Currere on the rescue: exploring teachers voices that shape teachers’ actions and identities

Boy Bongani Dlamini (a)*

(a) Senior Lecturer, Department of Education William Pitcher College, P. O. Box 7159, Muncini, Eswatini

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 13 July 2023
Received in rev. form 27 August 2023
Accepted 12 September 2023

Keywords:
Teacher’s voices, professional voice, societal voice, personal voice, currere, teacher’s identity

JEL Classification:
I23

ABSTRACT

Exploring teachers’ voices in curriculum spaces is critical. As enactors of the curriculum, teachers need to reflect and critique their teaching actions in order to recognize voices that summon their actions. The study employed the currere curriculum model to engage Eight (8) geography teachers purposively selected from four (4) high schools in Eswatini. The aim was to explore the teachers’ voices that shape their actions and identities. The qualitative approach under the pragmatic paradigm and the educational design research guided the study. To generate data, semi-structured interviews, reflective activities and focus group discussions were used. Guided thematic data analysis was used. The findings revealed that two (2) giant voices dominate and drive teachers’ actions: professional and societal voices. These two voices are in constant tension, resulting to the loss of teacher’s personal voice and identity. In essence, the tension causes teachers’ voices to be silenced or absent in curriculum enactment spaces. It was discovered that it was possible to sort the tension between the two giant voices through applying currere reflective moments, that would develop a neutral voice, the personal voice of teachers, thus a theory of teachers’ voices developed. The study concluded that teachers should identify strengths of both societal and professional voices to relieve the tension between the two and embrace teachers’ personal voices which are critical for understanding natural identities and for effective curriculum enactment.

Introduction

One key theoretical argument that has dominated the curriculum space is coming up with one definition of the term “curriculum”. Curriculum scholars, Celia and Elize (2018), Marsh (2009), Pinar (2012), Thijs and van den Akker (2010) note that a significant amount of curriculum literature has recognized that there is an incontrovertibly struggle in defining the term curriculum. Pinar (2012) defines curriculum as a plan of and for learning. This definition entails that the curriculum specifies content that teachers are expected to use for teaching and learning purposes. Khosa (2018) is in consensus with Pinar’s definition of curriculum, and points out that in most cases curriculum has been defined from the intended curriculum’s position, that is the level of curriculum designers. But, as a plan of teaching and learning, curriculum is defined from the implemented/enactment position which is handled by teachers and learners (Celia & Elize, 2018; Hoadley & Jansen, 2018).

The brief background understanding of curriculum suggests the possibility of diverse voices in the curriculum spaces. By voice of teachers in this work, I refer to individual teacher’s actions that are informed by experiences that in due course direct action (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008). Bainbridge and Macy (2008) carry on to elaborate that the voice attempts to represent an individual’s feeling about self or identity and actions that result from experiences. Correspondingly, Fowler and Fowler (1991) as well as Khosa (2019) refer to a voice as a specific view or feeling that is articulated by an individual who becomes aware of it through interrogating his/her subconscious thoughts and experiences by means of the conscious mind. This suggests that the voice signifies an identity of individual teachers.

* Corresponding author. ORCID ID: 0009-0008-9102-9023
© 2023 by the authors. Hosting by SSBFNET. Peer review under responsibility of Center for Strategic Studies in Business and Finance.
https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v12i7.2765
Bernstein (1999) observes that the curriculum enactment space where teachers feature the most is dominated by two voices that represent two curriculum frameworks; Vertical and Horizontal voices/curricular. The vertical curriculum denotes professional voices, driven by objectives, instructor role of a teacher and summative/high-stake examinations (Tyler’s model/Objectives based). The horizontal curriculum signifies societal voices, driven by outcomes, teacher as facilitator and formative assessment (Stenhouse’s model/Competency based). In Eswatini, Mabuza (2018) observes that the Eswatini General Certificate of Secondary Education (EGCSE) curriculum introduced in high schools in 2012 is supposedly horizontal/societal in nature, whereas teachers enact it summoned by the professional/vertical curriculum principles.

This situation creates tension for the teachers who enact the curriculum as they end up confused as to which voice directs their actions. Essentially, the personal voices of teachers are missing in the curriculum spaces, whereas the challenges brought by the confusion on the voices that drive the EGCSE curriculum need the teacher’s identity that will bring up a personal teacher’s voice to address the tension presented by the two giant voices. The writer of this publication is of the view that teaching and learning practices can better be handled by teachers who are aware of their identity who consequently will summon the curriculum through personal voices.

The organization of the study is as follows: the next section is on literature that theorizes on voices that summon the teaching and learning process. Then methodology, findings, limitations and conclusion are presented thereafter.

**Literature Review**

The literature review presents the problematisation and conceptualization of the two giant voices that dominate the curriculum enactment space, and further theorise on how the personal voice may address the tension between the two.

**Professional voices**

The professional voice derives its philosophy from the performance/vertical curriculum. Professional voices follow a structured pattern whereby teachers’ habits, choices and actions during teaching and learning are guided by strict rules (Tyler, 2013). The stern rules and procedures that the professional voices support, according to Amory (2014), Khoza (2017b) and Waghid and Davids (2016) are acquired from formal learning spaces and based on scientific researched facts. In principle, the professional voices summon teachers to follow specific instructions to meet needs of any discipline taught (Khoza, 2015b).

According to Bernstein (1999), the professional voices put forward specific and particular emphasis on specific guiding principles. These are; objectives prescribed/schooled content and teacher-centered activities which summon a teacher to assume the instructor role during teaching and learning. Also, the professional voice relies on summative assessment. Additionally, the form of content which professional voices favor give more opportunity to the cognitive domain than other domains: the affective and effective domains (Bernstein, 1999). Objectives are described as short-term goals for teaching that represent subsections of the prescribed content that geography teachers deliver in class (Khoza, 2020; Makumane, 2020; Mpungose, 2018; Shoba, 2018). Under the professional voices, the geography content designates the schooled knowledge that teachers teach for assessment purposes. The professional voices assess solely to grade learners. The main form of assessment favored by professional voices is summative assessment. The summative assessment which teachers use is to establish whether learners have mastered the content and is based on the prescribed objectives (Dlamini, 2018; Hoadley, 2018).

**Societal voices**

The societal voices are driven by the horizontal curriculum. This type of curriculum differs from the vertical one in that it emphasises on the learning outcomes to be achieved by learner. The teacher’s role assumed during teaching is that of a facilitator that utilises formative assessment. In essence, the societal voice signifies Stenhouse’s model which is based on realising competencies as compared to objectives-based education by Tyler. In Eswatini, Mabuza (2018) observes that the latest EGCSE high school curriculum is supposedly horizontal in nature, whereas it is vertical in practice, which creates a strain for teachers charged in enacting the curriculum (Flores, 2005). The tension takes place in a number of pedagogical decisions the teacher has to make in class. For example, while professional voices rely on prescribed content, the societal voices support the idea of engaging learners to activities that assist them in building content (cognitivism versus constructivism).

According to Elliott and Norris (2012), Hoadley and Jansen (2018) the main principles of the societal voices are founded by the horizontal/process model as advocated by Stenhouse. These principles are; learning activities, outcomes, facilitation as well as formative assessment. Learning activities refer to the various forms of activities that are produced by resources which teachers engage with during teaching and learning in order to be used by geography learners to produce content. Essentially, the societal voice expects geography teachers to engage learners to numerous activities to interact with by reflecting on their societal/community experiences. Huizinga, Nieveen and Handelzalts (2019), note that the activities assist the geography learners to produce specific content that enables learners to accomplish learning outcomes. As the learning outcomes are attained, teachers in the societal voices space play the role of being facilitators. The facilitation role the teacher assumes in societal voice setting gives learners an opportunity to demonstrate to their peers how they have used activities to generate content to achieve learning outcomes.

Mpungose and Khoza (2022), Khoza and Biyela (2020) and Shoba (2018) illuminate that the content that learners generate in societal voice summoned spaces, reflect the influence of the environment or societies of the learners. Thus in the societal voices space unlike
the professional voices, societal/indigenous knowledge is welcomed and appreciated, whereas, professional voices rely only on professional/schooled knowledge. Moreover, professional voices rely on a the four-walled classroom as the ideal teaching and learning space whereas societal voices allow teaching and learning to take place even in the outer space, out of the four-walled environment (Dlamini, 2022).

Whilst the professional voice expects the teacher to use the teacher-centered approach, the integrated curriculum presumes that the teacher facilitates (Dlamini, 2018). This indicates a strong difference in pedagogical approach which overwhelms the teacher charged to enact the curriculum. Furthermore, professional voices expect learners to be passive in class with an emphasis on summative assessment (Dlamini, 2018). For the societal voice, Makumane and Khoza (2020) note that the learners are encouraged to be active. The learners may engage in group activities which permit them to develop specific skills that encourage critical thinking that produce learners that are equipped with interaction skills.

The Nature of the contestation

The situation presented on the teaching and learning of geography EGCSE curriculum demonstrates that the enactment space is subjugated by a contestation between professional and societal voices. Fig 1.0 is an illustration of the tension between the professional and societal voices which tear the voiceless teacher apart and in the process the teacher becomes unable to find directed actions and identity.

Figure 1: An illustration of the tension of the two giant voices

The tension originates on the expectation that teachers need to meet demands of both principles of the professional and societal voices. However, what appears to be missing in curriculum literature as a cause of concern is an argument on personal voices and the teacher’s identity which could be brought to neutralize the tension between the two giant voices that dominate the curriculum enactment space. Essentially, personal voices can promote pragmatic habitual actions which could be helpful for teachers to realise and understand their personal identities through taking advantage of the strengths of both the professional and societal voices to address teachers’ personal and educational needs (Khoza & Biyela, 2020; Mpungose, 2020c). Scholars, Khoza (2020), Mpungose (2018) and Marsh (2009) support the view that teachers should enact the curriculum without any contestations, but should freely practice with an understanding of their identities. This view suggests a need for studies that could be conducted to explore voices of teachers in the curriculum to determine how the personal voice could help address the contestation of the professional and societal voices. As such, in the next section, the personal voice is unpacked.

The personal voice and teacher’s identity

It is crucial to note that teaching and learning is a personal/individual experience. This suggests that personal voices and identities of teachers as individuals should be considered for the achievement of the teaching and learning. According to Mabuto (2020) and Zuma (2020), the personal voice addresses the individual teachers’ needs thus it could be labeled as pragmatic. Sokhulu (2020) observes that the personal voice is unique to all individual teachers. It is crucial to note that the unique personal voice results from the societal and professional voices’ strengths which a teacher merges. In essence, the personal voice is concerned with a teacher’s identity/self as it concentrates on ‘who’ is teaching (Khoza, 2021b). According to Sokhulu (2020), the personal voice emerges from the teacher’s action who consciously takes advantage of the strong points of both professional and societal voices to produce a neutral self-position where the teacher’s needs are met. Khumalo, Shoba and Khoza (2023) posit that the combination of the strengths from
the two tensional voices produce teacher’s natural identities. In other words, in any activity one has to focus and act on the activity’s natural source (originality) more than on the activity’s symptoms created or constructed by personal identity with professional and/or societal identities. According to Khoza (2019) and Mentz and van Zyl (2016) the personal voice emphasises the significance of collaborative approach in curriculum enactment stages.

Essentially, the collaborative approach leads to the establishment of personal identities which are established to cater for needs of an individual teacher, the same approach extends to promote mutual working relationship amongst teachers (Khumalo et al., 2023). It is undisputed that the understanding of one’s personal identity stimulates self-directed learning that leads to self-actualization (Khoza, Makumane & Zuma, 2022). A self-actualised teacher would be highly creative in practice and problem-centered (Khoza & Biyela, 2020). Teachers that are self-actualised would perceive reality resourcefully, handle any form uncertainty and further agree to take themselves with high moral standards as they depict democratic attitudes in practice. It is for this reason that this study was undertaken to explore the voices of geography teachers in the geography curriculum to understand how the personal voice and teacher’s identity can assume prominence in the teaching and learning spaces. The Natural Identity Framework (NIF), Khoza (2020, 2021a) was used to understand the teacher’s identity. As shown in figure 2, the (NIF) is made out of three constructs/identities, namely the professional, societal and personal identities.

The argument advanced by the NIF is that teachers’ actions are driven by any of the three identities and these three identities combine to form the natural identity (Khoza, 2020; 2021b). The arrangement is such that the NIF situate the teacher at the centre of these three constructs. The NIF constructs postulate that the teacher utilises the unconscious, subconscious, and conscious cognitive processes which are believed to guide actions. This implies that teachers’ actions are guided by unique natural causes. The three identities of the NIF are tied together by the professional, societal and personal voices. The NIF puts more emphasis on the understanding of teacher’s individual identities by responding to the “who” question after reflecting and criticizing action and practices. Essentially, teachers need to understand their identities in curriculum enactment spaces so that they understand how to handle the tensions of the professional and societal voices to come up with their personal voice.

A qualitative interpretive case study by Khoza (2017b) which had ten (10) Master of Education students aimed to explore the students’ reflections on the curriculum discovered that the participants were not aware of their identities and personal voice. The participants were confused in making a choice between the societal and professional voices. Khoza (2017b)’s findings resonate with Biesta (2015) who opined that teachers are tangled on which voice’s principles to follow as they enact the curriculum. Biesta (2015) notes that besides being overwhelmed, the teachers practice by being one-sided on the emphasis on one of the two giant voices. This indicated that there is grave concern with balancing the professional and societal voices to address the practice needs of teachers and their identity.

**Theoretical/conceptual background**

To address the tension, the researcher proposed the theory of teachers’ voices that present a possible combination of the strengths of the professional and societal voices. The theory was informed by the currere curriculum model which suggests that teachers could reflect on their actions and moreover, currere positions the teachers’ voices at the center of their practice. Pinar (2012) posits that curriculum is autobiographical in nature, thus curriculum should not be simply regarded as being about what is to be taught and how it is to be implemented, but should also consider how the teachers understand themselves. This view implies that the curriculum is a curriculum journey which a teacher should embark on in order to express a personal voice. I argue that the journey a teacher embarks on when enacting the curriculum demands that the teacher continuously critiques and reflects in practice. Pinar’s currere has four (4) fundamental principles that are called reflective moments that assist the teacher to reflect and come up with a personal voice.
The first reflective moment in currere is the regressive moment. It is characterised by teacher’s learnt experiences which are used as data sources that guide practice habits. This stage describes teachers as they engage the professional voices through their conscious minds interrogating their past subconscious mind so as to transform their mind-systems to use professional voice principles to teach geography (Budden, 2017; Makumane & Khoza, 2020; Mpungose & Khoza, 2020a). It can be argued that the professional voice which calls upon teachers to use objectives to deliver prescribed content is important as it assists teachers to be accurate when teaching geography (Tyler, 2013).

The second phase, the progressive moments describe engagement of societal voices. Stenhouse (2005) supported by Khoza (2020) and Hoadley and Jansen (2018) opine those activities, learning outcomes, facilitation and peer assessment are the curriculum concepts that influence the teacher’s actions in the progressive moment. This view suggests that teachers should consider strong points of the regressive and progressive moments in order to come up with personal voices. This describes what the teacher does in currere’s analytic moment where teachers interrogate the regressive and progressive moments to realise a personal voice (Khoza, 2016a; Pinar, 2012). For teaching and learning purposes, the teacher gets into the synthetical moment. This is when the teachers interrogate the analytic moment and assume practice actions that draw from both regressive (professional) and progressive (societal moments) and combine both moments to establish one meaningful action (Mpungose & Khoza, 2020a; Pinar, 2012). When teachers reach the synthetic moments, they pragmatically engage the curriculum enactment in their personal voices that consider contextual factors. From the reflections and interrogations individual teachers will respond by their unique personal attributes to come up with individualized voice that will direct action in practice. This is where the theory of teachers’ voices is born as it assumes that individual teachers reflect using currere moments by reconciling the two giant voices to produce a unique identity with a personalized voice.

Figure 4.0 presents the theory of teachers’ voices which has used examples of relevant curriculum concepts or principles of professional and societal voices which teachers should analyse to come up with unique personal voices. I argue that if teachers reflect on practice, they can combine the professional and societal voices concepts to come up with a unique personal voice. The suggested theory then encourages prominence of personal voices to address the tension and transform teaching through engaging teachers to an analytic moment and select strengths from both the professional and societal voices to address teachers’ needs and identities.
Research and Methodology

The purpose of the study was to explore and further understand teachers’ voices to address their identity. The following research questions guided the study.

i. What are the voices of teachers on the teaching of EGCSE Geography?

ii. Why are the teachers voices the way they are in the teaching of EGCSE Geography?

Research Design and Methodology

This study was guided by the pragmatic paradigm which is grounded on the proposition that researchers ought to use philosophical as well as methodological approaches that work best or suits a specific research problem that is being studied. Kaushik and Walsh (2019) posit that the philosophical postulation of the pragmatic paradigm is driven by experiences of participants instead of other worldviews. Moreover, scholars Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), Kaushik and Walsh (2019) and Khoza (2021a) avow that pragmatists concentrate on finding out solutions to life and educational complications so that what works become known, followed and supported. Consequently, pragmatism improves teachers’ practices and their voices.

This study was coordinated through the qualitative approach and driven by the Educational Design Research (EDR). This design was suitable as it sets to attend an educational problem on the field by endeavoring to put knowledge in use and further generate new knowledge (Gravemeijer, McKenney & Nieveen, 2006; Van den Akker, Plomb & Nieven, 2013; ). Moreover, EDR was suitable to develop research-based explanations to compound problems such as the tension of voices in the curriculum spaces. Three (3) data generation methods were used in this study; reflective activities, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Data was analysed by guide/thematic descriptive analysis. Eight (8) teachers were purposively and conveniently selected to partake in the study.

Since this study was qualitative, guided/thematic analysis was used. Guided/thematic analysis which was used to separate, sort and synthesise the data supposes that the researcher decides categories before the data generation takes place (Cohen et al., 2018; Cresswell& Cresswell, 2017; Nieuwehuis, 2016; Samuel, 2008). The categories came as themes which were generated from the theory of teachers’ voices and the others were informed by the data generated. In order to make sense of the deductive/pre-determined and inductive/ collected themes I had to employ open coding. According to Cohen et al. (2018) and Maree (2020), open coding is the way the data is organised by a researcher. I engaged open coding in order to arrange the generated data in a way that classified it into categories so as to establish themes/patterns so to enhance the study’s validity.

Four principles of trustworthiness were taken into consideration so as to guarantee dependability (consistency through the use of direct quotations was applied), transferability (applicability of the study to different contexts), confirmability (elimination of bias by
the use of multiple data generation methods/ triangulation), and credibility (truthfulness by allowing participants to verify the findings) (Khoza, 2021b).

Findings and Discussions

The findings were generated by means of reflective activities (questionnaires) based on the themes and their accompanying items in the category depicted in Table 1. The participants had to react on each of the items, stating which one they favour. The similar items on the category section were used to generate questions for the semi-structured interviews and focus-group discussions.

Table 1: Themes and Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationalisation</td>
<td>Knowledge or Skills/Competencies or Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational goals</td>
<td>Teacher short-term goals or Teacher long-term goals Or Learner goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Prescribed or Every day/Indigenous Knowledge Or Self-developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Formal or Informal or Non-Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>Teacher centered or Content centered Or Learner centered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Technical/Mechanised or Multi-media Or Personal designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Instructor or Enabler or Illustrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Schoolroom or Field trips Or Blended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rationalisation

This theme sought after the reason/s why teachers teach. The participants would show the voice that drive them based on the choice of the category: if driven by the professional voice, (knowledge), to make learners acquire skills and competencies (societal) and those who indicated were teaching for the love of the subject it depicted one driven by a personal voice. The striking response on this theme was that participants were not aware of the justification on why they teach geography. Mostly they said “What does this question want? After clarification, five of the eight teachers affirmed that they were teaching for knowledge and two said there taught for the learners to gain specific skills or competencies so that their learners acquire a better future from learning geography.

Khoza (2015a) frowns at a situation where teachers find themselves teaching without fully understanding the rationale behind. This suggests that the teachers lack their personal voice which would direct their practice habits. Young (2014), Freire (1994) and Pinar (2012) suggest that teachers must be given direction in the form of rationale by curriculum developers from which they can be able to introduce their personal voices to enact the curriculum. The fact that one teacher indicated to teach for personal reasons confirmed that the teachers are fully entrenched in enacting the curriculum driven by professional and societal voices. Hoadley and Jansen (2018) acknowledges that usually, professional and or societal voice driven teachers are stiff on their reasoning for practice; they fail to accommodate ‘other’ voices, but remain completely entrenched in the professional or societal voice. However, Biesta (2015), Freire (1994), argue that teachers can enact the curriculum appropriately if driven by personal voices instead of being intimidated by the giant voices.

Educational goals

Goals in the teaching space are for guiding learning. The participants were not aware of the categories of goals they have to accomplish. Mostly said “We assumed this is all that we had to accomplish as they are stated in black and white in the syllabus. It is specified as general objectives and specific objectives. We use these short-term objectives when we write our daily preparation books. We believed these are the only goals that we ought to follow”. The participants’ response showed lack of understanding of the voices that summon their teaching. For Khoza (2015a, 2015b, and 2018) it is essential for teachers to distinguish the three educational goals in order to gain a full understanding of the curriculum they enact. The division of the goals suggests that the teachers’ short-term goals are objectives, teachers’ long-term goals are aims and the learners’ goals are outcomes.

In the teachers’ reactions in the reflective activities, mostly the teachers presented responses which indicated that they were typically driven by professional voices as they stated that they were driven by short-term goals. This is because the short-term goals are pre-arranged for the teachers to use in teaching and learning (Tyler, 2013). Stenhouse (2005) concurs with Celia and Elize (2018) that short term goals coerce teachers towards doing what is pre-set for them by professional voices. Seemingly the participants were happy to be driven by the professional voice as they said “We are lucky that the syllabus has stipulated objectives. We just follow and don’t deviate on those”. This assertion extrapolates that the teachers’ practice is not in line with the EGCSE curriculum which is supposed to be learner centered. This displays the voices tension.

Shoba (2018) bemoans the situation where teachers find themselves unaware of the educational goal to achieve. If teachers find themselves in the tension, it is likely then that they would they teach without determination, purpose and direction. This would be solved by the realization of a personal voice that would address the tension.
Content

By content, curriculum scholars refer to the matter to be taught or learned in the form of knowledge (Bernstein, 1999; Hoadley & Jansen, 2018; Khoza, 2015b; Shulman, 1987). The findings revealed that for teaching geography teachers rely on prescribed and everyday knowledge which depicts reliance on professional and societal voices. “My school buys the prescribed textbook for learners that is what I use”, said one teacher. Young (2014) condemns a state where learners are exposed only to prescribed content knowledge only. In what Young (2014) calls “powerful knowledge” which is biased and unreasonable for learners as it does not embrace knowledge from everyday knowledge or indigenous knowledge which supports the societal voices. Four teachers declared that they used both the prescribed texts and also does welcome indigenous societal knowledge from the learners. These teachers were however quickly to raise the tension in that the textbook content sometimes is in contradiction of that from the societal voice, or everyday knowledge.

Likewise, relying on the societal knowledge only can also be dangerous for teachers since some of the content might not be accurate. For example knowledge from some media or online sources might be misleading. Thus, Silseth (2018) advances that teachers must make use of everyday content knowledge since learners are not empty in content, they come full of knowledge and skills that are important particularly if applied tactically by a teacher through blending it with professional content. In this way a teacher may create a personalized kind of knowledge that has been developed by taking advantage of content knowledge from both societal and professional voices.

Assessment

Assessment denotes to the wide-ranging means and or tools that are used to measure, evaluate learning progress, academic inclination and specific skills acquisition of learners (Bennet, 2011; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Dlamini, 2018). The findings unearthed that the participants were aware of assessments and its categories. However, some were not aware the specific voices that influence the way they administer their assessments tasks. All of the teachers in the study pointed out that “always one makes sure that learners are engaged with random oral questions during the course of the lesson, and are also given some written pieces of work in form of classwork and homework together with topic tests or monthly tests. All these are done to prepare learners with questions that will be of assistance to them in their end of year final examinations”. This teacher’s account suggests that the teachers use varied forms of assessment, although emphasis is on professional/ summative assessment which forces teachers to prepare for the high stake examinations. This implies that the personal voice of teachers in assessment is missing as they are forced to drill learners for the professional voice needs.

Pedagogy

For Pollard (2010) and Stephen (2006), pedagogy involves explicit philosophies that describe the numerous activities teachers and learners engage with during the teaching and learning process. Findings of the study affirmed that a majority of the teachers use teacher centered activities to push the syllabus. “One has to push the long syllabus, lest the syllabus might not be finished as teaching and learning time competes with other extra-curricular activities”. Even though the curriculum is societal in nature, teachers mostly were driving it using professional voices. Three affirmed to be mixing the learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches.

The three presented curriculum enacted by personal voices as teachers are expected to utilise teacher-centred pedagogy for an effective presentation of prescribed knowledge, content-centred pedagogy to present the knowledge to be given to learners, and the problem-centred pedagogy which takes from both teacher and content pedagogy for the benefit of learners. This suggests that striking a sense of balance by drawing from the strengths of the teacher and content centred pedagogy yields a personalised pedagogy that addresses the needs of individual teachers who enact the curriculum on their natural identities free from any forms of coercion (Apple, 2004; Freire 1994; Pinar, 2012; Young. 2014).

Teaching tools

Teaching tools refer to whichever resource/instrument that communicates and stimulates learning (Berkvens, 2009; Khoza & Mpungose, 2022; Samuel, 2008; Van den Akker, 2010). Discoveries for this theme revealed that the geography teachers commonly used practically the comparable kind of instructional tools for their teaching. “We have the chalkboard and books that are ready for use, although sometimes one prepares a chart”. This shows that the frequently used tools were the professional tools/technical tools followed by the societal tools/multi-media ones which a small number of the participants used. “The school has a computer and sometimes geography lessons are projected for the learners”. For some teachers lack of the technological tools limited the teachers from using societal tools. However, the utmost interesting finding was that the participants were not conscious that they themselves were important personalised tools.

Khoza (2018) endorses that it is important for teachers to consider their personal voices when it comes to ideologies, theories, skills as powerful tools that should be put to good use to provide useful personalised tools for learners. Moreover, the teacher as a personalised tool fulfills self-actualisation needs as it represents the teacher’s personal identity that is critical in enacting geography lessons (Khoza & Fomunyan, 2021). This calls for the curriculum to be open in encouraging teachers towards using personalised tools instead of relying on giant commonly used tools.
Designation

Designation refers to the position or role a teacher assumes when teaching. The data generated for this theme submits that most of the teachers were entrenched in the instructor title role. Five of them confirmed that “One has to lead, instruct these learners lest time will be wasted, and syllabus will not be completed”. On the issue of time, Celia and Elize (2018) are in accord with Van Eeden (2018) that because of time stress and the issue of large class numbers, a majority of teachers choose to drive their lessons using the instructor role as it saves time since lessons are paced by the teacher instead of the learners. This suggests the weight of professional voices in detecting terms for teachers. Three indicated that they sometimes facilitate as the learners are sometimes grouped and do presentations.

Surprisingly, the geography curriculum does not make an explicit suggestion of the designation of teachers for which Makumane (2018) laments that such a position might pose a threat as teachers are vital connections between policy and practice. Thus the voice that drives the teaching of climate change must be clear so that teachers may not have misconstrued interpretations of their expected designations so to achieve intended curriculum outcomes. The personalised role is suggested as it would allow the teachers to be flexible to take strengths from both the professional and societal voices to come up with a role that is pragmatic and befits natural identities.

Setting

Setting describes every knowledge fashioned environment that is appropriate for teaching and learning (Dlamini, 2018; Khoza, 2020; Mabuza, 2018; Makumane, 2018; Van den Akker, 2010). The most favored setting for the teachers in this study was the four-walled classroom. “We always learn in the classroom as it allows us to pace the lessons in such a way that the learners push the syllabus.” This account indicates that professional voices mainly influence the teachers’ voices even though the EGCSE syllabus is societal in nature. Some teachers take their learners out to the society/environment to have firsthand information on some geography sections. If the worry of professional voices is the issue of time and control, taking learners out of the four-walled classroom indicates tension as the two voices evidently are conflicting.

This study suggests that teachers should embrace blended learning so that the teachers can continue engaging learners even when they are not within the four-walled classroom setting. Such would minimize the time lost in the course of the academic year. Castle and McGuire (2010), note that personal voices that depend on blended learning also caters for learners’ various needs thus its use can increase the chances of effective attainment of learning outcomes. In addition, blended learning upsurges learner’s motivation and further allows the teacher to work independently in his/her natural identity to meet the needs of learners.

Conclusion

The study concludes that as teachers enact the curriculum, they are driven by two giant voices that cause tension on the teacher’s actions, which are professional and societal voices. Moreover, the study unveiled that the tension can be addressed by embracing strengths of both the professional and societal voices to come up with a unique personal voice to enact the curriculum. It was discovered in this study that teachers were not aware of their personal voice as they were captured by the two giant voices. In essence, engaging currenre in this study assisted in allowing teachers to self-evaluate and self-reflect in such a way that they then became aware of their personal identities. The personal identity then serves as a major factor towards teachers practice habits. Khoza (2021), advocates for the acknowledgement of the personal voice as every teacher has unique qualities that allow each teacher to self-actualise and be more effective in practice.

The findings in this study indicated that the teachers were summoned by professional voices to enact the EGCSE curriculum which is societal. To address this problematic state, the study advocates for the combination of the two main voices so to come up with the unique personal voice. The study concludes that teachers need to utilise the personal voice in order to address the tensions that result from the professional and societal voice’s strain. For all intents and purposes, all eight participants gave the impression that they were thrown in confusion as they were to teach a societal voices curriculum using professional voices propositions. However, engaging them in this study made them appreciate that teaching and learning should not be affected by reliance on the two giant voices, but teachers should reflect and use their personal identities to approach the curriculum with their personal voices. The teachers need to realise that they need to be resourceful and seek for their identity to meet their needs and those of learners without compromising the quality of the enacted curriculum.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks go to Professor Simon B Khoza and Dr Makhosazana Shoba UKZN, Edgewood. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Author Contributions: Writing and Conceptualization, methodology, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, writing—original draft preparation, by Dlamini B.B and language editing, Lydia Weight.

Funding: This research was not funded.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to restrictions.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.
References

Budden, R. (2017). Exploration of factors that inform curriculum studies students to use e-resources in conducting Masters of Education dissertations at a South African university. (Doctor of Philosophy Full research), University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.


Mpungose, C. B. (2020c). Emergent transition from face-to-face to online learning in a South African University in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 7(1), 1-9.


502


**Publisher’s Note:** SSBFNET stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

© 2023 by the authors. Licensee SSBFNET, Istanbul, Turkey. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147-4478) by SSBFNET is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.