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PRIMARY TEACHERS' IDENTITIES AND UNDERSTANDINGS OF THEIR TEACHING PRACTICES IN A GAUTENG PROVINCE LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS STRATEGY CONTEXT

Tsholofelo Moremi

Student number: 0508271G

Protocol number: 2014ECE017M

Supervisors: Bronwen Wilson-Thompson and

Dr. Thabisile Nkambule

A research report is submitted to the School of Education, Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education by combination of coursework and research

Johannesburg

2016

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Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. This research project has not been submitted before for any other degree, or examination, in any other university. Where use has been made of the results of other authors, they have been duly acknowledged in the text.

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Abstract

This qualitative study aimed to understand teachers' identities and teaching practices in the Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy. The research, which is a case study, was conducted with six Foundation Phase teachers, which included two Heads of Department (HODs). The setting of the study was a primary school that was declared underperforming in 2013, after the low performance in Annual National Assessments. The prescriptive syllabus type of curriculum known as the Gauteng Province Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) was implemented due to the low Grade six Mathematics results. Semi-structured interviews were the primary research instruments used to generate data on how teachers understood their identities and teaching practices in a GPLMS school.

A major finding was that teachers renegotiated their identities in order to deal with the changing teaching context that came with GPLMS. The study identified three groups of teachers who dealt with the changes in different ways: their learning trajectories and communities of practice, along with their personal identities shaped the ways in which they responded strategy. The teachers had a good sense of teacher identity before being declared underperforming. Another major finding was that teachers changed their pedagogical approaches order to teach according to the detailed, prescriptive lesson plans. What is problematic is that some teachers resorted to skipping some parts of the content, prescribed in the lesson plans, in order to finish the syllabus on time. Of great concern is that none of the participants received training on using the GPLMS or even CAPS from their district: teachers ought to have sound pedagogical knowledge that can ultimately afford epistemological access to the learners. Research on teachers' identities and understanding teaching practices cannot be ignored since they teachers at the forefront of knowledge delivery.

Acknowledgements

In completing my research project, I am grateful to a number of people, without their help, this project would not have been possible. Thank you to:

My supervisors Bronwen Wilson-Thompson and Dr. Thabisile Nkambule, for having such faith in me. Your guidance, contributions, and suggestions helped me to finally put this project together, even when I was tired of writing.

My six participants, and the principal of the school, who willingly participated in this project, by allowing me to interview them. Your participation is greatly appreciated and I have gained a lot from your interviews.

Thank you to the Department of Education for allowing me to undertake this research.

My parents Paul and Lizzy Moremi, younger sister Lebogang Moremi, partner William Mosue, my son Tshegofatso Moremi, and friends Gontse Molotsi and Nomathamsanqa Wongo. Thank you for being so understanding when I couldn't spend time with you. Your encouragement and belief in me motivated me to do my best. I love you all.

List of abbreviations and acronyms

GPLMS: Gauteng Province Literacy and Mathematics Strategy

CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy

OBE: Outcomes Based Education

NCS: National Curriculum Statement

ANA: Annual National Assessment

RNCS: Revised National Curriculum Statement

GDE: Gauteng Department of Education

DBE: Department of Basic Education

GPLS: Gauteng Province Literacy Strategy

DoE: Department of Education

FP: Foundation Phase

IP: Intermediate Phase

SP: Senior Phase

HOD: Head of Department

SMT: School L Management Team

LOLT: Language of Learning and Teaching

CTAs: Common Tasks of Assessment

FAL: First Additional Language

NCS: National Senior Certificate

TIMMS: Third International Mathematics and Science Study

SAQMEQ: Southern African Consortium for the Monitoring of Educational Quality

MLA: Monitoring Learning Achievement

PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment

PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

NAPLAN: National Assessment Programme-Literacy and Numeracy

APPA: Australian Primary Principals Association

NEEDU: National Education Evaluation and Development Unit

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Chapter 1- Aim and context of study

1.1 Introduction

This research report describes a case study that involves the identities of primary school teachers and their understandings of their practices in a Gauteng Province Literacy Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) context. This chapter contextualises the study by discussing Literacy and Mathematics levels in local and international standardised testing, and how they lead to the school chosen for this study being classified as "underperforming". This discussion is then followed by a presentation of my motivation for this topic. Thereafter, the problems and issues investigated and key questions raised as a result are outlined. Finally, the structure of the report through which these issues and questions are addressed is presented toward the end of the chapter.

1.2 Background to the study

The democratisation of South Africa in 1994 brought changes in curriculum, with the aim to afford all learners with equal and unsegregated education. Jansen (1998) states that the Ministry of Education introduced national reform initiatives namely: to purge the apartheid curriculum that contained offensive and outdated content and to introduce continuous assessment in schools. The introduction of Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) has attempted to address curriculum challenges, through being content driven and relying on the teacher to deliver the content explicitly. This is due to the features of curriculum reforms such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE in Curriculum 2005), in which teachers acted as facilitators instead of explicitly teaching learners content (DOE, 2009), left our learners unable to read and lacking in general knowledge.

The introduction of reforms such as the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) were to test content knowledge that learners acquired in schools. The South African government needed a tool to "monitor and improve the level and quality of basic education", specifically in Literacy and Mathematics (DBE, 2012, p. 4). This testing of learners was intended to alert the Department of Education of the schools that are not performing at the expected level. Since 1995 learners in Grades 1 to 9 were tested nationwide in Language and Mathematics, focusing primarily on Grades 3, 6, and 9. Although there was a slight improvement in the results, they were still below the 60% minimum target that the government has set. The continuing poor performance in Gauteng

schools resulted in the department establishing the GPLMS (Gauteng Province Language and Mathematics Strategy).

The Strategy (GPLMS) was introduced in underperforming schools which performed poorly in the Annual National Assessments (ANAs). The aim of this strategy was to close the gap between performing and underperforming schools (de Clercq, 2014). This was done through explicitly telling teachers what to teach and assess, through prescriptive lesson plans. In order for this to happen, underperforming schools were assisted through supporting teachers by providing detailed lesson plans and workbooks for learners. While this practice from the department could be perceived as assisting teachers and learners, it might also undermine teachers' professionalism because telling them what to do, takes away their professionalism.

GPLMS is a whole-school approach based on the performance of the grades that were tested. The entire school was declared underperforming, even if one grade was underperforming. This is perceived by some as problematic because it can discourage teachers whose learners achieve well, and do not focus only on the specific underperforming grade. Being labelled "underperforming" leaves teachers vulnerable to other teachers, the district and the public as a whole, because it can be interpreted as teachers are not teaching, the principal not running the school well, and learners being unable to learn. The entire school receives support, and district officials visit the school regularly, to check whether the strategy is being followed. This is problematic because the approach does not focus primarily on the learners or teachers that need support. Therefore this strategy may be seen to undermine those teachers and learners that achieve good results. De Clercq (2014) argues that the lesson plans given to teachers to follow force both learners and teachers who perform poorly to adopt new instructional practices. This means that the lesson plans focus primarily on teachers and overlook the problems that learners may have. Teachers complained of being overworked due to the dense content that needed to be taught within rigid time frames. This research explored how teachers renegotiated their identities and adjusted their teaching practices. Curriculum reforms require teachers to adapt to changes; therefore their identities and teaching practices are influenced by these changes. This study investigated how teachers viewed themselves in this context and how their understandings of their teaching practices shifted in response to GPLMS.

1.3 Problem statement

Learners in my school performed poorly in the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) of 2012, resulting in the school being labelled as underperforming. The continuous poor performance in local and international tests is worrying and problematic since learners continue to perform poorly, even after numerous curriculum reforms and corrective policies were introduced (TIMMS, 1995, 1998; SACMEQ, 2000-2007; PIRLS, 2006; ANA 2011-2014). Thus study focused on teachers' experiences which are at times ignored in curriculum reforms, despite their centrality in content delivery. The study explored teachers' identities and their understandings of their teaching practices in the GPLMS context. The study was motivated by the negative emotions and attitudes that were identified in teachers and the schools that were declared priority schools. I acknowledge that the overall national ANA results confirm the ongoing challenges and problems with Languages and Mathematics, given that the results are lower than the target set by the government. However, the low Grade three and six learners' low marks and underperformance caused pressures and stress for teachers. The effect of these pressures on teacher identities and their understandings of practice warranted further exploration.

1.4 Rationale and motivation for the study

South African learners have been performing poorly in international and local reading, Mathematics and Science tests since 1994. Annual National Assessment (ANA) results continue to indicate the low results (DBE, 2011-2014). Although the Minister of Basic Education Ms. Angie Motshekga stated that the Presidential targets were exceeded in Languages and Mathematics for Grade 3 and Home Language in Grade 6 (DBE, 2014), there still are challenges in the Senior Phase (SP) as the results did not show progress against the targets set in 2010 that required schools to achieve a minimum pass rate of 505 (ANA, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the introduction of the ANA tests by the Basic Department of Education in the year 2011 resulted in changes in Gauteng schools. From the ANA results the GDE introduced the GPLMS, as a strategy to assist teachers with content coverage and delivery through providing detailed lesson plans and assessment (DBE, 2012). The strategy (GPLMS) focuses only on Gauteng schools that did not perform well in the ANAs, with the purpose of improving schools' performance by providing explicit pedagogical approaches for teachers and also monitoring of learner performance. Schools that performed below 50% in the Languages (English) and Numeracy (Mathematics) tests that become part of GPLMS and teachers are provided with detailed lesson plans. The learners received workbooks that were

intended to provide teachers with content knowledge and skills for effective teaching, and to ensure that teachers cover the curriculum and are assessed accordingly (DBE, 2010). However, teachers are restricted in how they deliver the content because they are not given the opportunity to teach using their own pedagogy or teach according to their learners' needs. The workbooks and lesson-plan explicitly outline what teachers ought to teach and how to assess the learner. This is problematic because teachers' professional judgement was not taken into account. There are also routine inspections from the district to check if teachers are following the GPLMS as a strategy. As a teacher in a GPLMS school, I noted that the inspections are perceived as 'policing' to ensure that we follow the strategy. Of interest is that while the district officials monitored teachers, there is no assistance or teacher development, to improve teachers' pedagogical approaches.

With this discussion in mind, in 2012 my school participated in ANAs when they were administered for the first time in Grades 1, 2, 4 and 5. The ANAs focused on the Grades 3, 6 and 9 learners prior 2012. The transitional stages are those grades that are at the end of the phase. In the Foundation Phase, the transitional stage is Grade 3, which is the end of the phase. In the Intermediate Phase, Grade 6 is the transitional stages and in the Senior Phase, the transitional stage is Grade 9. The problem was that the Grades 6 learners did not achieve the acceptable levels of competence in Language and Mathematics. They could not attain the minimum 50% in the Mathematics paper, consequently, my school was declared "underperforming" when ANA results were released in 2013. Given the low performance and being declared a 'priority' school, I have been concerned and interested in teachers' experiences of the implementation of the GPLMS in my school. Informal discussions suggested that teachers felt bombarded by new lessons plans and routine inspections from the district and being declared "underperforming" left the teachers feeling demoralised, demotivated, and vulnerable. Teachers also complained that the school had no autonomy in terms of what to teach, how to teach content, and what to assess because schools are given lesson plans, workbooks and assessment tasks. Thus teachers' experiences were a matter of feeling unappreciated as professionals, in their "experiencing the loss of something professionally valuable" (Kelchtermans, 1996, p. 4), such as the love and enjoyment of being in the teaching profession. The effects of standardised testing environments, such as the ANAs, may have effects on teachers' professional identity and their understandings of their teaching practices in the classroom.

As a teacher at the school where the study was conducted, I experienced a negative attitude and low morale in teachers that were affected by the poor performance in the ANAs, which caused the introduction of GPLMS. GPLMS was new to South Africa and not much is known about this strategy and how it affected teachers' identities and their understanding of their teaching practices. The GPLMS in the Foundation Phase (FP) is the focus of this study and it explores teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices, within the GPLMS. The decision to focus on the FP is due to the FP teachers who expressed their frustrations that the whole school being declared underperforming after the low Grade six ANA results.

1.5 Objectives of the study

This study seeks to explore teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices in a GPLMS context. According to Wenger (1999) identity is socially defined, and in this study, identity is formed in the social context of a school implementing GPLMS. Teachers need to be aware of how their identities and understandings of their teaching practices are affected by changing contexts. This is because they need to acknowledge that there are changes in how they view themselves, which may affect how they teach. Therefore exploring their identities and understandings of their practices may explain how teachers respond to new, corrective strategies such as the GPLMS.

1.6 Research questions and sub-questions

The critical research question which informed this study was:

How do teachers understand their identity and practices in a GPLMS school?

To further explore this critical question, the following sub-questions are addressed:

1. How does teaching in a GPLMS school affect teachers' identities?
2. To what extent does teaching in a GPLMS school shape primary teachers' understandings of their teaching practices?

1.7 Structure of the report

In order to answer the research question posed in the report, I organised the report into five chapters.

In Chapter 1, I contextualised the study by providing a brief overview of the low results in the ANAs written by learners in South Africa that tested Literacy and Mathematics knowledge from as early as Grade 1, to Grade 9, since 2012. The GPLMS is the context of the study, in which I highlight teachers' experiences regarding the implementation of the GPLMS in my school, This discussion is followed by the rationale and motivation for the study, presenting the problems investigated and key questions raised.

Chapter 2 consists of a conceptual framework, using Wenger's notion of identity in a community of practice. It employed only three out of the five aspects of identity. A literature review on the different areas of the study on which this report is based follows. Chapter 2 particularly describes the education legacy in South Africa post-apartheid era till the current curriculum reform. Identity and teaching practices are discussed, in relation to corrective strategies, in particular, the GPLMS.

Chapter 3 provides details about the case study's research process. This study used semi-structured interviews, with six participants. The research site is a primary school in Ekurhuleni, which is a previously white school, with both black and white teachers and 100% black learners. Noting that the case study is limited in its scope, the use of a varied range of participants as well as supporting data from documents such as policy statements, provided a rich picture of teachers' understandings of their identities and teaching practices.

In chapter 4, I describe and discuss in detail the findings of the case study. The findings are divided into two main themes namely teachers' identities and understanding of their teaching practices before and after GPLMS.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I provide a summary of the findings in response to the key questions, provide conclusions, a reflection on the research process, and discuss implications of the findings for future research on teachers' identities and their understandings of their teaching practices in the GPLMS context.

Chapter 2 - Conceptual framework and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In chapter 1, I provided an overview of the purpose of the study and the rationale behind the study. Noting that GPLMS is a corrective strategy, it is problematic that little attention is given to how such strategies influence teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices. However, while some teachers may have accepted the shifts in their roles and identities, and have made adjustments in their pedagogies in previous curriculum reforms, there is still a need to raise awareness concerning how their identities and understandings of their teaching practices have changed in the GPLMS context.

This chapter provides an appropriate conceptual framework for this study to understand teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices in relation to the implementation of GPLMS. I used is Wenger's notion of Identity. The concepts I'll be discussing in the framework are: identity as a negotiated experience, identity as a community member and identity as a learning trajectory. These concepts form the foundation for the study. Next, I will provide a detailed review of the literature chosen for the study. I began by providing an overview of the education legacy of South Africa, from Curriculum 2005 to CAPS. A discussion of assessment and testing locally and internationally follows, and this contextualises GPLMS. Finally identity and teaching practices will be discussed in relation to the changing contexts. An understanding of how strategies affect teachers' identities and understandings of their practices will enable teachers and policy makers to be aware of what such strategies, in turn, do to teachers.

2.1.1 Definitions of identity

Before I begin discussing Wenger's framework of identity, I will begin by defining identity according to other authors. According to Gee (2000) "we have multiple identities" that are connected to our performances and roles in a society. Teachers, therefore, can have many identities, including their teacher identity. These identities allow teachers to exist and function in different social contexts. Gee describes identity as being a "kind of person" how a person is recognised at a given time and place can change from moment to moment, when we interact with others (Gee, 2000, p. 99). However, Gee points out that we have a core identity surrounded by multiple forms of identity that we come across, as we move from context to

context (Gee, 2000). This means we have a 'core' identity but still, have multiple identities within a particular context. Gee identified different views of identities in educational research which are as follows: Institutional and Affinity Identities, are recognised by the authority through the membership and participating in a practice. An Institutional Identity, known as the I-Identity, is the identity given to an individual within an institution, authorised by those in the authority (such as being a Head of Department), whereas the Affinity Identity (A-Identity) is identity received or shared in a practice (Gee, 2000, p. 100). The emphasis here is that identity is "multifaceted in nature" and it changes shape in relation to external influences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 177).

Mockler (2010) defines teachers' identity as their professional identities. She states that teacher professional identity is understood to be formed within and out of teachers' narratives and stories that form teachers' lives (Mockler, 2010). This definition of identity reiterates that identity is an ongoing and dynamic process, and is unique to every professional teacher since every teacher has his/her own unique story to tell. Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) similarly add that identity is a constantly evolving phenomenon that involves the person and the context. Within a context, teachers learn their professional and individual uniqueness, because contexts sometimes 'force' teachers to be conscious of their identities.

Wenger has five characterisations of identity in communities of practice, namely identity as a negotiated experience, identity as a community membership, identity as a learning trajectory, identity as a nexus of multi-membership and identity as a relation between the local and the global (Wenger, 1999, p. 149). Communities of practice is a notion that encourages teachers to form their identities within a community, in a practice such as teaching. I used three aspects of these concepts of identity, namely identity as negotiated experience, identity as a community member and identity as a learning trajectory. I used these three aspects because they assist in explaining and understanding identities of teachers in the social context of schools within the changing policy context. The other two aspects which are an identity as multi-membership and identity as a relation between local and global explore identity go beyond the school context, which this study does not focus on directly. This study explored teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices in the GPLMS context. Wenger (1999) posits that identity is connected to practice. Therefore in this study, teachers' identities are connected to their teaching practice.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Identity as negotiated experience

In order for the practice to grow, teachers participate in a school community and engage with activities in the practice (Wenger, 1999), such as grade and phase meetings, teaching, assessing etc. When people are in a community of practice, they participate by doing similar things as a community. Identity in practice is socially defined, thus, when teachers participate and engage in the community, they share and exchange knowledge with members of the community. When teachers engage in the practices of the community, they negotiate "ways of being a person in that context" (Wenger, 1999, p. 149). This means that members are expected to act similarly or do similar things within the community. For example in the context of this study, teachers can negotiate their identities by working through lesson plans together or assessing learners similarly. Therefore teachers will possibly have to negotiate their identity as they are expected to adapt their teaching practices in ways that reflect the values of the community. In this study, teachers being in the GPLMS context negotiated their identity by communicating with other teachers about the work that they shared.

2.2.2 Identity as community membership

Wenger (1999) posits that practice defines a community through mutual engagement, accountability to an enterprise and a shared repertoire. Mutual engagement in this context is teachers engaging with the strategy, through discussions with each other and through working through the strategy to better understand it. Teachers are accountable to the government, school, community, and the learners. Therefore teachers are expected to produce citizens that will contribute to the economy of the country and advancement of the society and the individual. However, when external accountability is placed on teachers, consciously or unconsciously, teachers view themselves according to other people's perspectives (Wenger, 1999). In a community of practice, teachers are in a familiar territory, where they learn to engage with others and to work together. The school is a context in which teachers will work, as separate individuals and also as a community of practice. Individuals form their individuality identity within the community, and being part of that community arises from mutual engagement with others (Wenger, 1999). DuFour (2004) posits that powerful collaboration exists when teachers work together to analyse and improve their classroom practice. Teachers can develop and interpret their own way of viewing themselves when engaging in certain actions or duties or make choices to value certain experiences. In relation to large-scale standardised testing, because teachers are aware of external accountability

issues that arise from testing, they may view themselves as workers who must always produce desired results, even in challenging conditions, such as the GPLMS context. Amrein-Beardsley posits that teachers resorted to tactics that are frowned upon, such as giving the learners answers, or excluding the less able learners from writing the tests, for fear of being viewed as incompetent (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009). In relation to accountability, teachers are no longer accountable to their learners or their peers, but to the education department, because they are faced with educational policies and strategies that use marks driven standardised tests. However, professional learning communities can judge their effectiveness through student achievement (DuFour, 2004), hence the introduction of ANAs and GPLMS.

So in the context of the study, teachers that were interviewed worked at a school that had recently been declared underperforming. The teachers were driven to be more concerned with meeting the external goods of the practice (MacIntyre, 1982) such as students' marks, rather than being concerned with internal goods such as producing competitive, innovative, and critical learners. Because accountability emphasises external goods of the teaching practice instead of the internal goods, Steinberg argues that external goods are valued above the internal goods of learning. because "a good teacher is (seen as) one whose students achieve high marks in externally set, standardised tests" (Steinberg, 2008, p. 55), Similarly it is problematic to view good teachers in this manner because this implies that a bad teacher is that whom his/her learners achieve low marks in standardised tests, while overlooking the role of the learner in education.

2.2.3 Identity as learning trajectory

The work of identity is an ongoing process (Wenger, 1999), which means as we participate in practices our identities form trajectories within and across communities of practice (Wenger, 1999). A trajectory is not a fixed pathway, but a pathway where our past, present and our future is in continuous motion (Wenger, 1999). In the context of this study, identity as a learning trajectory would come into play when teachers understand that identity is an ongoing process by allowing themselves to interact with the lesson plans constructively and engage with other colleagues actively. Because identity is ever-changing or shifting, there are different pathways or trajectories for different teachers. Wenger (1999) posits that there are a number of pathways: peripheral, inbound, insider, boundary and outbound trajectories. They are possible paths that the teachers may find themselves in, due to the reforms and identity shifts. In the GPLMS, the teachers either follow the path they are being led to or choose their

own pathway in understanding their identity within the new context. However, GPLMS leaves very little room for teacher agency as teachers are provided with prescriptive, detailed lesson plans to follow. The lesson plans also provide standard assessment tools, for all types of learners. Then teachers decide how to adapt to the prescribed lessons or continue in negotiating their new identity.

Peripheral trajectories are those paths that never lead to full participation but offer access to a community (Wenger, 1999). This notion refers to teachers who may do work that is expected of them but they do not participate fully in the community. For instance, if teachers use GPLMS lesson plans in their classrooms without understanding and/or use lesson plans without receiving training on how to use these lesson plans, they do not participate fully in the practice. Teachers do not modify their lesson plans, to suit the different learners. The lesson plans are one-size-fits-all, as they do not cater for the different learning abilities. This is of concern because if teachers follow the lesson plans with little or no input, they could be teaching knowledge superficially. The *inbound trajectories* assist the teacher in developing their identity in a way that invests in their future participation in the practice (Wenger, 1999). This means teachers fully participate in the practice of teaching, by teaching what is expected, with understanding and take ownership of successful lessons.

In contrast *insider trajectories* are argued to be trajectories that assist teachers in renegotiating their identity (Wenger, 1999), even with new demands and events such as the ANAs and the GLPMS. The teachers on this trajectory would participate fully, in that they understand and acknowledge that their identities would shift and change due to contextual factors. *Boundary trajectories* are trajectories that place boundaries in teacher identity, which in turn, places boundaries in communities of practice (Wenger, 1999). A boundary may be restrictive positively or negatively. In a positive way, a boundary keeps one focused, minimising distractions. In a negative way, a negative boundary restricts the individual, limiting the individual from exploring other fields. In the context of this study, the GPLMS challenges teachers' pathway in their developing identities by limiting what teachers can do and not do in their practice and that of their community of practice. However the boundaries may assist teachers in sequencing and pacing the knowledge, topic by topic, grade by grade, and develop their teaching practices. Lastly, the *outbound trajectory* is defined as trajectories that "leads out of a community" (Wenger, 1999, p. 155). Leaving a community means that teachers can ask for assistance from others outside the community, for growth. Being led out

a community involves the development of new relationships (Wenger, 1999). Teachers in the context of this study would then be seen as changing or withdrawing from relationships amongst each other in order to develop their own teacher identity, through moving out of a community. The teachers could possibly not be working together with others but rather nurturing new relationships that develop outside the school.

2.2.4 Summary

Identity as a learning pathway or trajectory and is defined through forms of membership. The route or pathway is seen as a continuous motion, which connects the past, present and future. In the context of this study, the teachers are in continuous motion in discovering and negotiating their identity, as they have been working within changing contexts of implementing different curriculum reforms and the GPLMS. Depending on how teachers perceive the change, the context presents opportunities for teachers to construct their identities that accommodate, support and compliment their 'core' identity. A core identity is one's identity that defines who they are. The core identity does not shift or change.

Another way to think about identity is the concept of membership, which is the ability of a teacher to belong to a group of other teachers in a community by becoming a member of that group. This notion means that in order to form or shift a teacher's identity, she or he will need to belong to a community of other teachers and the global world at large. This point relates to Wenger's notion of identity which is defined through the local and global interactions (Wenger, 1999). In the context of this study, teachers belong in a community of practice where members work together, as members and individuals. The teachers in this context are in the process of negotiating their identity as they go through the shifting context from Curriculum 2005, RNCS, NCS, to CAPS. In the context of GPLMS, teacher identity would shift due to contextual changes, which affect teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices.

In this chapter, the conceptual framework used in this research: identity as a negotiated experience, identity as a community of practice and identity as a learning trajectory are described and explained. The chapter shows that Wenger's framework of identity offers ways of analysing teachers' identities in relation to GPLMS.

This study implied that identity is formed and is negotiated as teachers work together as colleagues, in thinking and talking about teaching and assessment. In the context of the

current study, it is assumed that teachers negotiated their identity to suit changed contexts, for example, different curriculum reforms and also GPLMS. As mentioned earlier, the latter is relatively new in South Africa. Therefore teachers construct and reconstruct their identities, in order to adapt to new contexts**,** as they experienced them since 1996. This addresses the complexity of identity, as it shifts, depending on the context, which means teachers' identities might have shifted when GPLMS was introduced.

2.3 Literature review

2.3.1 Introduction

Democratic South Africa stemmed from an oppressive political regime, which changed society (Howie, 2012). The South African school population grew faster in many schools across the country, especially in urban areas between 1970 and 1995, which meant that class sizes exceeded the 40 pupils in a class, in specific schools (Howie, 2001). South Africa was faced with infrastructural challenges (Howie, 2012) and curriculum challenges that disadvantaged many black schools (de Clercq, 2014). Although the school environment stabilised under the leadership of Nelson Mandela in 1994, the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) approach was introduced (Jansen, 1997) in an attempt to provide all learners with quality education. In order to monitor the changes that occurred in the education system, systemic evaluations system known as the Annual National Assessment (ANA)was introduced 2000 for Grades 3, 6 and 9 learners, to measure their Mathematics, Science and Language knowledge (Howie, 2012).

South Africa was not the only country that assessed their learners' performance, using large-scale tests. South Africa uses the ANAs to monitor and improve the Literacy and Numeracy levels in Grade 3, 6 and 9 learners (DBE, 2013). Other countries such as Australia, the USA, and the UK, used performance-based assessments, such as standardised tests, to measure learner performance against curriculum standards (Au, 2011). While Jansen (2001) argues that countries are becoming obsessed with standardised testing, there is little evidence which shows that high-stakes and standardised tests genuinely increase student learning (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009, p. 2). Nonetheless, teachers are affected by changes brought upon them by these high-stakes tests and large-scale standardised tests. Of concern with the high-stake tests is the pressure it puts on teachers to adapt to new pedagogies, resort to teaching to the test or even cheating in response to such pressures (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009).

In the context of this study, the implementation of GPLMS, which is an intervention programme for underperforming schools (de Clercq, 2014), seems to have affected teachers' pedagogical practices. The strategy includes detailed, prescriptive lesson plans that teachers use to deliver content. The change of practice could possibly affect teachers' professional identity because changes might require negotiating their identity (Wenger, 1999). However, this does not seem problematic if Palmer's (1998) point is taken into consideration that "identity is an evolving nexus" where all the forces constitute one's life converge in the mystery of the self. This mean means that one's identity is influenced by external forces, as we interact with our surroundings. Wenger (1999, p. 149) states that there is a connection between identity and practice and teachers negotiate their identity in the course of their practice. By practice, I am referring to an implementation of policy. Relating this to the study, teachers negotiate their identity through working with the GPLMS strategy. In addition, Wenger (1998 cited in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 180) posits that identity and practice are the "mirror image of one another". In the context of the study, it is in participating in the practice of teaching that teachers' identities are formed. Scripted Instruction, which is foregrounded in strategies such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and GPLMS, requires teachers to deliver content by reading through pre-written scripts (Reeves, 2014, p. 242). By participating in a community with other professionals, "a teacher is subject to the influences of this community on identity development" (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 180). Teachers negotiate their identity through practice in order to participate in the practice, while forming their new identity. In relation to GPLMS, this study explores the relationship between teachers' identities and teachers' understandings of their teaching practices. Identity for the teachers in this study is negotiated through participating in the community of practice, implementing the GPLMS in the school.

This section critically reviews South Africa's reforms between 1994 and 2015 which include high-stakes accountability testing and large-scale standardised testing. GPLMS foregrounds scripted instruction, which does not rely on teachers' subject matter expertise (Reeves, 2014). This chapter specifically engages with how teacher identity is formed and how it shifts in response to a different environment and context. The literature raises serious issues around high-stakes and large-scale standardised testing and the standardisation of teaching. Before I engage with a discussion on existing literature, it is important to present the legacy of education to contextualise the introduction of GPLMS.

2.3.2 Education legacy

In 1994, curriculum revision began, where the Education Department introduced curriculum reform initiatives that focused on schools, in an attempt to improve the quality of education (Jansen, 1998). The initial reform was done to cleanse syllabi, free them from offensive and racist language and outdated content (Jansen, 1998; Chisholm, 2005). The next section explains the journey that South Africa took in curriculum reforms from 1994 to present.

2.3.2.1 Curriculum 2005

As South Africa came from an apartheid era, and the notion of a national curriculum was a new and well-received concept that coincided with the new democracy (DOE, 2009). The new curriculum had to:

- *Promote the new constitution*
- *Rebuild a divided nation*
- *Establish and promote a sense of national identity in general but particularly for a troubled education sector*
- *Be inclusive in the broad and narrow sense of the term*
- *Offer equal education opportunity for all*
- *Inspire a constituency that had been oppressed by the very nature of the previous education dispensation and policies*
- *Establish the socially valued knowledge to be transmitted to following generations (DOE, 2009, p. 11)*

Despite the theoretical basis being questioned by curriculum specialists, the curriculum was implemented, without being researched and trialled. Teachers also did not receive adequate preparation (Jansen 1998, DOE, 2009). Teachers were sometimes required to teach knowledge that they did not understand or use a pedagogy that was unfamiliar which resulted in the incorrect teaching of knowledge. In 2000, the curriculum was reviewed, due to the obvious flaws: the complaints that children could not read, write and count and that they lacked in general knowledge. The review advocated a shift from learning through facilitating to explicit teaching to teachers that did not know what to teach (DOE, 2009). The implication was that learners performed poorly, as a result of teachers' confusion in what they should teach. Under the leadership of Linda Chisholm, Curriculum 2005 was revised in January 2001 (DOE, 2009).

2.3.2.2 National Curriculum Statement

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was an attempt to shift curriculum from skills-based to a more explicit systematic body of knowledge (DOE, 2009). NCS was implemented in 2004 (DOE, 2009). Firstly, NCS was seen by teachers as a new curriculum and not a revision of Curriculum 2005 (DOE, 2009). This led to confusion about the policy (DOE, 2009). Secondly, there was no assessment policy that was developed by specialists (DOE, 2009). This lead to confusion in respect to assessment practices (DOE, 2009). Thirdly, teacher training was superficial, and the policy did not address the outcry for training in the training for subject/learning area content (DOE, 2009).

In relation to my study, the extent to which teaching practices were altered arises. What is of concern is that teachers did not receive adequate training to implement NCS. Therefore it was challenging to implement a strategy that was introduced to teachers without proper training. Finally, the language policy was not implemented, which meant that children were taught in their mother tongue in the Foundation Phase, alongside schools that used English or Afrikaans as the mother tongue language of the learners (DOE, 2009). This left children unready for the change to English being the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), in Grade 4 (DOE, 2009) because the learners were not ready to be taught in English.

2.3.2.3 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CAPS (Grades R-12) was to be implemented during the period of 2012-2014, and this policy was intended to enable learners to ultimately obtain a National Senior Certificate after completing the full programme. (DOE, 2012). It consisted of the NCS curriculum that had been pre-packaged after teachers expressed their concerns about the challenges they encountered in the implementation of the NCS Grades R-9 and the NCS Grades 10-12 (DOE, 2012). The changes from NCS to CAPS were categorised into 2 categories: decisions made in 2010 and decisions made from 2012-2014 (DOE, 2012). The 2010 changes were: the discontinuation of Portfolio Files from learners; a single teacher planning file was required; a reduction in projects from learners and the discontinuation of Common Tasks of Assessment (CTAs) (DOE 2012). The 2012-2014 changes were: the reduction of Learning Areas; the teaching of First Additional Language (FAL) to be taught from Grade 1; external systematic assessment of Mathematics, Home Language and English First Additional Language in Grades 3, 6, and 9; and the development of curriculum and assessment policy statements per learning area and subject (DOE, 2012).

CAPS curriculum replaced each Subject Statement, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines in Grades R-12 (DOE, 2011). The curriculum aims "to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives" (DOE, 2011, p. 4). Du Plessis (2013, p. 1) states that CAPS is merely an "adjustment to what we teach (curriculum) and not how we teach (teaching methods)". In this study I argue that since the GPLMS provides precise content, pedagogy and assessment tasks for teachers to use in their classrooms, it intends to shape teaching practice and therefore may affect teachers' identities.

2.3.2.4 Summary

The above discussion tracked the curriculum reforms in South Africa from 1994 to the present CAPS. With the old apartheid education that was teacher-centred and flawed with segregated knowledge for the different racial groups, the ambitious reforms such as the OBE attempted to close the gaps in content knowledge and readdressing the function of assessment in our schools. The section below explains how South Africa participated in testing learners locally and internationally during the different reforms and the road towards implementing GPLMS.

2.3.3 High-stakes and standardised testing internationally

Glaser and Silver (1994 cited in Gipps, 1999, p. 355) posit that assessment has a long history, and has been the most pervasive influence on teaching. In order to move an individual to the next step, one has to be assessed. Assessment was used for the purpose of selection of who will do certain jobs or attend universities and later linked with certification (Gipps, 1999). However, more recent trends show that assessment is now used to "control and drive curriculum and teaching" (Gipps, 1999, p. 363). Assessment has now become important and closely linked to knowledge and pedagogy. Assessment is used for testing how much knowledge learners know and also how much knowledge teachers have taught. "High-stakes, standardised testing has become a common practice nationwide" and worldwide (Au, 2011, p. 30). In South African, large standardised testing was introduced to monitor teaching and learning in South African schools, more especially in Grades 3, 6, and 9. However, in Gauteng, standardised testing has played a larger role than in other provinces, with the introduction of GPLMS. Thus the ANAs are high-stakes because the tests are used to separate performing and under-performing schools. The tests monitor content knowledge taught, through assessing what learners know. Traditionally, South Africa only used the

Grade 12 exams known as National Senior Certificate (NSC) as a form of external large-scale assessment.

High-stakes testing in the US is central to schooling and it is used for educational reform (Kornhaber & Orfied 2001 cited in Au, 2011). Educational reforms such as the "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) policy, which was passed in 2001, tested Mathematics and reading/language arts. Such reforms are used in the US Department to monitor schools and failing schools were penalised by cutting funding (Au, 2011). However, in the context of South Africa, schools are not penalised by cutting down the funding. Instead, all government schools in Gauteng that perform poorly in standardised tests get assistance from the department of education, by providing teaching materials that "help teachers sequence and pace their coverage of the entire curriculum throughout the year…" (de Clercq, 2014, p. 311).

In Australia high-stakes, testing was introduced in 2008, as the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) (Klenowski, 2012). Learners in the years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are assessed in Reading, Writing, Language conventions (spelling, grammar, and punctuation) and Numeracy (Klenowski, 2012). The Australian Primary Principals Association (APPA) represented over 7200 principals on the publication of nationally comparable school performance information (p. 6). APPA acknowledges that high-stakes assessment narrowed the curriculum as teachers taught tested knowledge while curriculum not tested was neglected. Higher order thinking skills were neglected because they are difficult to assess and too much time was spent on coaching and practice tests (APPA, 2009 cited in Klenowski, 2012). If this was the case in Australia, it is interesting to find out what is happening in South Africa - Whether teachers teach the content selectively, focus primarily on tested knowledge and receive coaching, or assistance from the district. These questions are critical to ask because if teachers are narrowing content, then it is detrimental to our education system, failing our learners by limiting epistemological access through limited content knowledge.

Au (2011) argues that high-stakes testing is rooted in a view of education being a scientifically managed education system. In this system, managers gather information, analyse it according to 'scientific' methods and figure out the best way for workers to complete their tasks and tell the workers how to produce their products. This process is better known as Taylorism (Noble 1997 cited in Au, 2011). The problem with Taylorism is that

applying this view of education and schools, in particular, principals use tests to determine weak and strong teachers and students are viewed as 'raw materials' to be "produced like commodities according to specified standards and objectives". Teachers are however viewed as workers, who use the "best" methods to get students to meet the standards and objectives set for them (Au, 2011, p. 27). Such precision affects the relationships between teachers and students as it dehumanises and alienates students from their own learning and creativity. (Kliebard, 1975a cited in Au, 2011). In the context of this study, teachers are not just workers, but professionals. Student-teacher relationships are not nurtured, because teachers are racing to finish the syllabus or keep up with the expectations of the curriculum, such as assessing on time, and avoid being vulnerable to district officials and principals (Au, 2011). This test surveillance is problematic because it might cause teachers to feel powerless, frustrated, disappointed, angry, exposed, and fearful when their professional practice and identity are questioned (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002, p. 97). In relation to the study, the teachers also felt vulnerable to district officials who checked their work.

2.3.4 Issues of national testing

Jansen argues that performance assessment for education is problematic because first:

> *The national obsession with educational outputs diverts attention from the educational inputs required to redress the historical inequalities that continue to bedevil the education system after apartheid (Jansen, 2001, p. 560)*

The apartheid era has left a legacy of poorly performing schools that lack resources. Even though schools were stabilised in many township schools after 1994, many teachers were still left struggling to sequence knowledge. The lack of support material also widened the knowledge gap.

> *Teachers in ex-model C schools were given better knowledge, resources, and support. Teachers in disadvantaged schools with poor in-service education and those under-resourced schools continued to struggle and were not given meaningful departmental redress support (NEEDU, 2013)*

Schools were expected to perform without considering that each school is different, especially when it comes to the availability of resources such as textbooks and knowledgeable teachers. The government did not seem to consider the teacher-pupil ratio, where in some schools teachers deal with large groups of pupils, such as 55 to 60 learners in one class, and multi-graded classrooms, such as those found in rural and township schools. There have to be educational inputs such as the state investing more in teacher training, teaching resources, school infrastructure, and curriculum development (NEEDU, 2013).

Second, Jansen (2001) argues that standardised testing undermines commitments to equity. Equity refers to fairness, which means providing more support to schools that need assistance or resources. High-stakes tests and standardised tests view all teachers and learners in all public schools the same, irrespective of their history, resources or capacity, are required to attain the same level of achievement. This is problematic because schools are not the same. It cannot be expected that under-resourced schools perform on the same level as well-resourced schools. So in South Africa, a previously advantaged, urban school with middle-class children is measured on exactly the same basis as a previously disadvantaged township and/or rural school for poor children "where a poor culture of teaching and learning exists" (Jansen, 2001, p. 560). The government would need to address inequality issues in South African schools that may affect the culture of teaching, learning, and assessment.

Nichols and Berliner (2007) argue that high-stakes tests do more harm than good because they distort curriculum by narrowing the content. Although results have increased in the last two years, teachers still have not received training on how to implement the policy. Therefore learners could perform even better if teachers get adequate training in new strategies.

Although there are negative implications surrounding high-stakes testing, there are several answers that lend support to the use of comparative studies and high-stakes testing. Firstly, there is a lot of information that could be gathered from these tests and studies. Information that could assist curriculum planners when they evaluate and monitor a system (Reddy, 2005). And secondly, countries that do not have the research capacity and resources to conduct large-scale studies can use results gathered to make informed policy decisions.

2.3.5 South Africa's story of testing learners

Countries participate in national assessments of their educational system to monitor learners' performance, improve teaching practice, and identify strategies that can improve policy (Reddy, 2005). Participating in international and national tests allows South Africa to formulate intervention programmes that can improve content delivery and learner performance. The next section discusses South Africa's results in large-scale standardised testing. This is done to give a better understanding where the ANAs and GPLMS stem from.

2.3.5.1 Participation in comparative tests

South Africa joined the testing frenzy after the State adopted an educational philosophy called Outcome-Based Education, commonly known as OBE (Jansen (2001, p. 554). South Africa continued with its testing "obsession", by participating in international and comparative studies of achievement, such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS) in 1995 and 1999, which assessed Mathematics and Science knowledge and skills (Reddy, 2005). The TIMMS-Repeat studies measured Grade 8 learner performance in Science and Mathematics across 38 countries (Jansen, 2001). The Southern African Consortium for the Monitoring of Educational Quality (SACMEQ) in 2000 to 2007 aimed at continuous assessment and monitoring of education quality and learning achievement (Reddy, 2005). Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) project aimed at measuring learner achievement of Grade 4 learners in basic competencies such as basic knowledge and skills that learners were expected to have (Reddy, 2005, Howie, 2012). The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessed competencies in mathematical and scientific skills and reading literacy, assessing 15-year-olds (Reddy, 2005). This indicates the South African desire to participate in international performance tests because it wanted to be noticed and compare itself against other countries and also to have South Africa recognised internationally for its political changes and integration into the international community (Howie, 2012). To continue with testing, South Africa also participated in the UNESCO monitoring of learning achievement studies that compared Literacy Numeracy levels among Grade 4 learners (Jansen, 2001), and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006, which tested reading comprehension and reading achievement in Grade 4 learners (Howie, 2012). The main value or purpose of cross-national studies of achievement, such as those mentioned above, "lies in their potential use for the analysis and improvement of domestic performance' (Reddy, 2005, p. 64). Thus whether the achievement of domestic performance is achieved considering all the different tests is another study, because it is still unclear whether and how the tests assist in improving the quality and standard of learners' performance.

The discussion above shows that South Africa has been participating in various tests, possibly because it is a global practice. Of concern for South African learners is that they have performed poorly in all the above-mentioned tests. Although this is not the focus of the current study, it is important to mention them, because it is learners' poor performances that resulted in the introduction of GPLMS. There is no doubt that the low Literacy and

Mathematics and Science levels illustrate the ongoing poor performance, which is problematic if we are to compete in international tests and perform in the national high-stakes and standardised tests. However, these comparative studies can be used or seen as being more useful in improving policy and teaching practice, which is possibly what the GPLMS, in the context of this study, is trying to instil in poorly performing schools.

2.3.5.2 The Annual National Assessment tests

The president of South Africa Jacob Zuma stated:

> *From this year onwards, all Grade 3, 6, and 9 students will write Literacy and Numeracy tests that are independently moderated, we aim to increase the pass rate from the current average of between 35 and 40% to at least 60% by 2014 (GPLS, 2010-2014, p. 10)*

As discussed earlier, the recent large standardised testing tool in South Africa is the Annual National Assessment (ANA), which is a strategic tool that was introduced to "monitor and improve the level and quality of basic education, with a special focus on the foundation skills of Literacy and Numeracy" (DBE, 2012, p. 4). It is understandable the reason the tests initially focused on foundational skills because it is important to gain an insight of what is happening in the foundation of education that shape performance in other phases. It is presented as "a testing program that requires all schools in the country to conduct the same grade-specific Language and Mathematics tests for Grade 1 to 6 and Grade 9" (DBE, 2012, p. 4). These tests are used to determine whether schools are performing or not. To be noted is that the tests do not determine whether learners pass or fail the year, but measure the performance of educational programs and policies, assessing how much learners know. The Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga's report explained that the ANA 2011 results give the government a measured picture of levels of performance in primary schools in Literacy and Mathematics levels at the transitional stages of Grade 3 and Grade 6 for the first time in South Africa (DBE, 2012).

The ANA exams were written by all government schools in the week of the 18th to the 21st September 2012, testing Language and Mathematics, as mentioned above. Notwithstanding the poor performance, it is noted that the National results showed an increase in Grade 3 for Mathematics, from 28% in 2011 to 41% in 2012 and 53% in 2013 to 56% in 2014. Although the improvement could be celebrated, it can also be considered problematic because the level is still below the minimum 60% target that the government has set. The question to be asked is what happens with the 40% that fails. The government focuses on the pass rate and not

necessarily on those that fail. The 2014 target set by the government is to have a 60% pass rate of learners achieving above 50% for both Language and Mathematics in Grade 3 and 6 learners (DBE, 2012). Refer to appendix 1 and 2 to view the full national results. In Grade 3 Home Language, there was an increase from 35% in 2011 to 52% in 2012 and 51% in 2013 to 56 % in 2014. (ANA, 2011, ANA, 2012, ANA, 2013, ANA, 2014). Considering the 60% target, it could be argued that the 56% pass rate in 2014 suggest improvement in learners' performance.

In Gauteng, the Mathematics results increased from 46.9% in 2012, 58.9% in 2013 to 60.7% in 2014, for Grade 3 (DBE, 2014). Gauteng scored the highest in Grade 3 Mathematics which is a positive step towards schools performing and reaching the 60% pass rate score. The Language scores also increased for Grade 3, from 54.8% in 2012, a decrease in 2013 of almost 4% at 54.5%, to 60.1% in 2014 (DBE, 2014). Gauteng again scored the highest compared to the rest of the country. Grade 6 learners similarly scored well in Gauteng. The Mathematics results increased from 30.9% in 2012, 44.7% in 2013 to 51.1% in 2014 (DBE, 2014). The Language results also increased from 49.3% in 2012, 61. 3% in 2013 to 64.6% in 2014 (DBE, 2014).

Of concern is that the results for Mathematics Grade 6 are still below the 60% average that the president aimed for in his 2010 State of Nation Address. The results are also worrying because if South Africa is to participate in international studies, the results need to improve drastically because these results are still low if compared to the US and Europe. Despite the improvement in ANA results, the public pressure is still brought to bear on schools and teachers respectively. Teachers' commitment and professionalism are frequently under public scrutiny with a strong public discourse that blames teachers for underperformance (Amrein-Beardsley, 1999). Responsibility is put more on the teachers as they are responsible for curriculum delivery.

The government has an action plan comprising of different foci. For example, to expose teachers to best practices in assessment, to target interventions to the schools that need those most, to give schools the opportunity to pride themselves in their own improvements and also give parents better information on the education of their children (DBE, 2012, p. 4). However, there are tensions between school's autonomy and state control. The school is

given scripted and prescriptive lesson plans to follow, but these lesson plans restrict teacher autonomy and agency. The action plan claims to expose teachers to best practices, but teachers are not allowed to use their professional judgement in terms of what to teach and how to teach. It may appear that schools have control in "deciding on their own progress, plans, and priorities for school improvement" (Jansen, 2001, p. 557), while poorly performing schools are classified as "underperforming" or priority schools. This links to teacher identity, showing that teachers may not be afforded the space to be agents in their own classrooms, by teaching according to a prescriptive lesson plan. The next section explains how GPLMS was introduced due to schools not performing in the ANAs.

2.3.5.3 Gauteng Province Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS)

In the 2010 State of the Nation Address, the president made the following statement:

> *We have placed education and skills development at the centre of this government's policies. In our 2010 programme, we want to improve the ability of our children to read, write and count in the foundation years. Unless we do this, we will not improve the quality of education.*
>
> *Our education targets are simple but critical. We want learners and teachers to be in school, in class, on time, learning and teaching for seven hours a day. We will assist teachers by providing detailed daily lesson plans. To students, we will provide easy-to-use workbooks in 11 languages (GPLS, 2010-2014, p. 10)*

The Gauteng Primary Language and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS) was launched in 2011. As mentioned earlier, GPLMS is a teacher focussed initiative and intervention programme for low-performing primary schools in the province, to close the gap between performing and underperforming schools (de Clercq, 2014, p. 310). GPLMS is a strategy that is put in place for priority schools to:

> *Assist in strengthening the capacity of teachers to deliver adequate support to both teachers and learners (DBE, 2012, p. 7)*

The focus clearly is to assist teachers by providing them explicitly with the content they need to teach. In doing so the learners will receive the correct content of knowledge that they need to know in each year of their schooling career. GPLMS tries to close the gaps created by NCS by providing teachers with the content to teach and providing learners with knowledge. In the context of this study, it is problematic for the teacher because this means that teachers are expected to follow lesson plans without their input or adjustments according to their learners and the teachers' teaching styles.

The strategy has four pillars: (1) using the data gathered from the learner achievement to measure the literacy and raise the expectations; (2) strengthen the teachers' instructional

practices by providing teacher guides, textbooks, workbooks, readers, coaching and resource packs; (3) providing learner support through parents and the community and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs); and (4) improving the teaching and learning by school management teams (SMTs) and district support systems (DBE, 2010 cited in de Clercq, 2014, p. 311). Gathering data from the schools assists the government in keeping track in terms of learner performance.

However, the whole-school approach means that the entire school is viewed as underperforming, instead of focusing on the grades that did not perform well in the ANAs. This is to ensure that all grades receive support in order to prevent low performance. The entire school receives lesson plans that all teachers must follow, and assess on stipulated days. District officials visit schools at any time, to check what teachers teach, how they teach and assess.

The results obtained from the ANAs are intended to provide teachers with support, with 'preferred' teaching practices to improve teacher and learner knowledge or competencies (de Clercq, 2014). The lesson plans are instead used with the perception that they are the best way to force poorly performing and poorly qualified teachers to adopt new instructional practices (de Clercq, 2014, p. 312). The problem is that the lesson plans are designed with the assumption that the teachers are poorly qualified, and the learners have no problems. This is problematic because the lesson plans do not consider contextual factors such as rigid time frames for teaching dense content, availability of resources, learners' different cognitive levels, and the willingness of learners to learn. This means the curricula was tightened and controlled (Apple, 1986, cited in Harley, Barasa, Bertram, Mattson and Pillay, 2000, p. 288), as teachers are told what to teach, how to teach and when to teach. Changes in the educational system mean that teachers constantly have to reconstruct their identity (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). In South Africa, teachers are expected to adapt to curriculum reforms, and possibly renegotiate their identity accordingly.

The next section outlines the role of identity in teachers as professionals within the community in practice.

2.3.6 Identity

2.3.6.1 Policy change and teacher identity

In the UK, it has been argued that the prescriptive curriculum has de-intellectualised the teaching profession because it dictates to teachers what they should teach, through teaching

manuals and detailed lessons plans that teachers must follow blindly (Kelly, 1989 cited in Harley et. al, 2000). In South Africa Jansen (2001) conducted a study where he looked at the relationship between policy descriptions and images of teachers. Harley et. al (2000) investigated teacher roles and competencies in South African policy and practice. Both studies suggest that teacher identity research is not taken into account in policy change, despite the importance of teachers in curriculum delivery. For the purpose of this study, the identity of the teacher is central in understanding how they view themselves after being declared a GPLMS school. Teachers are important because they are often ignored in curriculum reforms and the introduction of corrective strategies, and yet they are expected to implement these strategies successfully. Palmer (1998) posits that we teach who we are, meaning teachers do not separate who they are (the self) and their teacher identity, but rather shift and change their identity to suit the context or vice versa.

Teacher identity is important especially in our South African context, considering that there is very little research done on teacher identity in the GPLMS context. Furthermore, both Harley and Jansen argue that teacher identity is affected by policy images and changes (Harley et. al, 2000, Jansen, 2001). Thus it could be argued that teachers' professional identity is undermined when schools use the pre-packaged curricular material, containing detailed lesson plans, which require teachers to follow strictly, leaving little room for agency and autonomy. Therefore participating in the practice, through using the lesson plans, affects the way a teacher may view her/himself as a professional. Therefore autonomy is ignored when a professional teacher is expected to follow a lesson plan.

2.3.6.2 Teacher emotions and its relationship to identity

Although the state introduces and implements policies to assist teachers in their teaching practices, there are implications for teachers' identities and practices in the classrooms. Teachers have emotions which are connected to their job. Therefore "emotions are at the heart of teaching" (Kelchtermans, 1996, p. 1; Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835), because how teachers feel about their work and their students' performance affects how they teach (Hargreaves, 2001). Therefore if teachers have negative emotions towards their work, this may affect their ability to teach with passion and consequently affect learners' performance. In relation to this study, teachers' negative emotions towards their work may lead to low learner performance. Before discussing how emotions affect teachers and teaching, Turner (2007) defines emotions from three perspectives, namely the biological, the cognitive and the

cultural perspective. From a biological perspective, emotions involve changes in the body system that "mobilise(s) and dispose(s) an organism to behave in particular ways" (Turner, 2007, p. 2). From a cognitive perspective, emotions are "conscious feelings about self and objects in the environment" (Turner, 1997, p. 2). Lastly from the cultural perspective, emotions are labels that humans give to particular "physiological states of arousal" (Turner, 1997, p. 2). For the purpose of this study, I used Turner's cognitive perspective of defining emotions, because I investigated teachers' conscious feelings about themselves as professionals and feelings about teaching in a GPLMS environment.

"Good teaching is charged with positive emotions", Hargreaves (1998, p. 835) which means teachers feel passionate about their work and connect with their students. However, teachers are constantly faced with challenges such as guilt, shame, and fear, when learners perform poorly, which affect their work (Kelchtermans, 1996) and Hargreaves, 1998). When teachers do not achieve by getting desired results, it is difficult to have positive teaching happening when teachers are faced with challenging and uncomfortable conditions. In relation to my study, the GPLMS could be perceived as challenging and uncomfortable conditions, because change is expected. The context challenges teachers' professional judgement and their way of teaching. Teaching practices are affected when teachers alter content, structure of knowledge and pedagogy (Jansen, 2001; Au, 2007; Amrein-Beardsley, 2009, Au, 2011) to secure positive assessment results. In the context of my study, teachers in South Africa may also resort to bad tactics such as possibly giving their learners answers in order to have more learners passing the exams. This is because "when purposes cannot be achieved, anxiety, frustration, anger and other negative emotions are the consequence" (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 841). If teachers lose their sense of purpose, which is to teach and produce desired results, then teachers become demoralised.

Hargreaves (2000) explained that we have an identity that is linked to the context which affects how teachers do their work. He termed this notion as the Ages of Professionalism and Professional Learning. The rapid changes bring uncertainty to teachers, therefore Hargreaves posits that partnerships and collaborations amongst teachers should be created to advance their own professionalism instead of leaving it all to fate or the government (Hargreaves, 2000).

A study by Smith investigated teacher responses to the introduction of standardised assessment in Iowa and revealed that the publication of test scores produced negative emotions such as embarrassment and shame, and external tests threaten teachers' moral and professional integrity (Smith 1991, cited in Steinberg, 2008). Similarly, other authors argue that some teachers participate fully in the context of large-scale standardised testing context by dedicating most teaching time to tested subjects, doing whatever it takes to see their pupils pass. (Amrein-Beardsley 2009; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2011; Au, 2009; Howie, 2012, Klenowski, 2012). Though their choices may be frowned upon, teachers participate in the practice and their choices shaped their identity (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009). In relation to this study, it would be problematic if teachers resort to teaching to the test because it means that content is taught in isolation and selectively. Knowledge cannot be downplayed for desired results. The next section discusses the changes in teaching practices due to changing context.

2.3.7 Teaching practices

2.3.7.1 Changes in teaching practices

Due to pressures exerted through policies associated with high-stakes testing, teachers resort to teaching to the test, with "increasing regularities, consistency, and intensity" (Au, 2011, p. 30). Au reports that the most prevalent findings in the empirical research in the US are that teachers shape their content norms to match that of the tests, by, for example, increasing the instructional time devoted to the Mathematics and Language subjects. Therefore the content of the curriculum is matched to what the test requires and possibly drilling as a pedagogical practice also takes place. This is problematic because knowledge is reduced to a collection of fragmented, disconnected facts and operations needed for rote memorization in preparation for the tests (Au, 2011). This is problematic because learners learn to memorise tested knowledge, leaving out important, untested knowledge. Amrein-Beardsley (2009, p. 3) posits that:

> *High-stakes tests in the US have led teachers to teach to the test, focus inordinately on test preparation, narrow the curriculum, cheat, exclude low scoring students from participating in the tests*

This leads me to a question whether or not teachers in the South African context have also resorted to such practices due to the pressures to perform in standardised tests. High-stakes testing creates conditions where teachers change their pedagogies or use practices to evade and adapt, in order to survive (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009; Au, 2011). This relates to one of the

purposes of this study, which is to investigate how the GPLMS context affects teaching practices.

Schools are mandated to use pre-packaged curricular material that teachers must follow (Au, 2011), requiring little input on the part of the teachers. The lesson plans pace the content for teachers while prescribing how they should teach the content. This is done through descriptive lesson plans that outline exactly what teachers should say to learners and explains in great detail step by step what the activity should look like. Of great concern is the 'one size fits all' lesson plans. The lesson plans are not appropriate for certain classroom context, as they do not cater for the different ability groups in the classrooms.

Over-ambitious curriculum reforms lead to serious gaps in knowledge, especially for poor learners, and leads to shallow learning outcomes, when pacing is moving faster than the pace of average learning (Prichatt & Betty, 2012). Narrowing of content or focus only on tested subjects, to get desired results in high-stakes and standardised tests is another problem with these type of curriculum reforms. In the US, the time spent on Algebra and Calculus is increased, whereas the time spent on Art, Music and vocational subjects are decreased (Rose, 1998 cited in Reddy, 2005). Amrein-Beardsley (1999) adds that some teachers in the US even exclude the low scoring learners from writing the high-stakes tests.

Coaches and peer support networks are designed to improve teaching practices (de Clercq, 2014), by providing meaningful support to teachers, while teachers assist and support each other as colleagues. This links up with Wenger's discussion on members of a community in practice that teachers work together as means of supporting each other. High-stakes and standardised testing also places individuals in a web of surveillance (Hanson, 2000), which de-professionalises teachers. They get regular, unannounced visits from district officials, monitoring if teachers are doing what is expected of them. Therefore coaches have to tread carefully and not behave like district officials (de Clercq, 2014). They are not fault-finders but boost the commitment and confidence of teachers (de Clercq, 2014). While this might be the case, it would be interesting to find out what teachers think of coaches.

2.4 Summary

In the reviewed literature, it is evident that South Africa has joined the international trend of testing learners, to measure them against the curriculum standards. South Africa participated in numerous international and comparative tests. The GPLMS strategy is the response to

underperforming schools in Gauteng primary schools. The strategy aims at bridging the knowledge gap for the under-performing school, by providing detailed, prescribed lesson plans. The schools also receive assistance from the district and NGOs, through coaches. However, school autonomy is minimised or even ignored when schools are mandated to use pre-packaged material (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009; Au, 2011). Professional judgement is compromised when teachers follow these detailed, prescribed lesson plans and assessment strategies.

The ANAs, which are large-scale standardised testing strategy began in 2011, to measure learner performance in Grades 3, 6 and 9, but has now involved Grades 1 to 6 and 9. Amrein-Beardsley (2009) posits that standardised testing strategies reduce knowledge, narrow the curriculum, and promote rote memorization, which can encourages teachers to cheat in tests by excluding low-scoring learners and teaching to the test. The downplaying of knowledge, to focus on tested knowledge is problematic, considering that there is already a knowledge gap in our schools.

Identity is a complex and contested issue, it is negotiated through experiences and activities that one partakes in (Wenger, 1999). Teachers are expected to cope with the changes and pressures that come with new curriculums and new strategies, such as the GPLMS. Large standardised testing affects teacher identity because there is a connection between identity and practice (Wenger, 1999). Teachers teach who they are (Palmer, 1998) therefore they would have to negotiate their identity in order to adjust to the changes in the teaching practice.

Since teaching is an emotional practice, assessment is also an emotional practice, filled with positive and negative emotions. Because emotions are connected to the teaching job, teachers are left feeling shame and guilt when their learners perform badly in standardised tests. Teachers reflect on their own competence through their learners' results. Teachers do not want their learners to fail, which is why the teachers in the US resorted to cheating on standardised tests (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009). Accountability emphasises the external goods of the teaching practice rather than the internal goods. This is because standardised testing focuses on learner performance. The external goods in this context are the high marks in the ANAs. By holding teachers accountable, "teachers' unpleasant emotions of failure"

(Steinberg, 2008) are intensified. Teachers worry about their learners' performance in these tests since they reflect back on the teachers' performance.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, the importance of gaining insight into teachers' identities and understanding of their teaching practices was discussed. This section provides an overview of the research methodology selected for this study and the rationale for the choices made. Given the focus of this study, a qualitative approach (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010) is appropriate to identify and gain insight into teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices in the GPLMS context. In addition, the justification of the chosen methods of data collection, selection of participants, and data analysis approach are also discussed. Finally, consideration is given to issues relating to trustworthiness, credibility, and confirmability of the data, all crucial to the validation of research. In conclusion, ethical issues relevant to the study are described and their implications for further study explored.

3.2 Research Objectives

The objective of the study is twofold: to explore and identify teachers' identities and also examine teachers' understandings of their teaching practices before and after the introduction of the GPLMS.

3.3 Research questions and sub-questions

The critical research question which informs this study is:

How do teachers understand their identities and practices in a GPLMS school?

To further explore this critical question, the following sub-questions are addressed:

1. How does teaching in a GPLMS school affect teachers' identities?
2. To what extent does teaching in a GPLMS school shape primary teachers' understandings of their teaching practices?

3.4 Qualitative research approach

Research is a process designed to acquire knowledge from somewhere, looking at something new, gaining new insights through combining the known and the unknown (Kvale, 1999a, p. 11). Ellis (2004, p. 24) explains that qualitative methods refer to:

> *A variety of research techniques and procedures associated with the goal of trying to understand the complexities of the social world in which we live and how we go about thinking, acting and making meaning in our lives*

This study utilises a qualitative research approach, and this decision is informed by the nature of the study which explores teachers' identities and teachers' understandings of their teaching practices within the GPLMS school. Qualitative research approaches attempt to study human action from the insiders' perspective to get an in-depth understanding, rather than explaining and predicting human actions (Babbie & Mouton, 2007). Therefore in this study I investigated how teachers viewed themselves in terms of their identities and their understandings of their teaching practices were affected, with the implementation of the GPLMS.

Thus, qualitative research is appropriate as it stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, and the researcher seeks answers to questions that focus on *how* social experience is created and given meaning by participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I engaged with socially constructed phenomena through investigating how their reality, which is GPLMS influenced, has or has not contributed to a shift in their identities and understandings of their teaching practices. Of importance for qualitative researchers is "getting close to those we study, attempting to see the world through participant's eyes and conveying the experience in a way faithful to their everyday life" (Ellis, 2004, p. 24). In contrast, quantitative research emphasises the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, rather than processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Since this study was not only concerned with teachers' own identities, but also whether their understandings of their teaching practices are affected by the GPLMS, a qualitative approach was most relevant, because the teachers' 'lived experiences' (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 23), are the focus of the study.

3.5 Research design

Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2007, p. 44) define a research method as an "approach used to gather data which is to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction". It is, therefore, important for a researcher to find the reasons why the chosen method of collecting data is correct and the best way of gathering information that will answer the research questions. "The choice of which method to employ depends on the nature of the research problem" (Noor, 2008, p. 1602), and for the purpose of this study, a case study was used. Baxter and Jack (2008) define case study as an approach that facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using data sources. Abercrombie et al. (1984, p. 34 cited in Flyvbjerg 2006) defined a case study as:

> *The detailed examination of a single example of a class of a phenomenon, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but may be useful in the preliminary*

> *stages of an investigation since it provides hypotheses, which may be tested systematically with a large number of cases*

Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 24) explain that a "case study examines a bounded theory, or a case, over time in depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting".

This case study is bounded because it explored particular responses of six teachers' identities and their understanding of their teaching practices in a GPLMS context. Although there are many schools that implement GPLMS, this study focused on the six Foundation Phase teachers, who teach in a newly 'prioritised' school to identify the initial shift. This research is a critical enquiry into understanding the role a new GPLMS context played relation to teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices. It is my hope that the data collected will make a meaningful contribution to not only the education department in Gauteng but also to guide future action in similar studies.

3.6 Research Site

The context for this study was at a primary school in the east of Johannesburg, with a predominantly working class population. The school used to be a parallel medium, meaning that both English and Afrikaans were used as a medium of instruction. The school was previously white but is currently dominated by black African learners, and has both black and white teachers, with a largely white management team. It was a government school, with government employed teachers and a few teachers employed by the School Governing Body (SGB). The selected school was newly prioritised, which means the school is monitored by district officials who visit the school regularly to check if teachers are following the lesson plans and whether the learner results have improved or not.

3.7 Participants

> *To say you will engage in purposive sampling signifies that you see sampling as a series of strategic choices about with whom, where and how to do your research (Given, 2008, p. 697)*

The participants selected for the study were two Grade 1 teachers, two Grade 2 teachers and two Grade 3 teachers. In the school, the teachers were purposively chosen, which means the researcher sought out groups, settings, and individuals where and for whom the process being studied was most likely to occur (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The teachers selected for this study are all females because Foundation Phase is usually females. All the teachers have a Bachelor's degree in Education, with four from the universities and two from colleges

around Gauteng. Two of the teachers had Honour's degrees in Education. All of them were level one teachers with the exception of two teachers who are HODs (Heads of Department). The teachers' teaching experiences vary from 4 to 39 years. All the teachers are second language English speakers but teach in English as a first language. They teach four learning areas namely Home language (English), Additional language (Afrikaans), Mathematics and Life Skills, as required by the curriculum. The teachers had not taught in a "prioritised" school before, thus the GPLMS is a new context in which they may define their identity.

Table 3.1: Teachers' profiles

Teacher	Qualification	Experience
A	Has a diploma in Education, Advanced Certificate in Education and an Honours' degree	35 years
B	Has degree in Education and an Honours' degree	12 years
C	Has a degree in Education	4 years
D	Has degree in Education and an Honours' degree	15 years
E	Has a diploma in Education and Advanced Certificate in Education	28 years
F	Has a diploma in Education and Advanced Certificate in Education	26 years

3.8 Research instrument

Interviewing, according to Berg (2007), is a conversation with a purpose in which the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the respondent. Maree (2007, p. 34) explains that "we interview people to find out from them things we cannot directly observe…", while Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) emphasise that we cannot observe feelings, thoughts and intentions, how people have organised the world, and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. Although interviewing is a common and powerful way in which to understand our fellow human beings, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) caution that it is a hard task.

I used semi-structured interviews because they allowed me to pose follow-up questions when the participants provided information that needed clarification in order to be as transparent as possible for the participants (see Appendix 3). I preferred semi-structured interviews because the questions are prepared ahead of time, and allowed me to feel confident and competent

during the interview. I tape-recorded the interviews and transcribed the interviews for analysis. I also jotted down some notes on the participants' responses to back up the recordings.

3.9 Pilot study

I began by piloting the interview questions a week prior to the scheduled interviews with the participants. Janesick (1998) recommends that the use of a pilot study allows the researcher to focus on areas that may not be particularly clear, in the design the interview schedule. I used one participant outside of the study, to test out the questions before the scheduled interviews

The pilot was not without shortcomings and the question had to be modified for the final implementation. The pilot was limited by the fact that I did not have introductory questions that gave me insight into the type of participant and her perspective of teaching and why she remained in the profession, especially considering the abrupt change with the introduction of GPLMS. Introductory questions were added to the final interview schedule to enrich the data.

The participant needed to provide me with the "correct" answers to the questions. This was due to the fact that at the time of the pilot, I was a Grade Head of the Grade 1, which may have influenced their responses. However, I no longer was the Grade Head at the time of the data collection period.

3.10 The interview process

For the semi-structured interview, although the interviewer has some established general topics for investigation, she allows for the exploration of emergent themes and ideas (Babbie & Mouton, 2007, p. 249). This is in contrast to relying only on concepts and questions defined in advance of the interview.

The interview began with briefing the interviewee on the topic, explaining the study so that participants understand their role and purpose for this study. I used a similar set of questions for all participants to enable comparison between answers. However, I also probed further, for relevant information through additional questions often noted as prompts on the schedule (Babbie & Mouton, 2007).

I began with questions about teachers' life history such as their perspectives of teaching as a profession before the GPLMS changes in order to gain background information on the participants.

Table 3.2: Introductory questions

You as a teacher
1. Why did you become a teacher?
2. What is your perspective(s) of teaching as a profession?
3. Given your perspective(s), what motivates you to continue teaching?

The next set of questions focused on teacher training background and how they adapted to previous curriculum reforms. This provided insight into how their backgrounds connected with their perceptions of their identities and their understandings of their teaching practices.

Table 3.3: Prior GPLMS

Curriculum reforms/reviews before GPLMS
1. During your pre-service training, which curriculum reform(s)/review(s) was predominant at the time?
2. How has pre-service teacher education shaped your view of yourself as a professional?
3. To what extent do you think your experience of previous curriculum reforms influenced the way you see yourself as a teacher?

The last set of questions investigated the teacher's perspectives or understanding of their identity in a GPLMS context, their teaching practices, and the level of assistance they received. The questions were ordered so that the interview felt like a "conversation" about a theme that was mutually interesting between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale, 1998). This was purposely done to encourage the interviewee to feel confident and talk freely.

Table 3.4: Post GPLMS

GPLMS
1. What is your experience(s) of the transition to the GPLMS? What was your reaction when you heard about the transition to the GPLMS in your school?
2. How has the transition to the GPLMS impacted in the way you view yourself as a teacher?
3. Would you say that classroom practice (meaning the way you teach, manage content and assessment), has been affected by the introduction of the GPLMS lesson plans?
4. How are you dealing with the changes that are introduced by the GPLMS:
a. As a phase?
b. As a grade?

c. And personally?
5. Did these changes shape your identity as a teacher?
a. If yes, please explain briefly how it shaped it.
b. If not, also please why you think your teacher identity has not been shaped by the changes.
6. Have you attended any training for the implementation of GPLMS? What kind of training, if any?

I ended the interview with a debriefing, in order for the participant to pose further questions (Kvale, 1998). All the interviews took place after school hours, in the teachers' classrooms, after the learners had gone home. The interviews were conducted in English considering that all teachers have a good command of the language. With the permission of the teachers, all interviews were audiotaped so that correct wording was captured. Taping allowed me to "listen to the tone, the pauses" (Kvale, 1998, p. 3), during analysis. The interviews took between 40-60 minutes each.

Having discussed the research method, the next section provides a discussion on how the data was analysed. Throughout the planning and implementation phases of the case study, issues of reliability and validity were foremost in mind.

3.11 Trustworthiness of data and findings

Qualitative research deals with rigour differently to qualitative research (Golfshani, 2003). The traditional notion of reliability, or dependability, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) can be demonstrated through explicitly making the process and product of the research open to scrutiny for consistency. In this study, the process of coding and the transcripts are available for this purpose. Validity in qualitative studies, referred to as trustworthiness (Golfshani, 2003), is reliant on the reliability of the research, and the quality of the enquiry audit that strengthens the possibility of replication.

A third process used to enhance rigour, triangulation, refers to using a number of data sources, assume a realist paradigm. In this study, teachers' identities are subjectively experienced and not necessarily visible in their practice. This study used a stratified sample and multiple participants who experience the same conditions. The teachers differed in their levels of experience, their learning trajectories and the grades that they taught, while they were similar in their recent experience of GPLMS.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) states that there are four aspects to ensure trustworthiness in a study namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In a case study, the role of the researcher is crucial. I began my fieldwork as an insider attempting to see the world from the viewpoint of the participants. Being a member of the staff in the school produced insight into the context and the teachers' opinions of GPLMS. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), this approach enhances the credibility of, and the usefulness of the data. In addition, credibility was ensured by making sure that participants feel safe and not threatened by the information they provided me with. The participants were given the opportunity to not participate in the project so that the data collected was from willing participants. They were also reminded that they can withdraw from the project at any point, without any explanations. Another strategy I used to ensure credibility was that the interview questions were deliberately rephrased to be consistent with the interviewees' responses. Shenton (2004) refers to this as Iterative Questioning Triangulation, which is a strategy used to elicit detailed data, through rephrased questions. This strategy assisted in identifying contradictions that emerged in the interviews.

Throughout the study, attempts have been made to provide rich and detailed descriptions of the participants, the research site and the process of data collection. I disclosed the number of participants, the data collection method, the length of the interviews, and the time period for the collection of data. Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of the research can be transferred to other contexts, and generalised (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Therefore the study could serve as a guide for other researchers to conduct similar studies, thereby contributing to its transferability.

Dependability is the processes within the study that should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, to gain the same results (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Detailed and in-depth methodological descriptions are important as it describes what was planned in executing the study, it addresses what has been already done on the same topic and the effectiveness of the process undertaken (Shenton, 2004). The participant read the transcripts and signed them as proof that they read them. Shenton (2004) posits that Member-Checks, are important as it affords them the opportunity to check whether it captured their experiences correctly.

Confirmability is defined as the steps taken to help ensure as far as possible that the research findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). This concept is concerned with how objective the researcher is. During the analysis of the data, I found it necessary to step back and take the role of an outsider in order to make sense of the situation, interrogating the findings and analysis. I ensured that the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, and not my ideas or my preferences.

The analysis of the data is presented in detail in the section to follow.

3.10 Data analysis

After recording, I transcribed the interviews myself. Following transcription, the data from the transcripts was analysed inductively, which means synthesizing the data to make meaning of it, looking for patterns and categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). To analyse the data, I began with open coding (Strauss, 1990), which involves arriving at tentative descriptive statements to "produce concepts that seem to fit the data" (p. 28). The important aspects of the responses to each question were highlighted and summarised, looking for common patterns. Each colour represented broad themes and categories. Throughout the analysis, I discovered patterns in terms of the participants' responses relating to their identities and teaching practices. The purpose was to "break the data apart analytically" (Strauss, 1990, p. 29). McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 367) add that "qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories".

The data was broken down into pieces to examine both similarities and dissimilarities between the teachers' identities and their understandings of their teaching practices.
The two main themes are teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices. The categories under teachers' identities were:

1. Teachers' identities prior GPLMS
2. Teachers' identities post GPLMS

The categories under understandings of their teaching practices are:

1. Teaching practices prior GPLMS
2. Teaching practices post GPLMS

The broad themes and categories are discussed in Chapter 4 in greater detail. The data analysis was dialogical (Rule & John, 2011), and had two phases: the first was inductive in which the data was coded in relation to the pre-established categories that emerged from the research questions. The second was deductive as the findings were explained in relation to Hargreaves notion of "ages of professionalism" (Hargreaves, 2000).

Throughout the process of collecting and analysing the data, there were a number of ethical considerations to consider.

3.12 Ethical considerations

In any research study, ethical considerations are of utmost importance. McMillan & Schumacher (2010) posit that qualitative research can be personally intrusive, thus it is vital that the researcher considers policies regarding informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy. Kvale (1996, p. 66) argues that "ethics must be considered throughout the research process from the planning to the finalising of the process". These ethical considerations were taken into account from the start of this research project to the end. They included access to the research site, obtaining informed consent, addressing confidentiality and privacy and anonymity.

I received clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Wits for clearance of research in 2011. I was allocated a protocol number which is proof that ethics was granted to collect data from participants (Appendix 6). I received GDE permission to conduct research in the school. Access was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education (Appendix 7), the principal and the School Governing Body (SGB) to conduct the research (Appendix 3). Refer to Appendix 5 for the letters allowing me to tape-record the interviews. The aim of the study was discussed with the participants and they were given the freedom to ask as many questions as they wished. I also explained that the interviews would be recorded.

Consent forms were distributed to the participant before commencing with a study, in which they agreed to be part of the research (Appendix 4). The informed consent is a written agreement, which contains information on the importance of the study, the consent procedure, the description of the study, assurance of confidentiality, the voluntary nature of their participation and contact details of the researcher; which were signed by the participants and the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to the commencement of data collection. Privacy means "that access to

participants' characteristics, responses, behaviour, and other information" are restricted to the researcher" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 121). Privacy was assured for the participants, by reassuring the participants that the interviews would be conducted in a safe and calm environment. Anonymity was assured, by explaining to the participants that their personal details would not be identified. Confidentiality means that no one will have access to the data except the participants and the researcher, and to ensure that the data collected does not link back to the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). I did this by locking away the transcribed data in a locked cabinet. The participants' names and the school name were changed in the report to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. Rather than using the participants' names, I used teacher A, teacher B, teacher C, teacher D, teacher E and teacher F to represent the participants for confidentiality.

3.13 Conclusion

In this Chapter the research methodology used to gather information, interpret the data has been described and explained. The chapter began with a rationale for my choice of methodology in collecting data in order to answer the research questions. I discussed the research design, which is a case study and the research instrument used. The chapter shows that a case study was found to be the most appropriate in collecting data from the semi-structured interviews, with 6 teachers, from a GPLMS school. The pilot study involved, using one of the participants, was used to extend the interview schedule, to gain insight into the participants' backgrounds history. Data analysis was discussed. Trustworthiness of the data and the findings were explained using Guba and Lincoln's aspects of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Ethical considerations followed, outlining important issues of confidentiality and privacy.

Having discussed the research methodology and providing a rationale for my methodological choices, what follows in chapters to come is the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter 4- Discussion of Data

4.1 Introduction

I provide in this chapter an account of the teachers' understandings of their identities and teaching practices, with a new understanding various issues in relation to curriculum reforms. This latter aspect of the research traces the teachers' understandings of their identities and teaching practices from their teacher training years to the present. The case study shed some light on how strategies such as GPLMS impacted on how teachers understand their roles as teachers and how those roles impact on their attitudes and practices within the GPLMS.

There are four sections to this chapter. The first describes the coding process, whilst the second is a presentation of the data. In the third section, the discussion of data follows, whilst the fourth section discusses the link of the findings to a theoretical approach.

4.2 Coding process

After identifying the two major categories, which are identities and understanding of teaching practices, I further broke down the data into pre-GPLMS and post GPLMS, for both identities and understandings of teaching practices. The table below summarises the responses of the participants, for both their identities and understandings of the teaching practices.

Table 4.1: Responses from the participants, taken from the interviews

Teachers	Pre GPLMS	Post GPLMS
Teacher A	• Had passion • Liked kids • Values and skill	• Mixes everything • Confused • No change (teaching) • No linkage • Doesn't finish • Doesn't plan with other teachers • 1 size fits all
Teacher B	• Morals and principles • Learner centred • Had passion	• Turns into a person you're not • Don't know what you're doing • Unsure about teaching • Would have but had no choice but to stay • Still the same person • Didn't change

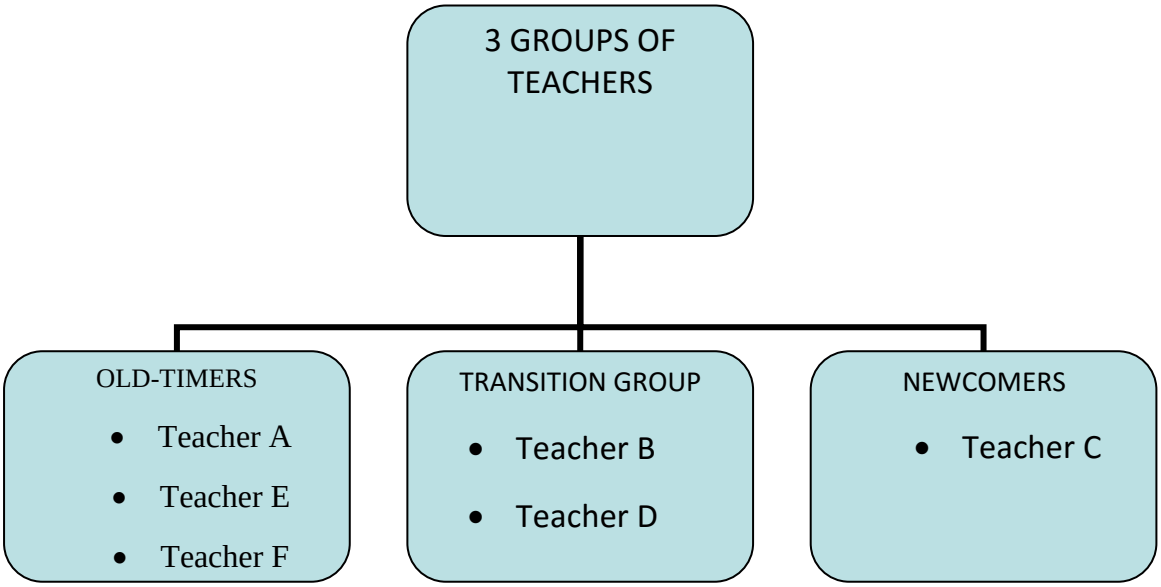
Teacher C	• Knew what she wanted to be	• Still the same person • Does her own thing
Teacher D	• Loved children	• Lost but finding self • Adapted to change
Teacher E	• Teachers teach and learners learn-traditional learning • Teaching a calling • Make difference in children's lives	• Must adapt to changes • Must do what district says • Must be the example as the HOD
Teacher F	• Planning • Religious education • Mould young minds	• Scavengers • Accept change

From the table above which was a top-down approach, I moved on to presenting the data. The next section is a presentation and a discussion of the data.

4.3 Presentation of data

The table with the data (Table 4.1) assisted me in identifying that there were three types of teachers: the old timers, the transition group, and the new-comers. The three categories that emerged from the data for analysis link with Wenger's members of communities. The terms old timers and newcomers were coined by Wenger (1999) when differentiating the types of members in a practice. Therefore I used the same terms to divide the teachers, as the teachers came into the profession during different eras in education, ranging from those that were trained during the segregated education for black and white people under the apartheid regime to the more recent RNCS and CAPS. Refer to chapter 3 to see the qualification of the teachers.

Table 4.2: 3 groups of teachers



The *old timers* are those teachers who have been in the education system and received their training in the old apartheid regime. The teachers also accepted change brought by the implementation of GPLMS. **Teacher A, E** and **F** are the old-timers. The *transition teachers* are those teachers that received their initial teacher education and training post-1994, under Curriculum 2005. These teachers are in this group because they have been in the education field post-apartheid, and have also taught under the 3 reforms namely C2005, NCS and CAPS. Teacher **B** and **D** fall under this category they had different responses to change brought upon by GPLMS. The *newcomers* are the last group and this group consists of teachers that are new to the education field. **Teacher C** is the only teacher that falls under this group because she received her training during the NCS reform. She easily adapted and accepted change brought by GPLMS, because her identity corresponded with the trajectory and experiences of curriculum change.

The terms old-timers and newcomers are Wenger's groups of identities in communities of practice (Wenger, 1999). The term transition group is my own; it refers to teachers that are neither newcomers nor old-timers in the profession of teaching.

This section is further divided into two main themes which are teacher identities and understanding of teaching practices. The section discusses the shifts in their identities and their practices in different ways, according to their trajectory and community. The community in this context is the teachers in the FP, working with the GPLMS.

4.3.1 Identity shifts

The literature on identity shows that identity development is an ongoing, dynamic and evolving process (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). This means the understanding of identity is helpful in understanding the relationship between teachers and their changing work. After the introduction of GPLMS, there was a lot of change in terms of teachers' identities. Policy changes affect teacher identity (Jansen, 2001). Teacher identity shifts and is "undermined" by the introduction of rigid, detailed teaching materials, that restrict teacher agency, and autonomy. This discussion shows how teachers' identities shifted or changed along with the introduction of the GPLMS.

The section below is a discussion of the identities that the participants had prior to the introduction of GPLMS and post GPLMS. I discussed the identities of the old-timers first, followed by the transition group and then the new-comer.

4.3.1.1 Old-timers

The old-timers are three teachers, teacher A, E and F. The section below presents the teachers' identity shifts before and after GPLMS.

Teacher A viewed teaching as a passion and a calling. She explained that:

> *I had a passion…about teaching*

Passion is defined as a strong emotion that cannot be controlled and a calling is a vocation, something that one is destined to pursue. The response by **teacher A** suggests that teaching is more than the external goods (Zembylas, 2003) such as learners performing, but also internal goods because of passion for teaching. This participant also added that "*I like kids…but back then".* The learners she teaches also contribute to her passion for teaching. Teaching for this participant was charged with positive emotions. Fried (1995 cited in Hargreaves, 1998) posits that teaching is a passionate vocation. For **teacher A**, pre-service education also played a role *"in my profession…about values…and skills".* Having good values and the proper skills was paramount for this participant. She, however, added that this happened *"back then",* prior to GPLMS. Therefore the introduction of GPLMS affected how she viewed her current work. This participant had to renegotiate her identity because she had strong positive identity prior GPLMS.

After the introduction of GPLMS, **Teacher A** explained that:

> *GPLMS mixes everything. It confuses the kids. It confuses also me*

The participant is confused because of the way the policy was presented to her, *"mixing everything"*. She is confused at how totally different concepts are combined. **Teacher A** further explained that:

> *There is no linkage or a chain*

T**eacher A** mentioned that the GPLMS lesson plans do not show a linkage between concepts. This is problematic because one of the GPLMS aims is to ensure that teachers "sequence and pace their coverage of the entire curriculum throughout the year" (de Clercq, 2014, p. 311).

While the **teacher A** initially said she was confused, she later said that:

> *I'm still the way I was because in some instances I don't consider the GPLMS planning or the curriculum.*

I would say that this teacher has interpreted the change in ways that allowed confusion. The participant is trying to renegotiate her identity in the new context as required by GPLMS. She is renegotiating her identity. From the data collected, **teacher A** reported that a reason for staying in the profession is the *"hope to continue"* [teaching], in case things change for the better. The hope of better things to come encourages her to renegotiate her views of a teacher and continue teaching.

Prior GPLMS, **teacher E** viewed teaching as a passion because of the passion she had for her learners. She explained below:

> *I see teaching as a calling. Since I was a child in Grade 8 I felt that is what I wanted…to be a teacher. And the passion that I have for children. I tried it and I am enjoying it* ***(teacher E)***

This participant's learners keep her in the profession and sustain her love for her work. Hargreaves (1998) posits that for good teaching to occur, positive emotions need to be present. The sense of enjoyment that **teacher E** has may be due to her learners, as they seem to make the participant enjoy her work.

Teacher E also views teaching as a calling. She added that:

> *you must have the love for the children. [I] have a lot of patience and perseverance*

This statement explains why she views teaching as a calling. For this participant, one needs to have love, patience, and perseverance for the learners in order to be a teacher. Teaching for **teacher E** was her "*first choice"* profession, teaching for her was not only a passion but also a calling. Hargreaves (1998, p. 835) posits that "when people are emotional, they are moved by their feelings. This participant has a strong affiliation to the profession which gave her a

strong sense of identity. Wenger (1999) argues that identity is linked to practice, thus the participants have identities that are strongly linked to their passion in their work.

Teacher E also saw teaching as not just a job but:

> *I can still make a difference in children's lives, even if I can just touch the life of just one child. And that makes me happy*

This participant viewed teaching in a positive way, because teaching seemed to go beyond the end results of learners passing, but intrinsically, resulting in passion and joy.

Teacher E had an established, strong, positive identity before the implementation of GPLMS. She had positive emotions linked to her teacher identities, such as passion and a sense of calling. Their identity was closely linked to their learners, with the passion to *"make a difference to the children's lives"* (**teacher E**). The participant valued the intrinsic goods of the profession rather than the results.

Teacher E had a love for teaching which placed her in the profession. She said:

> *I became a teacher because I love teaching…I was mostly influenced by my role model who was my Grade 1 teacher…teaching is noble…*

However, after the school implemented GPLMS, **teacher E** explained that:

> *I am confused, they[the district] keep you from wanting to do things your way…I am now a follower not a leader in my phase as a HOD, I have to set the example for everyone so that the other teachers can also be obedient*

The participant was also confused in what to do, as a HOD. She felt that she needed to set the example by being obedient, forgetting her own principles and ideas. Teachers were not aware that for instance, lesson plans from the GPLMS are there to improve content and methods of teaching, and not to dictate what teachers ought to do (de Clercq, 2014). Hence this HOD was confused and felt restricted. She might not agree with the claim that lesson plans do not dictate what they should do, and did not use the lessons as a guide as to what to teach. The confusion influenced how she viewed herself. She viewed herself as a follower and no longer a leader in her phase. This participant renegotiated her identity as a teacher and also as a HOD. The lack of knowledge in GPLMS has created confusion in her HOD and teacher identity and she needed to learn as the circumstances changed.

The last old-timer **teacher F** referred to teaching as a vocation. The love arose from her role model, her previous Grade 1 teacher, who demonstrated to her how to teach and carry yourself as a teacher. The participant referred to *"behave[ing] and carry[ing] yourself*

accordingly" as important characteristics that she has in her teacher identity. This stems from her pre-service training.

Teacher F explained that:

> *I respect authority. I adhere to authority…so what we were taught while becoming a teacher was useful. Religious education was a core subject. It taught us morals, values, it was compulsory…*

Teacher F emphasised that Religious Education was compulsory for them, and this education encouraged them to learn about values and morals that teachers need to have. Pre-service teacher education seemed to have had a great impact in this participant's view of herself as a teacher. Reflecting upon her experiences as a child and a student teacher, her identity was strongly linked to her past experiences, which have shaped her teacher identity.

After GPLMS was introduced, **teacher F** felt differently from the other old-timers, she said:

> *You are going through challenges, you shape up. You adapt. Change will always be there. It has made me realise that I am still new in this profession…change is ongoing*

This participant has positively accepted change in the profession and has handled the change well. She seems to have adapted to the changes. She is already renegotiating her identity by accepting the challenges.

4.3.1.2 Summary

In this category, **teacher A** and **E** viewed teaching as a passion and a calling. **Teacher A** also referred to the notion that teaching is more than just imparting knowledge, but teaching also is imparting good values and skills. **Teacher E** stated that teaching is a passion because she has love and patience for learners. Her learners give her a sense of happiness, therefore, her identity is linked to her learners. **Teacher F** referred to teaching as a vocation. Her identity was linked to Religious Education, which is closely linked to values. This is similar to what **teacher A** valued in teaching and teacher training.

When the context changed to GPLMS, **Teacher A,** and **E** are confused by the GPLMS implemented. Their confusion has filtered in confusion about their identities. This is due to no linkage between concepts. However, **teacher F** feels differently because she feels that she has adapted to the changes and challenges brought by the GPLMS. This participant has possibly renegotiated her identities as a HOD and a teacher, unlike **teacher E**, who is also a HOD, but finds it difficult to be a leader in the phase.

4.3.1.3 Transition group

The next group is the transition group which is teacher B and D.

Teachers' past experiences seem to have shaped their identities and understanding prior to GPLMS. **Teacher B** observed her past teachers, observing how they taught and behaved, in order to understand how to act and be a teacher. The experience of former teachers, which seem to be positive, influenced her positively and encouraged her to see herself as a professional teacher. Her identity was formed through her past experiences, on her learning trajectories.

Teacher B explained:

> *I didn't know that I was 100% gonna study to be a teacher, and this teacher formed me into the person I am today*

Teacher B pointed out that a particular teacher in her university helped her form her identity. This university lecturer became a mentor for her, demonstrating to her how teachers look and teach. **Teacher B** strongly believes that the university played a big role in understanding her identity. She elaborated that:

> *… They helped me you know gave me principles and morals…but the teacher I am today is because of what I studied. What they taught me at university…this is what a teacher does, this is not what a teacher does, this is how we teach, this is how we don't teach. Those things I took on and they formed me and made me the teacher (**teacher B)***

The training that **teacher B** received shaped her identity she believed that the training she received provided her with positive characteristics of what a teacher is. This point relates to Flores and Day's (2006) research that former teachers provide negative or positive models of teaching, which are an important socialising factor that impacts on their identity. The university lecturers modelled positive characteristics of being a teacher. The participant's learning trajectory, learning along the way, as to how to become a teacher with morals and values.

Teacher B, however, feels trapped in a job that was once her *"passion",* leaving the participant feeling restricted because she has had to comply with the district's expectations when GPLMS was introduced. She stated that:

> *if I had the chance I would have left. This whole...environment is not suitable for anyone. Not young not old, not anyone. Just drives you insane. It turns you into a person you don't know…*

Teacher B expresses feelings of confusion too because she explains above that she is turned into someone she does not know or understand. This confusion in her identity is affected by

the confusion in her role as a teacher. The environment is not suitable for her old identity. She is having difficulty in negotiating her identity which is currently in transition, hence the quote *"it turns you into a person you don't know".* This quotation also shows that this participant also feels restricted in the job because she had no other option.

This participant also no longer has joy in her work but works because she has no choice. Hence she stated that *"if I had the chance I would have left".* When one has no choice, one feels a sense of restriction or not having any options. This restricts **teacher B** who did not do identity work, in her environment.

While **Teacher D**'s explanation is not specific about a particular teacher who influenced her but the response shows that the participant *"loved"* being present at school because of some teachers:

> *When I was still at school I loved seeing and looking at teachers teaching*

Teacher D's response shows that observing teachers, while she was young, had a great impact on her becoming and remaining a teacher. This is a concept termed "the apprenticeship of observation" which describes a phenomenon whereby student teachers observe and evaluate professional teachers in action, in a school context (Borg, 2004, p. 274). This means that in the context of this study, **teacher D** learnt how to become a teacher and formed her identity through observing her school teachers.

Both the participants had identities closely linked to others mainly previous teachers, prior to GPLMS. Although **teacher D** relied on previous teachers to form her identity and become a teacher, she also *"[had] a passion for kids"*, which resonates with the old-timers views. However what is different for this participant is that she added:

> *You go back to the times when you were at school…how your teacher taught*

Apprenticeship of observation seems to have been an important aspect that formed teacher identity for the two participants. Both participants, however, renegotiated their identities due to the GPLMS context.

In the interviews, **teacher D** expressed that she was confused, due to the GPLMS being introduced. For example, **teacher D** explained:

> *For now, I'm lost, I am still finding myself. This GPLMS has messed me up so I am in a process of rediscovering who I am again*

When GPLMS was implemented, **teacher D**, like the old-timers, was also concerned that "*I'm still confused…And sometimes I'm confusing the kids…"* and appeared to be lost, and possibly means she no longer knows who she is. Not knowing who you are in a new and changing context is troublesome as teachers "teach who they are" (Palmer, 1998). The participant is confused in terms of not understanding her role as a teacher. The learners cannot afford to perform badly as shown in the ANA results from 2012 to 2014 (DBE, 2012-2014). Moreover, the teachers' identities cannot be linked to their practice because if the practice leads to confusion, then their identities will also be left in confusion.

Teacher D also is renegotiating her identity. She states that:

> *You don't know exactly what it is that you are going to teach. And again we don't have that thing…that satisfaction of accomplishment. You find yourself still lacking somewhere*

Teacher D said she *"Adapt[ed] to the changes"* and her identity was not affected negatively. By being part of GPLMS means some changes in pedagogical practices have to take place, because of certain expected outcomes, it is then suspicious what the participant means by this.

This lacking makes her feel incomplete. Lacking somewhere might affect the passion that this participant might have.

4.3.1.4 Summary

In this category, **Teacher B** and **D** pointed out that previous university and school teachers in their school days played a role in their teacher identities. Observing previous teachers demonstrated to them how teachers are. They both had to negotiate their teacher identities, to discover themselves as teachers. **Teacher D** has uttered that due to GPLMS she has confused and still finding herself in this new context. **Teacher B** stated that she was restricted and trapped by the strategy, as it is very prescriptive. **Teacher B** felt that she was trapped and could not go anywhere else, whereas **teacher D** said that she was slowly adapting to the changed context.

4.3.1.5 New-comer

Teacher C is the only new-comer in this study, who has been in the profession for 5 years.

This participant chose to become a teacher because:

> *I didn't wanna do what the other thing that I was supposed to do. I had to choose between accounting and teaching*

The participant is probably still trying to find who she is in the profession. Her identity is not linked to her profession like the other participants. Because she is still new in the profession, she still only has her inner or core identity (Palmer, 1998). The following statement illustrates this point:

> *From varsity, I already knew what I was gonna do. Everyone still says I am the same person*

She is likely to form an identity provided she stays in the profession. She is negotiating her identity whereas the other participants are renegotiating their identity.

Post GPLMS, **teacher C**, appears to be the only participant whose identity is not affected, because the changes brought upon by GPLMS seems to not be challenging her inner identity or restricting her identity. To illustrate this, she said:

> *I don't change to suit other people's needs or try to conform to society's expectations of how teachers ought to be (**teacher C**)*

Although the response suggests that **teacher C** is not concerned by the changes in previous curriculum reforms, it is also unclear whether she complies with the district expectations.

Teacher C added that:

> *The progress that I see in my kids (motivated her to stay in the profession) … I can see that I'm making a difference….. I do not make excuses. I do my work and do it to the best of my ability*

Teacher C stayed in the profession for her learners. When her learners are doing well, it is encouraging and motivating to stay in the profession. **Teacher C** also does not make excuses; she works to the best of her ability instead of focusing on the changes. This may be due the fact that she is a newcomer and therefore she accepts and adapts to policy changes well.

Day et.al (2005, p. 566) argues that:

> *Commitment is a necessary element of professionalism that motivation self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and commitment are closely linked with identity; and that teacher identities are the result of an interaction between personal experiences*

The participant's commitment is encouraged by the job satisfaction, which in turn, is linked to her identity. This may be the reason why this participant still has an unchanged or unaffected identity, in the GLMS environment.

4.3.1.6 Summary

Teacher C explained that she did not have a teacher identity as yet. She felt that she was the same person she has always been, before and after she entered the profession. She has not

negotiated her identity consciously. Her core identity has not been altered by a change in curriculum. **Teacher C** stated that she did not have to alter her identity because she did not have one. She may have an identity but is not conscious of it. This participant is still in the profession regardless of changes in the curriculum. Because she is a newcomer, her commitment, and her learners' success assisted her in adapting to the changes in curriculum.

4.3.2 Changes in teaching practices with the introduction to GPLMS

The new GPLMS context brought changes in the way content was taught and assessed. Teachers were presented with workbooks, lesson plans, and teaching materials. These changes meant that teachers had to alter the way they delivered content. Pedagogy became "restrictive" due to the prescriptive lesson plans and there were regular district visits to check content delivery (Amrein-Beardsley, 2009). The section below describes the participants' experiences due to the unexpected changes.

In this section I firstly discuss the teaching practices of the old-timers, the transition group then the newcomers, prior GPLMS then post GPLMS. This is to show the nature of changes in teaching practices before and after the implementation of GPLMS.

4.3.2.1 Old-timers

In this group, the old-timers are teacher A, E, and F. **Teacher A** explained:

> *We were not only looking at just the academic. We learnt about values, we learnt about skills*

Teacher A seems to be drawn more towards Curriculum 2005, which emphasised values and skills. Values, skills, and knowledge are what learners had to know – they were derived from Learning Outcomes (DOE, 2002).

When there was a change in curriculum, **teacher A** explained:

> *by this time you need to be doing this…and sometimes you don't even finish what you need to be doing this. So that is why I cannot even go the extra mile…*

This participant suggests being restricted because the lesson plans are dense and restrictive. The time needed to teach all the concepts is too short, with too much content to cover. The participant also adds that she cannot do more for her learners because *"sometimes you don't finish".* Certain knowledge is skipped or left incomplete due to too much work to be covered. Kliebard points out those relationships between teachers and students are affected when teachers race to finish the syllabus and to keep up with other teachers (Kliebard, 1975a cited in Au, 2011).

Another issue that this participant complained about was that "they" (the school) received the lesson plans late. It is already de-professionalising for teachers to teach following a script. They also have to deal with lesson plans that arrive late. The late arrival of these lesson plans contributes to the content being skipped or taught superficially, in order to finish the syllabus. **Teacher A** explains below:

> *We are always behind with the work and planning. Last year we didn't have any planning the first term for GPLMS schools*

What is problematic is the fact that the participant added that they did not receive planning for the term, so they could not teach the learners according to the GPLMS. The participant resorted to *"photocopy plans from lessons given to other schools so that we don't fall behind"* (**teacher A**). This added to the participant's feelings of powerlessness with regard to planning her work accordingly and also, more importantly, powerlessness in how she renegotiated her identity if she is to work at a fast pace to finish the syllabus. Therefore there are instructional and institutional constraints that affect her identity as a teacher.

Teacher A added that she disliked the *"one size fits all"* method of teaching and assessing all the learners. Learners are not all the same therefore they cannot be taught and assessed as though they are alike.

The lack of training in this new strategy left **teacher A** *"confused".* Not receiving adequate training on new reform is problematic because schools that are underperforming may stay underperforming because the teachers lack knowledge or struggle with pacing (Amrein-Beadesley, 2009). The participant received lesson plans with some charts to use but complained that she did not know how to use the files given to them. She explained:

> *They just didn't come for development. They came to look at our work* ***(teacher A)***

Teacher A explained that everyone is focused on their own grade and *"we don't have time to discuss and help each other"* as a phase. It seems that there is no community of practice, but everyone is more concerned with their own work and more importantly finishing the syllabus on time.

Teacher A explained that GPLMS certain knowledge is skipped or left incomplete due to too much work to be covered. This means that the content is dense with too little time to teach. This is problematic because this may mean that knowledge is taught superficially, increasing the knowledge gaps the learners have. **Teacher A** is negotiating her identity because she deals with the gaps that she has in how to implement GPLMS.

The second teacher in the group, **teacher E** said that:

> *Back then it was classical where the learners sit and the teacher teaches*

Teacher E prefers the teacher-centred type of curriculum, where the teacher teaches and the learner learns. From the statement above, it is clear that the traditional curriculum was teacher-centred and content driven.

When there was a change in context due to GPLMS, **teacher E** stated that unlike the other participants she did not feel restricted.

> *Curriculums are different and there are lots of changes. But if you adapt to that from where you started to now, you must also change. Otherwise, if you don't adapt to the changes you will get stuck and things will get very difficult and challenging for you*

Teacher E seems to have adapted to the changes involved in GPLMS. Adapting to change simply prepares her for challenges and difficulties that new policies bring. However, she explained that:

> *In a way, your teaching is affected because now you must do what they [district] give you*

The participant prioritizes the GPLMS lesson plans above her own professional judgment and attaining the internal goods of teaching, such as the joy in teaching and producing performing learners. She is more worried about the district officials than doing her work.

The last old-timer, **teacher F** preferred the teacher-oriented curriculum. The statement below explains this:

> *I respect authority. I adhere to authority. Planning was there…Religious Education was the core subject. It taught us the values, morals, it was compulsory…it helped in moulding the young ones*

Again values are of importance to **teacher F**, as values "*mould the young ones*". Education for this participant embodies delivery of content knowledge as well as morals, in order to be a law-abiding citizen that respects authority. These participants are strategy driven "old-timers" (Wenger, 1999) in the community of practice.

With the introduction of GPLMS, **teacher F** said that:

> *We are like scavengers we go to other schools and ask them to give us what they are not using*

This statement suggests that the participant feels that she has no autonomy because they even have to resort to scavenging for the work that they should be teaching. Teachers resort to asking other schools for assistance and resources. Thus prescriptive lesson plans take the teacher's professional judgment out of the equation. Au (2011) reiterates this point by

explaining that pre-packaged curricular material, such as the GPLMS lesson plans in this context, require very little or no creative input from the teachers. The lesson plans could leave the participants feeling useless, as they do not require much thought or decision-making from the teachers.

Teacher F referred to herself as a "scavenger" due to the fact that the school does not receive any resources or assistance from the district or the teachers do not help each other. **Teacher F** strongly feels that GPLMS is *"not meant for innovative teachers"* because the GPLMS lesson plans are prescriptive and pre-packaged, which means they need to be followed precisely.

In summary **Teacher E** preferred the teacher-oriented education, where the teacher imparts knowledge and the learners learn. Similarly, **teacher F** thought that the teacher-oriented curriculum was better because the curriculum taught the learners values and morals. Her identity was closely linked to the Religious Education because of the moulding the education did for her learners.

However, the participants' lack of training led to old-timers to be confused as to how to teach using the GPLMS lesson plans. Hence this participant is confused and negotiating her identity and teaching practices. **Teacher A** expressed dislike in the one-size fits all method of teaching and assessing that the strategy instructs through detailed lesson plans. **Teacher F** is the only teacher in this group that is adjusting to the new strategy and its demands. She is more accepting of the changes brought by the GPLMS. This participant is negotiating her identity through working with the strategy positively.

4.3.2.3 Transition group

Teachers B and D are the transition group**. Teacher B** explained that:

> *OBE was more about the learner. You know as a teacher you know that this is your child, this is what they need to know and you teach it*

According to **teacher B** teaching was learner-centred. This means the learners are in the centre of their teaching. Jansen (2001) argues that teachers were facilitators, as opposed to being "repository of all knowledge and wisdom". The participant clearly is in favour of co-operative learning and teaching, whereby both the teacher and the learners learn and teach each other about the world and learning.

However, things changed for this participant after GPLMS. **Teacher B** felt strongly against GPLMS, complaining that:

I feel like I'm stupid, [as if]I don't know what I'm supposed to do?[or] I don't know what I'm supposed to teach. [or]I don't know what these children need to know

Teacher B feels restricted; hence she feels that the lesson plans leave her feeling stupid because they outline in detail what she should teach. However, these detailed lesson plans are meant to pace content for teachers and prescribe what teachers need to teach.

Teacher B complained that:

Teaching is to GPLMS, not according to my personality or the way I am or to my children, it's according to what this paper tells me

This participant views teaching in the GPLMS context as following what the lesson prescribes, and not necessarily according to her personality or style of teaching that seems to have been taken away. The restrictions are in both her identity and teaching practice due to the strategy. The response below shows that:

The way you teach has been taken out of your hands because you have to teach now in a specific way ***(teacher B)***

Considering teachers' training and their pedagogical practices they developed while in the profession, it is of concern that she feels like teaching *"has been taken out of your hands".* There is a feeling of powerlessness because of external expectations and is unclear whether this shapes teacher's intrinsic way of teaching.

The lesson plans given to the participant are prescriptive. Therefore the district officials are sent to schools to monitor that teachers teach the content using the lesson plans. **Teacher B** repeatedly referred to the constant surveillance on their teaching, through checking if they teach the same content, in the same way, at the same pace. Teaching was described as:

*Just doing because you don't teach you just do what you are told (****teacher B****)*

*[the district] don't wanna [see you as the teacher] and explain to [you] what [they] don't like seeing in [your] books (****teacher B****)*

The data suggests that the participant adjusted her teaching style in order to teach the new and prescribed knowledge using the GPLMS lesson plans.

The last teacher in this group, **Teacher D** said that:

Teaching for me was learner-oriented

Teacher D received training post-1994, under the Curriculum 2005. The curriculum replaced the traditional instruction with learner-centeredness and teachers being facilitators. These participants were exposed to the OBE curriculum and did not necessarily receive training.

Teacher D complained when contexts changed, expressing that the *"lesson plans are too long and dense"* (**teacher D**). Giddens (1991, cited in Woods & Jeffrey, 2002) posits that the teacher has dilemmas, dealing with the constant pressures and criticism that breed uncertainty, and undermine teacher autonomy. The prescriptive changes through lesson plans may leave teachers feeling powerless and no longer trusted because they have to comply with the expectations from the district.

In summary, **teacher B** and **D** preferred the learner-centred approach in teaching prior GPLMS. The approach was "learner-oriented" and encouraged co-operative learning and teaching. The two participants are negotiating their identities because they both have had to alter and change their teaching approaches since GPLMS is teacher-oriented. The strategy is teacher-centred because it relies on the teacher to impart knowledge to the learners. Prior GPLMS **teacher B** expressed that she felt restricted as she followed the lesson plans, without her input. The district's surveillance contributed to the restriction. This participant negotiated her identity in the new context because she preferred the freedom of OBE to the rigidity of GPLMS. Similarly, **teacher D** complained of a lack of teacher autonomy, due to the prescriptive lesson plans.

4.3.2.5 New-comer

The last teacher in the research and the only teacher in this group, **teacher C**, however, felt differently from the two above groups of participants. She explained that:

> *The thing is with me is I don't follow these reforms as such*

This participant does not allow any reforms to change her teaching practices; at least consciously it appears like that. **Teacher C** received training through the NCS group of teachers; therefore this participant is the "new-comer" (Wenger, 1999) in the profession. She is still probably still trying to find what works for her, in terms of teaching practices.

Teacher C does not feel restricted when GPLMS was introduced. She explains:

> *These changes are just changes that do not or have not affected me. It's still the same content. I did not even worry about anything. I'm still not bothered hey…"*

The participant, as I explained earlier, does not yet have a strong teacher identity and therefore arguably she is unaffected by any changes. Or it could be that she is not bound by a strategy and she feels that she is not affected by any reform. It could be because she is still new and has not been teaching in many reforms, unlike the other participants who have taught in more than 2 reforms. This participant continued to teach the way she has always

been teaching. She went beyond what the lesson plans prescribed for her, as she taught "idioms", though they are not supposed to be taught till Grade 5. Managing content was of more importance to this participant than following the lesson plans exactly.

> *I have what they [district officials] want and more. If they want 20 written activities for English, in two weeks, I will probably have like 50 activities (**teacher C**)*

Teacher C consults with other teachers in their grade meetings, *"talk[ing] about the expectations…"* and tackling these changes. This is a positive step towards collegiality. Hargreaves (2001, p. 518) posits that emotional and professional support among teachers is important, provided that support promotes professional interaction and improves the work of teaching.

In summary **Teacher C** as a new-comer in the profession said that she does not follow any reform. This is unique because she could still negotiate her identity and teaching practices, which is why she is not probably aware that she may have been teaching according to strategy subconsciously. Trying to find what works for her suggests she is still negotiating and understanding what she prefers as a teacher. **Teacher C** is not restricted because she may not be bound by strategy or reform. She explained that she even goes beyond what is expected of her, by teaching more activities. However it may be because she has not experienced dramatic reform, therefore she has not had any reason to question the nature of CAPS or of the GPLMS.

This section presented the data collected from the transcribed interviews conducted with six FP teachers. The next section is a discussion of the findings.

4.4 Discussion of findings

The findings suggest the responses obtained in the interviews presented in this chapter found that many participants in this study did not accept of the new GPLMS easily. Each group of teachers grappled with the different issues differently. It is clear that the introduction of GPLMS introduced problems to the participants in this study. However, it must be noted that three groups of teachers implemented the strategy differently due to the fact that they have different trajectories. Their differences arise from the era they received their teacher training, but also on their experiences in implementing a new and unfamiliar strategy.

Hargreaves' Ages of Professionalism and Professional Learning (2000) is used to link the identities and teaching practices with the ages during which participants began teaching. This

is done because Hargreaves identified that the context that teachers teach in affects how teachers work together and ultimately the nature of their professionalism.

4.4.1 Old-timers

Teacher A, **E** and **F**, the old-timers use a more technicist approach in teaching. I say this because the participants preferred teaching systematically in a "managerially demanding but technically simple" way (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 156), where one's authority is not questioned or challenged. Hargreaves further explains that some teachers belong in the Pre-professional Age. In a technicist approach, teachers teach and the learners learn in a systematic way, with little or no deviation from the content knowledge. **Teacher F** mentioned in the interviews that she preferred the Religious Education era because it was not only linked to religion but also because the teacher and the learners have their roles that they play. She stated that "you have to be aware of your role as a teacher". The traditional way of teaching enables teachers to work quickly in a structured way, which assists in teachers completing the syllabus on time.

Whilst the old-timers can be viewed as obedient civil servants that abide and follow policy (Jansen, 2001), or strategy, they complained about the time constraints and dense content, are required to teach. Change brings about uncertainty, forcing teachers to teach in ways that they themselves were not taught (Hargreaves, 2000). In saying this, the old-timers renegotiated how they viewed themselves as professionals which affected their identities. How they viewed themselves after GPLMS has been restrictive and their work has rather broken down into "checklists of performance standards or competencies" (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 152). This is because the old-timers are more concerned with finishing the work on time and teaching content exactly as the lesson plans have outlined. Hence the participants felt restricted. The whole-class teaching practice also restricted their ability to design activities to accommodate their different learners. **Teacher A** expressed this point through a concern she had with teaching and assessing in a whole-class, one-size-fits-all approach. In contrast, the ANAs are claimed to expose teachers to alternative, best practices in assessment, as an intervention for the poor performing schools (DBE, 2012-2014). However, there are tensions between teacher autonomy and state control, through restrictive policies. The participants still taught using the lesson plans, which made them passive and compliant.

Teacher E is the only old-timer that still felt torn by strategy and her own professional judgement, as she is a HOD. She felt the pressure to comply and show support of the

government, as she is the head of the phase. This participant comes from the White segregated system of education, whereas the other 2 participants were trained in the Bantu "Religious' Education system. This participant may have had to renegotiate her HOD identity because of pressures that expect her to comply with a strategy that she does not necessarily believe in.

4.4.2 Transition group

Teacher B and **D** are the two participants that Hargreaves would argue that they belong in the Age of the Autonomous Professional (Hargreaves, 2000). This era is explained as the era of "licenced autonomy" (Dale, 1988 cited in Hargreaves, 2000). Teachers in this era were using pedagogies that promoted child-centeredness rather than the traditional teachers-centred pedagogies. However, the issue with these pedagogies is that knowledge is then downplayed, due to learning being left in the hands of the young, inexperienced and unknowledgeable learners (Jansen, 1998). The two transition participants received initial teacher education during the C2005 era. The participants were exposed to discovery type of learning, through group work amongst the learners, where the teacher facilitates learning. The issues that the transition participants mentioned was the workload being too much to teach, with rigid time frames. However, there are differences in the two participants, although they both belong to this transition group.

Teacher D is still lost and still renegotiating her identity in the new context. She, however, resorted back to teaching using the cooperative, discovery type of teaching that she is familiar with. She skipped some content in order to finish the syllabus on time. Amrein-Beardsley (2009) explained that teachers resort to skipping content to complete syllabus and to focus on tested knowledge. Thus this teacher does what Amrein-Beardsley mentions because she was more comfortable using her learner-centred style rather than following the GPLMS methodology. This then means that she "rushes through syllabus" due to being left behind in order to do the prescribed assessment. **Teacher B** similarly questioned lesson plans that dictated to her how to teach. She particularly raised an issue of how the lesson plans require no thinking, which left her feeling negative towards GPLMS. "Being boxed" also made her feel restricted and limited to how she could teach the content knowledge. However what made this participant stand out from the other transition teacher was that she complained that GPLMS challenged "who I am" as a teacher. She had to renegotiate her identity because the strategy challenged her identity as a teacher.

4.4.3 New-comer

The new-comer, **Teacher C**, in this research belongs in the Age of the Collegial Professional. Hargreaves (2000) described this era as collegial and collective, where teachers work together rather than in isolation. This participant did not necessarily cling to autonomy like the other participants, but she worked collaboratively with the other teachers in her phase. The collaboration is not imposed on the teachers, which makes the collaboration fruitful. This participant uses a pragmatic approach to teaching because she accepted changes in curriculum and also appreciated the assistance. “I appreciate the content” demonstrates that the lesson plans were not restrictive for her, but rather the lesson plans provided support that she did not receive from the district through workshops.

Teacher C also has a commitment towards her work as a professional teacher which “requires time and effort, as teachers rework their roles and identities as professionals in a more consciously collegial workplace” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 162). Her commitment is demonstrated in the effort she put in by teaching more activities than expected and challenging her learners through topics that are not covered in the grade. She also did her own research with other teachers in other schools and checked how others differ from her. The teaching practices she used do not differ with the implementation of GPLMS. This is due to the fact that she claimed that she did not yet have particular teacher identity nor did she follow the strategy exactly as it is presented.

4.4.4 Conclusion

The data presented highlighted the fact that contexts that are restrictive bring about change and shifts in identities for teachers who have experiences of previous curriculum contexts. How teachers view themselves as professionals is affected not only by the era they received training but also their work. Their teaching practices are also similarly affected as “administrative mandates to teach in particular ways are being imposed and overturned at an ever increasing rate” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 162). In the context of this study, shifts in identities and teaching practices are a result of GPLMS introduced to the school, which require shifts in identity and practice that teachers may find difficult in the light of their learning trajectories.

Chapter 5- Conclusions and further research

5.1 Introduction

The research study set out to investigate what six teachers in the foundation phase, in one GPLMS school think about their identities after their school was declared underperforming. It also highlighted how the GPLMS context affected their teaching practices, with regards to the lesson plans they used. This chapter will summarise and discuss the main findings from the research and analyse.

Due to the introduction of the ANAs as a testing tool for learners in South Africa (chapter 1 and 2), schools that performed poorly in the tests were declared underperforming in Gauteng schools. Given that the corrective strategy namely the GPLMS was introduced in schools, this study posed questions about identities and teaching practices of teachers in the foundation phase, thus a call for a case study into the teachers' identities and practices. In particular, the study asked the questions: How do teachers understand their identities and practices in a GPLMS school? How does teaching in a GPLMS school affect teachers' identities? And, to what extent does teaching in a GPLMS school shape primary teachers' understandings of their teaching practices? These questions provided an indication of the shifts in identities in teachers prior and post GPLMS, as well as understandings of their teaching practices. Since teachers are responsible for content delivery, their identities are influenced and understandings of their teaching practices change. Therefore how they view themselves as professionals is essential to investigate in order to understand how teachers view themselves in relation to reforms. Their teaching practices also are affected as teachers adjust their pedagogies to suit the strategies.

Using Wenger's Framework of Identity, and in particular identity as a community of practice, identity as negotiated experience and identity as a learning trajectory (chapter 2), I argued that GPLMS impacted on teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices. Their identities are renegotiated in order to adjust to the changes to adapt to the changes. Their teaching practices are also shifted and changed by the prescriptive lesson plans.

Based on my research, I argued that teachers' identities' and their understandings of their teaching practices are influenced by the GPLMS. This is due to the fact that the new strategies such as the GPLMS come with pre-planned and pre-designed lesson plans that teachers follow. This results in teachers adopting new pedagogies and without receiving any training on how to implement the strategy. The literature review on South Africa's story on

testing (chapter 2) and the findings from the interviews (chapter 4) indicate that the implementation of corrective strategies that are implemented to improve content delivery affect teachers professionalism, especially when proper induction into the curriculum does not take place.

In this concluding chapter, I reflect on the findings of the research. In doing so the findings are contextualised within the key questions framed in chapter 1. The limitations of the study are acknowledged to show that while this study attempted to enhance knowledge in teachers' identities and understandings of their practices, it does not provide all the answers on teacher identity. Finally, I include recommendations and a reflection on the design of the research that may be of use for further research.

5.2 A summary of and reflections on the findings

5.2.1 Identity

The main argument as drawn from chapter 4 is that teachers' identities are affected by GPLMS. It is found that their identities shift or change to accommodate the changes brought about by GPLMS. The old-timers' identities shifted from *passion* and *calling* to being *confused*. On inquiry, this was due to the restriction they felt brought upon them by the lesson plans and not understanding how to implement the strategy. The transition teachers similarly moved from "*have a passion for kids"* to *confusion* and *restricted* due to not understanding the strategy or how to implement the strategy. On further investigation, one out of the two participants adapted to the changes and her identity was not affected. From the above-mentioned finding, one may conclude that lesson plans played a large role in how the participants viewed themselves as professionals. Their professional judgement was taken away by the prescriptive lesson plans, which is problematic because they places a higher value on the strategy rather than their own professional judgement. The new-comer accepted and adapted to the changes without her identity being affected significantly.

It could be argued that GPLMS highlighted the existing differences in identities that teachers have. The strategy was implemented without teachers being orientated in the strategy, in this research, they were not assisted in any way. This is problematic for teachers and learners because the teachers existing pedagogy may differ from that assumed in GPLMS, therefore it would be difficult to implement unfamiliar strategy. The erosion in confidence, authority and competence are due to teachers taking on new pedagogies (Jansen, 2001). I wish to caution

teachers not to be too accepting of changes in curriculum, without considering that their identity will be affected. It is important to understand how a teachers' professional identity is formed while she works with the curriculum. If her inner or core identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) is weak, the professional identity will also be weak. The quality of work that a teacher produces will be influenced by how she views herself as a professional. One can say that if teachers' professionalism is eroded, leaving them no longer proud of themselves or their work their practice is weakened.

5.2.2 Teaching practices

The participants had to adjust and change their teaching practices in order to work with the strategy. They found it challenging to adjust their teaching practices due lack of training in the strategy and lack of experience of the strategy. Some of the teachers mentioned rigid time frames, lesson plans, problems that came with a one-size-fits-all approach and a lack of teamwork as issues that affected how they implemented the strategy.

5.2.2.1 Rigid time frames

Participants reported that they did not get enough time to teach concepts due to rigid time frames. They also could not do more for their learners as they had to deal with trying to finish the work on time. This is problematic because teachers could resort to teaching knowledge superficially and skipping content they do not manage to cover. Lesson plans also arrived late exacerbating their experiences of time pressure as they are expected to complete the syllabus despite receiving lesson plans late.

5.2.2.2 Lesson plans

The participants explained that they felt restricted in their work due to the lesson plans being rigid and prescriptive. The issue that most participants had with the lessons was:

- The lesson plans did not make sense to the teachers because they arrived as a document
- The lesson plans were not explained by coaches or district officials
- There was no assistance from the district when they needed assistance or clarity to questions the teachers could not answer themselves
- The pedagogy applied in the lesson plans was rigid and did not allow any freedom *from the teachers to do more*

We can assume that the Department of Education expects teachers to implement the strategy. However, it is problematic if the DoE expects teachers to produce performing learners,

without proper training in a new, unfamiliar strategy. The use of pre-packaged materials downplays teacher authority (Au, 2011).

5.2.2.3 One-size-fits-all

GPLMS uses a one-size-fits-all strategy to teach different types of learners. This is disappointing because this strategy is corrective, and intended to be used by all teachers, to teach all learners. The strategy does not acknowledge differences in learner ability. The strategy uses a whole-class method of teaching the "traditional recitation-like patterns of teaching", where there is the question-and-answer type of teaching (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 154). Although this type of teaching works in large classrooms of over 40 learners, it ignores the growing diversity of learners learning needs. Policy-makers need to aware of the difficulties of today's age of cultural diversities and new technologies (Hargreaves, 2000). This is why teaching needs to address the differences in the classroom and support rather than restrict teachers' work.

5.2.2.4 Teacher relationships

Four out of the six participants reported that they do not consult with each on what to do or how to deal with the strategy, as grades or as a phase. Everyone tended to do what they thought was is best and correct. Most worked in their classrooms in isolation. The consequence of isolated teaching on teachers is:

- Limited feedback from colleagues on teacher performance
- Little or no improvement in teacher performance
- Little or no professional growth due to teachers not being able to reflect on their teaching

There is little evidence of any cooperative or teamwork among the teachers. What was interesting was that although the transition group was trained during the OBE era, which encouraged cooperative teaching and learning, the participants did not consult each other despite them both having issues with implementation.

It must be noted that the above findings may be influenced by the limitations of the study.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The sample I used for the study is only six Foundation Phase teachers in one school, which is a small sample. Supplementing this research with another six teachers from another school would have been ideal. Comparisons could have been made between the different groups.

Moreover, the two schools would have given me more insight into how different schools work with the GPLMS. I was alerted to this by a participant's response regarding another school around the same area, which had coaches that assisted the teachers. However, the design of the study and time constraints precluded this possibility.

Initially, this research was both a case study and an auto-ethnography. I made notes gathered from meetings and conversations among teachers. I found that because I am a teacher at the research site, some of the data that the teachers provided through the interviews contradicted what I observed in a staff meeting, phase meetings and what I heard through conversation[1]. The notes would have made the data richer.

The findings and limitations discussed give rise to the recommendations for further research for the study which are discussed in the next section,

5.4 Recommendations

It cannot be ignored that GPLMS is a new strategy intended to improve content delivery in Gauteng schools that are underperforming. As discussed in chapter 1, the results that our learners are getting in English and Mathematics are low (DBE, 2012-2014). Therefore one cannot ignore that we have a problem in knowledge gaps and content delivery. The participants in this research complained that they did not receive training in GPLMS nor did they receive coaches to assist them in implementing the strategy. Therefore, it is recommended that for improvement in learners' results and increased teacher confidence proper training for teachers should happen. Teachers are implementing a strategy that they are not familiar with and do not understand its methodology. How teachers feel about their work affects how they perform in their work (Hargreaves, 2001). The expense of this strategy may be a waste if teachers are using these lesson plans and resources incorrectly or without a fuller understanding of the process.

This research has highlighted that there are different types of professionals in a school. Each professional may belong to an age namely the pre-professional age, the age of autonomous professional and the collegial professional (Hargreaves, 2000). My recommendation is that school principals should acknowledge that we have different groups of teachers in a school each with different challenges in relation to GPLMS. Acknowledging the differences in teachers also calls for teachers to communicate their frustrations, challenges, shortcomings, successes and failures in a community of practice. Mutual support means that teachers can

[1] The auto ethnographic approach was abandoned in response to feedback in the proposal.

begin to “rework their roles and identities as professionals in a more consciously collegial workplace” (Hargreaves, 2000, p. 162).

5.5 Future research

This study on identities and understandings of teaching practices demonstrates that identity plays a great role in how teachers develop their professionalism. This allows teachers to view themselves in a positive way and acknowledge their identities and understandings when practicing in new contexts. However, it does not claim to have answers on teacher identities and their understandings of their teaching practices among underperforming Gauteng schools. Nonetheless, this research can make a valuable contribution to policy development. This study provides educators with information on how other teachers in Gauteng in a GPLMS school understand the GPLMS and how their identities and understandings of their teaching practices have changed.

In this research, I have shown that teacher identity has been neglected and it may negatively affect how teachers view themselves and how they work with the strategy. The low ANA results obtained in the school chosen for the study after being labelled underperforming may be as a result of the negative attitudes and poor support which impacts negatively on the education system as a whole.

5.6 Reflections

This study on teachers’ identities and understandings of their teaching practices demonstrate that policy and strategy changes influence how teachers create their identities and interpret their teaching practices. However, it does not claim to have solutions to all identity issues related to teachers. Nonetheless, this research can make a valuable contribution to the policy and strategy development for policy makers in South Africa. The study also an understanding of how socially constructed communities of practice affects them in their workplace as they adapt to a changing curriculum context.

In this research report I have shown that in the South African context, particularly the GPLMS context, teacher identity has been a neglected field. This, in turn, affects how they understand their teaching practices, filtering into their work as teachers. There is no quick-fix solution to this situation. Taking the recommendations made above, the success of corrective strategies such as GPLMS will eventually filter into teachers’ work where appropriate interventions will better prepare them before implementing new strategies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: ANA results in Home Language

Summary table: Home Language in 2012 and 2013 for Grades 1-6 and Grade 9

Grades	Home Language 2011	Home Language 2012	Home Language 2013	Home Language 2014
1		58	61	63
2		55	57	61
3	35	52	51	56
4		43	49	57
5		40	46	57
6	28	43	59	63
9		43	43	48

Appendix 2: ANA results in Mathematics

Summary table: Mathematics in 2012 and 2013 for Grades 1-6 and Grade 9

Grades	Mathematics 2011	Mathematics 2012	Mathematics 2013	Mathematics 2014
1		68	60	68
2		57	59	62
3	28	41	53	56
4		37	37	37
5		30	33	37
6	30	27	39	43
9		13	14	11

Appendix 3: Interview schedule

You as a teacher

1. Why did you become a teacher?
2. What is your perspective(s) of teaching as a profession?
3. Given your perspective(s), what motivates you to continue teaching?

Curriculum reforms/reviews before GPLMS

4. During your pre-service training, which curriculum reform(s)/review(s) was predominant at the time?
5. How has pre-service teacher education shape the view of yourself as a professional?
6. To what extent do you think your experience of previous curriculum reforms influenced the way you see yourself as a teacher?

GPLMS

7. What is your experience(s) of the transition to the GPLMS? OR What was your reaction when you heard about the transition to the GPLMS in your school?
8. How has the transition to the GPLMS impacted in the way you view yourself as a teacher?
9. Would you say that classroom practice (meaning the way you teach, manage content and assessment), has been affected by the introduction of the GPLMS lesson plans?
10. How are you dealing with the changes that are introduced by the strategy (GPLMS) :
    d. As a phase?
    e. As a grade?
    f. And personally?
11. Did these changes shape your identity as a teacher?
    a) If yes, please explain briefly how it shaped it.
    b) If not, also please why you think your teacher identity has not been shaped by the changes.
12. Have you attended any training for the implementation of GPLMS? What kind of training, if any?
    OR What kind of curriculum support have you undergone around the GPLMS, such as support from school coaches and facilitators?

Appendix 4: Letter to the principal, SGB Chair

DATE: 9 April 2014

Dear Principal / SGB Chair

My name is Tsholofelo Moremi. I am an M.Ed student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am doing research on teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices in GPLMS context. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because the school is newly declared a priority school. Your teachers I believe would add valuable input into exploring teachers' identities and understanding of their teaching practices, in the new curriculum reform, namely GPLMS.

My research involves interviewing six teachers in Grades one to three, using semi-structured interviews. Each interview will take an hour. The interviews will take place at the school on days that suit the teachers. I will discuss the interview questions with the teachers a day before I interview them in order to allow them to think about their answers.

If the participants give permission I will audio record the interviews in order to form an accurate understanding of what the participants are saying. The transcripts of the interviews and the interpretation will be verified with the participants in order to enhance the trustworthiness of this research.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school and district will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

You can withdraw permission without being advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. There is no payment for participating in this study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as it is convenient.

Yours sincerely

SIGNATURE: T. Moremi
NAME: Tsholofelo Moremi
ADDRESS: 557 Sakoane Street, Spruitview, Germiston
EMAIL: tsholofelomoremi@gmail.com
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 083 963 0123

Letter to the teachers

DATE: 9 April 2014

Dear TEACHER

My name is Tsholofelo Moremi. I am an M.Ed. a student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am doing research on teachers' identities and teaching practices in GPLMS context. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because I was made aware that the school is newly declared a priority school. Your input would add valuable input into exploring teachers' identities and understandings of their teaching practices, in the new curriculum reform, namely GPLMS.

My research involves interviewing six teachers in Grades one to three, using semi-structured interviews. Each interview will take an hour. The interviews will take place after school on days that suit the teachers. I will discuss the interview questions with you a day before I interview you in order to allow you to think about their answers.

If you give permission I will audio record the interview in order to capture what you are saying accurately. You will be asked to check the transcripts to ensure that I have reflected your thoughts accurately.

Your name and identity of the school and district will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

You can withdraw permission without being advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. There is no payment for participating in this study. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as it is convenient.

Yours sincerely

SIGNATURE: T. Moremi

NAME: Tsholofelo Moremi

ADDRESS: 557 Sakoane Street, Spruitview, Germiston

EMAIL: tsholofelomoremi@gmail.com

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 083 963 0123

Appendix 5: Letter to the teachers for audio-tape

Dear Teacher

Permission to audio record your interview for my research project

I request your permission to audio record the interview using a tape recorder in order to form an accurate understanding of what you are saying. I will then proceed to record my findings and select relevant transcripts from the interviews for analysis.

However, if you prefer not to grant me this permission to audio record I will conduct the interview without the tape recorder.

Please sign the consent form, indicating whether or not you grant permission to record the interview. Tape recording is necessary as it will assist the researcher to ensure that she grasps every contribution made by the participant.

Many Thanks

Ms. Tsholofelo Moremi
Contact Number: 0839630123
Email Address: tsholofelomoremi@gmail.com

Appendix 6: Wits Ethics Clearance

Appendix 7: GDE letter