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PEER ASSESSMENT AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICE IN THE UNIVERSITY: CONCEPTUALISATION, ENACTMENT, AFFORDANCES AND CONSTRAINTS

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A research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

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ABSTRACT

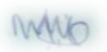
This study explores how lecturers, as instructional leaders, conceptualised and enacted peer assessment in the courses they teach. The study also explores affordances and constraints of peer assessment to teaching and learning at the university level. Qualitative case study design was employed in this study. Five lecturers from one University in South Africa across different disciplines in School of Education, participated. Data was collected through an in-depth semi-structured interview with each case lecturer. Findings of this study revealed that peer assessment was conceptualised by the lecturers as both assessment for learning and as an opportunity to develop in student-teachers skills of assessment. Three different approaches to the enactment of peer assessment emerged. These are: individual-written work peer assessment; group-oral presentation peer assessment; and group-written work peer assessment. Various teaching and learning affordances of peer assessment were revealed, as well as constraints on its effective implementation, such as: students' incompetence in assessment; issues of bias in assigning marks to peers; and increasing demand by the lecturers in terms of their workload. Implications of these findings for the theory, practice and policy on assessment at University level were discussed.

Keywords

Affordances, Conceptualisation, Constraints, Enactment, Peer assessment, South Africa, University level

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



Maryam Abdulhamid

27th day of January in the year 2017

DEDICATION

To my Late Mother, who supported me throughout my life endeavours. I wish you are here to see that your daughter has completed a master's degree. May Almighty Allah grant you Jannatul Firdaus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Allah who made it possible for me to accomplish this research report and my study at Wits University. I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Felix Maringe for his constructive criticism to my work and being patient with me all the time as a novice researcher.

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I would like to thank my family who had to endure so much for me to accomplish this study. To my parent, Alhaji Umar Mohammad (Baba) and my late mother, Amina Yahaya (Umma), who passed away during the course of this study. I say thank you for the moral support that you have rendered to me since my childhood. May Allah forgive my mum and makes her a dweller of the highest place in heaven (the Jannatul Firdaus). Special thanks to my husband, Dr Lawan Abdulhamid who provided me with the opportunity to pursue this degree, and his emotional, moral and financial support throughout this study is well appreciated. To my children Sabriyya, Sajida, Siyama, Ihsan and Salima who grew at the hands of different caretakers because of my study. May Allah continue to bless you with abundance knowledge and give you the ability to

make good use of it and may He also continue to guide and protect you throughout your life.

Finally, to the five lecturers who participated in this study. I couldn't have completed this research report without your kind support in sharing with me your experiences relating to your practices of peer assessment. I say a huge thank you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore in-depth the concept of peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice in the university. The aim is to unpack how university lecturers, as instructional leaders, conceptualise peer-assessment and how they apply it in the courses they teach. This was done through in-depth semi-structured interviews with a sample of five lecturers in one university in South Africa. The study also provides an insight into the lecturers' perspectives on the affordances and constraints of peer assessment to teaching and students' learning.

The central conception of this study is based on the notion that lecturers' behaviour in the classroom is seen as part of their instructional leadership role. This understanding is drawn from the work of Bush (2007, p. 401) who affirms that "instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning, and on the behavior of teachers [lecturers in this case] in working with students". This behaviour has a direct influence on students' learning. A behaviour that is an integral part of teaching is witnessed in lecturers' assessment practices. In support of this argument, Brown, Bull, and Pendlebury (1997, p. 7) state that "If you want to change students' learning then change the method of assessment". In this sense, assessment is considered as an integral component of any educational process. Assessment helps to support learning by providing students with the opportunity to demonstrate acquired skills and knowledge, while determining professional, vocational and academic achievement (Ashford-Rowe, Herrington, & Brown, 2014).

Leadership is defined in terms of traits, behaviours, roles and processes (Weber, 1989). The practice of instructional leadership in South African universities is guided by how lecturers play their roles as leaders in the courses they teach. It is the responsibility of a lecturer as an instructional leader to create a conducive atmosphere that promotes

effective teaching and learning. According to Spiller (2012), contemporary approaches, drawing from constructivist perspectives, emphasize the active engagement of students with their own learning, learner responsibility, metacognitive skills and a dialogical, collaborative model of teaching. These approaches serve as a means of creating an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Assessment processes in which the lecturer holds all the power and makes all the choices and decisions limit the potential for students' development in the aspects mentioned above. To better conceptualise instructional leadership practices in the university, the focus on assessment is paramount.

Lecturers who see dialogue and the co-construction of knowledge as a core part of their teaching conceptions, consider the importance of students' involvement in assessment processes in fundamental ways. While many lecturers, as instructional leaders, are trying to design classroom learning opportunities that reflect the principles of constructivist learning, however, these principles are frequently ignored in the design and implementation of assessment tasks (Spiller, 2012). Assessment should be used both for transforming teaching and learning, as well as decisions about students' competencies and successes in higher education.

Alternative forms of assessment have received much attention in the last decade and several forms of assessment have been introduced into higher education (Boud, Cohen, & Sampson, 1999; Brindley & Scoffield, 1998). One of the alternative forms of assessment that has received considerable attention in recent years is 'peer assessment'. Falchikov (2007, p. 132) describes peer assessment as a form of assessment that "requires students to provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product or a performance, based on the criteria of excellence for that product or event which students may have been involved in determining". Falchikov (2007) aligns peer assessment with the notion that an important part of the learning process is enacted during social interactions in a "community of practice" (Wenger, 1999, cited in Falchikov, 2007, p.129). Drawing on Wenger's ideas, Falchikov suggests that "learning involves active participation in a "community of practice" in which members of the

community determine and structure their own practices, and construct identities in relation to these communities" (2007, p.129).

Linking the centrality of lecturers' role as instructional leaders to their assessment practices and the benefits of peer assessment to students' unique learning experiences, the present study explores how lecturers in the school of education of one university in South Africa conceptualise and enact peer assessment in the courses they teach. Lecturers' perceptions about the affordances of this form of assessment to their teaching practice and students' learning, and the challenges in relation to students' competencies in effective application of criteria for judging and awarding grades to peers, are also of interest in this study.

The next section outlines:

- The problem that motivates this study
- The aims and objectives of this study
- The guiding research questions.

The significance of the study and how the chapters of this study were organised are presented in the concluding section of this opening chapter.

1.2 Problem Statement

There is an increase in the number of student enrolments in higher education in recent years. According to Ballantyne, Hughes, and Mylonas (2002), higher education institutions worldwide are experiencing an unprecedented growth in students' enrolments, which resulted in lecturers teaching more students at a particular time. This increase of students' enrolments in higher education is more apparent in the South African context, with the historical transition from apartheid era to freedom, where most South Africans now have access to the university education. With this high enrolment, lecturers' instructional workloads have risen dramatically. Hence, more innovations are required from the lecturers to lead effective teaching and learning. One strand of this workload is apparent in the area of assessment.

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning at all levels of education, and requires lots of effort and time to be effectively implemented. It this serves as a tool for reflection and supports the students' learning. Immediate feedback to large undergraduate classes can be arduous and often overwhelming (Billing, 1997). Hence lecturers were confronted with challenges of how to implement assessment effectively..

One of the alternative forms of assessment that lecturers are beginning to implement in order to address the above challenges is peer assessment. This is, however, a concept that is widely recognized to be a process that is "fraught with difficulties" (Spiller, 2012 p.13). Boud et al. (1999) observe that "if students are expected to put more effort into a course through their engagement in peer assessment and learning, then it may be necessary to have this effort recognized through a commensurate shift in assessment focus" (p. 416). Issues of credibility and fairness have hindered the widespread acceptance of peer assessment practices in higher education. Potential biases such as friendship, gender and race could lead to students rating their peers in good or under performance (Li & Steckelberg, 2004).

Looking at the lecturer's role as instructional leader in the context of enacting peer assessment, the present study is aimed at exploring how lecturers conceptualise and enact peer assessment in their courses, what are the affordances of peer assessment practice to students' learning and the specific challenges that lecturers face in implementing this alternative form of assessment.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the study

The main aim of the study is to explore in-depth, the concept of peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice in the university. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the perceptions of lecturers toward peer assessment in terms of how they define, use and understand the notion in the university.
2. To explore the role of lecturers as instructional leaders in implementing effective peer assessment in the university.

3. To explore the benefits that are attached to the practice of peer assessment in the university.
4. To investigate the challenges lecturers face while conducting peer assessment in the university.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research question is formulated to guide the study:

In what ways can the theory and practice of peer assessment as a tool for assessing students' work be re-conceptualised and developed?

To answer this research question, the following sub-questions were investigated.

1. How do lecturers in a university conceptualise the notion of peer assessment?
2. How do lecturers implement effective peer assessment in the courses they teach?
3. What are seen as the affordances of peer assessment to students' learning?
4. What are the challenges faced by lecturers and tutors while conducting peer assessment in their courses?

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the outcome of this study will be beneficial, particularly to lecturers who practice or aim to practice peer assessment in the courses they teach, as well as to shed light on alternative forms of assessment practice that can be used by university lecturers. Conceptualising the notion of 'lecturers as instructional leaders' in the courses they teach will offer a tool that can be used to describe some of the key responsibilities of lecturers in the university. This, in turn, can highlight areas of thought for lecturers as a means to support effective teaching and learning, particularly with a focus on assessment practices as used in this study to illustrate lecturers' leadership characteristics in the courses they teach.

The study will contribute to the research on ways to promote the practice of peer assessment in the university. It will also highlight some of the affordances and

constraints of peer assessment practices in the university.The study will also present a possible recommendation for lecturers in terms of implementing effective peer assessment. It will also be a source of references to other researchers in the field

1.6 Structure of the chapters

Chapter one deals with the rationale for the study, in particular the need for research that look at the notion of lecturers as instructional leaders in higher education. The aim and objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study are also stated in this chapter.

Chapter two locates the present study in the literature and theory on instructional leadership and peer assessment practices in higher education. The chapter is organised into two distinct bodies of writing: the first part deals with the concept of instructional leadership in higher education, with particular emphasis on the roles and behaviours of lecturers as instructional leaders in the courses they teach; the second part deals with the concept of assessment in general, with a specific focus on peer assessment practices. The discussion of different conceptualisation and implementation of peer assessment, its affordances and constraints to teaching and students' learning are discussed. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework that summaries the key concepts that are discussed in the literature and theory on peer assessment.

Chapter three presents the research design and methodology used for this study. A brief discussion of research paradigms and research design is presented, as well as an account of the research site; and a discussion about the sample of the participants, data sources, approaches to data collection and data analysis. The validity of the research and ethical considerations are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four reports on the analysis and findings of this study - in particular on the analysis and findings from interviews conducted with a sample of five lecturers across different disciplines who practise peer assessment. The analysis is organised according to the four research questions stated in Chapter One in relation to the four constructs:

conceptualisation, enactment, affordances and constraints to the practice of peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice in the university.

Chapter five is the concluding chapter of this research. It deals with discussion of findings for the study, contribution to knowledge base, implications for policy on assessment, limitations of the study, recommendations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how lecturers as instructional leaders conceptualised and enacted peer assessment in the courses they teach. The study also explores affordances and constraints of peer assessment to teaching and learning at university level. This chapter locates the present study in relation to the relevant literature and theory on instructional leadership and assessment at the higher education level. It began with theoretical discussion that underpin the study. This is followed with a review of two distinct bodies of writings: the first part deals with the concept of instructional leadership in higher education, with particular emphasis on the roles and behaviours of lecturers as instructional leaders in the courses they teach; the second part deals with the concept of assessment in general and a specific focus on peer assessment practices. The discussion of different conceptualisations and implementation of peer assessment, its affordances and constraints to teaching and students' learning are discussed. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework that summaries the key concepts that are discussed in the literature and theory on peer assessment.

2.2 Theoretical Perspective

The educational assessment in higher education is viewed from two extreme points of view, each with specific roles assigned (Shepard, 2000). The first being the assessment used to only give grades or to satisfy the accountability demand of an external authority. In this regard, the assessment is separated from instruction in time and purpose (Graue, 1993). This view is grounded in the social efficiency curricula, behaviorist learning theories as well as scientific assessment. Social efficiency theories hold that principles of scientific management, intended to maximize the efficiency of factories, could be applied with equal success to schools (Shepard, 2000). In this light, educational objectives are carefully specified based on job analysis, resulting into utilitarian content

that is antagonistic to academic content except for elite few. This gave rise to science of exact measurement, precise standards and in-turn a differentiated curriculum based on predicted social roles. Moreover, the behaviorists and connectionists learning theories, supported this view, through replacing the concept of mind by stimulus-response associations, atomizing knowledge into bits that can be learned sequentially and hierarchically, and motivation based on positive reinforcement of many small steps. This has critically influenced and tilted the belief system of teachers, parents and policy makers, to view assessment as an official event, separate from instruction and had to be uniformly administered (Bliem & Davinroy, 1997).

Contrary to the above view, is the second conception of assessment, which is formative as it is integrated as part of instruction, to support and enhance learning. This is based on the emerging constructivists paradigm, that teachers' close assessment of students' understandings, feedback from peers, and self-assessment would be a central part of the social process, that mediate the development of intellectual abilities, construction of knowledge and formation of students' identity (Shepard, 2000). This role of classroom assessment was heavily supported by social constructivists' conceptual framework, which conjugated ideas from cognitivists, constructivists and socio-cultural theories. This emphasize that the students-teachers interactions should help students gain experience with the ways of thinking, speaking in academic disciplines, make learning more interesting and motivating to students, and also to develop the ability to use knowledge in real world settings. To support this model of instruction, classroom assessment must change in two fundamentally crucial ways; its form and content to represent important thinking and problem solving skills, as well as the way it is used in the classroom and how it is perceived by both lecturers and students (Topping, 1998). Therefore a broader range of assessment tools and techniques are required to capture important learning goals and processes and to more directly connect assessment to on-going instruction.

The present study is grounded within the second view of assessment, and in particular on how lecturers as instructional leaders conceptualize and enact peer assessment practices in a social context of classroom. This suggests a need for transformation of

assessment practices in higher education, which must be made more informative, insightfully tied to learning steps. In this regard, the social meaning of assessment also need to be changed to incorporate students' perspective. To accomplish this vision, the following assessment techniques, as dynamic assessment, assessment of prior knowledge, use of feedback in teaching, explicit criteria, as well as evaluation of teaching are very important.

2.3 Instructional Leadership and practice

Instructional leadership has been defined in different ways by various researchers and scholars. King (2002) defines instructional leadership in general terms as anything that leaders do to improve teaching and learning within a particular programme, or school. Bush (2007) defines instructional leadership in relation to specific teachers' behavious while working with students. "Instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and the behaviours of teachers in working with students" (p. 401). Instructional leadership is concerned with hands-on involvement in teaching and learning processes (Muijs & Reynolds, 2010, p. 52). Instructional improvement occurs as a result of the ongoing learning of teachers and other school personnel about individual practice at the school (West, Peck, & Reitzug, 2010, p. 703).The common ground for all these definitions is that instructional leadership is about teaching and learning and is pivotal in bringing about school improvement and enhancing students' achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

In the context of the school system, Keefe and Jenkins (1984) view "instructional leadership as the principal role in providing direction, resources and support to teachers and students for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school". In this view, instructional leadership is limited to the role of principal. Others, view instructional leadership as not only the role of principal, as it may take different dimensions and the principal alone cannot perform all the roles of instructional leadership. Tedla (2012, p. 762) states that "the principal alone cannot cover all the school instructional programs and activities that is happening in the school". This is simply because there are professional responsibilities that eventually yield aggregate outcome. Teachers think

rationally and critically about their profession, practices and learning experiences. In effect, they start to work collaboratively and create collegiality in the learning community of a school and outside (Tedla, 2012).

This contrary view suggests that instructional leadership is a complex multidimensional task that supports teaching and learning in the school. In the present study, instructional leadership is positioned as the role of lecturers in providing direction, resources and support to students in order to enhance teaching and learning of both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the School of Education and also to foster learning among students. Generally, leadership is defined in terms of traits, behaviours, roles and processes. The practice of school leadership in South African universities is guided by how lecturers and tutors play their roles as leaders. Therefore, it is the responsibility of a lecturer to understand his/her role as a leader in order to promote harmony and sound work within the lecture hall.

In this study, I sought to understand how lecturers seen as instructional leaders at one university in South Africa conceptualised and enacted peer assessment. This is grounded within an emerging view that leadership is seen as everyone's responsibility (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2008), and is not limited to the heads of institution. Lecturers are seen as leaders of the courses they teach and practise this leadership in their interactions with students in the classroom. Instructional leadership styles have been proposed as a means for lecturers to develop their practices and responsibilities in assessment in order to enhance teaching and learning in higher education (Bolden et al., 2008; Jones, Lefoe, Harvey, & Ryland, 2012; Middlehurst, 2008) This, according to Scott, Coates, and Anderson (2008), enhanced teaching and learning in higher education does not just occur — it is understood as a complex learning process for all, rather than simply as an event. This suggests that great efforts are needed from the lecturers to effectively deal with the dynamics of classroom culture and that of assessment in particular.

Southworth's (2002) study which advocates three instructional leadership strategies provides a starting place for exploring how lecturers conceptualised and enacted peer assessment practices. Although, Southworth's study is not in the context of higher

education it has relevance to this study. Three strategies were meant to improve the quality of teaching and learning: modelling, monitoring and professional dialogue and discussion. For Southworth, modelling is the heads using their teaching as an example of what and how to do things, as a form of coaching. Monitoring involves the heads looking at teachers' weekly plans, visiting classrooms and checking a sample of learners' work. Professional dialogue involves working together with staff to reviewing practices, preparing curricular policies and analyze learners' work. These three strategies can be employed in relation to Thabo as an instructional leader, where he/she models good assessment practice to the students, monitors interactions among students in the context of peer assessment practices and engages with them in a professional dialogue about changing conceptions that can sustain their lifelong learning. Professional dialogue might involve working together with the students to develop and renegotiate criteria for assessment and bring about common understanding of what counts as good assessment practices.

Developing instructional leadership practices is the key factors to improve teaching and learning in higher education (Hofmeyer, Sheingold, Klopper, & Warland, 2015). Literature suggests that effective formal leadership and management traits in higher education confirm that leaders and leadership are crucial to improving the governance, learning, teaching, relevance and success of higher education institutions (Bolden, Petrov, Gosling, & Bryman, 2009; Middlehurst, 2008; Parrish, 2001; Ramsden, 1998; Scott et al., 2008). However, very little is known about how lecturers exhibit an instructional leadership role in the courses they teach (Juntrasook, Nairn, Bond, & Spronken-Smith, 2013; Middlehurst, 2008). This is a gap that the present study aims to explore.

Effective instructional leaders are intensely involved in curricular and instructional issues that directly affect students' learning outcomes (Cotton, 2003). Therefore, instructional leadership is directly related to the processes of instruction where lecturer, students and the curriculum interact; with the lecturer serving as facilitator of learning within a constructivist perspective. There is consensus among researchers that instructional leadership involves direct influence on teaching and learning, however,

there is no agreement about what constitutes instructional leadership, or any guidelines to what an instructional leader does to achieve the desired outcome. This lack of clarity and consistency in defining what exactly instructional leadership means, makes the field wide in scope, complex in nature and inclusive in essence (Tedla, 2012). It's the function of a principal (in the context of school system), but also the function of teachers who interact with students and the curriculum.

Jenkins (2009) argues that instructional leaders needs to be instructional resource providers and possess up to date knowledge of the curriculum, instruction and assessment practice. They must have pedagogical vision and pedagogical expertise, which is focused on teaching and learning processes. According to Naicker, Chikoko, and Mthiyane (2013), ideal instructional leaders should be outstanding teachers themselves, who use their exceptional teaching skills to impact on student learning.

Conceptualising lecturers as instructional leaders provides an insight into understanding the role that they play in student learning and overall school improvement. One key role of lecturers is in the area of assessment for learning and teaching transformation. In the following section, the discussion of the second body of writing, the *concept of assessment*, provides the empirical space of this study to explore instructional leadership practices by university lecturers. The discussion begins with general points about the concept of students' assessment, types of assessments used in higher education, and forms of assessment. This is followed by a detailed discussion about peer assessment; its conceptualisation, enactment, affordances and constraints on the teaching and learning process.

2.4 Concept of assessment in higher education

Students' assessment in the context of higher education is a relatively new focus area (Peterson & Einarson, 2001). There are numerous definitions for the term 'assessment' used in the literature. According to Gipps (1994), assessment has a wide range of purposes in the context of higher education, such as: (1) to support teaching and learning, (2) to provide information about students' needs, (3) to act as a selection or certification tool, and, lastly (4) to serve as an accountability procedure.

The key areas of focus within the field of assessment over recent times have been concerned with students' learning and how best to assess this learning (Hopfenbeck & Stobart, 2015). Assessment was used primarily to describe the process of evaluating the effectiveness of sequences of instructional activities when the sequence was completed (Wiliam, 2011). Assessment refers to the activities undertaken by lecturers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Therefore, what students learn as the result of a particular sequence of instructional practice, will be different from other learners in the same instructional group. This make assessment the most significant tool in enhancing student learning outcomes. The quality of instruction determines the quality of student outcome.

Brindley and Scoffield (1998, p. 79) state that "…tutors [and lecturers] should be developing types of assessment which result in effective, efficient and appropriate assessment, instead of always following the traditional approach in their subject areas". Therefore, multiple methods of assessment are required to assess multiple talents and to develop these talents in students. As an integral component of the education process, assessment supports learning, while determining the students' professional, vocational and academic achievement (Ashford-Rowe et al., 2014). Assessment reformers today emphasise the need for a closer substantive connection between assessment and meaningful instruction (Shepard, 2000).

In this stand of research, William's (2011) study found that effective use of classroom assessment yields improvements in students' achievement. Assessment also offers information to student about the knowledge, skills and other attributes they can expect to possess after successful completion of course work and academic programmes. Therefore, assessment provides evidence of student achievement to accreditation groups, state legislators, and other stakeholders in education.

Assessment should be integrated with instruction, which implies "the meaning of the items or assessment task will depend on the environment" (Brookhart, 2004, p. 430). This suggests that assessment should be culture-specific in order to be responsive to the immediate environment or region. Therefore, assessment can also be a social activity

that can be understood by taking into account the social, cultural, economic and political context in which it operates (Gipps, 1999). Assessments become a powerful device that can control learning activities of students, therefore assessment becomes a continuous process instituted to understand and improve students' learning.

To achieve the goal of students' learning, lecturers may find alternative pathways to arrive at this goal. This process needs to begin with the articulation of educational goals for all programs and courses. These goals should be expressed as measurable objectives, followed by the selection of reliable and valid methods to measure these goals. After collecting, interpreting, and sharing findings, the aim is to use these learning outcomes to better understand how and what students learn; how well students are meeting expected objectives; and to develop strategies to improve the teaching and learning processes. Decisions about students' competencies and requirements for success in higher education is strongly linked to the assessment outcomes, hence, assessment has become the heart of the lecturers' role as instructional leaders. To conceptualise instructional leadership practices in the university, the focus on assessment is paramount, and this focus serves as the empirical field in this study.

In the following section, the two major types of assessments that are used in higher education are discussed. These are: summative and formative assessment. This discussion is followed by the different form of assessments that are used by lecturers in the university. The focus is specifically on peer assessment as a form of alternative assessment, which is relevant to the present study.

2.4.1 Summative assessment

Summative assessment demonstrates the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme, and which contributes to the final mark given for the module. It is normally, though not always, used at the end of a unit of teaching. Summative assessment is used to quantify achievement, reward achievement and to provide data for selection (to the next stage in education or to employment). For all these reasons the validity and reliability of summative assessment are of greatest importance. According

to Harlen and James (1997), evidence from the evaluation of implementation of national assessment and testing in Scotland found that the reliability of summative assessment has suffered from confusion in the last two decades. Research has shown that teachers share the view of how the summative assessment of children works. What child X scores may not be the same as child Y - it depends on their backgrounds. Therefore, what children might get on their summative assessments will depend on their cultural upbringing, knowledge, experience and expectation.

However, summative assessment takes place at certain intervals when achievement has to be reported. The results for different students may be combined for various purposes, because they are based on the same criteria. The evidence from the full range of performances is relevant to the criteria being used, which enable the information gained from the assessment to be used in planning for the student's future learning opportunities. Harlen and James (1997) state that "summative assessment is concerned with progress towards the big ideas rather than with the learning in specific activities" (p. 374). Therefore the process of applying certain criteria to summative assessment to improve learning is difficult, due to the reliability of the judgment.

Summative assessment becomes cumulative evaluation that is used to measure a student's growth and development, after instructions are given at the end of the course, in order to determine whether long term learning goals have been achieved or not. Therefore, summative assessment tends to have the least impact on improving an individual student's understanding or performance. The other type of assessment that is ongoing, with great potential for immediate improvement of teaching and learning, is formative assessment.

2.4.2 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment, according to Black, Harrison, Hodgen, Marshall, and Serret (2010).has, as the priority in its design and practice, the purpose of promoting students' learning. Thus, it differs from assessment designed to serve the purpose of accountability, or of ranking, or of clarifying competences. Formative assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. It does not contribute to the final mark given for

the module; instead it contributes to learning through providing immediate feedback. It should indicate what is good about a piece of work and why it is good. It should also indicate what is not so good and how the work could be improved.

Effective formative feedback will influence what the student and the teacher do next. It helps to differentiate instructions and thus supports student improvement. According to Black et al. (2010), formative assessment is an activity that can help learning and provide information to be used as feedback by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves and each other, in order to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes 'formative assessment' when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs.

According to Elwood and Murphy (2015), formative assessment in classrooms focuses on teachers and students, their experiences and shifts in understanding and practices. Researchers are therefore interested in an assessment practice that integrates with socio cultural theories in understanding human processes and interactions within different subject contexts, as students, teachers and peers interact. Formative assessment seems to be a space where socio-cultural theories of learning have been invoked for a fuller understanding of energy and interactional practices.

Formative assessments help teachers to recognize a problem at a particular time in a particular context. According to Harlen and James (1997), formative assessment, which involves using information about students' learning, gathered from observing students; listening to them discussing informally with their peers and talking to the teacher; reviewing written work and other products; and using their self-assessments, has always been part of teachers' work.

In summary, assessment is broadly characterised as either formative or summative The formative assessment provides feedback and aims at filling the gap between current and desired performance (Sadler, 1989); while summative assessment is the end result of the teaching and learning. Formative assessment is an on-going assessment and is usually conducted to determine what type of action should be taken by the lecturers to strengthen the students' understanding of course material (William & Black, 1996).

Summative assessment provides a judgment of the level of students' skills, knowledge, and behaviors near the conclusion of their classroom experience (Taras, 2005). According to Harlen and James (1997), formative and summative assessment strategies are linked to instructional best-practices strategies, because they provide students with meaningful feedback at the start and end of a course.

In the next section, forms of assessment which can be used for both summative and formative purposes are outlined. There is a specific comment about peer assessment as a form of formative assessment that offe++rs opportunities for immediate feedback among peers in support of students' learning at the university level. Before the detailed discussion about peer assessment, the various forms of assessment that were used in higher education are discussed.

2.4.3 Forms of assessment

Within summative and formative assessment, there are various forms of assessment that were used in higher education. These include essays, test and examination, practical assessment, oral assessment, computer based assessment, group work, portfolios and so on (Biggs, 1999; Gipps, 1994). While each form of assessment is used for different reasons, research has shown that over 80% of university assessment worldwide is made up of essays, reports and traditional tests or examinations (Brown, Race, & Smith, 2004). Gipps (1994) argues that it is important for the various forms of assessment to be used in an appropriate manner. The reasons for using a particular form of assessment are closely tied to its functions. In other words, each form is used to determine something different about a person, and this can vary across contexts

In relation to effective feedback about students' work in recent years, higher education literature testifies an extensive interest in peer assessment. The interest is partly driven by the changing conception in teaching and learning, where active students' engagement is at the centre of contemporary teaching approaches. Other reasons may be aligned to increase students' enrolment in higher education, where lecturers tend to teach more students. In such circumstances, traditional forms of assessment, in which lecturers

provide individual feedback to students, seems to be impossible to be effective. This rationale motivates the focus of peer assessment in this study. In the following section, detailed discussions about peer assessment practices in higher education are provided.

2.5 Peer assessment practices in higher education

In modern educational settings, the importance of alternative assessment cannot be over emphasised. With the emergence of alternative assessment, Shepard (2000) and Topping (1998) argue that traditional approaches to assessment are no longer effective in providing productive feedback to students. This emphasis was based on the fact that alternative assessments are research-orientated and student production and integration are evaluated (Huerta-Macias, 1995). Peer assessment is one of such alternative forms of assessment that received considerable attention in higher education and refers to an interactive type of assessment in which students provide feedback to their fellow students with very limited lecturer involvement (Wikström, 2008). Peer assessment can be described as "an arrangement for learners to consider and specify the level, value, or quality of a product or performance of other equal-status learners" (Topping 2010, p.62). It was recommended by Shepard (2000) and Topping (1998) as one of the effective approach for classroom evaluation.

Karami and Rezaei (2015) consider peer assessment as one of the main alternative forms of assessment that is effective in providing useful, immediate feedback to students. Salvin (1997) attributes the emergence of peer assessment in teaching and learning as the most influential approach to assessment to ensure success in educational history. Pedagogically, peer assessment improves students' learning (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000).

The present study explores how peer assessment as formative assessment is conceptualised and enacted by University lecturers, and the affordances as well as constraints to students' learning as part of their instructional practices in the university. In the next section, the four key constructs that were central to this study are discussed. These are: conceptualisation, enactment, affordances and constraint of peer assessment practices.

2.5.1 Conceptualisation of peer assessment

Peer assessment is an "educational arrangement where student judge a peer's performance quantitatively and/or qualitatively, which stimulates the students to reflect, discuss and collaborate" (Strijbos & Sluijsmans, 2010, p. 256) while Bandura (1997) refers to peer assessment as cognitive aspect of assessment and its inevitability. Therefore, peer assessment refers to situations where students become familiar with what quality practice is and how to be able to see that in others. Through peer assessment students were able to assess their peers quantitatively or qualitatively and get constant feedback from them. Based on that comment, students can also assist the lecturer to improve the learning activities to a greater extent.

Peer assessment is the process whereby groups of individuals rate their peers. This exercise involves the use of criteria, such as assessment criteria, assessment task, rating instruments and checklist before conducting peer assessment. Products such as written work or examination scripts may be assessed by peers (Falchikov, 1986; Magin & Churches, 1988) therefore, peer assessment has been used in university and college classrooms. With peer assessment, students have the opportunity to observe their peers throughout the learning process and often have more detailed knowledge of the work of others. Keaten and Richardson (1993) reports that peer assessment practice can foster a high level of responsibility among peers, requiring students to be fair and accurate with the judgments they make.

In an effort to utilize peer assessment as an effective learning strategy, Kim (2009) investigates the role of assessee in peer assessment that goes beyond receiving feedback. Kim uses the notion of 'feedback-on-feedback' to contextualise the role of assessee in peer assessment practices. 'Feedback-on-feedback' is not usually considered in the process of conducting peer assessment as the attention in most cases is focused on the role of the assessor in giving the feedback. What is done with the feedback is not investigated. The notion of 'feedback-on-feedback' give students the opportunity to reflect upon their own thoughts regarding the given peer feedback. The intent was to give the assessee an active role in the peer assessment practice and the learning process, as well as a tool for lecturers as instructional leaders for measuring the extent of

learning outcomes. Kim found that students who engaged on 'feedback-on-feedback', or back-feedback, showed significantly higher metacognitive awareness, higher performance in tasks, and higher evidence of motivation by the students in their practices of peer assessment.

2.5.2 Enactment of peer assessment

Research evidence has shown that students become better at peer assessment with practice, and this might take a considerable period of time (Falchikov, 2007). According to Spiller (2012), lecturers should make sure that the criteria for any piece of peer assessment are clear and fully discussed among the students themselves, spending considerable amount of time with students as well as creating an enabling environment of trust in the classroom. Also, lecturers should create an environment that incorporates peer learning and collaboration in a range of ways. Spiller also suggests some tips to prepare students for peer assessment. These include:

- Exchange notes – Students were encouraged to take notes at the beginning of a class, then in the final segment of the class, a lecturer then invite students to exchange notes with their peers; and to discuss perceived gaps and differences in understanding. This can be done on a regular basis and has potentials benefits for getting the students used to discussing their work with peers, and preparing them well for subsequent peer assessment.
- Peer editing and feedback – Students are asked to prepare a draft short segment of an assignment, and they circulate the copies of the drafts to their peers. The lecturer must discuss and negotiate criteria for feedback beforehand, or talk about some key questions that have been developed for students to use. Students take turns in providing oral feedback on their peers' drafts.

In their empirical study, van den Berg, Admiraal, and Pilot (2006) found that students interact with peers in four basic ways in the peer assessment process:

- Authoritative reader - points out errors or shortcomings in the writing

- Interpretative reader - expresses interest in discussing ideas emerging when reading the text
- Probing reader
- Collaborative reader

The authors argue that the last two; probing and collaborative readers get the writer to articulate and clarify their intentions. These ways of giving feedback during peer interaction appear to be more productive for the improvement of the quality of writing. More importantly, in peer assessment practices, students are required to spend a considerable amount of time processing, comparing, contrasting and evaluating each other's work (Ballantyne et al., 2002). Falchikov (2005, p. 27) reports that in peer assessment, "students use criteria and apply standards to the work of their peers in order to judge that work"

2.5.3 Affordances of peer assessment

Falchikov (2005) and Magin (2010) both report that students perceived the scheme of peer assessment to be beneficial to them. This includes a perception of peer assessment experiences as a tool for developing students' ability to assess the work of others and in improving their performance by looking at what the examiner wants and also enhancing the learning process. Peer assessment methods can cause resistance and give opportunity for students to assess and give feedback for their peers' work. There is shift of responsibility from the lecturer to the student. Peer assessment helps the student to think critically and to take control of their learning. This point is supported by Oldfield and Macalpine (1995) " …as part of education for life, peer assessment can also assist in the essential task of allowing students to become self-learners, a measure of the quality of the educational programme they are undertaking" (p.129).

Peer assessment help student to develop certain skills that can improve the performance of their peers in higher education. Therefore, for peer assessment to be useful, it needs to meet the needs of the people for whom it is intended. These include the students as well as the instructors and institution in terms of evaluating teaching and learning outcomes and also the connection that exist between them. The advantage of this form

of assessment is that the same task is given to a very large number of students at the same time using special criteria that were assigned and negotiated with the students for that purpose. This form of assessment has been gaining lots of interest in South African universities, particularly in courses with large numbers of students at the undergraduate level. Boud and Falchikov (2006), argue that students' active participation in assessment design, choices, criteria and making judgments acts as a more sustainable preparation for subsequent working life.

Kim (2009) organised the effect of peer assessment into two broad categories. These are:

a) Effect on learning outcomes – This involves both cognitive and affective domains. Cognitive is measured in terms of subject matter related skills, or general skills such as presentation skills, discussion skills and so on. Affective, on the other hand, pertains an attitude that relates to students' feelings and perceptions towards peer assessment and is often measured along with motivation and self-concepts, such as self-esteem.
b) Effect on learning process – This entails a view of peer assessment from the perspective of the students' awareness of their own learning process. This includes students' reflections on assessment procedures as part of their learning experiences.

In the context of undergraduate courses in the United Kingdom, Brindley and Scoffield (1998) identified three benefits of peer assessment. These are:

a) Increase in personal motivation as a result of students' active involvement in the assessment process.
b) The opportunity to compare and discuss the assignment, and
c) The opportunity to gain knowledge and develop a greater understanding of assignment and assessment processes.

The three benefits of peer assessment listed above linked to both the effect of peer assessment on learning outcome and on the learning process as discussed by Kim (2009). Both Kim (2009) and Brindley and Scoffield (1998) considered peer

assessment as an important teaching and learning strategy that enhances the development of students' capabilities in broad goals of educational settings.

2.5.4 Constraints of peer assessment

The concept of peer assessment has been highlighted by different studies as an important tool for both enhancing students' learning and their motivation to learn. However, it is widely recognised to be a process that is fraught with difficulties, especially when grades are to be assigned by peers, and a great deal of skills and extra work tis required to effectively implement peer assessment.

Spiller (2012) points to the extra work that peer learning and assessment activities may require from students. Boud et al. (1999) observe that "if students are expected to put more effort into a course through their engagement in peer learning and assessment activities, then it may be necessary to have this effort recognized through a commensurate shift in assessment focus" (p.416). However, in instances where peer feedback includes the assigning of a grade, it is also widely recognized to be a process that is associated with credibility issues (Spiller, 2012).

2.6 Conceptual framework

The underlining conception of this study was the notion of lecturers as instructional leaders in the University, and how the concept of assessment is used to exemplify this conception. The interrelatedness of these two constructs, instructional leadership and concept of peer assessment provided the conceptual framework for this study.

This conception was based on the notion that lecturers' behaviours in the classroom are seen as part of their instructional leadership role. This understanding is drawn from the work of Bush (2007, p. 401) who affirms that "instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning, and on the behavior of teachers [lecturers in this case] in working with students". These behaviors have a direct influence on students' learning. One of such behavior that is an integral part of teaching is seen in lecturers' assessment practices. With the growing evidence of the utilisation of alternative forms of

assessment against the traditional assessment practices in higher education, the present study explores the concept of peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice in one university in South Africa.

In line with this instructional role in peer assessment practice, four constructs are investigated. These are: conceptualisation, enactment, affordances and constraints. It is believed that these constructs constitute the scope the of lecturer's instructional role in the peer assessment practice. Figure 1 presents the summary of the conceptual framework for the study that looked at the interrelatedness among the four constructs in the context of effective instructional leadership practices.

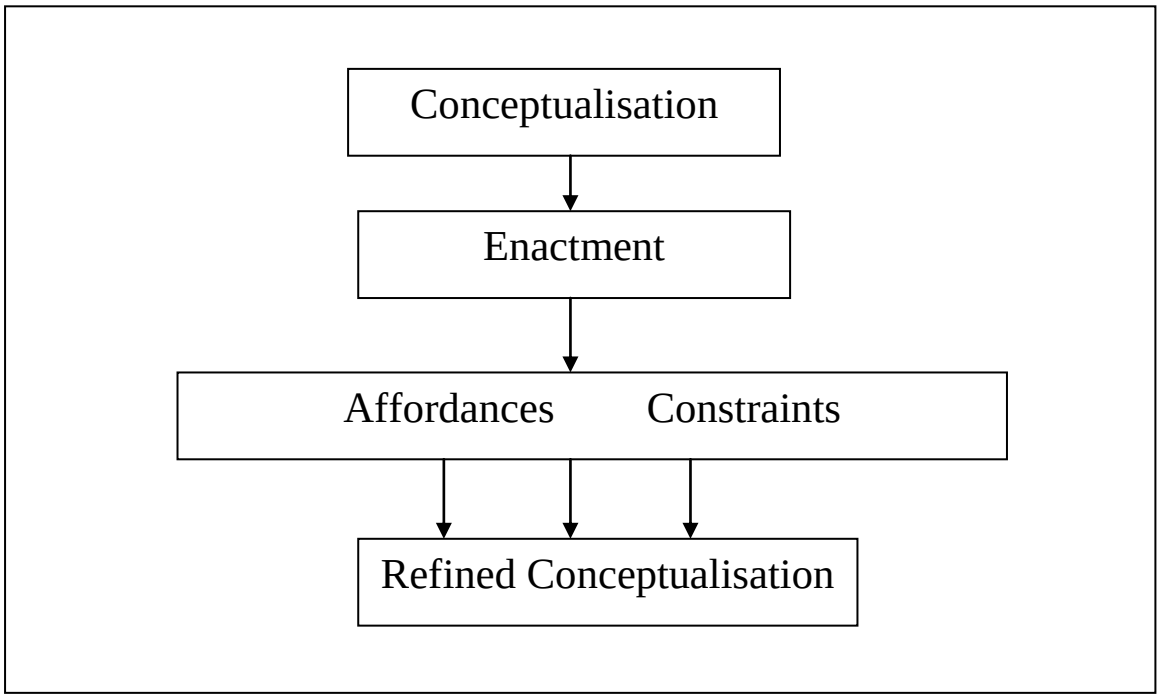


Figure 1: Instructional leadership cycle in the context of peer assessment practice

Lecturers began their instructional role with a conceptualisation of peer assessment – What do they think it is? For what purpose is it used in the course they teach? Answers to these questions shaped the kind of assessment criteria to be designed, and the plan for how they are to be implemented. Hence, the lecturer's conceptualisation of peer assessment provides directions for the enactment process. During the enactment stage, affordances and constraints are possible to discern. The lecturers' experiences in this

endeavour are expected to bring a refined conceptualisation that is responsive to the students' needs and the purpose of the peer assessment in the lecturer's initial conceptualisation. In subsequent enactment, lecturers that provide an effective instructional role will strengthen the affordances of peer assessment, and address the constraints that emerged as critical in the process.

This conception informed the design of the semi-structured interviews that were used in this study, as well as the analysis of the interview data. Questions were based on the four constructs, and in some cases, how each inform the other in the context of lecturers' perception of their instructional role within peer assessment practices was probed

2.7 Summary of the literature review

The section of the literature review highlights two key concepts that are central to the present study: instructional leadership and peer assessment practices. The debate of seeing the head of the school or department as sole instructional leader has been discussed. The present study aims to add to this debate by exploring the role of lecturers as instructional leaders in the courses they teach. Peer assessment practice is used in this study as an example of one key instructional responsibility of lecturers in their work of teaching at the university level.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section begins with a brief discussion of research paradigms, research design, research site, sample of the participants, data sources, approaches to data collection and data analysis. The section also discusses the validity of the research and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Paradigms

Scott and Usher (1996) describe paradigms as perspectives that prescribe rules, values and procedures which function as maps for scientific communities, determining the important problems or issues for members to address and defining acceptable theories, explanations, methods and techniques to solve defined problems. Research Paradigms are used to capture thoughts, feelings and experiences of those who are being studied or the phenomena under investigation. Three possible broad paradigms are described that can be used in this research before justifying the rationale for the choice of interpretivism as the perspective that was used in underpinning this research. These paradigms are: positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory.

Positivism is a school of thought that views the basis or foundation of all knowledge through observation, and therefore believes that knowledge and thought depend on scientific methods (Scott &Usher, 1996). In this view, the root of knowledge is claimed to be based on scientific observation and experimentation carried out through logical rules of inference and confirmation. Positivists believe that it is possible to develop correct methods for understanding educational processes, relations and institutions.

On the other hand, the interpretivist views emphasises the way human beings give meaning to their lives; reasons are accepted as legitimate causes of human behaviour;

and agential perspectives are prioritised (Scott & Morrison, 2006). This view is in contrary to the positivist perspective of the development of correct universal methods because there is a likelihood that the understanding of an observed object could be influenced by the state of mind of the observer, which may be based on cultural upbringing, experience and expectations.

A critical theory perspective offers a means for mapping the inequalities and injustices of education by claiming those inequalities and injustices to their own source and showing the various educational processes and structure that can be maintained, and also provides remedies for those inequalities and injustices (Gibson, 1986). Critical theorists believe that values are accepted as central to all research activities and, therefore, the researcher does not adopt a neutral stance in relation to understanding the world.

This study is framed by the perspective of the interpretivist paradigm because understanding the construct of lecturers as instructional leaders in assessment require s an interpretation of the meaning of their actions in their practice rather than seeing it as universal fact. Therefore, the interpretivist perspective is linked to qualitative methodologies, which attempt to capture deeper meaning and explore representations of a particular issue where the researcher is central to the interpretation of the findings (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994; Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). Within this methodological orientation, a more descriptive and qualitative inquiry is needed to understand how university lecturers and tutors conceptualise and implement peer assessment in the courses they teach, as well as affordances and the challenges they faced while conducting peer assessment. The interpretivist paradigm was found to be most suitable for this study as a way of exploring the concept of lecturers as instructional leaders within the realm of their assessment practices.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study approach to both data collection and data analysis. Case study is a research design that provides an opportunity for in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g. an activity, an event, a process or an individual)

based on extensive data collection that results in rich description of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007). The "single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study: the case (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). The case is a unit, entity, or phenomenon with defined boundaries that the researcher can demarcate or "fence in" (p. 27), and therefore, can also determine what will not be studied. The case is "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (p. 27).

It is therefore important to define my 'case' in this study and to outline my rationale for the choice of case study as a research design. The in-depth exploration of how lecturers as instructional leaders conceptualised and enacted peer assessment as social practice in the classroom provided the bounded system, the 'case' for my study. This is done by "analysing the many contexts of the participants and by narrating participants' meaning of these situations and events (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Qualitative study is used in this study to explore the notion of peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice at the university level. Therefore, the qualitative case study approach is suitable for this study, because it provides a researcher with extensive data collection that can result in a rich description of the account of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2007).

Qualitative research has been used mainly to investigate phenomena with small-scale studies. Some writers have argued that the kinds of inferences that can be drawn from these studies are different in type from those that might be drawn from quantitative research, or from large scale scrutiny (Yin, 1994). Therefore, it is mostly impossible with small scale studies to make generalisation of the findings, rather relatability is argued with a sample of the same characteristics, under the same circumstances. In this sense, detailed description of the features of the research site and the characteristics of the sample of the study is important. A description of the research site for this study follows.

3.4 Research Site

The research site is the School of Education at one University in South Africa. The selection of this University was based on two reasons. The first is the fact that the University is one of the top in the country and is research-focused, meaning that it has a great investment in maintaining high quality research outputs. It is also a University where the teaching strategies used involve direct contact between lecturer and students. This influences the assessment practices of this University in general and thus the forms of assessment used by lecturers. The second reason was because of the evidence of reasonable number of lecturers practicing peer assessment in the School of Education and the willingness of the lecturers to participate in my study.

In this research site, there was no policy that specified that all lecturers must use peer assessment in the courses they teach, but willingly some lecturers have started piloting this alternative form of assessment on their own. This provides motivation for the focus on peer assessment in this context as a form of instructional leadership practice by lecturers. The findings of this study are therefore intended, in the context of the research site, to make recommendations about possible stages of implementation of policy in relation to the use of alternative forms of assessment as a means of strengthening teaching and learning at the university level.

3.5 Sample of the Participants

Unlike other types of qualitative research design, there are two levels of sampling inherent in case study design (Merriam, 1998). The first is the selection of the case to be studied; the second is the sampling of the participants within the case. In this study, the case to be studied as mentioned already was lecturers' practices of peer assessment at the University level. Below I describe the second level – about the selection and the characteristics of the participants for this study.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the participants that were involved in this study. This is a tool for informant selection that focuses on theoretically informed decision about who or what to include in the criteria for the sampling (Scott &

Morrison, 2005). According to Macmillan & Schumacher (2014), Purposive sampling is a strategy that should be used because of its convenience in data collection. This strategy was used in this study to select five lecturers from the School of Education on one university. These lecturers were selected based on the following criteria:

- Lecturers/tutors who are willing to voluntarily participate in this study.
- Lecturers/tutors who are piloting peer assessment as an alternative form of assessment in the courses they teach. It does not matter whether they use results of the peer assessment as part of the overall students' grading or not. This is because literature suggests that peer assessment can be used to support learning with immediate feedback, not necessarily for grading (Boud et al., 1999; Dochy, Segers, & Sluijsmans, 1999; Karami & Rezaei, 2015; van den Berg et al., 2006).
- Lecturers are drawn across different divisions of the school where possible. This is to allow the researcher to get rich data across different content disciplines.

Table 1 below provides a brief description of the characteristics of the lecturers who participated in this study.

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants

Pseudonyms of participants	**Division where they teach**	**Course level where peer assessment is practised**	**Highest Qualification**
Thabo[1]	Mathematics Education	Undergraduate	PhD
Jessica	Foundation Phase	Undergraduate	PhD
Clement	Language studies	Undergraduate	PhD
Lorraine	Curriculum studies	Undergraduate	PhD (in process)
Shadrack	Mathematics Education	Postgraduate	PhD

[1] All the names of the participants are pseudonyms, intended to preserve the anonymity of the participants

3.6 Data Sources

Data gathering is the crucial part of any empirical research, as the data is meant to contribute to a better understanding of the theoretical field (Bernard, 2002). In this study, the main data source was generated through semi-structured interviews conducted between the researcher and individual lecturers.

Interviews are a valuable source of data as participants share their experiences, attitudes and beliefs, in their own words. Patton (1990) Urges that interviewing is to provide a framework within which the respondents can express their own understanding or perceptions on their own terms. According to Moyle (2002), the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in the participant's mind. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study because this approach allows the freedom to vary the course of the interview based on the participant's responses. This is in contrast to closed questions, which elicit minimum or limited information from the respondents. Closed questions seek factual information. However, follow-up probes in an interview allowed the interviewer to gain clarity, and seek more in-depth information from the participants while events are still fresh in their minds. The purpose of the semi-structured interview in this study is to gain insight into the lecturers' conceptions about peer assessment, their experiences about how they enacted peer assessment as well as its affordances and constraints to teaching and learning.

3.7 Procedures for data gathering

Data for this study was gathered by the researcher, who personally booked appointment with individual lecturers to collect all the documents and resources they used in conducting peer assessment. This was followed with an arrangement for the next contact for the interviews, which were conducted with three lecturers in their offices, while the other two were conducted at their various homes. The interview was guided by a prepared schedule of questions (see Appendix A for the sample of interview schedule) and this was followed with probes where necessary to clarify ideas and seek more in-depth data. The interview lasted between 28-35 minutes with each participant.

3.8 Pilot study

Arain, Campbell, Cooper, and Lancaster (2010) describes a pilot study as a small study for helping to design a further confirmatory study. Studies of this kinds may have various purposes such as testing study procedures, validity of instrument tools, estimation of the recruitment rate and estimation of parameters, such as the variance of the outcome variable to calculate sample size etc. (Thabane et al., 2010). In this study, the purpose of the pilot study was to test the validity and reliability of the semi-structured interview questions in terms of duration of time and the kind of data that could be generated.

The pilot study was conducted with two lecturers who were not part of the main study. The results of the analysis of this study helped in structuring the semi-structured interview questions into four categories: conceptualization of peer assessment; preparation for peer assessment; weighting of peer assessment and constraints of peer assessment. The pilot study also helped in identifying key probes; such as, the value and rational of peer assessment, your style of peer assessment, and the need of whether to incorporate students' input into peer assessment criteria or not, and so on. All inputs from pilot study were incorporated into the final version of the instrument that was used for the main study (see Appendix A in page 87 for interview questions with probes). All the interviews were audio recorded to ensure that accurate information was documented and used as evidence in the reporting of the findings of this study.

3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted to answer research questions related to the lecturers' conceptualisation, enactment, affordances as well as constraints of peer assessment to teaching and learning. Analysis of the conceptualisation was based on the clarity of the peer assessment task, criteria and guidelines to students; and ways in which the lecturers defined peer assessment in their courses.

Analysis of affordances was based on the opportunities, conditions, things that were put in place for students to gain the relevant skills, as advocated bySlavin (1990), which attributed to peer assessment potentials. These are:

- The development of learning outcomes related to collaboration, teamwork, and becoming a member of a learning community
- Critical enquiry and reflections
- Communication skills
- Learning to learn

3.9.1 Thematic analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. This approach to data analysis helps in minimally organizing and describing data sets in rich detail. This type of analysis was used in describing and explaining the interview data in this study.

All the interviews were transcribed, which captured verbatim the lecturers' responses to the interview questions. In the first instance of the analysis, the interview transcripts were organised into episodes, which were defined as chunks of the lecturers' responses organised according to the empirical questions. For example, the issue of credibility of the assessment, weight of the grading, friendship, gender, race, etc that might hinder effective implementation of peer assessment were chunked together as episodes that formed under the responses that answered research question four on the constraints of peer assessment. Empirical questions, as described in Chapter four, constituted questions that were grouped together to answer a particular research question.

The second phase of the data analysis began with open coding to generate themes that best described the lecturers' utterances related to the rationale for conducting peer assessment, how it is being implemented, about innovations, and how students feel about peer assessment from the lecturer's perspectives. These themes were then grouped together by looking at similarities and differences across the sample of five lecturers. For example, in the analysis of affordances, two broad themes emerged: teaching

affordances and learning affordances. In Table 2, within the learning affordances, the following sub-themes were grouped together:

- Students develop skills in giving feedback to their peers
- Students develop skills in communication
- Students develop skills in critical enquiry and reflection

These themes were grouped on the basis that all of them involved developing students' skills. I then collected all of these themes under one assigned theme – *developing students' skills.*

Table 2: Summary of thematic analysis of affordances of peer assessment

Evidence		Themes, categories and sub-categories					
Description of lecturer's perspectives	**Transcript excerpts**	**Teaching affordances (T)**			**Learning affordances (L)**		
		Reduces lecturer's workload in giving feedback to all individual students (T1)	**Identifies strength and weakness of students' learning (T2)**	**Modifies teaching methods to consolidate students' learning (T3)**	**Develops students' skills and knowledge (L1)**	**Develops students' agency (L2)**	**Develops students' identity (L3)**
Thabo Peer Assessment (PA) helps to boost the performance of student in terms of their strength and weaknesses, it also enhance skills and knowledge of student while assessing their peers. PA also helps the lecturer to change the method of teaching by monitoring, measuring and evaluating student performance, and also as a way to consolidate our teaching. It also	"Yeah peers assessment does eh reduce the workload in a in a big way." "To change the method of teaching"	Reduces their workloads "Because what happens here is that	Boost the performance of student in terms of their strength and weaknesses "through peer assessment other what other learners can also see	Helps the lecturer to change the method of teaching "To change the method of teaching" " to measure or to monitor our own	Enhance skills and knowledge of student learners, who can also learn when assessing other learners.	Engage with more learning material	

reduces their workloads. PA helps student to cope with the new ideas. When they are engaged with other people's work, these will develop their communication skills and make the students work hard, as they need to present their work to their peers. In turn, this forces students to engage with more learning material, therefore, peer assessment helps learners to learn while assessing others' work.	can also help in a very big way to force students to engage with the	because there are so many students and when it's hard for the lecturer to assess all the students' work".	the level of performance of their of their fellows develop their own"	teaching" to say are we connecting are communicating with the students,			
Jessica PA enables students to have some agency in their own learning and build ownership to their own learning by developing community of practice. PA brings an alternative perspective to students by building new experience on their perspective and also enhances student to understand a particular concept or topic, by giving insight of tasks. It also give student voice on how to interpret their own ideas and understanding on a particular task. Therefore, it help students to learn	"I think the students bring an alternative perspective. I think they now build it on new experiences on their perspective so it forces them to have an alternative perspective on a particular concept or topic...			guide the practices and pedagogy		build ownership to their own learning building new experience on their perspective enhances student to understand a particular	developing community of practice

from their peers. To the Dr Thabolso used peer assessment to guide the practices and pedagogy						concept or topic give student voice on how to interpret their own ideas	

3.10 Ethical considerations

Blaxter (2010) states that the conduct of ethically-informed research should be the goal of all social researchers. Any research has the potential to impact on the lives of others and therefore consideration must be given to recognise and protect the rights of human beings (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Therefore, ethical concerns will be addressed, as in any research in which human participants are involved in order to minimize damage or wrong doing to the participants. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that ethical standards are adhered to. Therefore, in this study, ethical measures were taken, while planning and conducting the study.

For this research, the participants were lecturers/tutors from one university in South Africa teaching undergraduate students. To deal with the ethical issues in the study, information letters were issued to all the participants before the commencement of the data collection process. These provided the participants with information about the purpose of the study and procedures for the data collection in order to clarify any issues regarding the research. Furthermore, these letters highlighted the beneficial relationship within the research project (see Appendix B in page 89 for the sample of information letters).

Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary, and that they may withdraw at any time during the process with no fear of any consequences. All participants were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity for participating in the study. To guarantee the confidentiality of the participants, all data collected in the study was kept private. The audio recordings of the lecturers' interviews were kept in a locked filling cabinet. Only the researcher and her supervisor had access to this data, which will be destroyed five years after of completion of the study. Anonymity is guaranteed through the creation of anonymous transcripts for any broader sharing of the data beyond this study.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study sets out to investigate how lecturers as instructional leaders in one university in South Africa conceptualise and enact peer assessment in the courses they teach. The study also examines the affordances and constraints of this instructional practice to teaching and learning. The purpose of this chapter is to report analysis and findings from interviews conducted with a sample of five lecturers across different disciplines who practice peer assessment. The guiding research questions and analysis questions that informed the study were formulated as follows:

Research questions	Analysis questions
1. How do lecturers conceptualise the notion of peer assessment in the courses they teach?	• What are the lecturers' views about the concept of peer assessment? • How do lecturers define peer assessment to their students? • What key assessment ideas do lecturers consider as important in designing peer assessment criteria? • To what extent do lecturers consider aligning peer assessment criteria with the task given to students? • Do lecturers consider incorporating students' inputs into the peer assessment criteria as necessary?
2. How do lecturers and tutors implement effective peer assessment in the courses they teach?	• What is the nature of the peer assessment task employed? Is it oral presentation or written work? • What format of peer assessment do lecturers use? Is it individual or a group peer assessment?
3. What are seen as the affordances of peer assessment to students' learning?	• What are the lecturers' reasons for conducting peer assessment? • How do lecturers value peer assessment in relation to other

	form of assessment?
4. What are the challenges faced by lecturers and tutors while conducting peer assessment in their courses?	• How do lecturers ensure credibility in the conduct of peer assessment? • How do lecturers manage issues of friendship in peer assessment practices? • What other issues that are seen by the lecturers as constraints on the practice of peer assessment?

The analysis questions were used to organize each of the five lecturers' interview transcripts into chunk of episodes as described in the methodology chapter. In the sections that follow, the analysis and findings generated from the interview data that answer the research questions in relation to the four constructs are presented: conceptualization, enactment, affordances and constraints on the practice of peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice in the university.

4.2 Conceptualisation of peer assessment practice among university lecturers

The first research question sought to describe the ways in which university lecturers conceptualize peer assessment in the courses they teach. The analysis of the data collected to address this research question produced two distinct themes related to the different conception of this alternative form of assessment as aspect of the lecturers' instructional leadership practices:

- Theme 1 – conception about the role of peer assessment
- Theme 2 – Conception about the design of peer assessment criteria

The university lecturers passionately described their conception of the practices of peer assessment in the courses they teach. Findings from this analysis point to the differences and similarities within these conceptions. Below is a discussion of each theme in terms of what it constituted, with verbatim excerpts from the interview transcripts that are presented as evidence. This is followed with some commentary based on literature and theory related to peer assessment practices as a vantage point.

4.2.1 Theme 1 – Conception about the role of peer assessment

The first theme that emerged from the analysis of data was the conception of the role of peer assessment. From this theme, two sub themes emerged:

(a) Peer assessment as assessment for learning

(b) Peer assessment as an opportunity for student to develop skills in assessment.

All of the five lecturers supported these findings, perhaps with the greatest frequency and intensity of the conception of peer assessment as an assessment for learning. Below each theme is discussed separately with evidence drawn from transcript excerpts selected across the five lecturers as an example.

(a) Peer assessment as assessment for learning

Assessment for learning is an assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning (Black et al., 2010). The majority of the lecturers' responses about their practice of peer assessment in the interviews indicated a conception of the practice of this alternative form of assessment as an assessment for learning. Some of the descriptive statements they used are:

> So like I said, uhm uh, it is always for developmental purposes. It plays a formative role. It's so because sometimes assessment between the teacher and the learner is so asymmetrical - where a lot of power is in the hands of the lecturer. When you allow students to assess each other's work, they receive the feedback better and it promote learning among peers (Lorraine)
>
> Student can also learn while assessing other student, you know if you are assessing the work of someone who is good you learn a lot (Thabo)
>
> Peer assessment is a form of assessment for learning as it affords opportunities to students to check what they have learnt and how best they can learn. Through peer assessment and constant feedback from students' comments, can also assist lecturer to improve the learning activities to a greater extent. I simply asked students to make comments about three areas of strength and three

> areas that need improvement on their peer work. In each case, I focused on two key areas of strength and weakness of the presentation (Clement)

> In my case, peer assessment is a practice that I conceived through introducing students into the experiences of the rigor of publishing an academic article and the mere fact that they are able to read another person's work and provide feedback that relates to the strength that they value and weaknesses that they themselves have to avoid when they begin writing their own articles (Shadrack)

All the lecturers' responses in the excerpts presented above indicated an aspect of assessment for learning. Like Lorraine conceived peer assessment as an assessment that 'plays formative role' while Clement was very explicit by using the term 'assessment for learning'. The literature has demonstrated the importance of conceiving practices of assessment as a way of enhancing learning rather than merely keeping records of students. This is vital both for changing classroom practices and also for promoting meaningful learning that is responsive to what students can do and what they cannot do. This is mainly achieved through response to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance on-going learning (Klenowski, 2009).

Another interesting focus that echoed clearly from Clement's and Shadrack's responses is a conception of peer assessment as a tool for identifying and developing students' capabilities in terms of strength and weaknesses of their responses to the task. This conception reveals a strong focus on assessment for learning. This finding is supported by the work of (Strijbos & Sluijsmans, 2010), who view peer assessment as a tool that stimulates the students to reflect, discuss and collaborate in order to enhance learning among peers.

(b) Peer assessment as an opportunity for student to develop skills in assessment

Another sub theme that emerged from the conception about the role of peer assessment was that it is as an *opportunity for students to develop skills in assessment*. This theme indicates the potential of engaging with the practice of peer assessment in supporting students to develop skills in assessment itself. Below are some of the lecturers'

statements that were coded within this sub-theme. This theme is generated from lecturers' responses to the question: Please can you tell me your view about the concept of peer assessment?

> It is a kind of practice especially in teacher education where one of the main roles that teachers have to practice is that of assessment. So, I explain to them that peer assessment is an opportunity to kind of have map of a set of criteria against responses of peers to a given task. It is a chance for kind of an open forum of transparent means of getting familiar with what quality practice is and how to be able to see that in others (Jessica)

> Peer assessment develops students' identities as teachers by assessing their peers (Lorraine).

The above statements indicate a different conception of the role of peer assessment in the learning context, which presents a view of peer assessment as a tool for developing students' skills in terms of assessment itself. This conception, according to Jessica, helps student teachers to develop skills to be able to map a set of criteria to learners' responses to a particular task. This is a necessary skill that pre-service teachers need to be able to effectively translate in the course of their teaching practice. This finding is in agreement with the view by Karami and Rezaei (2015, p. 95) who asserted that peer assessment "can also be considered as an opportunity for students as learning facilitator and also used as a tool for instructors to obtain a more clear and obvious picture of learners' performance".

4.2.2 Theme 2 – Conception about the design of peer assessment criteria

The other theme that emerged is the conception of peer assessment in relation to key ideas in designing the rubric as a tool used in the assessment process. This is s one of the key instruments that are used in peer assessment, because students need to be provided with a common ground on the areas to look for in the assessment process. Two sub-themes emerged:

(a) Aligning Peer assessment criteria with every task

(b) Incorporating students' input into peer assessment criteria

(a) Aligning peer assessment criteria with the task

Aligning peer assessment criteria with the task states the way in which the assessment rubrics match with the nature of the task. This sub-theme emerged as a result of thinking about whether the same assessment criteria can be used for all types of peer assessment or not. Below are some of the lecturers' utterances in response to the question: Do you prepare the same assessment criteria for all peer assessment tasks?

> I think it is important because each task is asking for something different. Sometimes it's about argumentative stance, pragmatic implementation of a concept and other time it requires research evidence base. So, I think the criteria are very important to match with the task. It's got to be aligned. You can't assess something that you haven't asked the students to put forward. So I try to align the criteria with what the kind of aim and the objective of the task. What is important is that assessment criteria and the nature of the task must be aligned (Jessica)

> We've got, we use different memos for different tasks, but the structure of the memo is the same but the content of the memo is different, It depends on the topic yes because the memo must be very specific because mh tries to focus not just on the ideas or the concepts but it also focuses on expression, writing and fluency and eh how students are able to formulate ideas in a coherent manner (Lorraine)

The above excerpts represent all the views of the lecturers in this study in relation to the need for aligning assessment criteria with the task. This finding is in agreement with the view that was put forward by Falcikov (2005) and Smith, Copper and Lancaster (2002), that one of the key ideas to be considered when designing peer assessment tasks, instructors should ensure that it aligns with the task.

(b) Incorporating students' input into peer assessment criteria

Incorporating student input into peer assessment criteria emphasises the need for negotiation and renegotiation of the assessment criteria with the students. This may have potential in giving students a voice and also having the agency of seeing them involved in the process, rather than Thabo to be the sole determiner of what must be assessed. It is interesting that the findings from this study reveal that, while lecturers acknowledge that it is important, none of these lecturers negotiate with the students about the assessment criteria. However, some of these lecturers consider incorporating students' ideas in future as an important refinement to their process of conducting peer assessment. Below are some of the lecturers' responses to the question: Did you consider students' input in your assessment rubric?

> I actually haven't but that's something to think about in the future to make it more inclusive of student's voice and what they consider to be worth of assessing in each particular task. So it's not something I have necessarily incorporated but perhaps I think that it is necessary in the future (Jessica).

> Incorporating student input Yeah definitely, because you know when students read material, learning material, they sometimes come with some new ideas which you have not thought about. Or they could link this reading and that other reading this concept and that concept and in ways that you did not see before and so definitely it's quite necessary (Thabo).

> Ok, while doing the review, no, maybe something I can think of doing. Yeah maybe I can ask them what other questions could be asked. Yes, ok that's a good idea, thank you for raising that yes I could ask them then I could include it (Shadrack).

Excerpts above showed how these lecturers, even though they'd never thought of incorporating students' inputs into their assessment criteria, but they passionately indicated an interest in exploring the potential of including the students' perspectives into their assessment criteria.

4.3 Enactment of peer assessment practice among university lecturers

The second research question sought to describe the different enactment of peer assessment by the lecturers. The analysis of the data collected to address this research question produced a two-by-two matrix that describes the interrelatedness of the nature of peer assessment tasks (either oral presentation or written work) and the format of peer assessment (either individuals or group peer assessment). Table 1 shows the scope of the different styles of enacting the peer assessment by the participants. This data was generated through the lecturers' responses to the question: What is the style of your peer assessment?

Table 3: The scope of different enactment of Peer Assessment by sample of lecturers

		Nature of Peer Assessment task	
Format of Peer Assessment		**Oral Presentation**	**Written work**
	Individual Peer Assessment	Individual – Oral presentation Peer Assessment (**Not Applicable**)	Individuals – Written work Peer Assessment (**Thabo and Shadrack**)
	Group Peer Assessment	Group – Oral presentation Peer Assessment **(Jessica and Clement**)	Group – Written work Peer Assessment (**Lorraine**)

Table 1 shows the scope of different enactments of peer assessment across the five participants in this study. Thabo and Shadrack enacted individual – written work assessment; Jessica and Clement enacted group-oral presentation peer assessment; and Lorraine enacted group – written work peer assessment. No individual – oral presentation peer assessment is evident across the five lecturers. Below, the three styles of peer assessment that were found in this study are described.

4.3.1 Individual – written work peer assessment

This is the style of peer assessment where the task required individual students to submit an essay or any written piece of work. Shadrack exchanged the written work among the students to assess the strengths and the weaknesses of the work against certain criteria that were prepared by Thabo and discussed in the class. This style of peer assessment represents the practices of Thabo and Shadrack.

To exemplify this style of peer assessment, the instructional practice of Shadrack has been drawn on. This lecturer taught postgraduate masters' students a course which incorporated the development of their skills in academic writing and reviewing of journal articles into his/her course. Shadrack gives different research topics relevant to the focus of his/her course and asks students to write a draft article for submission into an academic journal. Students were given number of weeks to submit the draft article to the lecturer, who collected the draft articles from all the students and distributed them randomly, in such a way that every student had one article to review from another student. A standard journal reviewer template was given to the students with detailed areas that provided guidelines on what to assess in the written work. Each student was required to submit a detail feedback comment using these guidelines to the other student within a certain period of time.

At the end of the review, each student returned the draft article to his/her peer for correction. Each student is expected to look at the reviewer comments carefully and make corrections. A final version of the corrected piece of work, with a summary of response to the reviewer's comments together with the draft and reviewer's comments, are submitted to the lecturer. This review serves as an exams equivalent, which constitutes 15% overall mark for each student. Lecture E made the following comment on this practice:

> So in a way it's a very useful tool that I used in my masters' course to kind of introduce the students to what it means to publish in academia.
>
> And basically what I do is to, as the exams equivalent is about simply asking my students to write an article that they deem publishable in the journal and then

> we use all the journal formats. So there would be the writing of the draft article which will be sent for review and feedback from the review ah from the reviewer rather and then uhm the author of the article have to rework the article based on the reviewer comments.
>
> So basically the reviewing of the article is done by a fellow student and so I think it's a very good practice in my own case because ... at masters' level it introduces them to the intricacies involved in publishing an article, which is what a lot of master's students should be doing at some point as it's not good for them to begin to experience what it is to publish an article when they are out there in the field with no introduction at all so in a way it introduces them and the mere fact that they are able to read another person's work and provide feedback which will be assessed means that they know certain weaknesses that they themselves have to avoid when they begin, when they write their own articles.

The statement above indicated that Shadrack was passionate with the way and manner in which he used *individual – written peer assessment*. It is interesting to note that this style of peer assessment is serving the intended purpose for his task at hand, and therefore was found useful in this context. Similar to the findings in this study, Topping (1998), in a comprehensive literature review on peer assessment of writing, found that it is effective in providing useful feedback that enhances learning, and, in some cases, is even better than lecturer assessment.

4.3.2 Group – Oral presentation Peer Assessment

This is the style of peer assessment where the task requires group of students to prepare an oral presentation to present to the whole class. The class is clustered into a certain number of groups, with each group having dual inter-changeable roles: presentation to the whole class and assessing other group presentations. This style of peer assessment represents the practices of Jessica and Clement.

To exemplify this style of peer assessment, the practice of Clement's style of enacting peer assessment has been drawn on. Clement taught a methodology course to undergraduate pre-service teachers, and the nature of the task required a group of students to prepare a micro-teaching and present during the lecturer session. Clement divides the students into three clusters:

- Cluster 1: Those who will present micro-teaching on that day
- Cluster 2: Those who would assess presentation
- Cluster 3: Those who would act as learners in the class for the micro-teaching session.

The groups rotated so all students participated in the three roles. As usual an assessment criterion was discussed in the class and the group in cluster 2 were expected to use the assessment criteria in judging and preparing feedback for the presentation group. Oral feedback was provided by the students to the presentation group. Clement then provided clarification where necessary, and considered the students' comments in deciding on the marks for the students. Here Clement did not give the students full autonomy to decide and allocate marks. The following comments were made by Clement related to his style of peer assessment:

> So what I do ah in those specific classes is that I divide that class into three areas, three parameters, three clusters, alright, the first cluster is the cluster of students who will be presenting on that specific day because we will do that for over 3 to 4 days. So, depending on the number of students that are presenting, ok.
>
> So we have ah the one cluster which is made of students who are presenting and those students do one thing only during that day, they focus on their presentation.
>
> Then I have a second group of students ok, and this second cluster here is made of what I call my assessors, ok. These are students who will be assessing their peers, alright, and writing comments for me you know and I try to eh sort of make it straightforward and simple at the same time. I simply ask them to write 3 things that they like about the lesson and 3 things that they think should be improved about the lesson
>
> Then I have my third cluster which is made of learners. Ok, ah this will be the sort of punitive class that my students will be teaching to. This is one instance in which peer assessment kind of features quite strongly.
>
> So, I will say in a nutshell that I value peer assessment a lot and I don't see how one would ah teach without peer assessment, particular at the University level

As in the case of Shadrack, Clement was also passionate about his style of peer assessment - referred to as *Group – Oral presentation peer assessment*. The comment made by Clement in the last paragraph indicated the extent to which he valued his practice of peer assessment to the extent that he wondered how one can teach without peer assessment. Research in this field of peer assessment of oral presentation indicated improvement in learning in general, and in particular in developing the students' confidence and better presentation and appraisal skills (Falchikov, 1995, Topping, 1998).

4.3.3 Group – written work peer assessment

This is the style of peer assessment where the task required a group of students to submit an essay or any written piece of work. The lecturer exchanged the written work with another group of students so they would assess the strengths and the weaknesses of the work against certain criteria that were prepared by the lecturer and discussed in the class. Each group would have another group's written work to assess. This style of peer assessment represents the practice of Lorraine.

Lorraine structured her course in such a way that students had to read ahead of time and respond to certain questions. Students formed groups of four and would initially read the material given to them by the lecturer individually, then discuss this a group. Based on this discussion, they wrote down their collective response to the questions. On the day of the lecture, students were expected to bring their group written work to the class. Lorraine then collected all their group work and exchanged them with the other groups of students. Before the assessment process, as a whole class, Lorraine led a discussion about the answers to the questions, providing clarification where necessary.

Upon completion of this discussion, Lorraine asked students in groups to use assigned assessment criteria that had been discussed in the class to make comments about their peers' group work. Each group would then return the work to the other group with feedback. Lorraine made the following comments about her practice of peer assessment:

> The course that I teach is structured in such a way that students have got to go and read ahead of time and then respond to some given assignments or exercises based on the readings. Uhm then they come to class the following day or the whenever they have their next meeting. I then asked them in groups to exchange their notes.
>
> And when they exchange their notes we then read out what the questions were. We discuss the questions with them and then based on this discussion they read those notes and write down their feedback and comments.
>
> In my case, peer assessment is extremely valuable because it is formative. It is right at the core of teaching and learning practices. So it can be viewed I think as what I call a form of pedagogy. So if the purpose of education is to educate or to teach learners so that they can learn something, then peer assessment plays a formative role. It plays a valuable and critical role.

As in the case of the other lecturers discussed above, Lorraine was also passionate about her style of peer assessment, referred to as *Group – Written work peer assessment*. The comment made by Lorraine in the excerpt above indicated the extent to which she valued her practice of peer assessment viewed as part of her pedagogy - as it played a valuable formative and critical role in enhancing teaching and learning.

4.4 Affordances of peer assessment practice in the university

The third research question sought to describe the ways in which the participants in this study talked about the affordances of peer assessment to both teaching and learning. The analysis of the interview data to address this research question produced two distinct themes:

- Theme 1 – Teaching affordances
- Theme 2 – Learning affordances

These themes are discussed below across the five samples of university lecturers that participated in this study

4.4.1 Theme 1 – Teaching affordances

The first theme that emerged from the affordances of peer assessment practices is teaching affordances, which states that the kind of information generated used by lecturers to enhance teaching that is responsive to students' needs. Below are some of the lecturers' utterances that related to what peer assessment affords to their pedagogy in the classroom.

> We do assessment as a way to consolidate our teaching. If you don't assess how do you know that students have understood what you wanted to teach. So peer assessment helps us to monitor students learning to see how far they have learnt or the difficulties they faced while learning. In the event of no such difficulties, teaching proceeds quickly to another topic or concept. If they are not eh doing well then peer assessment helps to inform our methodologies to say how I can change the method of teaching, so that the students can understand (Thabo)

> Peer assessment help us to see how well they have understood concepts. So when you get the assessment it's not just whether the student can assess but do they understand the concepts being assessed....do they understand for example, how those concepts have been forwarded eh and put forward and implemented. So I think it gives insight not just only that the student can assess....but it gives another insight into understanding of the tasks so I hold it to be very important….and also to use the peer assessment to further guard my own practices and pedagogy (Jessica)

The statements above indicated how peer assessment practice becomes a significant factor that enhances a pedagogy that is responsive to the students' level of difficulties. For example, Jessica acknowledged that peer assessment 'further guards my own practice and pedagogy'. This indicated the usefulness of peer assessment since it served a vital role for directing choices of pedagogy in teaching. Similarly, for Thabo, peer assessment helped in unveiling the level of difficulties that students faced in understanding the concept while assessing others.

4.4.2 Theme 2 - Learning affordances

The second theme that emerged from the affordances of peer assessment practices is learning affordances. From this theme, two sub-themes emerged, these are:

(a) Develops students' skills and knowledge

(b) Develops students' agency and identity as teachers

Develops students' skills while assessing their peers

Lecturers were asked to talk about the value and rationale of peer assessment. One of the strong point they put forwards related to the potentials of peer assessment in developing the students' skills at giving feedback, communicating, and critical enquiry and reflection. Some of the evidence for developing students' skills is presented below:

> Peer assessment help student to cope with the new ideas when they are engaged with other people work, these will develop their communication skills and make the student to work hard, as they need to present their work to their peers **(Thabo)**

Develops students' agency and identity as teachers

This sub-theme relate to the potential of peer assessment as a tool that developed the students' agency (having voice in their own learning), as well as developing their identity as teachers – belonging to a community of practice and the feeling of being through participation is one significant component of effective pedagogy as professionals. Some of the descriptive statement by the lecturers is presented below:

> I think it's important to give, from my perspective, students the voice ...and to enable them to have some agency in their own learning I think it develops an ownership for learning because I think when you're evaluated by a peer it becomes kind a more collaborative it becomes more collegial and I think it brings students ownership for their own learning. They are accountable ...not only to the lecturer not only to themselves but to their peer group and

especially in teacher education. It's very important to develop a community of practice (Jessica).

So I think by doing peer assessment we may get to kind of uhm in a positive way and constructively assess or evaluate their peers work according to certain criteria not just to assess whether I like a person or not. But to keep it on a professional way where they evaluate their work and to what extent that might be quality based or not (Clement).

4.5 Constraints of peer assessment practice

The fourth research question sought to describe the challenges faced by lecturers while conducting peer assessment at the university level. The analysis of the data collected to address this research question produced three distinct themes:

1) Students' incompetence in assessment

2) Issues of biases in assigning marks by peers

3) Peer assessment increases lecturers' workload.

The study participants described these constraints about peer assessment practices in the course(s) they teach. When participants described how they conduct peer assessment, they generally described it as interested, undergoing refinements as it is not fully developed. These constraints often led them to strategically engage in refining their ways of conducting the peer assessment - to increase its validity in relation to students' learning and credibility in relation to using the marks obtained from peer assessment as part of students' overall progress by the end of the year.

4.5.1 Theme 1: students' incompetence in assessment

The first theme that emerged from the analysis of data was that students were incompetent in assessing their peers. All of the participants supported these findings, perhaps with the greatest frequency and intensity of all other themes that emerged. The issue of students' incompetence is one constraint of peer assessment that has been noted in the literature (Falchikov, 2007). Students often lack the appropriate skills to assess

their peers' work. Of course, the task of assessment and giving productive feedback requires a great deal of knowledge and skills in the content, as well as in communication of feedback that is supportive to learning (Spiller, 2012; Topping, 1998; van den Berg et al., 2006)

The following excerpts from interview transcripts exemplify the predominant lecturers' responses that are coded within this theme.

> Well the problem is like I told you before that some students you know, they do not have sufficient knowledge to be able to assess someone, right, and some students don't know that they don't have that knowledge and stick rigidly to things that they believe is correct (Thabo)

> In most cases when students assess their peers they don't capture well the essence of the substance in the answer that has been discussed. This is a big problem, but their competences grows over time as they engage more on this exercise (Lorraine)

> It's a genuine concern because I want my work to be given to someone who will tell me ok you can rework and improve on A, B, C, D, E, F rather than my work given to someone who will just say yes/no without giving me the necessary feedback. This comes to issues of students' competence in providing good feedback (Shadrack)

In all the statements above, though stated in different ways, each lecturer highlights the students' knowledge base as a problem in conducting peer assessment. Thabo raised the concern that some students they do not understand limitations of their knowledge and assess their peers incorrectly. Shadrack talked about concerns raised by some students where they got readers that are either authoritative or interpretive, rather than probing or collaborative (van den Berg et al., 2006). Students need to develop skills and knowledge competencies to be able to provide more productive feedback that can help their peers to improve their work. As stated by Lorraine more explicitly, and supported by all the participants in this study, the knowledge and competences grows over time as students constantly engage with this practice of assessing their peers.

4.5.2 Theme 2: Issues of biases in assigning marks by peers

The second theme that emerged related to issues of biases in assigning marks by peers. This is different from the students' incompetence in doing the assessment. All of the

participants acknowledged that students often give high marks to their peers in the event where peer-assessment is used for allocating marks. It has been noted in the literature that certain factors, like friendship, gender and race are associated with students' biases in assigning marks to their peers (Spiller, 2012; Li & Steekelberg, 2004). The participants in this study shared their experiences of efforts to minimize these issues, particularly the one related to friendship among peers. These issues are discussed, with evidence presented in the form of excerpts drawn from the interview transcripts to exemplify the predominant lecturers' responses that are coded within this theme.

> … when they assess their peers, you know if when they know correct things, they may not want to give low marks to their peers because they are afraid of peer pressure (Thabo)

> I try to keep it framed within educative context – as a form of professional practice as teachers. Although, I don't know if you can ever take friendship or networks away from that. I think they try more most of the time to evaluate one another quite highly so that it's going to kind of improve their own marks (Jessica)

> You know this thing of awarding a low mark because that a peer has a grudges against him or her or something like this. So, to avoid interpersonal conflict, what I do is, I would be the one to awarding marks – all what I need from students is to give me some comments about what they think their colleagues should get and why they think so (Clement)

Where peer assessment counts for marks, students often favour their peers by giving them high marks. Sometimes it's as a result of 'peer pressure' (Thabo) or, in some cases, giving low marks because of 'interpersonal conflicts' (Clement). As indicated in the excerpts, all the participants presented above acknowledged that it is a problem for the credibility of peer assessment. As indicated by Jessica, it is so because students want to improve their marks, so that cumulatively they end up with high marks in the course. Interestingly, while all the participants in this study acknowledged assigning marks to peers as being problematic, they also shared some of the ways they used to negotiate on this issue. Jessica tried to keep the practice framed within an educative context as a professional practice. In this way, some students would be able to detach their personal opinion and be guided by the professional ethics of the teaching profession. However, Clement negotiated by taking authority in being the sole final decider of the students'

marks. He does acknowledged contributions from students through providing comments and suggesting marks. Clement also pointed out that where a very tight criterion was used in situations when students find it hard to unambiguously allocate high marks to their peers, they often rejected their peers' marks and preferred a decision to be taken by Thabo as the sole authority.

> The first challenge is that, in some cases, where a tight assessment criteria is used that is quite simple and clearer, I will repeat what I said earlier on, students do not accept the marks that they are given by their peers, they tend to be more amiable or more acceptable for the marks that a lecturer has awarded and I think that comes with the matter of authority (Clement)

4.5.3 Theme 3: Peer assessment increases lecturers' workload

The third theme that emerged related to issues of lecturers' workload in assessment. This was different from the students' incompetence and issues of biases in assigning marks by peers. This indicated the kind of preparations, instructional roles and the work that was involved in implementing effective peer assessment. Below are some of the lecturers' responses to the question: 'Does peer assessment reduces your workload?'

> I don't think so because I think it needs a lot of I mean it does need a lot of scaffolding until it becomes a habitual practice. And then I think you have got to take their comments in and then I think you know I ask them to make comments, so it's not just numerical, because I think the qualitative, it gives insight into their understanding where they found concerns so I think reading through their comments, reading the whole group. Since they did it as a team and seeing if it matches my own and that's quite additional work rather than less (Jessica).

> Unfortunately it does not, yeah, I wish it would. I really wish it would and maybe you are now going into the austerity - a year that is next year maybe more and more of my colleagues will be doing peer assessment, but I won't be around by the way. But I think, I think it's going to be a very important part of what we will be doing in a school such as this one, because the staff has been cut. There won't be a lot of human resources as we were used to have in the past, so if peer assessment can reduce workload, then it would serve as a good way to respond to current situations. But sadly, in my case it actually increases my workload (Clement).

> It doesn't because I still, in my case it doesn't so I am not using it in a sense of them marking and then me entering their marks as I read through again. When I read through their exams, they submit a draft and final so I read through the draft, read through the comments that were made by their reviewers (peers),

> read through the final to see how those comments were addressed and I also read through the letter written by the author that addressed the feedback from the reviewer (peer). So it doesn't in any way reduce my workload. I put up as you were saying send me your final report and I will read it. In fact it actually increases my work load (Shadrack).

Interestingly, the diverse majority of the lecturers affirmed that peer assessment increased their instructional workload. This finding has antecedents in the literature. For example, David (2000), Orsmond and Merry (1996) and Topping (1998) all argue that the process of conducting peer assessment is time-consuming and suggest that methods of easing time constraints need to be considered. Clement also made a similar call, in the context, about limited human resource: an alternative form of assessment that can reduce lecturers, workload is to be welcome.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the analysis and findings of the four constructs that are central to this study have been presented. These are: conceptualisation, enactment, affordances and constraint to practices of peer assessment by sample of five lecturers at one university in South Africa.

Research question one sought to describe the ways in which university lecturers conceptualise peer assessment in the courses they teach. The analysis of data resulted in the following distinct themes:

1) Conception about the role of peer assessment (as either assessment for learning, or as opportunity to develop skills in assessment as part of the pre-service teachers teaching practice)

2) Conception about the design of the peer assignment criteria (aligning assessment criteria with the task, and incorporating students' inputs into the assessment criteria) were found to be vital constructs to be considered when designing peer assessment criteria.

Research question two sought to describe the different enactment of peer assessment by the sample of lecturers. The analysis of data resulted in the following distinct themes:

1) Individual – written peer assessment

2) Group – Oral presentation peer assessment

3) Group – Written work peer assessment.

These three practices indicated the scope of the different styles of peer assessment enacted by the sample of five lecturers that participated in this study.

Research question three sought to describe the ways in which the participants in this study talk about the affordances of peer assessment to both teaching and learning. The analysis of data resulted in the following distinct themes:

1) Teaching affordances – what peer assessment affords in terms of changing pedagogy that is responsive to the level of students' understanding

2) Learning affordance – what peer assessment affords in terms of developing students' skills in communication, giving feedback and supporting students to develop the identity of being, and belonging, as professionals.

Research question four sought to describe the challenges faced by lecturers while conducting peer assessment at the university level. The analysis of data resulted in the following distinct themes:

1) Students' incompetence in assessment

2) Issues of biases in assigning marks by peers

3) Peer assessment increases lecturers' workload.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presents an overview and discussion of the study's findings, including the implications of peer assessment practice in higher education, as well as the recommendations for higher education lecturers in terms of conceptualisation, enactment, affordances and the constraints of peer assessment practice and policies. A possible direction for future research is also enumerated in the concluding section of this chapter.

5.2 Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how lecturers as instructional leaders conceptualised and enacted peer assessment in the courses they teach. The study also explores the affordances and constraints of peer assessment practice in the university. Understanding how peer assessment is conceptualised and enacted in higher education was framed within several underlying concepts that composed the conceptual framework for this study, which was based on research, which confirms that lecturers can serve as instructional leaders within their practices of peer assessment in the university. The conceptual framework was also based upon research that documents how peer assessment has been conceptualised and enacted in higher education. It is pertinent to note that assessment practices within higher education institutions are highly idiosyncratic, and this makes research in this area complex and multi-faceted.

The notion of a lecturer as instructional leader in the implementation of peer assessment practice is a vital phenomenon to explore, due to the importance of higher education accountability and assessment protocols. The review of the literature conducted for this study found no, or limited, research where peer assessment is conceptualised as instructional leadership practice in the university, in terms of how lecturers

conceptualise and enact peer assessment in the courses they teach, as well as unveiling the affordances and constraints of peer assessment to teaching and learning. This is a gap in the literature that the present study investigated.

A qualitative case study design was used in this study. The qualitative case study design allowed the researcher to gather data from the perspective of multiple interrelated cases (Creswell, 2014). A multiple case study involving replication of data collection with five lecturers across different divisions in the school of education was used. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with each lecturer who provided insight that constituted the key findings of this study.

The study interrogated four research questions:

1. How do lecturers conceptualise the notion of peer assessment in the courses they teach?
2. How do lecturers implement effective peer assessment in the courses they teach?
3. What are the affordances of peer assessment to teaching as well as the students' learning?
4. What are the challenges faced by lecturers while conducting peer assessment in the courses they teach?

Thematic analysis was carried out in answering the above research questions. In the section that follows, a discussion of the key findings that emanated from the analysis of the interviews conducted with the sample of the five lecturers is presented.

5.3 Discussion of the key Findings

There were four key findings that emanated from the analysis of the lecturers' interviews. These findings were presented in line with the four research questions.

1. Peer assessment is conceptualised as both assessment for learning and opportunity for students to develop the skill of assessment

Through the thematic analysis as discussed in Chapter 3 and presented in Chapter 4, two distinct and important conceptions of peer assessment practices in relation to purpose were identified. The first conception is the view of peer assessment as *Assessment for Learning* (AfL). In this conception, the lecturer's purpose of using peer assessment is to promote students' learning of the content of the course. In most cases within this conception, peer assessment is not used for awarding marks to students, but rather for the lecturer to get the students actively engaged with the course materials in order to critique their peers. Through this process, there is a possibility of conceptual learning by the students.

The second conception, on the other hand, viewed peer assessment as a vehicle that supported students to develop skills of assessment. Different from the first conception, in this view, the purpose is not centred on learning of the course materials *per se*, but rather for using assessment criteria to make informed decisions on peer students' work. The purpose here is for future use and development of the students' skill of assessment. A good example of this conception is in Shadrack's notion of the use of peer assessment in the context of article reviews. In most cases within this conception, marks were awarded on the basis of how students assess their peers. In the context of Shadrack for example, he awarded marks as an exam equivalent on how students' review and make comments about their peers work, as well as how they respond to the comments of others.

2. Peer assessment can be enacted in different ways

Findings from this study shows that peer assessment is enacted in three different ways, which describe the interplay between the nature of peer assessment tasks and the format of peer assessment. These are:

Individual – written work peer assessment – A form of peer assessment where individual written work is assessed by another student.

Group-oral presentation peer assessment – A form of peer assessment where group of students present oral work and are assessment by another group of students.

Group – written work peer assessment – A form of peer assessment where a group of students submit written work that is assessed by another group of students.

Each of these types is discussed in Chapter 4 with illustrative examples drawn from the responses from the five lecturers.

3. Peer assessment practice provides both teaching and learning affordances

Findings from this study showed that peer assessment practice provides both teaching and learning affordances. The teaching affordances indicated how peer assessment practice enhances pedagogy that is responsive to the students' level of difficulties. By way of example, Jessica acknowledged that peer assessment directs his pedagogy, 'peer assessment further guard my own practice and pedagogy'. This indicated the usefulness of peer assessment since it serves a vital role for directing choices of pedagogy in teaching. Similarly, for Thabo, peer assessment helped in unveiling the level of difficulties that students faced in understanding the concept while assessing others.

On the students and learning side, peer assessment was found to provide two dimensions of affordances to students. The first is developing students' skills and knowledge; and the second, is developing students' agency and identity as teachers. Lecturers were asked to talk about the value and rationale of peer assessment. One of the strong points they put forward related to the potential of peer assessment in developing the students' skills of giving feedback, communication and presenting critical enquires and reflections. Ideas like students' voice in their own learning, belonging to a community of practice and the feeling of being enables through participation are significant components of having agency and identity as professionals.

4. Students' incompetence, issues of bias, and increasing lecturers' workload were found to be the key challenges to the effective implementation of peer assessment

The findings from this study showed three key challenges that constrain effective implementation of peer assessment:

Students' incompetence in assessment - All of the participants supported these findings, perhaps with the greatest frequency and intensity of all the others. The issue of students' incompetence is one constraint of peer assessment that has been noted in the literature (Falchikov, 2007). Students often lack the appropriate skills in assessing their peers' work. Of course, the tasks of assessment and giving productive feedback require a great deal of knowledge and skills in the content as well as in communication of feedback that is supportive to learning (Spiller, 2012; Topping, 1998; van den Berg et al., 2006).

Issues of biases in assigning marks by peers – All participants in this study acknowledged that students often give high marks to their peers in the event where peer assessment is used for allocating marks. It has been noted in the literature that certain factors, like friendship, gender and race are associated with students' biases in assigning marks to their peers (Spiller, 2012; Li & Steekelberg, 2004). However, participants in this study shared their experiences of making the effort to minimize these issues, particularly the one related to friendship among peers.

Peer assessment increases lecturers' workload – Four out of the five lecturers described the kind of preparations, instructional roles, and the work that is involved in implementing effective peer assessment as demanding. This finding is in disagreement with what is reported in the literature. For example, Ballantyne et al. (2002) reported that the popularity of peer assessment in higher education was as a result of increasing enrolment, where lecturers experience an extensive workload due to assessment. In this sense, peer assessment was seen as an alternative form of assessment that reduces the lecturers' workload. Findings from this study reveals otherwise. One can speculate that the nature and format of implementing peer assessment might be dependent on whether the lecturers' workload could be increased or reduced.

5.4 Implications of findings to theory, policy and practice of peer assessment in higher education

The findings of this study, particularly by bringing together the notion of instructional leadership into the context of assessment practices has implications for the theory,

policy and practice of peer assessment in higher education within the South African context. Each of this implications is discussed separately.

5.4.1 Implications for theory

Understanding how lecturers conceptualised peer assessment has provided greater implications for the theorisation of the notion of peer assessment practices in higher education. Hence the findings of this study have provided a starting point to talk differently about the role of lecturers in assessment practices as instructional leaders. This has implications for future research in considering how lecturers perceived their role in enacting peer assessment, as well as unpacking what it means to do peer assessment in terms of its affordances and constraints.

5.4.2 Implication for policy

To date, specifically in the context in which this study was conducted, there was no policy that specifies what type of assessment lecturers should use in the courses they teach. Some lecturers, like the participants in this study, practise peer assessment based on their individual choices and their strong belief in its value in promoting teaching and learning in higher education. Therefore, higher institution policy makers can benefit from the findings of this study in formulating policies of enacting peer assessment and providing suggestions about how lecturers can minimise some of the challenges that have been highlighted in this study.

5.4.3 Implications for practice

The findings of this study have important implications for the practice of peer assessment in higher education. The lack of extensive research in bringing together the instructional leadership practices in the perspective of assessment in the local context in which this study is conducted has revealed the limits of many lecturers practising peer assessment in the courses they teach. Findings from this study can benefit lecturers by providing them with more insight into how they can practise different kinds of peer assessment as reported in this study. This, in turn, can support effective students'

learning, developing communication skills as well as providing useful feedback for lecturers in terms of their pedagogical practices.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The following are some of the limitations for this study

1. The study did not consider the voice of the students. All findings were based on lecturers' perceptions of the students' learning affordances.
2. The data was conducted at the end of the semester, when all the lecturers have completed their courses, therefore the researcher does not get opportunity to visit their classes and practically observe how they enacted their peer assessment. This would provide a form of triangulation of what the lecturers describe as their style of practicing peer assessment
3. The analysis of assessment criteria to document the different tasks and the assessment guideline could have been useful in understanding why some lecturers describe peer assessment as increasing their workload and others as it reducing their workload.

5.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Workshops and seminars should be organised to acquaint lecturers with the rationale and value of peer assessment in higher education. This in turn would generate more dialogue towards understanding the concept of peer assessment and how best it can be implemented in higher education.
2. Policy makers should provide more extra time in the curriculum to allow students to get more opportunities to practise peer assessment as it requires lots of practice in developing the competencies of assessment of peers' work.
3. Lecturers need to provide students with precise and clear assessment criteria in order to minimize the challenges they faced in assessing their peers. In addition, a special session needs to be created for the students to discuss the concept of peer assessment and its values to their learning before implementing peer assessment.

4. Peer assessment should be closely monitored in the early stages because of the students' level of incompetence in assessment. In this sense, productive feedback to students is necessary.

5.7 Suggestions for further studies

The following areas of research are suggested for further investigation

1. Exploring the relationship between lecturers' perception and students' perception of peer assessment practices.
2. Exploring different conceptualisations, enactments, affordances and constraint of peer assessment across different disciplines. To establish whether peer assessment is discipline dependent or not.
3. Exploring the effect of peer assessment on students' achievement in higher education

5.8 Critical reflection

This research journey has made significant contributions to my growth as a novice researcher, as well as in understanding management and leadership in education. My background was not in education. I came with an Honours degree in business management and I have chosen to enrol into a Master's degree in Educational leadership and policy studies, because I saw the school system as a setting that requires professional leadership and managerial skills in order to optimally achieve the vision of effective students' learning. As a student, I am always concerned about not incorporating students' voice into the design of what they are to learn, how it is to be learned and in what ways it will be assessed. This driving concern led me to looking at peer assessment in higher education.

As a novice researcher, this journey emphasised the importance of thorough and unambiguous description and interpretation of what people said in its raw form into looking at patterns and relationships. This is really something new that I have learnt. Another important change for me in this endeavour was the demand of setting out an interview schedule and thinking promptly about useful probes in looking deeper into the

minds of the participants. This was really a challenging task, particularly as I had to interview experts – they are both researchers and lecturers, almost all of them with PhD qualifications in various disciplines in education.

Another important reflection for me is the analytical process of qualitative data. My data was interviews. I started with verbatim transcriptions of all what the participants said. I then started looking more closely for evidence from the data to answer my research questions. In this engagement, I began to notice a pattern in the lecturers' ways of conceptualising peer assessment, and how they implement it in the courses they teach. This led to drawing out themes and categories in order to organise the raw data into a coherent story.

Finally, as I engaged closely with the concept of assessment of the lecturers' role as instructional leaders, I became more aware of the complexity of the notion of assessment that is responsive to both teaching and learning, particularly assessment in a large class. How the literature describes the benefits of peer assessment made it seem to be something that is easy to do, by just asking students to assess their peers. Through this study, I realised that it is not an easy task for the lecturers to prepare and implement effective peer assessment.

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APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

Thank you very much for finding time for this interview. I really appreciate your willingness to participate in my study.

The purpose of my study is to investigate how peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice is conceptualized and enacted as an alternative form of assessment practice in the university. The study also aims to examine the affordances and constraints of the peer assessment practices.

In this interview, I would like to ask you questions related to how you implement peer assessment in the course(s) you teach and the opportunities and challenges that it creates for student learning.

Conceptualization of peer assessment

1. Tell me your view about the concept of peer assessment?
    a. In the course you teach, how do you define peer assessment to your students?
    b. In your view what are the rationales for conducting peer assessment?

2. In relation to other forms of assessment how do you value peer assessment?
    a. Reducing your workload of assessment
    b. Developing range of skills for students to meet the demand of the labour market.

Preparing for peer assessment

3. As a lecturer/ tutor, what is it that you actually do in order to conduct peer assessment? What is the style of your peer assessment?

4. What are the key concepts or ideas you consider when designing assessment criteria (rubric) for students' to use as a guide to assess their peers?

5. Do you prepare one assessment criteria for all tasks or you have different assessment criteria for every task that you require students' to assess their peers?
    a. If no, Why?

b. If yes, what is the value of the differentiation of the assessment criteria?

6. Tell me in what ways and how do you obtain ideas for planning your assessment criteria?
    (i) Do you get ideas from past experience, previous research, etc? Please elaborate

7. Do you at all consider incorporating students' inputs into your assessment criteria?
    (i) If yes, in what ways? Please elaborate
    (ii) If no, in your view, do you think it is important to discuss and agree with students on what to be included in the assessment criteria?

Weighting of peer assessment

8. In conjunction with other forms of assessment, what is the weight of peer assessment?
    a. On what criteria do you decide this weighting?
    b. What do you think about students' feelings about this weighting? Do they demand more or less marks?

Constraints of peer assessment

9. What problems or challenges do you experience that are associated with the practice of peer assessment and how do you navigate through these?
    a. Reliability with student's interpretation of the assessment criteria?
    b. Issues of friendship?
    c. Incompetency in the assessment decisions by students?
    d. What other issues have you dealt with? Or what are the constraints of peer assessment in your own view.

10. Would you like to add anything about peer assessment that we have not talked about?

Thank you

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

DATE: 10 August, 2015

Dear Lecturer/tutor

My name is Maryam Abdulhamid and I am a Masters student in the Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS), School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am conducting a research project with the title: Peer Assessment as an instructional leadership practice in the university: Conceptualization, enactment, Affordances and Constraints. The purpose of this study is to investigate how peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice is conceptualized and enacted as an alternative to assessment practice in the university. The study also aims to examine the affordances and constraints of peer assessment practices to students' learning. The motivation for focusing on peer assessment emanated on one hand from the need for alternative form of assessment to reduce lecturers workload in large classes, and on the other hand the need to develop range of skills for students to be able to communicate effectively, in meeting the demand of the labour market and also to foster lifelong learning among peers, which many authors argue that peer assessment has this potential (see for example Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2006 and Slavin, 1990).

I write to invite you to be a part of this research project and to consider giving me permission to collect and analyse documents that you are using in implementing peer assessment in your course. I would also like to interview you at your convenient time for about 30 minutes to gain more insight into how you implement peer assessment and the challenges you are facing. I would like to seek for your permission to audio recorded the interview.

Your participation in my research project is entirely voluntary, and you are free, without any problem, to stop participating halfway if you decide to do so.

In the final reporting of my research project, I will ensure that your real name and your identity is not revealed. I will also ensure that nobody except myself and my supervisor will have access to the audio recordings of your interview. All audio recordings collected will be stored safely and destroyed after 5 years of completion of this research.

I would like you to please sign a consent form indicating that you are consenting to participate in my research project

I trust that you will find the above information in order and I look forward to working with you.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you

_____

SIGNATURE

NAME: Maryam Abdulhamid
EMAIL: mamansabriyya@gmail.comor885873@students.wits.ac.za
TEL NUMBER: 0718280285

Lecturers/tutors Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called: **Peer Assessment as an instructional leadership practice in the university: Conceptualization, enactment, Affordances and Constraints**

I, _____ give my consent for the following:

Permission to review/collect documents/artifacts	**Circle one**
I agree that the documents (e.g. task, peer assessment guidelines, etc) that I am using for peer assessment can be used for this study only.	YES/NO

Permission to be audio taped

I agree to be audio taped during the interview	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only	YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time and don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my division will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audio-taped
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____ Date_____

APPENDIX C: LETTER OF PERMISSION

Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies,
Wits School of Education
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
4th September, 2015

To The Head of School,
Wits School of Education
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

My name is Maryam Abdulhamid and I am a Master's student in the Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS), School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am conducting a research project with the title: Peer Assessment as an instructional leadership practice in the university: Conceptualization, enactment, Affordances and Constraints. The purpose of this study is to investigate how peer assessment as an instructional leadership practice is conceptualized and enacted as an alternative to assessment practice in the university. The study also aims to examine the affordances and constraints of the peer assessment practices to students' learning. The motivation for focusing on peer assessment emanated on one hand from the need for alternative form of assessment to reduce lecturers workload in large undergraduate classes, and on the other hand the need to develop range of skills for students to be able to communicate effectively, in meeting the demand of the labour market and also to foster lifelong learning among peers, which many authors argue that peer assessment has this potential (see for example Boud, Cohen & Sampson, 2006 and Slavin, 1990).

The study involve analysis of documents (e.g. peer assessment task, peer assessment criteria, guidelines for students, etc) that lectures at Wits School of Education used in conducting peer assessment and interviews of ten selected lecturers. The interview will be for about 30 minutes and the purpose of the interview is to gain insight on how lecturers implement peer assessment and the challenges of implementing it. The ten lecturers will be selected based on two criteria: (1) lectures who practice peer assessment in their courses, and (2) lecturers who are willing to participate in my study. The interview will be audio recorded.

In the final reporting of my research project, I will ensure that lecturers' real name and their identities are not revealed. I will also ensure that nobody except myself and my supervisor will have access to the audio recordings of the lecturers' interviews. All audio recordings collected will be stored safely and destroyed after 5 years of completion of this research.

In view of this, I would like to seek for your permission to conduct this study at Wits School of Education. I trust that the findings of the study would be beneficial to both lecturers in the school in better conceptualising their practice of peer assessment and also would serve as a useful information to be use in formulating policies relating to assessment at Wits School of Education.

Attached to this letter is a tentative lecturers' interviews schedule.

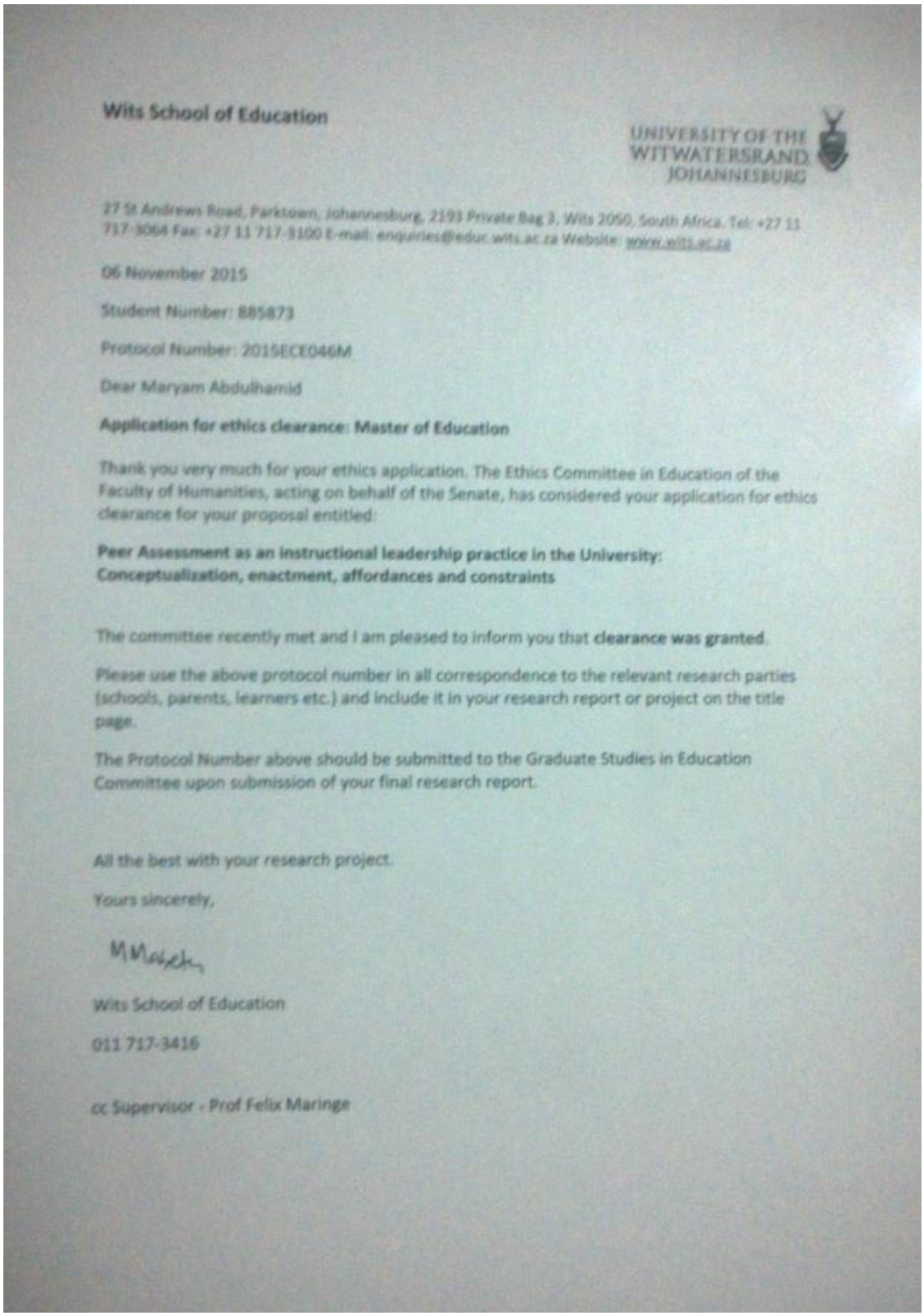
Thank you

_____

SIGNATURE

NAME: Maryam Abdulhamid
Person number: 885873
EMAIL: mamansabriyya@gmail.com or885873@students.wits.ac.za
TEL NUMBER: 0718280285

APPENDIX D: ETHICS APPROVAL



Wits School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND JOHANNESBURG

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06 November 2015

Student Number: 885873

Protocol Number: 2015ECE046M

Dear Maryam Abdulhamid

Application for ethics clearance: Master of Education

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate, has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

Peer Assessment as an instructional leadership practice in the University: Conceptualization, enactment, affordances and constraints

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that **clearance was granted**.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely,

M Maringe

Wits School of Education

011 717-3416

cc Supervisor - Prof Felix Maringe