that was supposed to foster autonomous learning. The study found that some teachers did not incorporate activities that had the potential to encourage learners to engage in autonomous learning. This finding is interesting because even teachers that mainly adopted learner-centred teaching pedagogies did little to foster autonomous learning. Abugohar et al. (2019) found that teachers are reluctant to incorporate learning activities that promote autonomous learning because it's time-consuming. Similarly, in this study, it appeared that some teachers did not allocate enough time for learners to engage in autonomous learning. It is important to note that teachers in this study were not reluctant to incorporate learning activities that were meant to foster autonomous learning. However, time constraints hindered them from creating conducive learning environments for autonomous learning to thrive.

Furthermore, the infusion of authentic learning activities in business studies pedagogical practices is widely recommended by different scholars and theorists (Mohammad, 2015). Functional Context Theory advocates for authentic learning activities to be an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The proponents of this theory call for real-life experiences and events to be used in classrooms to make the learning process and skills acquired to be easily transferable to the world beyond school (Haryanto & Arty, 2019). From their commentaries, teachers recognized the positive impact that authentic learning activities could have in preparing learners for the contemporary world of work. However, from teachers' pedagogical practices, it appeared that very few teachers attempted to create a learning environment that promoted authentic learning. Sticht (1975) advises that teachers should create learning environments that promote authentic learning by using tools that learners would use after their schooling and this nurtures learners' skills that can accelerate learners' adaptability in the world beyond school.

From the discussions above, several inconsistencies emerged in relation to teachers' abilities to create learning environments for learners to acquire different critical business skills. The inconsistencies that emerged in teachers' pedagogical practices in relation to their abilities to create conducive learning environments for the acquisition of critical business skills may be caused by the fact that some teachers wanted to achieve several critical business skills at once. Although several critical business skills can be nurtured in one lesson, teachers should target one or two critical business skills that they aim to develop in one lesson. This would enable them to focus their learning activities and the integration of ICTs to those particular critical business skills they are focusing on for that particular lesson.

7.6. ICT INTEGRATION TO EQUIP LEARNERS WITH CRITICAL BUSINESS SKILLS

Several scholars continue to acknowledge the role that ICT integration plays in equipping learners with critical business skills that are needed in the contemporary business environment. A study that was conducted by Daud and Khalid (2014) confirmed that the integration of ICT in teaching and learning develops learners' critical business skills. Also, the study conducted by Liesa-Orus et al. (2020) found that the integration of ICT in teaching and learning develops learners' critical business skills, such as critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills and technological skills. Voogt et al. (2012) concede that these critical business skills are at the core of the skills that are demanded by the contemporary business environment. In this study, these skills were identified, and they were explored further. It transpired from the findings of this study that most teachers integrated different ICTs in their pedagogical practices to equip learners with critical business skills.

7.6.1. ICT integration to nurture learners' communication skills

Contemporary business practitioners consider communication skills as the most important skill and for individuals' success in a business career, communication skills are indispensable (Chatterjee, 2018). The participants' commentaries indicated that communication skills are important for business studies learners to acquire for them to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment. The study revealed that most teachers incorporate learning activities that nurture learners' communication skills in their classrooms. Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018) postulate that for learners' communication skills to develop, they need to engage in learning activities that support the generation, transmission, receipt, and interpretation of messages in interpersonal and group contexts through verbal and written formats. This study found that the larger number of teachers who exposed learners to learning activities that had the potential to develop their communication skills focused on activities that required learners to exercise verbal communication. Judging from this finding, one may suggest that teachers paid less attention to learning activities that were supposed to nurture learners' written communication skills. If this is a regular practice in business studies classrooms, it may pose a challenge to learners because it will mean that their communication skills are not nurtured holistically, but only certain aspect is developed while the others are overlooked. Conrad and Newberry (2012) advise that communication skills such as reading, writing, listening and oral communication skills, accompanied by the ability to communicate using novel ICTs, are crucial for learners to survive in the contemporary business environment. This suggests that nurturing learners' communication skills that are skewed towards one aspect may negatively affect learners in the long run.

Furthermore, this study found that teachers mainly use WhatsApp as an ICT to nurture learners' communication skills. This finding is intriguing because WhatsApp is generally

known as a social network platform. In the past, teachers were reluctant to integrate WhatsApp into their classrooms because they perceived it as a tool that distracts learners from their studies (Irfan & Dhimmar, 2019). However, nowadays, it seems like WhatsApp is gaining some form of traction in business studies classrooms (Gcabashe & Adebola, 2023). Teachers reported that they believe that WhatsApp can play a role in nurturing learners' communication skills. This finding presents a shift from some of the ICTs known to have the potential to nurture an individual's communication skills. Literature maintains that ICTs such as emails and intranets are deemed ideal tools for nurturing learners' communication skills (Chatterjee, 2018). This is because businesses usually adopt these tools to facilitate communication among business stakeholders (Chatterjee, 2018).

Although teachers were adamant that they integrate WhatsApp to nurture learners' communication skills, it was not clear from the findings how they integrate it to nurture learners' communication skills that are relevant to the contemporary business environment. This might be caused by the fact that the adoption of WhatsApp in teaching and learning is still new, and teachers still use it to engage in basic communication with learners and from such communications, some teachers believe that learners' communication skills are developed. Nevertheless, it is interesting to learn that some teachers are now integrating novel ICTs that many learners have access to in order to nurture their communication skills.

7.6.2. ICT integration to nurture learners' problem-solving skills

Problem-solving skills are one of the critical business skills that future business practitioners should acquire as early as their schooling period. This is because contemporary businesses face complex and sophisticated problems that need individuals with problem-solving skills. This study found that teachers incorporate

learning activities aimed at developing learners' problem-solving skills. However, a close examination of the teachers' submissions revealed that they mainly rely on learning activities that are not supported by technology to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. This finding suggests that some teachers have yet to explore novel learning activities to teach learners problem-solving skills. From teachers' commentaries, it appeared that very few teachers indicated that they incorporate technology-based learning activities such as games to nurture learners' problem-solving skills.

The study further revealed that teachers who integrated ICT in their classroom practices did so in a rudimentary manner. ICTs were not an integral part of learning activities that were meant to nurture learners' problem-solving skills. Rather, they were integrated mainly to depict real business scenarios from which learners were required to engage in the problem-solving process. Rahmi and Jumadi (2019) mention that learners can use technology to search for different logical reasons from different sources to solve a real business problem. In some schools, there was internet access, which could have helped facilitate learners' engagement in more advanced problem-solving exercises using technology. However, teachers did not encourage learners to use the internet to search for information that would help them to solve business-related problems. Instead, most learners depended on brainstorming ideas with their peers to solve problems given to them by the teacher.

Despite what may be perceived as elementary ICT integration by some teachers to nurture learners problem-solving skills, it was notable that the larger number of the participants exposed learners to the problem-solving approach that is useful for the contemporary business environment, which is solving business problems collaboratively. Teachers created a learning environment that fostered learners to engage in problem-solving activities collaboratively. Exposing learners to solving

business-related problems collaboratively is crucial to shaping future business practitioners because business problems are complex and need a collective effort to resolve them. Crebert et al. (2011) assert that when business-related problems are solved collaboratively, different opinions among learners are important and they enhance their problem-solving skills since the variety of possible solutions promotes their evaluative and creative thinking skills. When learners are engaged in problem-solving collaboratively, they get an opportunity to share their thoughts with their peers, evaluate each other's thoughts and reach a consensus on one or more solutions to a problem.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that teachers incorporated some problem-solving techniques used in real businesses. Teachers made use of problem-solving techniques such as brainstorming techniques and nominal group techniques to engage learners in the problem-solving process. These two problem-solving techniques are among the common techniques that are employed by business practitioners when solving complex business problems. The use of such techniques by teachers not only enhanced learners' problem-solving skills but also exposed them to problem-solving settings that are relevant to the real business world. This is in accordance with the aspirations of Functional Context Theory which advocates that the learning environment should reflect the features of the real world beyond school (Sticht, 1975). Learning activities that are incorporated into teaching and learning should be skill-based and work-related to develop learners' problem-solving skills.

7.6.3. ICT integration to nurture learners' creative thinking skills

Equipping business studies learners with creative thinking skills is important for their survival in the contemporary economy (DBE, 2011). This is the sentiment that teachers echoed in this study. The study found that teachers believe ICT integration in business studies classrooms helps promote learners' creative thinking skills. This finding is in line

with the findings of the study that was conducted by Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015) which affirmed that ICT integration helps learners to be more creative. This is believed to be the main reason for many teachers in this study to make strides to integrate ICTs to enhance learners' creative thinking skills. It emerged from the study that teachers mainly integrated ICTs to demonstrate learning activities that stimulated learners' creative thinking. Mathews et al. (2019) affirmed that encouraging creativity in the classroom is the primary task of a teacher. Thus, teachers are required to integrate ICTs and design learning activities that nurture learners' creative thinking skills.

From the foregoing discussions, it can be inferred that most participants attempted to integrate ICTs to promote creative thinking among learners. The participants integrated ICTs to display learning activities that had the potential to foster learners' creative thinking skills. Integrating ICTs in this manner encouraged learners to generate ideas, which, in a way, ignited their creativity. However, integrating ICTs in this manner may not be deemed as effective in a classroom where learners are required to be equipped with critical business skills needed by the contemporary business environment. One may expect teachers to integrate ICTs in a more advanced manner to equip learners with creative thinking skills. Bereczki and Kárpáti (2021) posit that teachers' epistemic beliefs about creativity influence their technology-based creativity-fostering practices. Simply put, this view suggests that teachers' beliefs about creativity influence the kind of technology-based learning activities to nurture learners' creative thinking skills. Apart from teachers' orientation towards creativity in ICT-enhanced classrooms, I propose that teachers' skills in ICT integration may also influence the learning activities they incorporate their learning activities to nurture learners' creative thinking skills.

7.6.4. ICT integration to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills

The need for business studies learners to be equipped with entrepreneurial skills in the contemporary business environment cannot be overemphasized. The findings of this study highlighted that teachers acknowledged a dire need for learners to be equipped with entrepreneurial skills. The study further revealed that some teachers capitalized on the capabilities of ICT to design learning activities that would expose learners to learning activities that would shape their entrepreneurial skills. Du Toit (2016) supports such learning activities that develop learners' entrepreneurial skills through immersing them in real-life learning experiences. Okoye (2018) also encourages business studies teachers to integrate ICTs to design learning activities that would enable learners to acquire entrepreneurial skills.

To entrench entrepreneurship among learners, teachers indicated that they integrate ICT to foster learners to demonstrate "entrepreneurship" skills and engage learners in real hands-on entrepreneurial activities to shape their entrepreneurial skills. The findings of this study indicate that some teachers encouraged learners to use technology to engage in different innovations relevant to the contemporary business environment. Encouraging learners to engage in inventions using ICTs is also commended by Badawi et al. (2019), by stating that learners should engage in hands-on activities to develop sound entrepreneurial skills. The use of ICTs by learners to engage in different innovations helps them develop both entrepreneurial and technological skills (Okoye, 2018).

Another imperative finding from this study is that the participants acknowledged that entrepreneurial skills are not only limited to an individual's ability to establish a business venture. They noted that for one to develop sound entrepreneurial skills, there is an assortment of qualities that need to be nurtured. Entrepreneurial qualities such as

decision-making, ability to take risks, flexibility, innovation, and ability to lead are some of the qualities that help entrepreneurs to be resilient (Fatoki, 2018). It is, therefore, important for teachers not to sidestep these soft qualities of an entrepreneur.

Despite attempts by teachers to incorporate learning activities that had a potential to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills. It transpired that most teachers are still not fully certain about their abilities to design learning activities that are compatible with ICT integration to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills. This appeared during classroom observations where all teachers resorted to learning activities that were not supported by technology to nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills. Some teachers indicated that they lack guidance on how they can integrate ICTs to design learning activities that would foster the development of "soft" entrepreneurial qualities such as decision-making and inner discipline. Also, most teachers relied on their subject knowledge of entrepreneurship and ICT integration skills to design learning activities that they think would help to nurture learners' entrepreneurial qualities that culminate in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. Du Toit (2016) blamed the lack of stand-alone entrepreneurship education in South Africa as the cause for teachers' failure to equip learners with holistic entrepreneurial skills needed by the contemporary business environment. The current entrepreneurship education that is embedded within the business studies curriculum is more theory-based based and this leaves learners with limited opportunities to apply their entrepreneurial skills in the real business world (Du Toit (2016). Also, for many business studies teachers, nurturing entrepreneurial skills is limited to equipping learners with skills to establish a business venture without taking into account the qualities of an entrepreneur that need to be developed first.

From the discussion above, it can be deduced that some teachers embraced the idea that nurturing learners' entrepreneurial skills is not limited to stressing learners' ability to

acquire skills to start business ventures. However, teachers understood that entrepreneurship as a skill is made up of an assortment of skills (qualities) that shape a successful entrepreneur. Having this understanding can play a crucial role in teachers' instructional practices because it means that they should consciously design learning activities that would help them to foster different qualities of an entrepreneur in their instructional practices. With the help of technology, teachers can design and infuse such learning activities in their classrooms.

7.6.5. ICT integration to nurture learners' technological skills

The changing trends in the contemporary business environment due to advancements in technology continue to increase the complexity of skills needed by businesses from prospective business practitioners (Chigbuson et al., 2018). Prospective business owners, employers and employees are now expected to possess skills that would allow them to operate various ICTs in a business context. As a result of this, teachers are expected to nurture learners' technological skills to prepare them for the contemporary business environment. This study revealed that teachers understand the importance of technological skills to the survival of learners in the contemporary business world. The study found that some teachers integrated learning activities that afforded learners opportunities to use different ICTs to nurture their technological skills. Teachers are of the view that engaging learners in using actual ICTs helps them to acquire technological skills. Okoye (2017) maintains that ICTs that are integrated into business studies classrooms should expose learners to various ICTs that are used in business organizations. It transpired from the study that there were very few ICTs that are used in real businesses that were seen integrated by the teachers in their classroom practices. It also transpired from the findings that some teachers encouraged learners to use technology as part of completing learning activities while other teachers limited the use

of technology to themselves. This finding highlights the difference in approaches that were adopted by teachers in their classrooms in relation to allowing and not allowing learners to utilize ICTs to complete some learning activities. Having such disparities in business studies classrooms when it comes to actual ICT utilization by learners to complete learning activities may exacerbate the technological divide that exists between learners who have access to ICTs in their classrooms and those who don't (Mathrani et al., 2022). This implies that learners who are allowed to use ICTs to complete learning activities may develop technological skills compared to their counterparts who are not allowed to use ICTs in their classrooms.

This study further reported that in classrooms where learners were allowed to utilize technology, teachers took a back seat. Teachers who provided guidance as learners were completing learning activities using ICTs focused on the content, not on the technological skills that were supposed to be nurtured through ICTs. This is worrisome because some of the learners who used ICTs to engage in presentations had an opportunity to develop presentation skills using various ICTs, but teachers did not provide proper guidance on how they could use ICTs to present business information. Teachers, as experts in business studies, should have gone beyond providing guidance relative to the content but also coach learners on how they can engage in presenting business information using ICTs. From this, it seemed like the sentiments shared by some teachers during the interviews that most learners do CAT/IT with business studies made them believe that learners have adequate technological skills that would allow them to successfully integrate ICTs in different contexts, including contemporary business environments. Okoye (2017) emphasizes the need for business studies teachers to equip learners with technological skills in their classrooms. This view suggests that business studies teachers have a duty to provide coaching and guidance

to learners on how to use ICTs for them to develop technological skills relevant to the contemporary business environment.

From the foregoing discussions, it can be inferred that some teachers know that learners need to be equipped with technological skills to operate optimally in the contemporary business environment. It might be due to this understanding that some teachers incorporated learning activities that had the potential to nurture learners' technological skills. In spite of teachers' understanding of the need for learners to acquire technological skills, some teachers did not allow learners to use ICTs in their classrooms. It also emerged from this study that those teachers who allowed learners to use ICTs in their classrooms did not provide guidance to learners for them to use ICTs correctly and subsequently develop technological skills suitable for potential business practitioners. The failure of teachers to provide proper guidance to learners when utilizing technology may be attributed to teachers' beliefs that learners who do IT/ CAT already have adequate technological skills to operate in the contemporary business environment. This finding suggests that business studies teachers do not value their roles in nurturing learners' technological skills as pronounced in business studies official curriculum.

7.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on discussing the findings of the study that were presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Detailed discussion of the findings was supported with literature and the frameworks that underpin this study. The discussions of the findings provided a deeper understanding of the phenomenon since they revealed how teachers integrate ICTs to equip learners with different critical business skills. Given the findings of this study, there is a compelling need to suggest a model for effective integration of ICTs in business studies classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills required by the contemporary business environment. The next chapter is the final chapter of this

thesis, and it provides the summary, contribution of the study, recommendations, and conclusion of the thesis.

CHAPTER 8

8. OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

8.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on discussing the key findings of the study. Then, this final chapter concludes the journey of this research that sought to investigate ICT integration by business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills to prepare them for the contemporary business environment. This chapter starts by presenting the overview of the entire study, a summary of the key findings, implications of the findings, contributions of the study, recommendations, and limitations of the study. The chapter also provides recommendations for this study and recommendations for future research. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the conclusions drawn from the key findings of this study.

8.2. SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1: This chapter provided an overview of the entire thesis. The introduction and the background of the study are outlined in this chapter. This chapter also provided a detailed discussion of the problem statement for this study. The research aim, objectives and the research questions that guided this research were also stated in this chapter. This chapter also presented an explanation of operational terms that are key in this study.

Chapter 2: A literature review of the existing studies related to the phenomenon that is investigated in this study was conducted in this chapter. The literature review helped in understanding the phenomenon under investigation and in engaging with the data.

Chapter 3: This chapter outlined the theoretical lenses that were adopted in the study. Two theories, which are Social Constructivism Theory and Functional Context Theory, were discussed in detail. This chapter also presented the conceptual framework that was formulated for this study. The conceptual framework demonstrated what was to be expected in the study by presenting relevant concepts and showing relationships among them.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, the research methodology of the study was outlined. The research approach, research paradigm, and research design were discussed in detail. The process that was followed when conducting this study was also explained. The research population, sampling and sampling technique, data collection methods, data analysis technique, trustworthiness principles and ethical issues were presented as well.

Chapter 5: In this chapter, the biographical information of the participants was discussed. Information on the research sites was also outlined in this chapter. Furthermore, the empirical findings that were generated through interviews were presented. Key themes that emerged during data analysis were used to present the findings of the study.

Chapter 6: This chapter focused on presenting the findings of the study that were generated through classroom observations. This chapter reported on how teachers integrated ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills and the findings focused on the classroom environment created by teachers to enable the acquisition of critical business skills.

Chapter 7: This chapter focuses on discussing extensively the findings of the study presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. The literature review and theoretical underpinnings of this study were used to support the discussion of findings.

Chapter 8: The overview of this study is presented in this chapter. This chapter also focused on summarising the key findings of the study, the contribution of this study, recommendations and the limitations of the study, as well as the conclusions of the study.

8.2. SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS

Key research findings that were identified from data analysis presented and interpreted in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 and discussed in Chapter 7 are summarised in relation to the research objectives of this study outlined in Chapter 1.

Teachers' views on ICT integration to nurture learners' critical business skills: The study found that teachers see value in ICT integration in business studies classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. From the teachers' self-reported experiences with ICT integration, they mentioned that ICT integration in business studies classrooms promotes learner participation in learning activities. The other noticeable finding of this study is that teachers believe that ICT integration promotes authentic learning among learners. Data collected through individual interviews also showed that ICT integration enables teachers to expose learners to authentic learning activities. Therefore, teachers concluded that the above-mentioned affordances of ICTs help them to design learning activities that help nurture learners' critical business skills.

Teaching methods adopted by teachers while integrating ICTs to create learning environments that promote the acquisition of critical business skills: This study revealed that teachers integrated different teaching methods to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills. Teaching methods such as collaborative learning method, brainstorming method, case-based teaching method and problem-based teaching methods appeared to be common among business

studies teachers. The study found that adopting these methods in their classrooms enabled them to create learning environments that support the acquisition of skills such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, and creative thinking skills.

Correspondingly, the findings from classroom observations revealed that most teachers adopted different teaching methods to create learning environments that promoted collaboration among learners, which had the potential to nurture learners' communication skills. Furthermore, the study revealed that teachers were able to adopt learning activities that fostered active learning, which had the potential to nurture learners' communication and technological skills. The study also found that there were very few teachers who managed to create a learning environment that fostered autonomous learning among learners.

ICT integration by teachers to equip learners with critical business skills: This study found that teachers reckoned the importance of critical business skills for the survival of learners in the contemporary business environment. Therefore, during interviews, they stated that they integrate different ICTs to nurture learners' critical business skills. It, however, emerged during classroom observations that although some teachers integrated ICTs to equip learners with critical business skills, they did so in a less harmonized manner. Nevertheless, a larger number of teachers integrated various ICTs in their instructional practices to support learning activities that were meant to nurture learners' critical business skills.

8.3. IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of this study have implications for ICT integration in business studies classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills espoused in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

The study found that most business studies teachers understand the importance of transforming their pedagogical practices to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills. Based on the teachers' commentaries and the classrooms that were observed, it can be concluded that most business studies teachers now embrace teaching methods that support learner-centred teaching while integrating different ICTs. In other words, they recognize the value of the learning context on learners' acquisition of critical business skills. Hence, they are inclined to adopt teaching methods that create conducive learning environments for the acquisition of critical business skills. Given this, business studies curriculum specialists should support teachers by providing them with ongoing professional development programmes (workshops) to expose them to more teaching methods, especially those that are regarded as novel, so they can have more capacity to create learning environments that promote the acquisition of critical business skills through adopting various teaching methods.

Furthermore, the study revealed that business studies teachers appeared to be prepared and willing to integrate ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. However, few inconsistencies in their ICT integration were noticed. Due to this, some learning activities that were meant to foster some critical business skills were completed without ICT integration. In other words, some teachers relied on "traditional" learning activities to foster some critical business skills, such as problem-solving skills. The implication for implementing some learning activities without ICT integration is that learners may not benefit from the affordances of technology that would help them to

acquire the critical business skill that is being reinforced. This will then hamper learners from gaining critical business skills that would help them to operate effectively in the contemporary business environment. Therefore, business studies teachers need to be deliberate about learners' critical business skills they want to nurture, the learning activities, and the kind of ICTs they integrate, as well as how that particular technology would help them to nurture a specific critical business skill.

8.4. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Although the study was limited in scope, it is fascinating to reveal that it has made contributions, particularly to theories that were adopted in this study and on ICT integration in teaching and learning of business studies. Although Social Constructivism Theory is hailed for creating an enabling environment for teachers to integrate ICTs in their classrooms (Mhlongo et al., 2017), it did not make it clear how ICTs can be integrated in business studies classrooms to create a conducive learning environment to equip learners with critical business skills. This study helped to highlight how different ICTs can be integrated in business studies classrooms to create learning environments that supported the acquisition of critical business skills. Teachers such as Teacher B and D succeeded to integrate ICTs to create learning environments that were characterized by the elements of Social Constructivism such as active learning, and collaboration among learners.

In addition, this study helped to provide meaning to the principles of the Functional Context Theory. The proponents of FCT suggest that teachers should integrate learning resources that learners will find in the workplaces that they are being prepared for. However, FCT is not explicit on the kind of the learning resources that need to be integrated in the learning context to prepare learners for the world beyond school. Through participating teachers, this study helped to highlight actual ICTs that can be

used by teachers to expose learners to the real world. Teachers such as Teacher E adopted educational videos that exposed learners to real business problems and how business practitioners engage in solving those business related problems. From this study, it seemed that business studies teachers played their role as teachers through maximising the use of ICTs that are available in their schools (Ndlovu, 2016), without complaining about the lack of advanced ICTs that are used in real businesses as per the aspirations of FCT. Further to that, Functional Context Theory was initially advocated for adult education (Sticht, 1975). This current study employed FCT to understand how business studies teachers can use learning resources (ICTs) to prepare high school learners for the contemporary business environment.

Furthermore, this study provides data that can be used as a guide by curriculum planners and curriculum specialists to support business studies teachers to integrate ICTs in their classroom practices to achieve the objectives of the business studies curriculum. This is because this study does not end with exploring the integration of ICTs in teaching and learning business studies, but it also advocates for teachers to integrate ICTs with the aim of equipping learners with critical business skills that are needed by the contemporary business world. Furthermore, this study provides empirical data on what should be entailed by the present business studies classroom to create a conducive learning context for business studies learners to acquire critical business skills. The study practically outlined how different teaching methods can be coupled with different learning activities to create a learning environment that gives rise to the acquisition of critical business skills.

Finally, this study suggested a model called Technology Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers. The researcher regards this model as a unique contribution to the

body of knowledge. The model is presented in Figure 8.1 below and is followed by a detailed discussion of what it entails.

Technology Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers

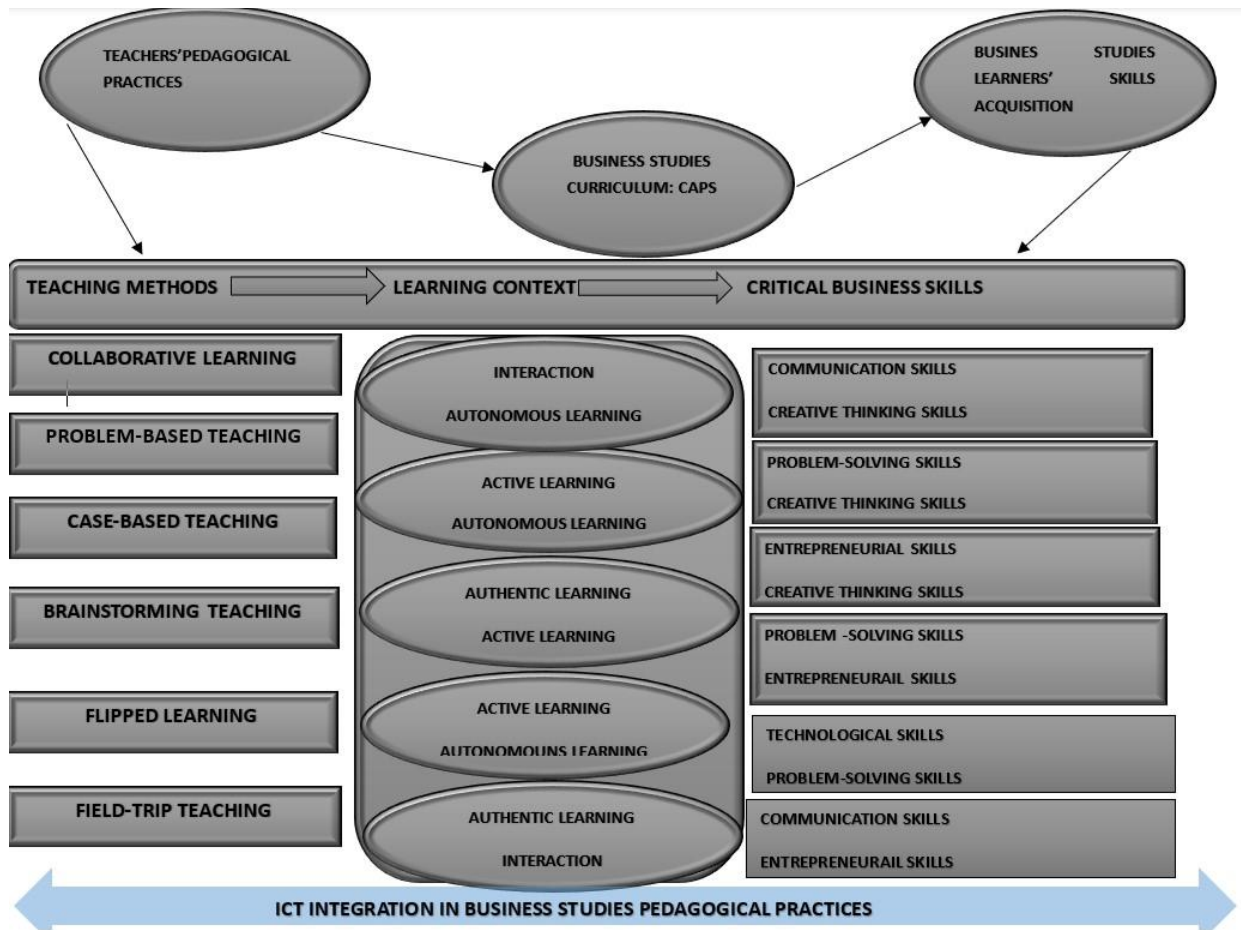


Figure 8.1: *Technology Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers*

8.4.1. An Overview of the Model

The Technology Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers is built from the key constructs that emerged from the main findings of the study and the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. This framework advocates for subject-specific and context-sensitive ICT integration practices to enable business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills. Currently, there are few clear models or theoretical groundings designed from the South African context informing ICT integration in South

African classrooms (Howard & Maton, 2011). Also, the policy on ICT integration in South Africa recognizes the role of ICT integration in teaching and learning (DBE, 2004) but does not provide a grounded framework for the implementation of ICT in the classroom (Mbatha, 2020). This study, therefore, suggests a model of ICT integration, particularly for business studies teachers. Business studies teachers can follow this model in their classrooms when integrating ICTs to create learning environments that help facilitate acquisition of critical business skills by learners. This model is seen as an instrument to help achieve some of the objectives contained in the DBE's ICT integration policy to achieve the objectives of the curriculum.

The suggested framework advocates for business studies teachers to integrate different ICTs in their classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. Teachers can achieve this through integrating ICTs in their classrooms to first create learning environments that foster learners' active involvement in learning activities. Creating a learning environment that fosters learners' active involvement in learning can enable them to acquire critical business skills. This framework suggests that learning environments that show some elements of Social Constructivism Theory, such as interaction, collaboration, authentic learning, autonomous learning, and active learning are ideal learning environments to facilitate learners' acquisition of critical business skills. Business studies teachers can create such learning environments by adopting teaching methods and activities that would put learners at the centre of the learning process. Finally, this study argues that by integrating various ICTs in business studies instructional practices, teachers can expose learners to real business environments that they are being prepared for (Aspirations of Functional Context Theory). This study advocates for business studies teachers to capitalize on the capabilities of technology to design learning activities such as virtual field trips that would help expose learners to real businesses.

8.4.2. Brief outline of the constructs of the Technology Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers

This model is developed to help business studies teachers facilitate ICT integration in business studies classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills. Although this model is designed based on the study that was conducted in a context where ICTs are scarce, it is believed that the model can still be useful to teachers from well-resourced contexts. The main constructs of the model are briefly discussed below:

8.4.2.1. Teacher's pedagogical practices

This is the first domain of the Technology Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers. Teachers' pedagogical practices domain encompasses all the philosophies and practices that are employed by the teachers to represent business studies content. It is made up of the teaching methods, ICTs and learning activities that are employed by business studies teachers in their classrooms. This model assumes that all business studies teachers have knowledge of the set of teaching methods and learning materials that they can use to ensure that the business studies curriculum is implemented.

8.4.2.2. Business studies curriculum: CAPS

This domain is made up of the official business studies curriculum that is outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document for business studies Grades 10-12. All business studies teachers in South Africa are responsible for implementing this official curriculum in their schools to equip learners with critical business skills. Teachers have a minimum of four hours per week to implement a business studies curriculum (DBE, 2011). It appeared from the study that all teachers possess adequate Content Knowledge (CK) that is needed to teach business studies. Hence, this model assumes that all business studies teachers already have adequate content knowledge when they enter their business studies classrooms to teach the subject.

8.4.2.3. Business studies learners' skills acquisition

Business studies learners' skills acquisition is the domain that stresses that all learners in business studies classrooms should acquire critical business skills after learning has occurred. In other words, for the learning process to be considered successful, all learners should acquire critical business skills during the course of learning. Hence, business studies teachers should be intentional about the contribution of all pedagogical practices and ICTs they adopt in their classrooms towards the attainment of critical business skills by the learners. In short, learners' skills acquisition domain is seen as the culmination of meaningful learning in business studies classrooms.

8.4.2.4. Teaching methods

The teaching methods are the cornerstone of every pedagogical practice. This domain suggests several teaching methods that can be adopted in technology-enhanced business studies classrooms to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills. It emerged from the key findings of this study that most business studies teachers believed that adopting teaching methods that promote learner participation in learning activities can help to create learning environments that support the acquisition of critical business skills. The relationship among these constructs is also shown in Figure 8.1. through the arrows. The arrow indicates that teaching methods adopted in business studies classrooms can create a particular learning environment which can be an enabler to the acquisition of certain critical business skill(s). For example, the collaborative learning method can create a learning environment that is characterized by interaction and autonomous learning, which may enable teachers to nurture learners' communication and creative thinking skills.

8.4.2.5. Learning context

The suggested framework perceives the learning context as an environment where teaching and learning of business studies occurs. This model suggests that a conducive learning environment to teach and learn business studies should be characterized by active learning, collaborative learning, autonomous learning, interactive learning, and learner involvement. Constructivists believe that a learning environment that is characterized by the abovementioned elements has the potential to promote the acquisition of critical business skills. Wilson (1996) stipulates that constructivist teachers use tools and information to create a learning context where learners can work together to construct knowledge and subsequently acquire skills. It emerged from this study that most business studies teachers were able to use different teaching methods and ICTs to create learning environments that fostered the acquisition of critical business skills.

8.4.2.6. Critical business skills

The final domain of this model focuses on critical business skills that business studies learners need to be equipped with in order for them to operate meaningfully in the contemporary business world. The suggested framework proposes that learners' critical business skills can be meaningfully nurtured in the context where business studies teachers adopt learner-centred teaching methods while integrating ICTs to create conducive learning environments that encourage learners to actively participate in learning activities. For example, Figure 8.1. above shows that critical business skills such as technological and problem-solving skills can be nurtured when business studies teachers implement flipped learning teaching methods in their technology-enhanced classrooms. This is because the flipped learning method has the capability to create a learning environment that is characterized by active learning and autonomous learning, which makes it easy for learners to acquire technological and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, creative thinking and problem-solving skills can be nurtured in the

classroom where brainstorming teaching methods are adopted. It emerged from this study that the brainstorming teaching method can create a learning environment that supports interaction and autonomous learning. Both autonomous and interactive can be enablers to learners' acquisition of creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

8.4.3. Operationalization of ICT Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers

The visual representation below shows how the proposed model can be implemented to ensure meaningful integration of ICTs in business studies classrooms.

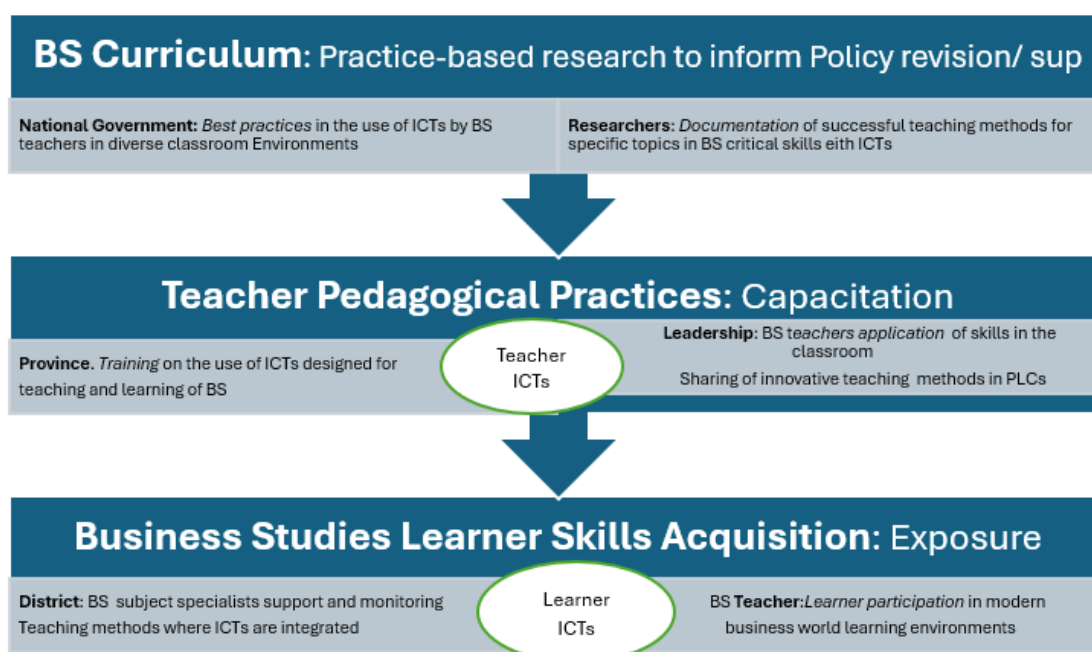


FIGURE 8.2: The suggested implementation tool for ICT Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers

Figure 8.2. above is a visual representation outlining how the suggested ICT Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers must be implemented. In order to ensure that business studies teachers integrate ICTs in South African schools to equip learners with critical business skills, the National government through the Department of Basic Education should develop ICT policy that would advocate for subject specific ICT integration practices. This can be achieved through conducting research that would

document best practices of ICT integration from different business studies classrooms in South Africa. The policy development of this nature would strengthen the White Paper on ICT education that was developed in 2004 by the Department of Basic Education. Furthermore, the subject specific ICT integration policy would outline how teachers can integrate technology to teach certain topics in business studies in order to achieve the objectives of the curriculum.

DBE should also develop business studies teachers' ICT integration skills. This can be achieved through through capacitating teachers by offering them training on ICT integration in teaching business studies. The ICT integration training should include both pedagogical and technological skills to equip business studies teachers with suitable technology intrgration skills. During the training process, teachers should be encouraged to build Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) according to their clusters. Building PLCs would create a conducive environment for teachers to share creative and innovative ways of using available ICTs in their business studies classrooms. DBE through its different levels such as the provincial and district-based officials should provide leadership on the implementation of the suggested model. Provincial and district officials in the form of subject specialists should conduct school visits for the purposes of monitoring of the training offered to teachers and to provide support to teachers.

Finally, to ensure that learners are equipped with the critical business skills that are needed by the contemporary business environment, they should be exposed to real business environments. This can be done through conducting physical field trips (business visits) or virtual field trips. Exposing learners to actual business environments can help to enhance their critical business skills. Districts and schools can work closely with businesses to organize business visits and this would help learners to develop critical business skills such as problem-solving, creative thinking skills and technological

skills. This is because during business visits, the business people can model to learners how some complex business problems are resolved or how technology is used to support business operations.

8.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A few limitations of this study were identified, including the limited sample of six business studies teachers who participated in this study. Due to the limited number of participants in this study, its findings cannot be generalized to all business studies teachers. Despite the non-generalizability of the findings of this study, it can be maintained that the findings of this study do have implications for other business studies teachers. In other words, this study contributes to instructional practices in other business studies classrooms in relation to ICT integration to equip learners with critical business skills.

Time constraints and the limited scope of this study were also identified as the limitations. Given that this was a doctoral study, and it was bounded by time and scope, this study did not include learners as its participants. Involving learners in the study could have helped to capture their views on how their teachers integrate ICTs to nurture their critical business skills. Nevertheless, the researcher is of the view that the data obtained from the teachers was rich enough to help understand the phenomenon that was investigated.

Finally, qualitative research is usually blamed for bias from the side of the researcher. This is because the researcher has the power to select the approaches, research design, data collection instruments, sampling techniques and, finally, the participants. The researcher used all processes humanly possible to deal with any possible biases during this study. The researcher fully complied with the ethical process to ensure that any form of bias during the study was avoided.

8.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that business studies teachers are “willing and eager to integrate ICTs in their classroom practices” (Hindle, 2007). This creates a fertile ground for the Department of Basic Education to provide teachers with the support they need to enhance their ICT integration practices, to achieve the objectives and aspirations of business studies curriculum. From these conclusions, the study recommends that:

1. The Department of Basic Education (DBE), through curriculum specialists, should provide continuous support to business studies teachers to encourage them to integrate ICTs with the aim of nurturing learners’ critical business skills in order for learners that are produced by the South African schools to possess skills that are needed by the contemporary business environment.
2. DBE should develop coherent professional development programmes (workshops) to expose all business studies teachers to novel pedagogies, learning activities and ICTs that can be used to nurture learners’ critical business skills in order for them to survive in the contemporary business environment. This will help to reduce teachers’ reliance on their teaching experiences and what they think is suitable for learners to acquire, which sometimes can be inconsistent with the objectives of the business studies curriculum.
3. Furthermore, this study recommends that business studies be treated as a vocational subject as early as high school in South Africa. This will ensure that proper ICTs that are made available to business studies teachers and schools that offer business studies. The business environment in which business studies learners are being prepared for, is complex due to the advancements in technology, so for schools to produce learners that are relevant to an ever-

changing business environment, ICTs used in schools should somewhat match those that are used in real businesses.

4. Finally, schools and business studies teachers should form sustainable partnerships with businesses (big or small) in the areas where schools are located. This would enable teachers to regularly conduct industry visits (field trips) to expose learners to real businesses. This will not only familiarise learners with the real business environment but also help learners to learn from business practitioners who are at the coalface of business operations. The field trips or business visits should not be limited to physical visits only, but also virtual field trips should be conducted to allow for business studies teachers and learners to conduct multiple business visits without experiencing difficulties that were expressed by some teachers in this study.

8.7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the future, a study of this nature should be conducted in schools located in urban schools or in schools that are well-resourced. This would help to ascertain whether the integration of ICTs by business studies teachers to equip learners with critical business skills in the way they did in this study is isolated to contexts where there is a lack of ICTs or it is common among business studies teachers.

Furthermore, there is a need for a similar study to be conducted in the future where learners would be included to ascertain their perceptions of ICT integration by their teachers to equip them with critical business skills. This study will also provide a platform for learners to express their views regarding ICT integration in business studies classrooms. This study couldn't explore learners' perceptions of this phenomenon due to the limited scope and time constraints.

This study also suggests that participatory research investigating the same phenomenon be conducted in the future. The study of this nature would allow the researchers to identify specific teaching methods and learning activities they can use while integrating ICTs to nurture learners' critical business skills. The study of this nature will help teachers to reflect and learn from their pedagogical practices. By its nature, participatory research is not a once-off data collection exercise but it is continuous and helps stakeholders involved in the research project to engage in activities over time and reflect on their actions.

8.8. THE FINAL WORD

This study sought to explore business studies teachers' ICT integration to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills that are required by the contemporary business environment. The empirical data gathered through interviews and classroom observations provided the basis to ascertain business studies teachers' integration of ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. The frameworks that underpin this study were used to make sense of the findings of the study. Firstly, the study revealed that business studies teachers see value in ICT integration in their classrooms. It merged from the findings that teachers believe that ICT integration helps them expose learners to authentic learning activities. Furthermore, teachers believe that ICT integration in business studies classrooms encourages active participation among learners. Therefore, this enables them to easily create learning activities that would foster collaboration and interaction in the classroom, and this results in learners' acquisition of critical business skills such as communication skills.

This study also found that teachers implemented various teaching methods in their technology-enhanced classrooms to create learning environments that were conducive

to the acquisition of critical business skills. Although some teachers dominated their lessons with teacher-centred learning environments, it was encouraging to see a larger number of participants adopting learner-centred teaching methods in their classrooms. Learning methods such as collaborative learning, brainstorming method and case-based teaching method were incorporated in various classrooms. This showed that most business studies teachers recognize that for them to nurture learners' critical business skills, they need to adopt teaching methods that are amenable to ICT integration.

Furthermore, the study found that most teachers integrated different ICTs in their classrooms with the aim of equipping learners with critical business. However, it emerged that some teachers' ICT integration practices were not fully harmonized to nurture learners' critical business skills. This is because some teachers limited the use of technology to the delivery of the lesson content, not necessarily to perform learning activities that would help learners acquire critical business skills. On the other hand, some teachers managed to integrate ICTs to develop learners' critical business skills. The finding of this nature is interesting because it shows that not all business studies teachers can fully integrate ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. This may be attributed to the fact that most business studies teachers who participated in the study relied on their personal teaching experience and their general technological skills to integrate ICTs in their classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills.

It is for this reason that this study proposed a Technology Integration Model for Business Studies Teachers to help them integrate ICTs in their classroom practices. This framework can be used as a practical guide for teachers to integrate ICTs in business studies classrooms to nurture learners' critical business skills. This is because it suggests specific teaching methods, learning activities and ICTs that can be incorporated

in business studies classrooms to produce certain learning contexts that have the potential to result in the acquisition of particular critical business skills.

8.9. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This is the final chapter that provides an overview of the whole study. This chapter provided a summary of the key findings that emerged from this study; implications of the findings were also discussed in this chapter. Based on the findings, a technology integration framework for business studies for business studies teachers to nurture learners' critical business skills was proposed and outlined in detail. The researcher also recognized that there are few limitations to this study that needed to be ventilated and they were presented in this chapter. Recommendations to different parties were made and recommendations for future research were stated as well. Finally, the chapter presented the main conclusions in the form of the final words that were drawn from this study.

"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest"- Benjamin Franklin.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Gcabashe

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: H22/05/12

PROJECT TITLE

Business Studies teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technologies to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills in selected schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Mr N Gcabashe

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Wits School of Education/

DATE CONSIDERED

22 May 2022

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved
Risk Level: Minimal

EXPIRY DATE

20 June 2025

DATE 21 June 2022

CHAIRPERSON

(Professor J Watermeyer)

cc: Supervisor : Professor N Ndlovu

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/we fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. I agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.

Signature

30 / 06 / 2022
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

APPENDIX B: KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

	KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE EDUCATION REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	
Private Bag X9137 PIETERMARITZBURG 3200 Anton Lembede Building, 247 Buroer Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201 Tel: 033 392 1051	
Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za	
Enquiries: Mrs B.T. Ntuli	Ref.:2/4/8/7279

Mr Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe
P.O. Box 3408
SUNDUMBILI
4491

Dear Mr Gcabashe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"BUSINESS STUDIES TEACHERS' INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES TO EQUIP GRADE 12 LEARNERS WITH CRITICAL BUSIENSS SKILLS IN SELCTED SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA:"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from **19 April 2022 to 31 March 2025**.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Open Rubric

APPENDIX C: LETTER TO THE PRINCIPALS



P.O. Box 3408

Sundumbili

4491

16 April 2022.

Dear principal

My name is Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe, I am a Doctoral student at the University of Witwatersrand School of Education. My supervisor is Dr Nokulunga Ndlovu. I am doing research on **An exploration of Business Studies teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technologies to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills**. The main aim of the study is to investigate how Business Studies teachers use Information and Communication Technology resources to prepare learners for the contemporary business world by equipping them with critical business skills.

I hereby seek your permission to conduct a study in your school. One Business Studies teacher from your school is sampled for the study. The information provided by the teacher will be used against the school, but it will be used only for the purpose of this study. The identity of the school and the participant will always be kept undisclosed and in all academic writing about the study. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study.

The findings of this study will be submitted as a thesis report to the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg and may also be published in journals or books.

All research data will be destroyed five years after completion of the project. I can be contacted on 2459694@students.wits.ac.za / [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe.

APPENDIX D: INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS



Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Divisional of Educational Information Technology,
Wits School of Education, 27St Andrew Road Parktown,
University of the Witwatersrand, 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa
01 June 2022

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe. I am a Doctoral student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr N.S Ndlovu. I am conducting a research study about technology integration in Business Studies. The study title is: **An exploration of Business Studies teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technologies to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills.**

I am inviting you to take part in a face- to- face individual interview and classroom observation. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about 30-45 minutes (interviews), while classroom observations will be (120 minutes or two lessons per teacher). The interview and classroom observations will take place at your school after schooling hours, with classroom observations taking place on weekends to avoid disturbing the school timetabling.

With your permission, I would like to audio-record the interviews and video-record the classroom observations. This data will be stored in a password-protected laptop for five years and be deleted after five years. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the raw data.

The interview and classroom observations will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decided not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

There are no potential risks associated with this study that the participant will incur or be exposed to.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,
Nduduzo Gcabashe

Researcher:

Nduduzo Briand Gcabashe

Contact number: [REDACTED]

Email address: 24596944@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisor:

Dr N.S. Ndlovu

Email Address: [REDACTED]

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS



Consent Form

Divisional of Educational Information Technology,
Wits School of Education, 27St Andrew Road Parktown,
University of the Witwatersrand, 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa
01 June 2022

Title of project: An exploration of Business Studies teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technologies to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills.

Name of researcher: Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe

I, ..., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the classroom observations may be video recorded and my pictures while teaching will be taken	YES	NO
I agree that my blurred pictures and direct quotations from my video recorded lesson presentation may be used by the researcher in their research report	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report	YES	NO

..... (signature)
..... (name of participant)
..... (date)

APPENDIX F: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS



Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Divisional of Educational Information Technology,
Wits School of Education, 27St Andrew Road Parktown,
University of the Witwatersrand, 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa
01 June 2022

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe. I am a Doctoral student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr N.S Ndlovu. I am conducting a research study about technology integration in Business Studies. The study title is: **An exploration of Business Studies teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technologies to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills.**

I am inviting your child to take part in my study by being observed while engaging in learning activities during Business Studies classes. Classroom observations will take place in two lessons or periods. If you allow your learner to be part of the observed lessons, classroom observations will be 60 minutes.

The classroom observations will be confidential and anonymous during the reporting of the findings.

If you decide to allow your child to take part in the research study, it should be because you want him/her (child) to volunteer. You can withdraw your child from the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You and your child will not get any direct benefits if you choose to allow him/her (child) to join the research study. You and your child will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decided not to allow him/her (child) to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You and your child will not be paid for being in this research study.

There are no potential risks associated with this study that the participant will incur or be exposed to.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,
Nduduzo Gcabashe

Researcher:
Nduduzo Briand Gcabashe
Contact number: [REDACTED]
Email address: 24596944@students.wits.ac.za

APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM PARENTS



Consent Form

Divisional of Educational Information Technology,
Wits School of Education, 27St Andrew Road Parktown,
University of the Witwatersrand, 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa
01 June 2022

Title of project: An exploration of Business Studies teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technologies to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills.

Name of researcher: Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe

I, ..., agree that my child (Name Surname) participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me and my child. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that my child volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the observation may be video recorded, and the researcher may take pictures	YES	NO
I agree that my child's blurred pictures may be used by the researcher in their research report	YES	NO
I agree that my child's participation will remain anonymous (his/her name will not be used by the researcher in their research report)	YES	NO

..... (signature)

..... (name of participant's parent)

..... (date)

APPENDIX H: INFORMATION SHEET FOR LEARNERS



Participant Information Sheet (PIS) (Learners)

Divisional of Educational Information Technology,
Wits School of Education, 27St Andrew Road Parktown,
University of the Witwatersrand, 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa
01 June 2022

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe. I am a Doctoral student at the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr N.S Ndlovu. I am conducting a research study about technology integration in Business Studies. The study title is: **An exploration of Business Studies teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technologies to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills.**

I am inviting you to take part in classroom observation. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study (classroom observations) will be (120 minutes or two lessons). The classroom observations will take place at your school during Saturday classes to avoid disturbing the school timetabling.

With your permission, I would like to video record and take pictures during classroom observations. The lessons will be video recorded or be shot (filmed) so that the researcher can be able to report on your engagement with technological tools during teaching and learning. The data that will be collected will be stored in a password-protected laptop for five years and be deleted after five years. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to the raw data.

The classroom observations will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name, or anything else that could identify you.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services; benefits or rights you would normally have if you decided not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

There are no potential risks associated with this study that the participant will incur or exposed to.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Nduduzo Gcabashe

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Supervisor:

Dr N.S. Ndlovu

Email Address: [REDACTED]

APPENDIX I: ASSENT FORM FOR LEARNERS



Learners' Assent Form

Divisional of Educational Information Technology,
Wits School of Education, 27St Andrew Road Parktown,
University of the Witwatersrand, 2050,
Johannesburg, South Africa

01 June 2022

Title of project: An exploration of Business Studies teachers' integration of Information and Communication Technologies to equip Grade 12 learners with critical business skills.

Name of researcher: Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe

I, ..., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me and my child. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that my child volunteered to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the observation may be video recorded, and the researcher may take pictures.	YES	NO

I agree that my child's blurred pictures may be used by the researcher in their research report.	YES	NO
--	-----	----

I agree that my child's participation will remain anonymous (his/her name will not be used by the researcher in their research report)	YES	NO
--	-----	----

..... (signature)

..... (name of participant's parent)

..... (date)

APPENDIX J: LANGUAGE EDITING LETTER

ERRCD Forum

Motto: *Rethinking Education Research for Inclusive Development*



Our ref: EDIT0339 Date: 13/10/2023

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter confirms that Nduduzo Brian Gcabashe's thesis titled "**An exploration of business studies teachers' integration of Information And Communication Technologies to equip grade 12 learners with critical business skills**" was edited by a professional English-language editing staff at ERRCD Forum.

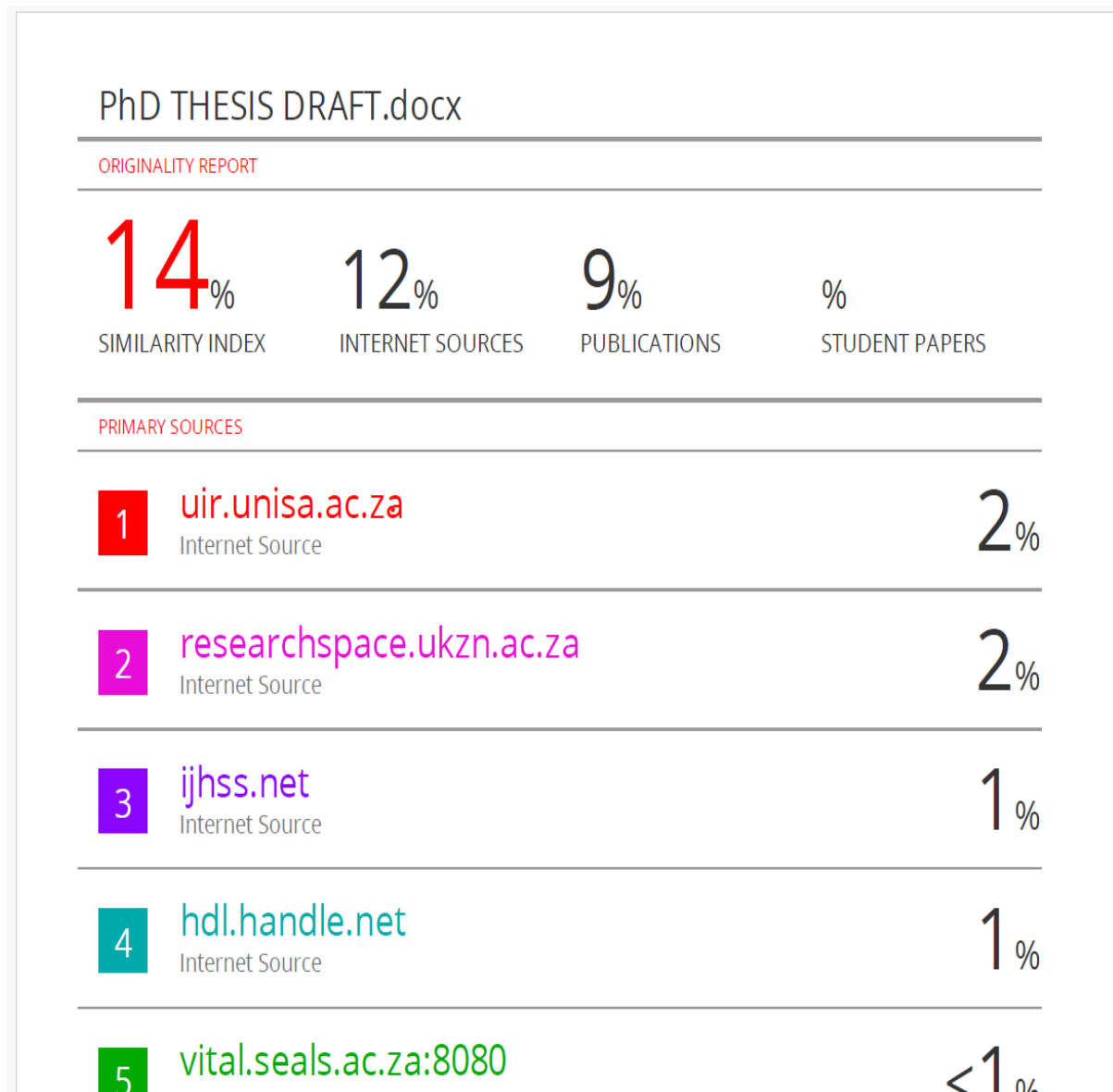
For further information, feel free to contact LangEditor@errcd.com


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APPENDIX K: TURN-IT IN REPORT



APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Semi-structured individual interviews schedule with Business Studies teachers.

QUESTIONS:

SECTION A

1. Teachers' perceptions on the impact of technology integration training programmes on their ability to integrate technology in Business Studies classrooms to equip learners with critical business skills.

- 1.1. Do you integrate technological tools in your Business Studies classroom?
- 1.2. What are the technological tools do you regularly integrate into your classroom practices?
- 1.3. The technological tools that are used in the schools were purchased by the school, provided by the government, or donated by the private sector/businesses?
- 1.4. Were you provided with training on how to use them or did you learn on your own?
- 1.5. How long did the training take and was it enough according to your view?
- 1.6. Were you introduced to integrating technology in teaching Business Studies before starting your practice as a professional teacher or while you were a student teacher?
- 1.7. So, do you think your exposure to technology while you were still a student or a qualified teacher prepared you enough to start using technological resources to teach Business Studies classroom?
- 1.8. Do you have technology related qualifications? Can be a short course.
- 1.9. Have you ever received formal training on technology integration? If so, when last was that?

- 1.10. If not, how did you learn technology integration in the teaching and learning of Business Studies?
- 1.11. Do you consider the training as continuous and developmental? If so, why do you say that and if not, why do you say so?
- 1.12. Is there any technical support you receive to help you in the integration of Information and Communication resources in your classroom practices?
- 1.13. Do you think the formal training on technology integration you received prepared you to equip Business Studies learners with critical business skills? Explain

SECTION B:

2. Teachers' perceptions on how they integrate technology into Business Studies teaching and learning.

- 2.1. How often do you integrate technology into your Business Studies Grade 12 classrooms?
- 2.2. At what level of Business Studies lesson do you integrate technology, i.e. preparation, during, or throughout the lesson? Please explain.
- 2.3. Kindly explain to me how technology integration enhances Business Studies teaching and learning process.
- 2.4. Do you think the Business Studies curriculum promotes the integration of technology? If so, do you think it's enough? If not, how can this be improved?
- 2.5. Do you think Business Studies CAPS documents provide enough guidance on how technology can be integrated into each lesson? Is that guidance, if any, enough?
- 2.6. Do you think there is enough clarity on how technology can be integrated into Business Studies to achieve a certain lesson objective?

- 2.7. Do you believe that the integration of technology in Business Studies classroom improve learners' performance or is there no difference?

SECTION C.

3. How teachers equip learners in the classroom with critical business skills needed in the business world through integrating technology in their classroom practice.

- 3.1. How do you use technological tools to equip Grade 12 Business Studies learning with problem-solving skills? Give an example and explain the technological tools you have ever used in your classroom to nurture learners' problem-solving skills.
- 3.2. How do you use technological resources to equip Grade 12 Business Studies learning with communication skills? Give an example and explain the technological tools you have ever used in your classroom to nurture learners' problem-solving skills.
- 3.3. How do you nurture learners' entrepreneurial skills with technological tools? Which technological tool have you ever integrated to do it?
- 3.4. How do you integrate technological tools in your Business Studies classroom to equip learners with creative thinking skills? Which resource(s) have you ever integrated in this regard?
- 3.5. Give examples of technological tools you integrate into your Business Studies classrooms to enhance learners' technological skills and how you go about doing this.

SECTION D.

4. Teaching methods used by Business Studies teachers to promote the acquisition of critical business skills as they use technology.

- 4.1. What do you understand about the learners-centred teaching methods? Explain...

- 4.2. Do you have any understanding of collaborative learning methods? How can you define it? How do you use it in teaching Business Studies?
- 4.3. What is your understanding of the flipped learning approach and how do you use it when teaching Business Studies?
- 4.4. What is your understanding of problem-based teaching method and how do you use it in your Business Studies classroom?
- 4.5. What is your understanding of the case-based teaching method (use of case studies/scenarios) in Business Studies? How do you use it in a Business Studies classroom?
- 4.6. What is your understanding of the brainstorming teaching method and how do you use it in teaching Business Studies in your classroom?
- 4.7. Have you used field trips or excursions in your Business Studies classroom? If so, how did it assist you in supporting learners' understanding or concepts? If not, how can you use and how do you think it can assist learners to understand a particular concept or content?
- 4.8. Do you think the teaching methods are compatible (work well) with technology in Business Studies classrooms? How?

SECTION E

5. Teaching methods used by Business Studies teachers to promote the acquisition of critical business skills as they use technology.

- 5.1. What are the teaching methods you use in teaching Business Studies that enable the integration of technology and enable you to equip learners with critical business skills? Explain by providing practical examples.
- 5.2. How do you think these methods you are alluding to allow learners to participate in classroom activities? Explain.
- 5.3. Do you think as learners engage in learning activities, they develop critical business skills? Provide one or two skills that get to be developed and how.

- 5.4. Have you ever received formal training where different teaching methods are used to teach Business Studies in classrooms enhanced by technology? If yes, what was that training about? Explain one or two teaching methods.
- 5.5. If not, do you think there is a need for Business Studies teachers to be trained in teaching methods that are compatible with technology integration? Explain.

SECTION F.

- 5.1. Do you think the use of technologies enhances learners' engagement inside and outside the classroom? How?
- 5.2. Have you ever given learners a project to complete using technological tools? What was that project?
- 5.3. Do you think the Business Studies curriculum enables learners to do activities or projects that benefit or impact the community at large? What can be that project or activity?
- 5.5. Do you think the Business Studies curriculum is preparing learners for the current world of work by equipping learners with skills needed by employers?
- 5.6. Do you think the Business Studies curriculum helps to equip learners with skills that may enable them (learners) to establish their own businesses? What are some of those skills?

APPENDIX M: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Name of the school	School D	
Grade	12	
Date	11 August 2022	
Lesson Topic	Characteristics, Advantages, disadvantages, and success/ failure factors of a private company.	
Areas of focus	Key elements of the lesson	Comments
Technological tools integrated into the classroom	Laptop, data projector, cell phones and whiteboard.	Both the teacher and learners made use of technology in different stages of the lesson.
Teaching methods adopted by the teacher	Telling method, flipped learning and discussion method.	Teacher D introduced the lesson through adopting the telling method; as the lesson develops, she adopted some elements of flipped learning in conjunction with the discussion method where she asked learners to engage on pair discussions

		based on the educational video, she shared with them via WhatsApp. She further adopted whole classroom discussions as learners were discussing the characteristics of the private company.
Learning activities adopted in the classroom	• Educational video • Oral presentations	Teacher D shared with learners an educational video that was extracted from the educational application called IWhiz. Some learners watched the video outside the classroom, while other did not. To ensure that all learners were on the same page, the teacher replayed the video. Learners also engaged in oral presentations where they were sharing their suggested on the real business problems they resolved during teaching and learning.

Learning context inspired by Social Constructivism Theory	Collaboration, interaction, and active learning	Through the teaching methods and learning activities that were adopted in the classroom, Teacher D managed to create learning environment that reflected some of the principles of Social Constructivism Theory.
Critical business skills nurtured	Communication skills, technological skills, and entrepreneurial skills.	Learning activities that were prepared by Teacher D had the potential to nurture some learners' critical business skills.