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Foundation phase teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the South African foundation phase curriculum

Research Report submitted in partial fulfilment for a Masters degree in Education

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Declaration

I Kathryn Govindasami, student number 752842, declare that the study presented is my original work. Where other authors work has been used, I have properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the APA requirements.

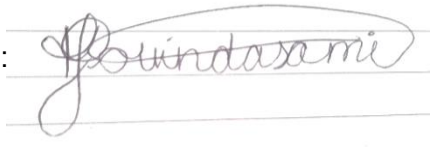
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Abbreviations

CAPS- Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

IKS- Indigenous knowledge systems

DST- Department of science and technology

Abstract

This study seeks to investigate teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the foundation phase curriculum in South Africa. The main objective of this research is to raise an understanding around decolonial thinking in teaching and learning, to contribute to the decolonial project focusing on foundation phase. Six foundation phase teachers were interviewed from one public primary school and one private school in Johannesburg. The teachers in this study taught from grades 1-3.

The literature review is made of sections which explains existing literature based on the development of decolonial literature through the years and its importance for education. The focus is on decolonial theory emerging in response to postcolonial theory. Change is inevitable in education; thus, teachers would have to adapt to changing curriculum with new teaching and learning. Teachers on the ground have a meaningful role to lay in bringing change. This was a qualitative study as I focused on teacher's beliefs and perceptions towards the concept of decolonising, especially the foundation phase curriculum. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher to ascertain their opinion without judgement.

The findings of this study were surprising and extremely hopeful for our country. The study proved that teachers have an awareness of decolonisation, and they showed much approval toward integration of decolonial teaching and learning. Community, identity, and appreciation of indigenous knowledge that can build the South African child to be a truly well-educated and empowered citizen were some of the themes that emerged in this study.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

As a teacher in foundation phase, it is often that I am faced with educational changes within curriculum. As a teacher and student, I am very privileged to have access to knowledge on decolonisation in education. Many teachers do not have this privilege or access to ever-changing debates on what should be in the curriculum. In all the years that I have been teaching, not once has the debates on decolonisation made its way to our foundation phase staff meetings or Gauteng department of education meetings. Before we start changing the tertiary institutions curricula, change must first happen at a foundational phase level. Teachers are directly impacted by curriculum change, which is why it is important to look at teachers understanding of decolonisation as well as their beliefs in order to bring direct change into the schooling system (Mahabeer, 2020).

In his discussion of decolonising university curricula, Mbembe (2016) asks of teachers to be practical as well as concrete in our understanding of decolonisation. The school domain and university domain which Mbembe (2016) expounds on shares many similarities. Both represent the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. Good architecture plays a role in the outcome of education. “Intellectual life can be dependent on the sort of buildings in which conversations take place” (Mbembe, 2016, p. 30). Apartheid architecture which is seen in most universities and schools are viewed as non-conducive to learning. The walls itself hold, a mental power over its subordinates and brings a history with it that is unspeakable. As South Africans we cannot remove history, but memories of what occur are within these walls and linger on, this cannot be removed (Mbembe, 2016).

Mbembe (2016) mentions that the university classroom should be a place where individuals experience equal distribution of emerging knowledge. However, despite universities trying to decolonise, faculties are driven by bureaucratic regime of any incentive to the safeguarding or intellectual advancement, however, at the same time keeping avid advancement of colonial threads within education (Mbembe, 2016).

Decolonisation is vital to allow for students’ and teachers’ free and fair access of knowledge. To decolonise according to Mbembe (2016) implies that breaking the cycle that turns students into customers and consumers (Mbembe, 2016).

In the Foundation Phase we teach four core subjects, Mathematics, English, Life Skills and Afrikaans. The foundation phase CAPS policy for all subjects, indicates that one of the purposes and aims of the curriculum is "valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the constitution" (CAPS Grade R-3 Life skills, 2011, p. 5). A commitment to indigenous knowledge is an important aspect of decolonisation. However, despite this commitment to the importance of indigenous knowledge in the policy document, indigenous knowledge is not part of the curriculum in most schools. Mahabeer (2020) notes that indigenous knowledge has not been included in the curriculum because it is regarded as meaningless and carries no weight both in theory and methodology (Mahabeer, 2020).

The curriculum favours Western knowledge and was developed as a separation technique between Western and non-western knowledge. Indigenous knowledge systems do not involve learning only about our history or heritage, rather a culmination of cultures which are all inclusive. "All knowledge forms must be brought into play in intercultural education that promotes a type of epistemic openness to the knowledges of all human beings" (Fataar, 2018, p. 2). Fataar (2018) states that schools and universities need to foster respect for people's cultures and knowledge systems. Therefore, research into decolonisation at the foundational level is vital if we want to value indigenous knowledge systems and bring transformation within the curriculum (Fataar, 2018).

1.2 Problem statement

There is much literature on decolonisation of curricula at higher education institutions (Mbembe, 2016), however, little research has been done with regards to the decolonisation of the curriculum in the early years of teaching and learning. Due to the inter-relatedness of schooling with the structures of higher education, it is worthless to debate decolonisation at the higher education level when it is not addressed at a school level. The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the foundation phase curriculum in South Africa.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of this research is to investigate and understand foundation phase teachers' beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the foundation phase, to contribute to the decolonial project. My purpose is to raise an understanding around decolonial thinking in teaching and learning, and to make recommendations on my findings to assist future scholars in decolonising for the early years.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Main Research Question

Foundation phase teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the South African foundation phase curriculum.

1.4.2 Sub-questions

- Why is it important to decolonise the foundation phase CAPS curriculum?
- In what ways do the current Life Skills CAPS curriculum promote or hinder the implementation of indigenous knowledge systems?
- What are teacher's feelings on the importance or relevance of decolonising the curriculum.

1.5 Rationale for the study

The purpose of this research is to identify teacher's perceptions and beliefs on decolonising the foundation phase curriculum. The CAPS curriculum is the policy that guides learning in all government schools. The general aim of the curriculum is to "ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives" (CAPS Grade 1-3 Life skills, 2011, p. 4)). The curriculum changes made since the dawn of democracy has not been very successful. The new changes to the curriculum are mainly focused on being leaner-centred, however, teachers are not fully trained to carry out these demands. The implementation of CAPS according to Maharajh, Nkosi and Mkhize (2016) has seen a shortage of subject specialists to come alongside teachers. According to the author there are very few studies on teachers experiences of implementing CAPS in schools (Maharajh, Nkosi & Mkhize, 2016).

Research overtime has changed globally and the strategic move to decolonisation is becoming the practical language of education at tertiary institutions. Here we find the gap in decolonising school curriculum. The #Feesmustfall protests led to dialogue on decolonising curriculum and content at higher institutions. The protest highlighted issues of coloniality and the need to decolonise our way of thinking and being. However, during this movement schoolteachers, and school learners were not included in this debate. My research addresses this gap, through focussing on foundation phase teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding the importance of decolonising the curriculum. A key point of decolonisation should first take place within the classroom, according to Mahabeer (2020) this is the best place to start social changes which will impact the greater community. Schools require knowledgeable teachers who can adapt to varying situations and connect with their learners' experiences and realities. The more colonised approach to education removes the idea of voices being heard, alternative indigenous voices which can shape our education and inform teaching practices. Cutrara (2018) indicates to us the relationship between indigenous knowledge and historical thinking are rather important. She raises an important issue, Western and indigenous knowledge cannot interconnect without taking notice of language used and how the syntax of Western epistemology degrades the other, when these two connect in the minds of young indigenous learners, a "collision" takes place which fosters open communication and debate (Cutrara, 2018).

Lebeloane (2017) argues that the starting point of decolonising the curriculum is in the schools and the classrooms. In many schools in South Africa, this change has not happened from the

perspective of decolonial critique. Mahabeer (2020) states that the curriculum continuously changes and shapes learners to follow a Westernised lifestyle (Mahabeer, 2020).

In my study, I am foregrounding the principle of, "valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the constitution" as found in the CAPS document (CAPS, 2011, p. 5).

According to Taolo (2013) teachers play an important part in curriculum change, which is why the study I am conducting on teacher's perceptions and beliefs on decolonising the foundation phase curriculum is vital to the expansion of decolonisation in education studies. Decolonising the foundation phase curriculum can either be accepted or rejected by teachers. It is valuable that teacher's viewpoints are incorporated in curriculum change or implemented especially with decolonisation (Maharajh, Nkosi & Mkhize, 2016).

Decolonising the curriculum welcomes values of diversity and the incorporation of multiple experiences. In a study conducted by Mahabeer (2020) she explored those perspectives of 5 black female teachers in Kwa-Zulu Natal on what decolonisation means to them. She was able to capture the reactions to decolonising curriculum based on the teacher's opinions. What was established in the study was that teachers in this study understood that they would have to acquaint themselves with an ever-changing curriculum. Teachers in the study were open to indigenous knowledge being part of teaching and learning. Teachers agreed that decolonising the curriculum is about critical engagements and not about disregarding Eurocentric views (Mahabeer, 2020).

My hope as researcher is that this study could add to existing literature on decolonising education, whilst taking into consideration teacher's perceptions and beliefs should our curriculum change. Teachers are often ignored in such changes, which they must implement in the classroom.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is highly significant in that it contributes to understanding teacher's beliefs around decolonisation in foundation phase which must be taken seriously if we want to transform education. Discussion occurs at a tertiary level, and these discussions have not led to changes within the South African schooling system.

1.7 Outline of Chapters

In chapter one I have outlined the importance and significance of my study. Stating the importance of teachers in the process of decolonisation at a foundational level. I have clearly stated my research question and sub-questions that will be answered through my report which aims to show that decolonisation should be aimed at the classroom first. Then in chapter two, I break down my literature review into sections. The first section introduces decolonial literature and explains decolonial literatures emergence through postcolonial studies internationally and lastly a look at decolonial education at a South African level. This is followed by chapter three which focuses on the methodology used to gather data, by undertaking one-on-one interviews with teachers, which allowed them to give their opinion freely on decolonisation.

Chapter 4 explores the themes that have emerged from the data collected. There are seven themes that have emerged from the data, *1. Relevance of the curriculum, 2. Decolonisation in practice, 3. Identity, 4. Voices, 5. Critical thinking, 6 community, 7. Reading.* Chapter 5 focuses on the conclusion drawn from the research gathered and providing answers to the three sub-questions and providing recommendations for the use of decolonisation at a foundation phase level taken from the perspective of the teacher.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores existing literature based on the development of decolonial theory and its importance for education. I begin with a brief discussion of the theoretical framework and then I explore decolonial theory and its emergence in response to critiques of postcolonial theory followed by a discussion on South African education and decolonisation.

2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used for the study is based on decolonial theories. Postcolonial and decolonial debates have been effective in challenging the narratives and traditions directed by Europe. This context created by Europe, puts their modernity in favour as colonialism and enslavement become the foregrounded truth in many countries, denying other narratives truth and modernity. According to Bhambra (2014) postcolonial and decolonial theory are two ways in which radical unsettling can occur and challenge what has been considered the norm (Bhambra, 2014).

Postcolonialism and decolonialism emerge within the broader politics of knowledge production and these come out as contestation of the colonial empire. The key issue that decolonial scholars work with is going back in time to account for what occurred in countries like Spain and Portugal, by finding the true concept of coloniality providing greater discussion (Bhambra, 2014).

Postcolonialism advocates for a few issues that are of relevance within education. Firstly, postcolonial theory is interested in the decolonization of knowledge allowing it to become transformative knowledge, knowledge for change. Secondly postcolonial theory challenge how a person's national identity is perceived, by focusing on a person's race, religion and ethnicity are all what make up a person's identity. Colonialism has put demands on a person's race, ethnicity, and gender. Lugones (2010) shows a hierarchical distinction between human and non-human, an identity imposed on slaves by the coloniser. Civilised people were considered men and women however indigenous and African people were considered uncivilised sexual and wild beings. Religion was also dictated as Christianity became a civilising cause of the coloniser and formed the basis of their ideology in determining who is civilised and uncivilised (Lugones, 2010). Odora-Hoppers and Richards (2011) remind us of two generation

colonialism. The first involved the colonising of people's land and bodies, the second was the colonisation of the mind through science, law, and learning. Neo-colonialism sought to bring a technical freedom to previously colonised nations, however, in todays society many countries are still influenced by former colonial superpowers. These superpowers control monetary lending and spending, corporations, and education. Many educationalists today were trained by colonialists and sent into different facets of education. The face of educational institutions may have changed but, the ideology of colonialism still underpins education in a subtle manner, making it an accepted 'norm'. The aim here was not upliftment but to bring the uncivilised to the level of the so called 'civilised' in education, science, religion, and laws (Le Grange, 2016).

Subedi & Daza (2008) state that the global affects the local more than we know, as the global trends change so do the local people follow through. Despite colonialism being abolished we still find the remnants within our modern society. Thirdly postcolonial theory is concerned with the resistance shown by those considered to be the minorities. Those who have been marginalized carry power within that causes a great disruption within dominant discourses. As we note with the fees must fall protests (Fataar, 2018) how marginalized students stood together causing a radicle shift within higher education institutions. Students in Oxford University stood in solidarity with students campaigning for the introduction of indigenous knowledge systems, saw the removal of a prominent statue in the university (Adebisi, 2016).

Postcolonial theory has invested a lot into the movement for change in shaping global discourse, however postcolonial theory has been critiqued for using language unnecessarily and it has become interdisciplinary in working with multiple contexts. Postcolonial theory is also critiqued as being shaped by too many conceptual and theoretical framework, bringing in a wide range of data, theory, and histories. Also, the use of Marxism and poststructuralism shows that postcolonialism still privileges western knowledge. "Postcolonial theories may not be viewed as a legitimate mode of inquiry by people in the Third World because of its perceived distance from situations in their parts of the world" (Subedi & Daza, 2008, p. 5).

The need for decolonial theory developed as a response to the critiques of postcolonial theory. Decolonisation emerged in Africa during the 1950s and 1960s as a response to colonial rule. The knowledge of the colonised has been suppressed for a long time. Indigenous knowledge has been regarded as folk tales and stories, however decolonial theory contests the dominance of Western knowledge and its power over many countries. The knowledge to decolonise education and making it Africa-centric will impact on reframing education. The broad ideas of

decoloniality must be brought into the school domain. The debate surrounding decolonisation has been at a university level, now the debate must be brought to the school domain contesting the existing curriculum knowledge. Colonial universities and schools paid no attention to indigenous knowledges. The colonial education put forward by universities has caused radical controversy which saw the decolonisation movement awaken. Decolonisation with educational institutions need to adapt to an all-inclusive approach (Fataar, 2018).

At a school level, our postcolonial curriculum has been through many changes. The discussion around curriculum policy change has brought out discussions around teachers' education at a university level. The South African school curriculum still perpetuates Western ideology and knowledge. Decolonisation calls for a delinking from Western traditions when thinking about knowledge. Decoloniality "emphasizes the decolonisation of knowledge and of being and assumes that the way out is to unlink from the colonial matrix of power…. [and] the liberation of spirituality". (Mignolo, 2011, p. 183).

Shizha (2013) advocates for indigenizing the school curriculum so that meaningful learning can take place. Indigenizing the curriculum means that it takes on a practical, sensible approach, curriculum should embrace inclusive knowledge that allows for learners to build on one another's knowledge, cultural diversity and acceptance should be maintained in the classroom and classroom experiences should meet the learners' societal needs and context which means that Western knowledge should not be disregarded as it forms part of the learner's lives (Shizha, 2013).

2.3 The emergence of decolonial theory

Decolonial theory seeks to understand the enduring psycho-social and economic conditions that endure since colonialisation. Although it is often confused with post-colonial theory, decolonial theory critiques many aspects of post-colonial theory.

Postcolonial theory according to Bhabha, is not simply about the establishment of separatist trajectories, instead it is seen as an interruption of Western discourses of modernity through displacing or post slavery narratives (Bhambra, 2014). Edward Said suggests that the move to decolonisation brought on a crisis for Orientalist thought and this has challenged postcolonial theory to focus on the 'other' as not just docile but to see them as powerful (Bhambra, 2014).

In postcolonial Africa, colonial education is still in existence despite political decolonisation. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa. English remains the language of teaching and learning,

which represents a contradiction for many postcolonial indigenous people. The power of coloniality has swept through South African schools and universities. It has brought its own knowledge and pedagogy used to teach learners foreign content in a foreign language, which impacts on the quality of education and learning (Mahabeer, 2020).

Decolonisation has been attained politically, countries have taken on their freedom and remained independent rulers of their own nations. Decolonisation may have occurred outwardly, however the inward changes have not taken place yet as coloniality is still intertwined into our everyday lives (Morriera, 2019). This means that colonialism is still highly predominant within our school system. Colonial educational systems globally, have designed indigenous schooling, however it became suppressive and abusive. Indigenous schooling created by the coloniser was never successful as the narrative was still being controlled. With indigenous knowledge systems failing to work, it was now easier for Western epistemology to embed itself within indigenous schooling and therefore the Western way of life, teaching and learning became a normalised and accepted way for all people (Mudaly, 2018).

Decolonisation of the curriculum is a move to liberation for all through education. A process whereby individuals become aware of the social forces at work. An education that insists on developing individuals with a consciousness that people must be master of their natural nature and social nature. Education and culture should be used not to explain how things work in the world but should be used as means to bring about change in the world. “Man is the creator of his destiny and we, as an African people, can only get the destiny we create for ourselves” (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986, p. 15). It is through decolonisation that we can create a space for all people to create and change their world (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986).

The ‘global south’ has become a fashionable metaphor used to describe the underdeveloped and emerging nations. The global south are providers of natural resources and great wealth and recognition for the global north, which are the well-developed, first world nations. Mignolo (2011) states that the “global south is a place where another way of life is burgeoning” (Mignolo, 2011, p. 4)

We see the global south countries are reclaiming their identity and place within society (Mignolo, 2011). We see this reclamation in Mbembe’s (2016) article where he comments on the Rhodes statue. The statue was in a public university, however it had nothing to do with the university at all. It is said that Rhodes donated the land and money for the university to be built. We must ask then, how did he get the land? Students are expected to walk the corridors and

lush green fields when images and symbols create a state of ongoing humiliation. These are figures of people who have violated and shown disregard for black men and women who built the wealth of rich white men on their backs. Today the men and women of these children who have built these universities are reminded each day to be grateful for their education, until 2016 when the statue was taken down by students. Whilst this happened in South Africa, similar actions were taking place in the United Kingdom at Oxford University (Adebisi, 2016). Changing a few names or by taking down a statue, may not bring fundamental change, however it is the beginning of another way of life, which is emerging through decolonisation and the call for Africanisation through education (Mbembe, 2016).

The knowledge of colonised people was supressed, their knowledge suffered 'epistemicide' according to Santos (2014), which means "the murder of knowledge" (Le Grange, 2016, p. 4). "Unequal exchanges among cultures have always implied the death of the knowledge of the subordinate culture…In most extreme cases, such as that of European expansion, epistemicide was one of the conditions of genocide" (Santos 2014 in Le Grange, 2016, p. 4). This epistemicide that came with colonisation has brought on the move for cognitive justice amongst decolonial thinkers (Le Grange, 2016).

All South African universities have adopted the western model of education which meant that indigenous knowledge was completely excluded. The organisation of the Western knowledge was embedded during apartheid, and this has yet to be addressed in a serious manner. The adoption of western knowledge comes as a negotiated settlement of our newfound freedom, adopting neoliberal policies to gain access to the globalising world (Le Grange, 2016). In South Africa and many developing nations, the early 2000s saw the move to a progressivist education, which was popular indeed with politics playing a central feature to curriculum change. Political progressivism and educational progressivism worked in tandem, to be politically progressive meant that South Africa was educationally progressive according to the West. Although this was enthusiastically taken up by developing nations, it was short lived. According to Hoadley (2018) Africa and India could perform the progressive curriculum outwardly but there was no substantive uptake of the deeper social logic of the model (Muller & Hoadley, 2019).

The preservation of colonial thinking has continued through the economy, politics, and universities. Le Grange (2016) states that it is vital that South African universities decolonise and so does the curriculum. We must understand that decolonisation is not a once off event but a long-term process. Guttari (2001) argues that we cannot create new ways of living by

reversing the clock or going back to old practices which were important at one point. New ways of living must be found in order to respond to new world events (Le Grange,2016).

Indigenous knowledge does not exist separately from other forms of knowledge rather bodies of knowledge influence each other showing dynamism of knowledge systems. If indigenous knowledge is excluded from university curricula, this leaves a space for recolonization of knowledges and cultures (Le Grange, 2016). The implications here, for the school then involve the suppression of other cultures, identity, language, and voice not only of the learners but that of the non-white teachers. Teachers will then teach what is prescribed and in the process recolonization of knowledge and culture (Le Grange, 2016). According to Mahabeer (2020) one language, culture and identity are given more power, while other languages, culture and identity take a passive conformity to the norm as they fade into the background (Mahabeer, 2020).

2.4 South African basic education and decolonisation

In South Africa little has been done to define 'decolonization of education' in the basic education context. There is little information on decoloniality at the foundational level of schooling. Discussions focused on curriculum change for higher education institutions, however according to Mahabeer (2020) decolonising the curriculum must take place at all levels, not just at higher institutions but should start at a school level first. Our South African curriculum has seen many changes over the years however the legacy of coloniality is still prevalent within the curriculum. The curriculum within South African schools have not yet undertaken the idea of decolonisation and embraced it within the curriculum. Universal knowledge is lacking in school curriculum, and decolonising practices acknowledge that there are difficulties in developing a worthwhile curriculum, as schools resist indigenised epistemologies (Subedi, 2013). Subedi (2013) mentions that in the US teachers often evade integrating local and global issues, teachers refuse to discuss economic and political practices of the dominant power structure. Teachers choose the 'safe' option in order to avoid debate and contestation (Mahabeer, 2020).

There is a strong link between teacher education curriculum and school curriculum. Despite teacher education changing globally, at the foundation important philosophies remain unchanged. Schools need knowledgeable teachers who can adapt to change and connect with learners' realities. With this study conducted by Mahabeer (2020) teachers agreed that the curriculum is highly influenced by colonisation and that in some instances lacks relevance.

Teachers understood that they would have to adapt with a changing curriculum with new methods of teaching and learning. Teachers on the ground have a meaningful role to play in bringing about change. This is the reason why decolonising at grassroots level is important according to Mahabeer (2020).

Mudaly (2018) suggests that a way of bringing indigenous knowledge to the fore is by introducing indigenous voices and practices of those who have been marginalised. Mudaly (2018) in his research looks to bring indigenised knowledge into mathematics lessons as a way of teaching relevant ideas. The creation of a totally new curriculum is not the response required, however a curriculum that is based on inclusion of certain cultural practices, materials and knowledge that could enhance understanding within the classroom (Mudaly, 2018).

Mathematics is a factual subject based on systematic and structured knowledge that is necessary for the world we live in today, the problem arises when the context between what the learner relates to, and the school knowledge creates a misalignment in cultural capital indicating to us a subtle way of exclusion (Fataar, 2012). Which is why the need for engagement with indigenous knowledge is so vital as exclusion is something existent within our schools, children fall into the category of "silent exclusion" which Spaull and Kotze (2015) address in their article. The department of science and technology (DTS) 2004 have stated that "the affirmation of African cultural values in the face of globalisation [is] a clear imperative given the need to promote a positive African identity" (DTS, 2004). The CAPS policy also shares similar ideas on indigenous knowledge, the document states that "valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the constitution" (Department of basic Education, 2011). All these principles are valid and important, however there is a lack of clarity as to what teachers are expected to do (Mudaly, 2018).

Mudaly (2018) conducted research with teachers who were studying towards their honour's degree. These teachers were asked to select topics within mathematics where decolonisation could be used. A teacher named Shivanie in the study, decided to use a potjiekos pot to explain linear and quadratic functions. One teacher claimed that mathematical knowledge is fixed, whilst others called for recontextualising, which Fataar (2012) mentions is a long-term process. The teachers found it difficult to develop lessons based around mathematics, as many of them have never seen a 'kraal' for example and found it difficult to work with. The participants in the study felt that decolonisation was necessary and needed within the curriculum. According

to the author, the teachers did not find "sufficient strategies" (Mudaly, 2018, p. 80) for mathematics, however we must consider that fact that most teachers have not been taught using decolonial strategies or practices which is why more time needs to be given to this and the most important people in this process are the teachers. The teachers are bearers of the curriculum and thus need to be considered in the process (Mudaly, 2018).

In the article, why decolonising the South African university curriculum will fail (Vandeyar, 2020) shows that decolonisation cannot work if the academic is removed from the equation. It follows that if the decolonisation of schooling is to be successful, then teacher' beliefs and perceptions have to be taken into consideration. Lecturers within the university space, had to re-look, re-visit and re-think the university curriculum and study guides. There was some attempt to decolonise the university curriculum however, whilst all this was happening at a reactive pace the most important people in this process, the lecturers who deliver key elements of the curriculum were forgotten. The education triad is very important in understanding curriculum change. The triad is made up of the learner, the teacher, and the curriculum, all three important within education. The triad reveals specific historical, cultural, and social contexts which come through in education. Change within the triad can cause issues if one part of the triad is not considered, if not considered then we may not see full change (Vandeyar, 2020).

By only changing the curriculum this may not work. The drive to decolonise the curriculum has started. According to Vandeyar (2020) little attention is given to the academics who bring forth the curriculum. Just like students, academics are complex individuals made up of varied identities, values, beliefs, and experiences which all form part of their practice as academics. Just like academics, teachers fall into the same category where they have their own beliefs or perceptions and these tie into their daily work. Teachers can be become "agents of meaningful educational change and social cohesion". What we cannot forget is that teachers or academics form an important part within the triad of education (Vandeyar, 2020, p. 2).

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have established that key elements of the decolonisation of the school curricula must include a re-centering of African indigenous knowledge in the curriculum, and a challenging of colonial ideology, and colonial hierarchies of knowledge. I have also argued that the need for the decolonial debate to happen at the school level is of most importance if change is to occur within schools. Teachers need to be the central focus of such change, which

is why research into teachers' beliefs and perceptions will be valuable to decolonial literature and further improvements to the curriculum.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this section I describe my research design, research sites and the participants in the study. I will discuss the research instruments developed for the study, as well as the ethical considerations of my research.

3.2 Research design

This study employs a qualitative research design. In order to provide insight into how participants may think or feel about a specific issue. Qualitative research design brings forth the in-depth beliefs of individuals as shaped by varied experiences, behaviours, and relationships. This method allows for the researcher to obtain systematic information about the world. In this study I have closely interrogated teacher's beliefs and perceptions of decolonising the curriculum by analysing participating teachers' answers to a set of questions which has revealed their attitude on this topic (Haradhan, 2018).

3.3 Data gathering methods

In my research I have conducted one-on-one interviews with foundation phase teachers. I have decided to conduct individual interviews as the participant will be free to give their opinion and feelings toward the questions without fear of discrimination or isolation from other participants if I were doing group interviews or sessions. Conducting a survey or group interview may not prove to be effective for this study as I have considered teachers feelings and thoughts (Cook, 2016). A survey will be too short and provide insufficient information for the study. Due to the Covid19 pandemic, conducting group interviews or sessions was of concern should anyone be asymptomatic and spread the virus unknowingly. Individual interviews have allowed the researcher to probe further based on the answers given by the participants. Also, there was an increased opportunity for respondents to share their viewpoint (Cook, 2016).

For the individual interviews, each participant was seated in a well-ventilated room, hands sanitised on entrance, masks were worn always and a 1.5m distance between the researcher and the participant was maintained.

I asked each interviewee a set of 10 questions which were both closed and open ended. The interviews lasted between 25-30 minutes, and the interviews took place after school hours to accommodate the participant.

The participants in the study have been audiotaped and not videotaped. Audiotaping allowed for the participant to remain anonymous and for their identity to be protected. This helped the participants to feel comfortable and freely give their opinions. Audiotaping has allowed me to focus on the interview at hand rather than writing out notes, which is distracting to the participant. Audiotaping allowed for what the participant said to be authentic and undiluted. Writing notes can be a hinderance as I may overlook or miss important information (Cook, 2016).

I had carefully developed and selected eleven questions based on what teachers currently think of the curriculum and moved to what their opinion is on introducing decolonisation within the foundation phase curriculum. I asked teachers questions around relevance of the current curriculum and what sort of impact will decolonising the curriculum have on the learners. Change can be difficult for teachers which is why I hoped to find out what they thought of decolonisation, what are their thoughts on integration and if they find decolonial teaching and learning necessary and relevant for the learners. Throughout the interview process teachers will kept an open mind and I was able to ignite a new passion for decolonisation through the interview process.

The audiotaped interviews have been transcribed by me. The raw data collected will be stored and destroyed in the next 3 years.

3.4 Research Paradigm

I have used a qualitative method in the interpretivist paradigm. I have interrogated participants statements to uncover what they believe concerning decolonisation. The interpretivist paradigm acknowledges the multi-layered and complex reality of individuals or a single phenomenon which can have varied interpretations.

3.5 Research site and participants

The research sites consist of two primary schools, in the Johannesburg North area. One school was a public primary school and the other a private primary school. Both schools are diverse in their representation of the teaching staff.

The research participants were foundation phase schoolteachers, who taught in Grades 1-3. The participants of the study were between the ages of 24-50 years of age. Having a wide age range allowed me to gain greater insight and data into teacher's beliefs and thoughts on decolonial education and the younger teachers had a good foundational understanding of decolonisation. I interviewed 6 participants for the study.

Teachers	School	Type
Maleeha	School A	Private
Cassidy	School A	Private
Sithako	School A	Private
Nolwazi	School B	Public
Chelsea	School B	Public
Aniesa	School B	Public

3.6 Ethical considerations

The consideration of ethics in research is critical when conducting any type of research. I have applied for ethics clearance and received a clearance number which allowed me to conduct research. It is of the utmost importance that the participant is respected throughout the research process and that honesty is maintained (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

As the researcher it was my responsibility to ensure confidentiality throughout this process. This ensures that the participant and the researcher are protected. There are certain ethical elements which were considered when conducting research.

Participation in the research was voluntary, the participant was not forced or coerced to participate. The participants were assisting me and therefore were invited to participate in the research. Each participant was given a consent form and participant information sheet which explained what was researched. What was made clear to the participant is that they understand that they are under no obligation to participate and can withdraw at any time, there was no negative consequences for them should they wish not to participate.

The most effective way to address the informed consent issue is with the use of the participant information sheet. This was provided to all those who were willing to take part in the study. The participant information sheet has the university logo, this was used to show the participant that is important, and it is a university activity. The letter explained what was to be researched, who will participate in the research as well as the researcher's details should the participant have any questions (Polonsky & Miller, 2010).

Prior to the research the participants were informed that their identity will be kept confidential. As I have interviewed teachers, the data collected was processed anonymously and that the researcher used the participants first name in collecting raw data. For transcription, the participants name was changed to ensure confidentiality in the study and to protect the school where they are employed. The questions that were asked to participants brought out differing opinions and feelings based on experiences or knowledge gained through media or social media interaction, which is why confidentiality of the participant was ensured throughout the process (Polonsky & Miller, 2010).

There are numbers of ways in which the participant can be harmed. Physical harm, psychological harm, emotional harm, and embarrassment. In this study that I conducted, there was no harm that the participant felt (Polonsky & Miller, 2010).

Audiotaping was used to gather data from the participant. There was an audiotaping consent form which was given to each participant. The letter detailed the process of audiotaping to the participant and ensured that the researcher was the only one listening to the recordings. After the data had been collected, I transcribed the recordings, and coded the data and analysed the emerging themes. The data was safely stored in a password protected laptop and locked in my home office until the final report was completed.

3.7 Data analysing methods

I made use of coding to establish common themes that emerged and then I conducted a thematic content analysis. Once the data was collected, I took the raw information and followed the two stages of data analysis, "the sifting and selecting process" (Scott & Morrison, 2005, p. 31). The data collected was given a category which is called a 'code'. Open-ended questions helped in gaining sufficient answers which was coded. Coding was used to breakdown the large amounts of data by focusing carefully on the characteristics of the data into data bits. "This allows researchers to obtain larger 'pictures' of research evidence" (Scott & Morrison, 2005, p. 33). Thematic content analysis of the interview transcripts by locating common themes provided by

the text. I presented a descriptive presentation of the qualitative data. In order to conduct a thematic content analysis, I maintained an objective stance. I grouped similar themes that emerged were marked and set aside as a distinct unit of meaning as this was relevant information which led to a further understanding of the study (Anderson, 2007).

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained how the research was conducted and the participants selected for the study. Importantly I explained the data analysis methods used to approach the study, coding, and thematic content analysis to derive the most important meanings in the data was used to best explain and describe the themes that were identified.

Chapter 4

Data presentation and analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents seven themes which emerged from the interviews conducted with six teachers, namely *1. Relevance of the curriculum, 2. Decolonisation in practice, 3. Identity, 4. Voices, 5. Critical thinking, 6 community, 7. Reading.* It is important to note that the themes emerged through analyses of the language and points made by the participants. the themes capture the participants' primary concerns regarding the decolonisation of the foundation phase curriculum. I will compare and contrast the main points that have been made in relation to each theme to arrive at a deeper understanding of the participants beliefs and perceptions of the decolonisation of the foundation phase curriculum.

4.2 Relevance of the curriculum

This theme is about how teachers feel about the current curriculum and its relevance to learners. Three teachers in the study found the current curriculum mostly relevant.

Aniesa: (School B): "*To a large extent I think it is challenging for them. It also depends on where you are teaching. I have taught at multiple schools it can be demanding. It does teach a lot of concepts and skills which the children do need. There are areas or topics that are boring and there is interesting it does have a lot of pluses to it and then things that can be changed"*

Cassidy (School A): "To a certain degree it is relevant, it equips them to get into university"

Nolwazi (School B): "It is relevant, our themes from grade 1-3 are relevant"

During the interviews when asked about relevance, two teachers displayed a negative tone within their answers. One teacher was from a private school and the other was from a public school. When asked about relevance, these two teachers played the blame game. They demonstrated a negative attitude towards teachers as if it is the teacher's fault and the other who taught in the private school displayed negative tones towards public education and learners who attend these schools. This was interesting as you would think a public-school teacher would be relatively supportive of the challenges of teaching and working with CAPS.

Sithako (Teacher A): "*I would say it's probably about 60% relevant and 40% not Sorry to say especially with public education, for instance, students graduating with an average of 40% some less. The idea is to get them out of the system, that's how I see it. The standard is reduced, and its aim is to just get them through the system. Education is about mastery and understanding of what is learnt. Education is politicised – government want to show something, or they just want to push people through the system. Partly relevant to the learners"*

Chelsea (Teacher B): "It can be relevant; I think it depends on the teacher. The curriculum is very open to interpretation which depends specifically on each teacher. How they interpret and teach it"

As much as teachers found the curriculum relevant, they provided some reasons on what does not work and gave some positive comments which showed a level of hope with our current curriculum.

Maleeha (Teacher A): "Aspects that are relevant and some not relevant. In life skills not everything taught is relevant to the learners. There is much not included in the curriculum. There is a lack of flow in the content"

Cassidy (Teacher A): "To a certain degree it is relevant, it equips them to get into university. I don't know how relevant it is for teaching critical thinking"

Nolwazi (Teacher B): "It is relevant, our themes from grade 1-3 are relevant however, more can be done to meet the needs of the learners"

One teacher mentioned relevance in terms of content, concepts, and skills:

Aniesa (Teacher B): It does teach a lot of concepts and skills which the children do need.

While another thought that there is not much that is relevant:

Maleeha (Teacher A): There is much not included in the curriculum. There is a lack of flow in the content.

The teachers' here have differing opinions on relevance of the curriculum, they are not all equally critical, they do not all see the curriculum as one thing. Teacher B sees possibility and the skills offered with CAPS, whilst teacher A feels there is not much relevance to the curriculum as not many topics are included, and that content does not flow. Teacher A is from a private school and Teacher B is from a public school. The point here is perception, each teacher sees something different within CAPS, it was expected that a teacher from a private school would give a negative opinion and the teacher from a public school might see the value offered and the curriculum meeting the learners needs currently.

Despite differing opinions, it was interesting to note that curriculum was seen as one thing and content, or concepts seen as another. Coming out of **relevance** is two distinct factors, relevance in terms of content and relevance in terms of curriculum. It was interesting to see that teachers separated content and curriculum. Curriculum is the subjects that are studied or prescribed for study at a school, it involves a learning program designed to meet the needs to a specific school or government (Maharajh, Nkosi & Mkhize, 2016).

Content on the other hand refers to the knowledge contained within the curriculum. Depending on how broadly educators define or employ the term, curriculum typically refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn. Most teachers spend time thinking about, studying, discussing, and curriculum. Over time teachers develop the ability to structure and deliver lessons in ways that accelerate student learning (Maharajh, Nkosi & Mkhize, 2016).

Curriculum content simply means "**the totality of what is to be taught in a school system"**. "The content component of the teaching learning situation refers to the important facts, principles, and concepts to be taught" (Maharajh, Nkosi & Mkhize, 2016, p. 374). During my conversations with teachers, I found that teachers were more concerned about the content, such as facts, principles and concepts taught. They view the relevance of the curriculum in a practical manner.

Cassidy (Teacher A): "To a certain degree it is relevant, it equips them to get into university"

Nolwazi (Teacher B): "More can be done to meet the needs of the learners"

Maleeha (Teacher A): "In life skills not everything taught is relevant to the learners"

Teachers here found relevance practically, it equips the learners or a focus on life skills specifically which tends to be practical in its approach and importantly more can be done for the learners. Through the interview process, teachers were more practical than theoretical in their answers.

Relevance is also based on interpretation on the teachers' part, according to Maharaj, Nkosi and Mkhize (2016) teachers' thoughts an opinion on the curriculum is vital to implementation. Should this not be included there tends to be a difference in what is prescribed by curriculum developers and what is taught in the classroom (Cuban, 1993). The issue with curriculum implementation is multiple interpretations of the curriculum. Interpretations made is a problem faced by teachers when putting the CAPS curriculum into practice (Maharajh, Nkosi & Mkhize, 2016).

Chelsea (Teacher B): "The curriculum is very open to interpretation which depends specifically on each teacher. How they interpret and teach it"

4.3 Decolonisation in practice

The theme focused on teachers understanding of decolonisation. Through the interviews, what emerged was that teachers could not give a definition or provide an understanding based on theory. Teachers focused on more practical explanations of their understanding.

Sithako (Teacher A): "My understanding is that it involves a balance in keeping what is good. Education then in decolonisation is a focus on community- what the communities needed is something they train their children in. What I mean by this is I am from a different country, now back in the day in the UK immigrants were trained to be labourers there was no equal access or inclusion into formal learning. Within my own country, the people studied according to what the community needed, our learning was very much community based and so we had a solidified identity as our community taught us. We then grew up and studied and went back into our communities to work again and carry on, in order to build each other up"

Howard and Kern (2019) in their article on decolonising science education in pursuit of Native American success, indicate an important scope in decolonisation and that is community. Education is very much informed by culture which puts the dominant culture at odds with culturally diverse views on success. For Native Americans success goes beyond the individual and transcends into tools used for building the community, self-determination, and decolonisation. Success in education goes beyond self, community is at the core by taking academics and the indigenous way of knowing which becomes the key for survival (Howard & Kern, 2019).

Nolwazi (Teacher B): "Making topics and content relevant to the learner especially with resources… these should be indigenous and relevant to children in South Africa"

Cassidy (Teacher A): "Education should focus on the South African childrens background… If we introduce decolonisation to all children, they will identify with where they come from. So, when we talk about shapes, we don't have to use shapes from suburban life but rather Ndebele houses which have a range of shapes. Children know their language but not their background or history, knowledge, and cultural identity. By introducing decolonisation, we give learners a balance between what they know"

Maleeha (Teacher A): "Relating to the children's context African/South African relevant to the children, we are a 3rd world country. The curriculum lacks content on decolonial learning and teaching. Resources within schools, pose a problem. Many township schools do not have sufficient resources, in terms of technology. When the curriculum and resources work together in our country then maybe we can introduce such curriculum. For example, African stories (readers) should be introduced, the names in the books changed to ones familiar to children, instead of Jill and Ben. By children not seeing representation within their learning material which can be used to build their identity"

Chelsea (Teacher B): "Making content more relevant to the kids, if we teach a comprehension for example it's based on Jack and Jill from England who build a snowman, the kids in our environment would not understand. Teachers can create content that is better understandable and is better inferred so learners can relate"

A very important word used by the teachers during the interview, which related well to their understanding of decolonisation, is the word Westernised, Eurocentric or colonial. Teachers acknowledged that the way they teach and what they teach tends to be highly Westernised in content and practice.

Howard and Kern (2019) make teachers aware of the fact that they should not think of Eurocentrism as something that will necessarily change but to acknowledge that Eurocentric thought has a set of beliefs that are statements of empirical reality, something that Europeans accept as the ultimate truth which are supported by fact (Blaut, 1993). The disappointment lies in not providing space for Indigenous Knowledge to express itself, Marie Battiste (2011) calls this "cognitive imperialism". With this, Indigenous people have no place and are denied their language, culture, and context by "maintaining the legitimacy of only one language, one culture and one frame of reference" (Battiste, 2011, p. 197). In fact, cultural minorities are made to think that their hardships faced, and lack of power is due to their own heritage and race (Howard and Kern, 2019).

Aniesa (Teacher B): "Take away the things that are too Eurocentric and inculcate things relevant to our children, South African children. Yes, there has been minor adjustments, we are into democracy and all we have done is taken the colonial/Eurocentric content and changed a few things"

Nolwazi (Teacher B) … "Less Westernised means of teaching strategies and resources"

Cassidy (Teacher A): "Education should focus on the South African childrens background. Today, children have become very Westernised. I will give you an example. Some Black children cannot relate to rural environment. If we introduce decolonisation to all children, they will identify with where they come from"

Within the knowledge economy of the world, the dominant forms of knowledge are ascribed to Western sources (Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Mbembe, 2015 and Studley, 1998). According to Connell (2016) she refers to the US and European nations as the 'metropole of knowledge' positioned epistemologically superior to other knowledge producers. In South Africa, our higher education institutions are culturally and structurally set up as Eurocentric, these institutions train teachers who are then employed to teach at schools. Despite our move to just and equal education, our institutions still perpetuate a level of inequality which makes colonial education highly valued for further success (Mudaly, 2018).

Western sources or powers have controlled what is taught and learnt in schools. As a 'metropole of knowledge' they have steered and controlled the amount of knowledge that is important for success. Power in the words of Foucault (1976) must be assessed extensively and we must reach a realization that power is used through a net-like organisation. People are the vehicles of power. Colonial power has been invisible for a long time, it has intertwined itself as an established point of power which circulates freely and has done so into the bases of our society (Foucault, 1976).

Michel Foucault's (1976) interviews on Power/Knowledge, suggests that a 'return of knowledge' be re-instated, an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production that does not await the approval of the established authority of thought. This 'return of knowledge' will see not only theory celebrated but life matters, not only knowledge but reality. Bringing forth historical content and knowledge that has been buried and forgotten. The introduction of low-level knowledge will see a return to what was considered insignificant and powerless. Taking what was disqualified as insignificant or non-scientific. A re-surfacing of local popular knowledges (Foucault, 1976).

According to Mudaly (2018) when teaching mathematical knowledge, there are important factors to consider, such as do we teach using colonial/westernised knowledge which is needed to function at university level and in the workplace. Colonial forms of teaching are viewed as fact and necessary for progress in our modern world. Mudaly (2018) suggests that colonial mathematics should not be removed from indigenous knowledge which will allow for better

understanding providing that the context is familiar. Indigenous knowledge is important for living but, due to modernisation there is a thought indigenous knowledge in academics is becoming unnecessary (Mudaly, 2018).

In answering the question on their understanding, teachers brought up the word once again, relevant or relevance. Which indicated that teachers in answering were themselves looking for something more fulfilling for the learners. The teachers were passionate in their response as change is something worthwhile to each of them.

*Nolwazi (Teacher B): "Making topics and content **relevant** to the learner especially with resources… these should be indigenous and relevant to children in South Africa"*

*Maleeha (Teacher A): "Relating to the children's context African/South African **relevant** to the children, we are a 3rd world country. The curriculum lacks content on decolonial learning and teaching.*

*Chelsea (Teacher B): "Making content more **relevant** to the kids"*

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, relevant means "something appropriate to the current time, period, or circumstances; of contemporary interest" (Merriam-Webster, 2022).

With the above definition in mind, we move to decolonising education which is something seen as "appropriate to the current time…of contemporary interest" (Merriam-Webster, 2022) teachers unknowingly have an understanding that teaching of content needs to be relevant, appropriate to the circumstances. In explaining their understanding of decolonisation, I did not expect them to use the word relevant. They deem decolonial teaching and learning to be relevant to children in South Africa. "Decolonising education calls for a Eurocentric consciousness to be disrupted, and notions of meritocracy within education and society that have privileged some, to be challenged" (Du Plessis, 2021). This issue of decolonising education is relevant, "appropriate to current time, period, or circumstances; of contemporary interest" (Merriam-Webster, 2022) therefore we can assume that relevant content should be at the fore front of teaching and learning.

Teachers gave a few teaching examples on how decolonisation can be put into practice by changing the way certain topics are taught. These topics came out of the subject life skills which is part of CAPS. "The Life skills subject is central to the holistic development of the learners" (CAPS Life Skills, DBE, p. 8).

The examples given were interesting as it gave insight into what teachers think and revealed their beliefs on decolonisation.

Cassidy (Teacher A): "So, when we talk about shapes, we don't have to use shapes from suburban life but rather Ndebele houses which have a range of shapes.... If they only learn about Nelson Mandela, then how will they know about Shaka Zulu and his strategies. He had innovative ideas on how to help his people. Our children learn how Westerner's fight. What if they learnt from Shaka Zulu? About strategy and planning and they are possibly using his tactics. What if children learn this and realise that it does not only come from the West. The idea is that everything comes from the West, our children need to know that this knowledge impacts on our lives. I mean the West think we ride on elephants. I mean what if the idea and design of the saddle was developed in Africa and that knowledge was taken by the West"

Nolwazi (Teacher B): "Decolonial curriculum can improve learning, it's not just textbook based or fully Western. We want learners to gain knowledge. for example, we do safety in the home as a topic, this focuses on brick houses in suburban areas. There are kids who live in shacks or informal settlements. We teach them in a standardised way as if they all live in a brick house. Also, we teach learners about water as a topic. We teach them the different ways to purify water and offer one solution. The children can bring ideas from home and bring in voices into this, there could be South African scientists who comes and shows the children a South African way to purify water"

4.4 Identity

Through the interview process, identity became a major factor in decolonisation. The teachers felt strongly about learners developing their own identity and self-worth. The word was used ten times in the interviews conducted. Teachers recognised that through learning and the use of proper resources children can develop their own identity by identifying with the given materials or books.

Maleeha (Teacher A): "By children not seeing representation within their learning material which can be used to build their identity"

Maleeha (Teacher A): "It would help in identity building when learners can identify context which should be included"

The above answer given related to improving the relevance of the curriculum. The teacher here felt that by improving the curriculum to include decolonial teaching and learning, then the identity of the learner can be developed through this.

The teacher below, Cassidy was very open and honest throughout the interview process. She was passionate about learners' identity developing through learning. This teacher portrayed a positive tone and a support for change within our curriculum.

Cassidy (Teacher A): *Children know their language but not their background or history, knowledge, and cultural identity. From a young age, when children are not in touch with their identity, whatever it may be. They go into high school with a good level of knowledge, but this knowledge ends up having no meaning to them and in building their identity. We must start building identity through history, children from all backgrounds not just black learners but all need to know and through this way we can instil and implement decolonisation where we not only learning about the French revolution or Picasso but rather what is useful knowledge to us and that will grow our children. Introducing decolonisation to learners, introduces them to identity*

Chelsea (Teacher B): *The impact would allow for affirming of identity in the children, we have a diverse group of children, some poor, middle class and rich.*

Nolwazi (Teacher B): *There is a build-up of identity within the class.*

Aniesa (Teacher B): *It's about identity and they don't have one because it's so confusing.*

Castells (2009) presents three forms of identity-construction. The first is 'legitimizing identity' this identity is dependent on social institutions, education, and religion. 'Resistance identity' projects itself as "active opposition to processes of social alienation and exclusion" (Castells, 2009, p. 5). 'Project identity' is about redefining identity such as the feminist movement. The most important identity in the age of decolonisation, according to Castells (2009) is 'resistance identity' which plays a role in the construction of our contemporary society. This is a collective resistance through the age of unbearable, inhumane treatment and exclusion of identities shaped by culture, context, and history. The push and pull between African and Western culture can be understood in terms of 'resistance identity' (Castells, 2009).

A reclamation of identity within the school walls is what the teachers in the interview demanded on. A place of active opposition to the norm (Castells, 2009).

4.5 Voices

This theme did not appear multiple times during the interviews, however three teachers made distinct mention of 'voices' within the classroom and outside the classroom that can impact and add to decolonial learning and teaching. I found it interesting that the three teachers wanted multiple voices to be used in the classroom.

Cassidy (Teacher A): Grandparents who share knowledge that is passed on to the children. Invite parents or grandparents to educate and share knowledge. Introducing different voices is important.

Nolwazi (Teacher B): We have a diverse class and so education becomes relevant. There is a build-up of identity within the class and a community of voices is developed. Why can't we be the first in Africa to do this?

Nolwazi (Teacher B): We want learners to gain knowledge. for example, we do safety in the home as a topic, this focuses on brick houses in suburban areas. There are kids who live in shacks or informal settlements. We teach them in a standardised way as if they all live in a brick house. Also, we teach learners about water as a topic. We teach them the different ways to purify water and offer one solution. The children can bring ideas from home and bring in voices into this, there could be South African scientists who come and show the children a South African way to purify water.

Discourses come about by specific social, political, and economic thought. Within this, the notion given is what must be said or unsaid. Who should speak with authority and who should be silent? Within the school domain, the teacher has had the command of what must be discussed or spoken of within the classroom environment. Teachers speak with authority when discussing different topics or themes based on the curriculum (Cherryholms, 1987). During the call for the removal of the Rhodes statue, we saw many students lend their voice to changing their university and removing what was seen as normal. The Western way of knowledge according to Mbembe (2016) has become a normal part of being human. It took a few university students to raise the issue of colonialism and decolonisation. By giving children the opportunity for their voice to be heard we allow them to move away from being customers or consumers of education (Mbembe, 2016).

A child's voice is necessary to the learning process. By bringing in the learner's voice and that of people from the community, it gives their ideas and thoughts to be properly heard. The

learners voice can transform learning which allows it to become more authentic. A recent Harvard study found the following when a child's voice is valued in the classroom:

- "When students experience voice, they are more likely to experience self-worth, engagement, and purpose, which lead to academic motivation" (Quaglia, fox, Lande & Young, 2020, p. 6).
- "Increasing student voice has been found to improve student learning, especially when student voice is linked to changing curriculum and instruction" (Quaglia, fox, Lande & Young, 2020, p. 6).

Piaget (1974) states that certain methods should be used for children to construct their own truth rather than have it given to them. Democratic education also gives insight into the idea that learners can become cocreators of their education, using their voices by being responsible citizens and be able to express and articulate ideas well to those around. Through the years we have seen the need for the child's voice to come alive within the classroom (Quaglia, Fox, Lande & Young, 2020).

4.6 Critical thinking

Critical thinking was an interesting factor to emerge from the interviews. Whilst the teachers spoke about critical thinking or developing critical thinking. I began to think of why our learners in South Africa may not have this and why do we compare ourselves so much to the West?

Cassidy (Teacher A): "Yes, it will help them to develop critical thinking skills"

Sithako (Teacher A): Students will think critically, they do not have to think the way their teachers want them to or curriculum.

Aniesa (Teacher B): By the time the kids we teach grow up, they can think critically, and you realise how wrong certain things are.

In the article "Can East Asian Students Think? Orientalism, critical thinking, and the decolonial project" by Moosavi (2020) Explores this notion of critical thinking. Now as South Africans we are not far off from the claims made about East Asian students.

"The European is a close reasoner; his statements of fact are devoid of any ambiguity; he is a natural logician, albeit he may not have studied logic; he is by nature sceptical and requires proof before he can accept the truth of any proposition; his trained intelligence works like a piece of mechanism. The mind of the Oriental, on the other hand, like his picturesque streets, is eminently wanting in symmetry. His reasoning is of the most slipshod description"—Lord Cromer, 1908, as cited in Said. [1] (p. 38)

Walter Mignolo's preface to the "Can non-Europeans think?" is well titled "yes, we can". Mignolo was very troubled by the question that he described this as "epistemic racism" (Moosavi, 2020, p. 3). Despite the decline of the West and the rise of Asia, developments show that Western intellect over Eastern intellect is still superior. There is a tendency that Western higher education for East Asian students to be thought of as intellectually deficient. This thinking exists even though critical thinking is problematic to define, cannot be measured that easily, and many come out in culturally specific ways (Moosavi, 2020).

Now this article suggests that the perception of East Asian students not demonstrating critical thinking skills is a "myth" (Moosavi, 2020, p. 31).

"There is, on the whole, a distinct lack of evidence to suggest that Asian learners have a negative attitude towards critical thinking or that there are significant differences in

dispositions between them and their Western peers . . . If there is little or no empirical evidence that Asian learners lack either critical thinking dispositions or skills compared to Western students and that, in fact, the opposite appears to be true, why is the image of Asian students as weak in critical thinking so prevalent"? (Rear, 2019, p. 119–120).

Within literature according to Moosavi (2020) the Other is always shown in an inferior manner compared to Western civilisation, whereas the oriental is seen as emotional and highly savage. Now the questions asked from their culture that lack critical thinking (Asia/Africa) can never gain the levels of critical thinking as that of the European? Where critical thinking has been cultivated into their daily life. The positive presentation of the West causes us to question critical thinking in moments where we are seen not to have any. According to Moosavi (2020) we ourselves have internalised this way of thinking that children lack critical thinking because of what is portrayed in the West. We begin to normalise these discourses and end up having to change who we are and question our intellect to appease the West. We rather see ourselves as uncritical than critical (Moosavi, 2020).

4.7 Community

This was a prominent feature within the interviews. Teachers surprisingly approved of the community created within the class or outside the class being a strong factor of decolonisation.

Nolwazi (Teacher B): "*There is a build-up of identity within the class and a community of voices is developed"*

Sithako (Teacher A*): "Education then in decolonisation is a focus on community- what the communities needed is something they train their children in. what I mean by this is I am from a different country, now back in the day in the UK immigrants were trained to be labourers there was no equal access or inclusion into formal learning. Within my own country, the people studied according to what the community needed, our learning was very much community based and so we had a solidified identity as our community taught us. We then grew up and studied and went back into our communities to work again and carry on that in order to build each other up"*

Cassidy (Teacher A*): Introducing decolonisation to learners, introduces them to identity and community. Something like Ubuntu is non-existent to young children. If they can practise community learning which is followed through at home, with grandparents who share knowledge that is passed on to the children. Invite parents or grandparents to educate and share knowledge. introducing different voices is important.*

These statements show that for these teachers' decolonisation is linked to community identity. The community plays a central and valuable part in developing who the learner is by introducing community thinking within the classroom and bringing in the wider community to speak into a child's learning and in the process instil pride in the learners by promoting their identity.

The community becomes a source of teaching and learning where indigenous knowledge is sustained and passed on to the next generation. Part of indigenous learning according to Kern and Howard (2019) involves communal values, community goals and multiple worldviews. As seen with Sithako, in the interview that they studied and went back into their communities which coincides with many Indigenous communities view of success as a tool for building the greater good of the community. "Tribal communities are likely to support the success of individual students because of the greater potential for impact on the community, while at the

same time students aim to give back to their communities" (Howard and Kern, 2019, p. 1139). In this way, success is not something achieved by oneself but linked to community power which allows for growth (Howard & Kern, 2019).

Bryan Brayboy and Emma Maughan (2009) state that "Indigenous framework, community is the core, one cannot simply understand ways of knowing and being without a deep and abiding understanding of what community means" (Brayboy and Maughan, 2009, p. 15).

A combination of academic knowledge with Indigenous ways of knowing can work well together to create synergy which makes powerful knowledge key for survival (Brayboy, 2005).

Schooling here according to the teachers becomes uplifting to the community. There is this reciprocal relationship between the two, feeding information from one into the other.

4.8 Reading materials

An unexpected theme arose in the interviews. Teachers in foundation phase do reading activities daily. The books read in class was more or less the first thing that teachers pointed out to me. Reading is the foundation of children's learning; it is when they are very young that they are exposed to different kinds of books and authors. The teachers were criticising the reading materials that the learners are exposed to. The current range of readers within schools, are generally authored by white women and illustrated by white men. The books lack representation of diverse characters, which according to the teachers would impact negatively on the learner's identity and the ability to see possibility in being a character.

"Indigenous texts function as decolonising texts, throwing off the baggage of colonialism and reclaiming language and identity" (Bradford, 2011, p. 275).

Maleeha (Teacher A): "For example, African stories (readers) should be introduced, the names in the books changed to ones familiar to children, instead of Jill and Ben. By children not seeing representation within their learning material which can be used to build their identity"

Chelsea (Teacher B): "If we teach a comprehension for example it's based on Jack and Jill from England who build a snowman, the kids in our environment would not understand"

Within our South African schools' books from 30 years ago are still being read today. There seems to be no interest or intention to decolonise and deconstruct historically racist norms, that are still perpetuated through the books read at school. Studies of children's publishing show that children's literature remains significantly white, lacking representation and diversity (Koss, 2015).

Since the publishing of *Peter Pan* in 1984, scholars of children's literature have taken the stance that books have colonised the child reader and are seen as a colonising site. The writer of Peter Pan, Jacqueline Rose and others have stated that children are colonised subjects. Though Rose makes the above claim, her language moves between what is implied and the actual child reader and she does not address the child's own experiences (Bradford, 2011).

Books for young children especially picture books are written with messages that convey culture and values of a society which help young children learn about their world. The books read in classrooms influences children's self-awareness (Chaudhri and Teale, 2013) and help in developing a positive self-identity (Koss, 2015).

Multicultural literature is sorely lacking in our school readers in South Africa. According to Koss (2015) multicultural literature helps young children identify their own as well as other cultures, which should promote discussions around diversity. Bishop (1990) in her research discovered that children need to see themselves reflected in the books they read as if looking into a mirror, being able to see themselves in different worlds. Pictures and images shared with children affect their sense of self and belonging. "When children cannot identify with a book or see their lives celebrated through stories, it may have a negative impact on their self-identity" (Willet, 1995, p.176). The message received by children is that their lives and who they are is not important and this is when marginalisation sets in, and young children become highly critical of themselves. The inclusion of diverse authors and illustrators create avenues of possibilities for young children. Children need to know that all people are valued (Koss, 2015).

Larrick (1965) analysed over 5000 pictures published over a three-year period and noted that only 6.7% have African American characters, most of them are shown in stereotypes. Larrick (1965) suggests that a lack of representation impacts society when images of White individuals are the only thing children see. The Cooperative Children's Book Centre (2014) reported that the number of picture books published are increasing however current demographics of multiculturalism are not reflected in children's books (Koss, 2015).

Aniesa (Teacher B*): "The pretty white girl or boy with blond hair and blue eyes, who speak perfect English is something that children should not aspire to be as which they see and read in their books. The sad thing is that is what we teach them to be. It's about identity and they don't have one because it's so confusing"*

Koss (2015) conducted research by focusing on contemporary 2012 children's picture books. Examination of the books revealed that 45% featured white characters, overall, there was a relative lack of representation of other cultures. "Children's literature is still not authentically portraying our multi-ethnic world; White privilege is apparent in the creation and publication of contemporary picture books" (Koss, 2015, p. 34). The results of the study also provided that children who read modern picture books only, see White faces and encounter the message that being white is a lot better (Koss, 2015).

Aniesa (Teacher B): "I was actually thinking about reading, these books that we use are what my children read 30 years, that is a form of indoctrination for so many years, why is it not being changed. Are you trying to tell me that there's no books where we have a few African

authors? Collectively from Grade 1-3 the readers are the same. Books can change for the better, if we can make small changes somewhere then I think that we can decolonise"

Teachers were very passionate about the readers that are used within the school domain. At times we are unaware of the impact that reading materials have on learners' identity. The teachers highlighted that change is much needed, and why not now? For too long there has been Western control within books, that misrepresent people of colour but affirm the white child through pictures and authors who are white. Teachers are not asking for major changes but small changes that can achieve decolonisation within schools.

4.9 Conclusion

Each theme was very significant, in that it invited me into the thinking and feelings of the teachers. The themes that emerged were surprising to me as the researcher, I did not expect these themes to emerge. Each theme led me deeper into the thinking of the teachers as well as their feelings on decolonisation, which has not yet made its way into foundation phase as a topic of discussion or a pilot program to implement. Teachers addressed issues that were close to them, such as reading, identity and voice. What became clear is that teachers hold a lot of knowledge and interest in what their learners come to know through the content of the curriculum. Teachers provided practical examples that can be used in decolonising the curriculum, showing me that decolonisation is not an ideology that is only to be dealt with at a university level but an ideology that should start a conversation at the school level.

Chapter 5

Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion taken from the research conducted. The main question of the research focused on Foundation phase teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the South African Foundation Phase curriculum is addressed through endeavouring to answer the following sub-questions:

- Why is it important to decolonise the foundation phase CAPS curriculum?
- In what ways does the current Life Skills CAPS curriculum promote or hinder the implementation of indigenous knowledge systems?
- What are teacher's feelings on the importance or relevance of decolonising the curriculum?

I begin with a summary of the findings which is then followed by answering the sub-questions of my research. Firstly, I explain why is it important to decolonise the foundation phase CAPS curriculum? Secondly, I focus on ways that the current Life Skills CAPS curriculum promote or hinder the implementation of indigenous knowledge systems and importantly, what are teachers' feelings on the importance or relevance of decolonising the curriculum?

5.2 Summary of findings

Through the data collected and the analysis of this data seven themes emerged from this: *1. Relevance of the curriculum, 2. Decolonisation in practice, 3. Identity, 4. Voices, 5. Critical thinking, 6. Community and 7. Reading.*

The main points that emerged from the data was that teachers had deferring views on decolonisation but most thought that decolonisation is important and can be achieved through small changes. Teachers found decolonisation to be relevant to all children and that decolonisation is best introduced at a foundational phase level. I found in the study that teachers explored identity, which has been subdued, due to colonial threads still found in curriculum today. What I found most interesting was that teachers could not give a direct definition or theoretical understanding of decolonisation, however, they found practical ways to use decolonisation within the classroom by bringing in the community as well as the voice of the learners into education.

Teachers found a practical way to answer, through teaching and learning examples. Critical thinking was a surprise as teachers felt this could be developed in the children through decolonisation and lastly, reading was something I did not see coming into the study. Teachers were able to give real life situations of what children see in the books they read at school and what the effects of misrepresentation might be for young children as they do not look like the characters in the books they read. Overall, this data was profound and unexpected, yet hopeful for the future of our learners and their education through a process of decolonisation.

5.3 Why is it important to decolonise the foundation phase CAPS curriculum?

Mbembe (2016) implies the importance of decolonisation, is something beneficial to students and teachers in their free pursuit of knowledge to decolonise. The importance of decolonising the curriculum allows the learners to abandon the thought of viewing education as a customer or consumer (Mbembe, 2016).

For too long the curriculum has made Western knowledge superior, this knowledge was created as a separation technique between western and non-western knowledge. Including indigenous knowledge systems allows for a culmination of cultures and histories to be included. Fataar (2018) states that schools and universities need to develop respect for other cultures and indigenous knowledge systems (Fataar, 2018).

Our very own CAPS curriculum calls for "valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the constitution". Our curriculum clearly states that IKS are important, nurturing and contains rich history, which can be used towards decolonisation. Decolonising the curriculum welcomes diversity and the incorporation of multiple experiences (Mahabeer, 2020).

In order to gage with whether decolonisation is important, teachers were asked if decolonial teaching and learning can be integrated within the current curriculum? Teachers were overwhelmingly positive! Their response was yes, indicating to me that CAPS can include some decolonial tasks or activities for learners to do. This study showed that integration was most necessary at a foundational level, as teachers considered this the grassroots level where decolonisation would be valuable in its pursuit of training young minds. Teachers considered integration as giving young children the opportunity to gain a wealth of knowledge and versatility can be experienced. The one steady thought here was the learner, the learner is central to the use of decolonisation and its success decolonising the foundation phase

curriculum is important because this is the foundation of schooling and critical thinking-so we must decolonise foundation phase in order to decolonise the university.

Only one teacher in particular that answered with a negative connotation. She decided that decolonisation is optional in terms of integration. That it is up to the teacher, if the teacher decides to make things more decolonised then that is her choice. She suggested that another teacher might be happy to teach in same way.

The next question asked which responded to the sub-question, is looking at necessity. Teachers were asked if they think that decolonial learning and teaching is necessary in foundation phase? Within the study, teachers agreed that decolonisation is not a concept that children should come across by accident but should rather be a part of their lives. Teachers found it a necessity in building identity and a community of voices as we have such diverse children within schools. Without a doubt, teachers found it most necessary that children are given the tools at a young age so that they will be able to critically analyse and debate at a university level or even at a school level. Implementation here, sets a strong tone of the future and the hope that each child has in doing great things for this country. Teachers agreed that by making decolonisation necessary means that the debate needs to happen at a foundational level and not only at a tertiary level.

The last question here is, what do you think the impact of decolonising the foundation phase curriculum might have on the learner? To have importance, I had to find out what impact would decolonisation have. The teachers in general here responded by affirming identity and self being developed. By introducing decolonisation in the classroom, they felt strongly that these two factors would be beneficial to the child. As the child develops identity, they can work creatively developing solutions for our unique problems and for them to think differently from their teachers

5.4 In what ways do the current Life Skills CAPS curriculum promote or hinder the implementation of indigenous knowledge systems?

Life Skills is one of the main subjects completed by children in foundation phase. Life skills was the one subject that teachers clearly related to and gave teaching examples from this subject using the given topics such as history on Shaka Zulu, water purification and homes that people live in.

Life skills is a subject focusing preparing young children for life and the many situations they may find themselves in. they are taught values and responsibilities for living.

The subject Life skills has 3 study areas:

The first study area is Beginning knowledge and personal and social well-being. Beginning knowledge focuses on concepts relating to social sciences, natural sciences, and technology. The skills relating to this area of study involve, "conservation, adaption, diversity and individuality, planet earth, observing, classifying, designing and evaluating" (CAPS Grade 1-3 Life skills, 2011, p. 8) These are a few of the skills which children learn here.

Personal and social well-being involves children learning how to care for themselves and to keep healthy. This area of study involves learning about the environment, emotions, health choices, values and attitudes that are important for being a productive and responsible citizen (CAPS Grade 1-3 Life skills, 2011).

Creative arts are the second area of study, this is broken up into two sub-topics. Creative arts focus on "four art forms: dance, drama, music and visual arts" (CAPS Grade 1-3 Life skills, 2011, p. 9) The main purpose of creative arts is to allow learners to foster creativity, an imagination and appreciation of art. Focusing on these creative skills helps in developing fine motor and gross motor skills.

Visual arts are designed so that learners master techniques related to two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork. Learners use and talk about line, space, shape, and colour in art. Performing arts falls under the category of singing, dramatization, and dancing. Children develop physical skills and a sense of creativity. Performing arts promotes building relationships, self-confidence, and self-discipline (CAPS Grade 1-3 Life skills, 2011).

The last area of study is physical education. This focuses on fine and gross motor skills as well as perceptual development. Physical education focuses on movement, play, games, and sport. It also develops perceptual and locomotor development, balance, and laterality (CAPS Grade 1-3, Life skills, 2011).

The question posed to teachers, have you come across activities or topics that require you to use indigenous knowledge that foregrounds African content? Majority of the teachers said no, there are no activities or topics that require the use of IKS. There was one teacher who mentioned the Life skills CAPS physical education section which focused on indigenous games. Teachers insisted on the Westernised topics and activities which they teach.

Below is a breakdown of the IKS which have been included in Life skills CAPS document. The document mainly focuses on creative arts, performing arts and physical education.

Grade	Term	Area of study	Topics
1	1	Performing Arts	Singing indigenous songs, using appropriate movement and dramatization p. 34
1	2	Physical Education	Traditional or indigenous games chosen by the learners p. 39
1	3	Performing Arts	Dramatizing a make-believe situation based on a South African poem, song or story guided by the teacher p. 36
1	4	Performing Arts	Classroom performance incorporating a South African song, poem or story with movement and dramatization p. 37
1	4	Physical Education	Games using ropes- Ugqaphu/kgati/ntimo (two learners swing the rope and a third jumps over it while the rest of the group sings rhymes p. 41
2	1	Performing Arts	Learn movements from a South African dance, such as gumboot dancing and others p. 46
2	3	Physical education	Traditional games of the learners own choosing p. 52
2	4	Beginning knowledge and personal and social well-being	Our country • A map of South Africa • Name and location of own province • Where we live

			• South African flag • South African national anthem p. 45
3	1	Performing Arts	• Listen to South African music (indigenous and western) focusing on rhythm and beat. • Role play with beginning, middle, and end using stimulus e.g., South African poem, story, song or picture. • Learn and combine movements from South African dance e.g., Indian dance or Pantsula with appropriate music p. 58
3	2	Performing Arts	Interpret and rehearse South African songs: rounds, calls and response p. 59
3	2	Physical Education	Indigenous games p. 63
3	3	Beginning knowledge and personal and social well-being	How people lived long ago • Stories and experiences of older family and community members. • Objects used by older family and community members. • Selections of old pictures and photographs from family albums and books.

			• How people lived then and now (Change and continuity) p. 56
3	3	Creative Arts	Increased awareness of pattern and printmaking in Africa, e.g., Ndebele painting, beadwork, decorative ceramics: looking, talking, and listening about patterns p. 60
3	4	Performing Arts	Listening to South African music: focus on how tempo, dynamics, timbre contribute to unique sound. Listening to and identifying prominent South African instruments, explore unique qualities of instruments p. 61

My analysis of the CAPS curriculum shows that there has been much done to promote IKS through art, music, and exercise. The need for change comes in when we only assume that decolonisation or IKS is good for music, art and games which is sufficient for now but the exclusion of decolonisation in technology, science concepts such as living and life, energy, and change, observing skills, experimenting or even investigative skills which are the basis of beginning knowledge and personal and social well-being. These values and skills cannot only be left to Western thought and theology, which is why this is still assumed as superior or the metropole of knowledge. the curriculum can be explicit or hidden. The 'explicit' curriculum is provided to the learners, content, assessment, and presentations which can be relevant to decolonise the curriculum by giving learners the necessary tools to work critically and decolonise the curriculum. The hidden curriculum refers to what is not formally taught but implied. This is where the dominant values of coloniality are enacted and are taught informally to create submissive students. What has not occurred is that we must appreciate the fact that coloniality is still embedded in the curriculum and is somehow not hidden in terms of content. If we look at the Life skills curriculum only two topics focus on what can be referred to as IKS

in beginning knowledge and personal and social well-being. By introducing IKS in art, music and physical education is a good start but however qualifies the comments made by Smith indicated back in (1999), "indigenous knowledge does not feature in the curriculum as it is regarded as weak and untrustworthy, both in terms of theory and of methodology" (Mahabeer, 2020, p. 98). Indigenous knowledge does not feature within important topics of science and technology as it is not valued or seen as important for learners to know. Rather dancing and art is where IKS is functional, and learners can be creative (Mahabeer, 2020).

Overall, the aim of decolonisation is to expose and deconstruct Eurocentric educational practices and to recognise IKS. Introducing decolonised curriculum is not to replace or disregard the old with the new but to bring in teachers as agents of change who should consider local and international ideology. There is a strong link between teacher education and school curriculum. Despite teacher education changing globally, the foundation has not changed in terms of philosophies. Schools require knowledgeable teachers who can adapt to change and connect with learners (Mahabeer, 2020).

In this study we can see that there are instances of activities being promoted and in other instances there are hinderances to including IKS.

5.5 What are teacher's feelings on the importance or relevance of decolonising the curriculum?

During the interview process it was quiet refreshing to hear what teachers had to say about decolonisation. It was important for me to know what teachers are thinking, feeling and their beliefs. Teachers are complex individuals, who bring with them their identity, value system and lived experiences. It is important to note this as teachers are not just conduits of information but also have valuable comments to make about education in general.

Teacher beliefs are vital within a diverse classroom setting. Beliefs influence the way teachers do their jobs and how they understand diversity. Teacher's beliefs tend to be resistant to change despite knowledge changing and varying over time. teachers, however, tend to maintain their beliefs and opinions on certain educational practices (Vandeyar, 2020).

Teachers in the study were very happy and willing to assist with the research. They had so much to say about decolonisation and what should be done. I came into the study with low expectations of the teachers however, they exceeded my expectations. They presented well-

balanced answers where Western knowledge was not disregarded but rather an amalgamation of both can work together.

Balance was key for the teachers in the study, they acknowledged that for too long Westernised knowledge has dominated not only curriculum but how children see themselves and how their identity is shaped. Teachers could not fully define decolonisation, but they spoke aptly about it and admitted themselves that they are bearers of colonisation not by their own fault but through things that were normalised.

Teachers were forthcoming and open to change; they were excited to talk about decolonisation and the possibilities for children to see themselves in books and educational resources. Teachers gave ways in which topics can be changed or taught differently in the class. They were adamant that change is necessary. They found decolonisation relevant in building identity, community and bringing in multiple voices which stems from multiple experiences that can build knowledge within the classroom. These teachers teach in diverse classrooms and they themselves were so happy to talk about children being represented in decolonial education.

5.6 Recommendations for further study

The research conducted was a small-scale study, conducted with a small number of teachers. The gap found was that teachers are excluded from conversations of curriculum change and decolonisation. It was enlightening to have a conversation with teachers that are varied in race, age, and identity. I would suggest that more research continue with this topic but on a larger scale with more teachers and schools. In order for change to come at a foundational level, research on this topic can be a national task that can be used to bring about valued changes to teaching and learning.

In the study, teachers gave recommended ways to decolonise the curriculum by changing the current reading materials at school. Incorporate books that represent all children and a variety of authors. Teachers highlighted the need to build identity and to be mindful of each learners growing identity also finding positive role models to develop a strong sense of identity, to include the community more in the schooling process. Having a curriculum that encompasses indigenous knowledge, by introducing topics using a South African or African method instead of only using Westernised ways of organizing and structuring learning. Resources play an important part in the decolonisation of the curriculum, teachers in the study mentioned the importance of resources. The vital part of decolonisation, according to the study is that it should

be practical in its approach to the foundation phase curriculum. Teachers are in this study are eager to learn and give their input into curriculum development as suggested here.

Teachers in the study did not ask for drastic change rather, they asked for small changes in the foundation phase which can be used to one day decolonise the university.

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Appendix A

LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kathryn Govindasami, I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am conducting research on decolonisation titled***: "What are teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the foundation phase curriculum"***

I would like to interview Foundation Phase teachers to understand teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the foundation phase curriculum.

With your permission, I would like to conduct individual, semi-structured interviews with 3 foundation phase teachers (teaching either Grade 1, 2 or 3), in your school. The interviews will be audio taped. For your interest, I have attached the interview questions that will be used during the interviews in order to gain their perspectives and feelings toward implementing decolonial education within foundation phase. The interviews will last for about 25-30 minutes, and I will make sure that these take place outside of teaching time, when it is convenient for participants to speak to me. I will present each teacher with a consent form to participate in the study which is voluntary.

I am inviting your school to participate in this research as I believe that the views from teachers in your school will contribute to understanding teacher's beliefs and perceptions about decolonising the foundation phase curriculum. Participating in this research is completely voluntary.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Each participant will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

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

All research data will be destroyed 3 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 is convenient.

Yours sincerely,
Kathryn Govindasami
752842@students.wits.ac.za

Appendix B

PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Participant

My name is Kathryn Govindasami, I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

I am conducting research on decolonisation titled***: "What are teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the South African foundation phase curriculum"***

You are kindly invited to participate in this study. With your permission, I would like to conduct an individual interview with you to investigate how you feel about decolonising the foundation phase curriculum. The interview will be audiotaped, and the interviews will last for about 25-30 minutes. I will make sure that the interviews take place out of teaching time, when it it is convenient for you.

I am inviting you to participate in this research as I believe that your views on this topic will greatly enhance my research and provide me with your understanding. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and choosing not to participate will have no consequences whatsoever. Should you choose not to participate you may withdraw from the study at any time during the project.

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

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

Thank you in advance.

Yours truly

Kathryn Govindasami

Contact no. 0723430541

Email.752842@students.wits.ac.za

Appendix C

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM and AUDIOTAPING

Research title: ***What are teachers' beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the South African foundation phase curriculum?***

Name of researcher: Kathryn Govindasami

I _____, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Place an X on the relevant options below)

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree that the data collected for this study will be processed by the student and destroyed once the study is completed and passed Yes ☐ No ☐

I may at any stage without prejudice withdraw my consent and participation from this study

Yes ☐ No ☐

Audiotaping

This study involves the audio recording of your interview with the researcher. Only myself, Kathryn Govindasami, the researcher will be able to listen to the recordings. The tapes will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study.

(Place an X on the relevant options below)

I agree that the interview will be audio recorded Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree that my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed. Yes ☐ No ☐

I can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape Yes ☐ No ☐

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign on the space below

Participant	**Researcher**
NAME: _____	NAME: _____
SIGNATURE: _____	SIGNATURE: _____
DATE: _____	DATE:_____

Thank you,

Kathryn Govindasami

Appendix D

Letter to the School Governing Body

April 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research at Blairgowrie Primary School.

My name is Kathryn Govindasami, I am a Masters student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at Blairgowrie Primary School.

I am conducting research on decolonisation titled***: "What are teacher's beliefs and perceptions about the importance of decolonising the foundation phase curriculum"***

The foundation phase CAPS policy for all subjects, indicate in one of the purposes and aims of the curriculum is, "valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the constitution" (CAPS Grade R-3 Life skills, 2011). In South Africa, we have had many curriculum changes over the years, each still subservient to colonial knowledge as the curriculum does not acknowledge indigenous knowledge of poor working-class people or urban literacies of black females. Each change in curriculum has not addressed the issues of decolonisation in the curriculum.

Therefore, research into decolonisation at the foundational level is vital if we want to value indigenous knowledge systems and bring transformation within the curriculum. It is worthless to debate decolonisation at the higher education level, when it is not addressed at a school level. Teachers are directly impacted by curriculum change, which is why it is important to look at teachers understanding of decolonisation as well as their beliefs in order to bring direct change into the schooling system.

With your permission, I would like to conduct individual, semi-structured interviews with 3 foundation phase teachers (teaching either Grade 1, 2 or 3), in your school. The interviews will be audio taped. For your interest, I have attached the interview questions that will be used during the interviews in order to gain their perspectives and feelings toward implementing decolonial education within foundation phase. The interviews will last for about 25-30 minutes, and I will make sure that these take place outside of teaching time, when it is convenient for participants to speak to me. I will present each teacher with a consent form to participate in the study which is voluntary.

I am inviting your school to participate in this research as I believe that the views from teachers in your school will contribute to understanding teacher's beliefs and perceptions about decolonising the foundation phase curriculum. Participating in this research is completely voluntary.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

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

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

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organisation. The permission letter should be on your organisation's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

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

Yours sincerely,

Kathryn Govindasami
0723430541
752842@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisor's name: Dr. Alison Kearney
0117173211
Alison.kearney@wits.ac.za

Appendix E

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interviwee name:

Age:

Occupation:

1. **Interview introduction**

Length of interview: 25-30 minutes

Data collection: Audiotaped (no pictures)

All consent forms to be given to researcher before the start of the interview.

Primary goal: To see things the way the participant sees them, to focus on having a conversation based on the participants beliefs and perceptions.

2. **Background information:** Explain what is meant by decolonisation within education.

3. **Interview questions**

These are the following questions that will be asked to each participant:

Questions to Foundation Phase teachers:

1. In your view how relevant is the curriculum to learners?
2. Have you ever heard about decolonial teaching and learning?
3. What is your understanding of decolonial teaching and learning?
4. Are you familiar with articles or debates on the decolonisation of the curriculum?
5. Can decolonial teaching and learning be integrated within the current curriculum?
6. Do you think decolonial learning and teaching is necessary in foundation phase?
7. What curriculum has been implemented in your school?
8. Have you come across activities or topics that require you to use indigenous knowledge that foregrounds African content?
9. How would a decolonial curriculum improve the relevance of the curriculum for learners?
10. Why do you think there are calls for decolonisation?
11. What do you think the impact of decolonising the foundation phase curriculum might have on the learner?
12. Would you be interested in knowing more about decolonial learning and teaching?