

THE ROLE OF CLASSROOM FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICE IN  
GEOGRAPHY

by

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MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

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ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

at the

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SUPERVISOR: DR S. VAN STADEN

July 2020

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Victor Rhulani Nkuna, student number 10486382, hereby declare that this dissertation, “*the possible role of classroom formative assessment practice on learners’ achievement in geography in the FET phase*” is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Magister Educationis degree at the University of Pretoria. I declare that it is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.



.....

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my mother, Patironi Therisa Nkuna, who instilled in me the love and value of education. I also dedicate this research to my significant other, Makgari and my children Rhulani and Motheo, may you always strive to be the best version of yourselves.

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the role of classroom formative assessment practice in geography. Although geography enjoys a good pass rate percentage in the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, the concern remains about the average and the number of distinctions produced annually. A Framework for Learning-Oriented Assessment was used as a conceptual framework which guided this study. Research questions that guided this study aimed at investigating the possible role of classroom formative strategies or techniques on learner performance in geography, the extent to which School-Based Assessment (SBA) is used as a formative tool, the provision of feedback and the learners' role in geography assessment. The qualitative data was collected through structured interviews, document analysis and observation involving six FET phase geography teachers from three different schools in Tshwane West District (D15).

The findings of this study indicated that the participating Geography teachers in the FET phase were committed to using differential assessment practices in their classroom to improve their learners' results. Though, their main focus was on summative assessment, and little attention was given to the formative assessment practice. It was against this background that this study recommended that Geography teachers should be formally trained/workshopped on assessment strategies. Secondly, there is a need to infuse SBA effectively as a formative assessment aspect of the curriculum in order to improve learner performance. Lastly, to further research the significance of assessment for learning in the South African context to strengthen the education system.

**KEYWORDS:** Classroom formative assessment, summative assessment, learner performance, school-based assessment, feedback, learners as assessors

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ATP    | Annual Teaching Plan   |
| CA     | Classroom Assessment   |
| CAPS   | Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement                         |
| CASS   | Continuous Assessment  |
| D15    | Tshwane West District  |
| DBE    | Department of Basic Education                                      |
| DoE    | Department of Education  |
| FET    | Further Education and Training                                     |
| GET    | General Education and Training                                     |
| GIS    | Geographic Information System                                      |
| GP     | Gauteng Province   |
| GPK    | General Pedagogical Knowledge                                      |
| HoD    | Head of Department   |
| HSS    | Human and Social Sciences  |
| LOA    | Learning-Oriented Assessment                                       |
| NPPPR  | National Policy Pertaining to Programme and Promotion Requirements |
| NPTFED | National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development    |
| NSC    | National Senior Certificate  |
| OBE    | Outcome-Based Education  |
| PAM    | Personnel Administrative Measures                                  |
| PCK    | Pedagogic Content Knowledge  |
| PCK    | Pedagogical Content Knowledge                                      |
| PGCE   | Postgraduate Certificate in Education                              |
| RNCS   | Revised National Curriculum Statement                              |



|      |                                    |
|------|------------------------------------|
| SA   | Summative Assessment               |
| SACE | South African Council of Educators |
| SAPA | Self And Peer Assessment           |
| SBA  | School-Based Assessment            |
| SCK  | Subject Content Knowledge          |
| SS   | Social Sciences                    |
| STD  | Secondary Teachers' Diploma        |

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# 1 CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

“The effective use of classroom assessment is critical for supporting teachers to improve teaching and learning. However, teachers need quality information from high-quality assessments to make appropriate decisions regarding what to teach, how to teach, and how to evaluate student achievement” (Kanjee & Sayed, 2013, p. 444).

The study aimed to investigate the role of classroom formative assessment practice in Geography. The study was conducted in Gauteng Province (GP) in the Tshwane West district (D15). Gauteng is geographically the smallest, most urbanised and most highly populated province in South Africa. GP is characterised by a high influx of people from different provinces with different ethnic groups in search of better job opportunities. However, Tshwane West district (D15) comprises various types of school, ranging from city schools to township schools with high enrolment rates.

Assessment forms an integral part of teaching and learning. In the South African context, assessment practice has been emphasised by the subject assessment policy for Further Education Training (FET) phase of the Department of Education (DoE) which state that “assessment should be part of every lesson and teachers should plan assessment activities to complement learning activities” (DoE, 2008, p. 1). The main aim of this study was to investigate whether formative assessment plays a role in the quality of learners’ achievement in Geography. According to Kanjee (2007), little information on how to improve learner performance in South Africa is available. Limited literature for Geography as a subject in South Africa, has left many Geography teachers in the dark on how to support and improve the learners’ performance in the subject.

The study aimed at collecting meaningful data about teachers’ current assessment practices and also to analyse the extent to which assessment practices in the FET Phase lead to the low performance of learners in Geography, with specific reference to the number of distinctions and the average for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) at the end of the year examination. Through this study, the research could inform teachers about other ways of gaining information through “Assessment for learning”. Many authors have used the terms assessment for learning in conjunction with formative assessment (FA) as well as an assessment of learning with summative



assessment (SA). Jonsson, Lundahl and Holmgren (2015) and Black and William (1998) are the few authors to do so. However, Earl (2006) differentiates between assessment for learning and assessment of learning.

According to Earl (2006), assessment for learning is a process that occurs throughout and ought to make each learner visible so that the teacher can be able to decide what to do to help learners progress. In the assessment for learning, the teacher is interactive with their learners so that they can be able to identify particular learning needs to select and adapt material and resources accordingly. In contrast, assessment of learning involves strategies, which are designed to confirm, what learners know and indicate whether curriculum outcomes have been met. It is designed to provide evidence of learner performance to parents and other stakeholders in education. In this study, however formative assessment and summative assessment will be the terms used instead of assessment for learning and assessment of learning.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Geography is one of the FET phase subjects, which learners choose as they enter the phase after completion of the General Education and Training (GET) band, either as a core or as elective subject (DoE, 2003a, p. 19). However, in recent years, the learners' performance in the final Grade 12 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination has shown a decline in the quality of learners' achievement for Geography. Since the inception of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2014 for Grade 12 NSC (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2019), Geography Grade 12 results nationally have shown a slight decline in the number of learners who pass the subject with at least 50% and above. The table below shows the performance trend in Geography in the period between 2014 and 2017.

**Table 1.1: Overall achievement rates in Geography**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>No. Wrote</b> | <b>No. achieved at 30% and above</b> | <b>% achieved at 30% and above</b> | <b>No. achieved at 40% and above</b> | <b>% achieved at 40% and above</b> |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2014        | 236 051          | 191 966                              | 81,3                               | 127 358                              | 54,0                               |
| 2015        | 303 985          | 234 208                              | 77,0                               | 153 212                              | 50,4                               |
| 2016        | 302 682          | 231 641                              | 76,5                               | 145 726                              | 48,1                               |
| 2017        | 276 771          | 212 954                              | 76,9                               | 138 704                              | 50,1                               |

Education (2018, p. 81)

The above statistic reveals a true story when it comes to assessment in Geography across the FET phase because what happens in the lower grades might impact the results once a learner reaches Grade 12. However, this challenge can be attributed to a number of factors akin to what Poliah (2014) points out as challenges faced by standardisation of NSC examination marking, which is determined nationally but has to be applied across nine provincial departments. He further raises the concern of inclusion of School-Based Assessment (SBA) as a promotional requirement for NSC offered subjects (Poliah, 2009, p. 48). According to Poliah (2014) “SBA is an important formative assessment component but when it serves as summative assessment component, as part of a high-stake exit qualification, it needs to be rigorously controlled and quality assured” (Poliah, 2009, p. 13).

The SBA for Grade 12 in the South African context is test dominated (Umalusi, 2013). There is a huge disparity in the quality of SBA from one district to the other, given the challenge of resources in schools and probably lack of competency in teachers when it comes to designing of SBA tasks, which can negatively affect the quality of NSC end-year results. Moreover, Poliah (2014), argues that NSC examinations are threatened by the 25% SBA component, which lacks reliability and validity.

The assumption here is that there is a great potential in the youth that is not being tapped, which might be as a result of employing an incorrect classroom assessment practice. The impact of national assessments is in some cases counter-productive to learning, as the focus becomes “teaching to the test”, an inevitable narrow focus. In the South-African context of the educational system, teachers tend to put more emphasis on the promotion role of School-Based Assessment (SBA), which results in a narrow focus when it comes to assessment. This narrow focus in assessment by teachers means teaching and assessing to the test, which is reckoned to be part of the final examination, which means learners are being trained for the final examination. This inflation of results will boost examination marks and consequently, lead to ineffective teaching and learning (DBE, 2014, p. 14;122).

The above statement is supported by Jennings and Bearak (2014), who highlight the delusion in which teachers tend to teach what is predicted to be in the national assessment rather than focusing on teaching what the curriculum prescribed. The hypothesis held here is that improved classroom teaching, including a conscious engagement with a formative assessment with enhanced conceptual understanding, can ultimately improve the scores of functional external tests. The good external score refers to the standardised common examination question papers that are set and regulated by the quality-assuring body Umalusi in the case of Grade 12. When looking at the lower grades of the FET, Grade 10 and 11, it will be the examination papers provided by the district or the province.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **1.3.1 Main research question**

What is the role of formative assessment in the quality of learners’ performance in Geography in the FET phase?

#### **1.3.2 Sub-questions**

1. To what extent is SBA effective as a form of formative assessment, and how does it affect learners’ performance in Geography?
2. To what extent is summative evidence reflective of formative practices?
3. What role do learners play in formative assessment concerning peer or self-evaluation?

4. What formative assessment techniques and strategies do Geography teachers apply in their classroom?

#### **1.4 RATIONALE**

It is more evident that the continuous practice of incorrect classroom assessment practice will hamper the achievement of learners. Assessment forms an integral part and the base of the curriculum; therefore, it is an important aspect of the education system. Schiefelbein and Schiefelbein, (2003, as cited in Kanjee 2007) posits that if formative assessment is deployed and used appropriately, the education system can achieve government's desired goal of producing matric results with high averages and an improved number of distinctions. However, most teachers in South Africa still employ the traditional way of assessment which is traditional tests and examinations aimed at summing up what the learners know and can do. This assessment procedure aims to report the overall picture of learners' achievement (Reyneke, 2016), while formative assessment is there to enhance teaching and learning.

The CAPS for Geography stipulates what must be taught, which topics to be covered, how long it should be taught and what to be assessed as part of School-Based Assessment (SBA) (Education & Africa, 2011). In the South African education system, SBA has become a supported policy practice. In CAPS, 25% consists of SBAs which includes all formal tasks and activities throughout the year, involving marking and recording and 75% consists of an end-of-year examination, added together these are the marks used for progression of learners.

In the introduction, Section 1.1 of this chapter it has already been highlighted that in the South African education system, teachers tend to prioritise the promotion of SBA since it has been aligned with the end-of-year examination in the FET and as a high stake National Senior Certificate (NSC) at the conclusion of this phase (DBE, 2014; Poliah, 2014; Reyneke, 2016). Therefore, the only way formative assessment can be practiced in the examination driven South African educational system is to merge the SBA with a formal programme of assessment. This merging of SBA into formal programme of assessment will be seen as an alternative way of replacing the traditional tests and examinations as a form of assessment practice (Ghazali & Malim, 2016).

According to Ghazali and Malim (2016), SBA is considered a holistic assessment because it can give the overall picture of the learner's potential and assess various aspects of the learner's development. They further argue that SBA should be able to promote active learning and be integrated into teaching and learning throughout schooling or be a continuous process. This SBA integration as a formative tool means promoting active involvement in learning, teachers giving feedback to learners and learners should have an active role in the assessment as either peer or self-evaluator. The interest for this study comes from the researcher's role as a Geography teacher with five years' teaching experience in the subject. I have observed the same pattern in learners' performance in Geography across the FET phase. I have realised the possible effect of classroom assessment practices on my learners' achievement between Grade 10 and 12 in the FET phase. This observation has constituted an interest in trying to investigate the possible source of low performance in the learners' achievement in Geography.

## **1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

Looking back at what Kanjee (2007) has highlighted in Section 1.1 of this chapter regarding little information being available in South Africa on how to improve learners' performance, this lack of information has underlined the need to close this gap. There have been many studies conducted to investigate the challenges faced by teachers in the Mathematics and Physical Sciences. Studies conducted by Dliwayo (2019), Motsamai (2017) and Mupira and Ramnarain (2018) focused on the use of formative assessment in Mathematics and the challenges faced by teachers and Physical Sciences subjects to mention few, but little literature is available about Geography. Thus, this lack of information constitutes a need to close the gap in the literature for Geography learners' performance with regards to external or end-of-year examination. Furthermore, the findings of this study could add to the body of knowledge regarding SBA as a tool for formative assessment. It could also help develop effective formative assessment strategies at a classroom level and to clearly define the role of learners in formative assessment, specifically with Geography as a subject. This study may also contribute eloquently to the education research community, the education profession, and the policymakers.

## **1.6 ORIENTATION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to investigate the role of classroom formative assessment practice in geography, the study adopted qualitative research methodology. Allen (2017) posit that the purpose of qualitative research is to “generate knowledge and create understanding about the social world (p. 7)” Furthermore, Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Maree (2016) suggest that qualitative research seek to acquire more understanding of underlying reasons and focuses on natural settings where interaction occurs.

A qualitative approach was selected for this study in an attempt to make sense of geography teachers’ experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards classroom assessment practices and how it affects their learners’ performance. A case study research design underpinned the study because according to Goodrick (2014) case study is defined as an “in-depth examination, often undertaken over time, of a single case (p. 29)”. Drawing from this definition, the purpose of a case study is to understand in great depth as to how geography teachers implement their daily classroom assessment in the FET phase.

## **1.7 SAMPLING**

The sample was drawn purposively and consisted of six Tshwane West district (D15) geography teachers. These participants at least had teachers’ minimum qualification of B.Ed. degree or Diploma in teaching and specialised in geography and were registered with South African Council of Educators (SACE). Moreover, they have been teaching geography in the FET phase for at least the past three years. Chapter 3 discuss in the details the background of the participants.

## **1.8 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

In order to understand and make meaning out of classroom assessment practices geography teachers employ, the following three data collection methods were adopted for this study:

### **1.8.1 Document analysis**

During this stage the researcher sought to understand the role of School-Based Assessment (SBA) and learners in formative assessment. Document analysis was a proper method to collect data as it allows the researcher to peruse the kind of SBA

tasks set by geography teachers and the evidence of peer/self-assessment tasks undertaken by learners.

### **1.8.2 Semi-structured interviews**

In the pursuit to make sense of geography teachers' experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the use of formative assessment, face-to-face semi-structured interview was considered appropriate data collection method. Attest to this, Van Teijlingen (2014) posit that semi-structured interviews are well suited to explore attitudes, values, belief, and motives and they can potentially increase the response rate. The researcher has conducted face-to-face interviews with the participants to find out more about their practice, attitudes and their beliefs with regard to the use of formative assessment in class.

### **1.8.3 Observations**

Observation was well suited for this study as it supplemented and clarified the data derived from participants' interviews. Observation was followed to triangulate if what teachers said during the interview was actually what was being practiced in the classroom with regards to use of formative assessment.

## **1.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

Thematic data analysis was adopted for this study and it was well suited, as it allowed the researcher to identify themes and patterns of meaning across the dataset in relation to the research questions (Ngulube, 2015). Through thematic data analysis, collected data from semi-structured interviews was transcribed thoroughly and enabled the researcher to code across the entire dataset. During this stage, themes were reviewed by mapping provisional themes and their relationships. The interview transcripts were examined in order to confirm, supplement and expand the observed data for each research question.

The descriptive case report was used which provided a clear chain of evidence linking the findings back to the raw data collected. This process enabled the researcher to integrate the observed data with non-observed data (Morgan, Pullon, Macdonald, McKinlay, & Gray, 2017). Detailed explanation on the analysis methods are provided in Chapter 3.

## **1.10 QUALITY CRITERIA**

The term “trustworthiness” refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Connelly, 2016). Triangulation was used through different data collection methods to ensure trustworthiness of study. Detailed description on the credibility, transferability and confirmability of this study is provided in Chapter 3.

## **1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Throughout the stages of this study, ethical practices which is prescribed by the University of Pretoria’s guidelines were followed. The researcher obtained the ethical clearance certificate from the University of Pretoria ethics committee. As soon as the clearance was approved, the permission was sought from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct research from the sampled schools. Once the permission by the Gauteng Department of education was granted, the sampled geography teachers who met the criteria were informed and asked to voluntarily give consent to participate in the study.

To ensure that the collected data could not be identified by the nonparticipants, pseudonyms were allocated to each participating school and the participants to ensure anonymity and privacy. More on this issue is outlined in Chapter 3.

## **1.12 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

This dissertation consists of five chapters, with Chapter 2 being the literature review. The literature review unpacks assessment into the themes of formative assessment, summative assessment, school-based assessment (SBA) and the role of SBA in formative assessment.

Chapter 3 explores the research methods and design applied in the study and the conceptual framework which underpinned this in the South African context. Moreover, the sampling process is unpacked and the data collection instruments and the analysis of the study are addressed.

In Chapter 4, the collected data is discussed and presented, and the main research question and sub-questions are addressed using the collected data. Furthermore, all



matters discussed in the preceding chapters are then considered to answer the main research question for the study.

Chapter 5 is the final chapter of this dissertation, where the findings of the main research question are then presented to draw the conclusion of the study. Thus, the dissertation draws near to consolidating the research questions, literature review, and conceptual framework to give further researchers on this topic the recommendations.

## 2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Part of tracking learners' performance is based on formative assessment. As such, it is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. This study aims to investigate the role played by classroom formative assessment practice or techniques on Grade 10 to 12 learners' achievement in Geography. Assessment plays an important role in teaching and learning, as stated above. It can determine whether a learner progresses to the next grade or not. It is for this reason that it always has and always will be an important part of a teachers' job requirement. Assessment is a very specific and comprehensive form of evaluation, in its nature, it has the ability to enable the tracking of a school's quality as well as the educational system of a country (Braun, Kanjee, Bettinger, & Kremer, 2006; De Cooman, 2018). The view of assessment has changed a lot since the advent of democracy in South Africa. According to Motsamai (2017) all these changes are as a result of wanting to track the quality of learner performance in South African schools. Some of the differences that can be noted in assessment pre- and post-apartheid in South Africa comes in the form of content assessment. During apartheid, the focus was placed on summative assessment, however, post-apartheid the focus has been more on educational reform and formative assessment. (Motsamai, 2017; Reddy, 2004).

The first signal of educational reform in South Africa in the post-apartheid era was in the form of the introduction of curriculum 2005 (C2005). This curriculum was also known as the Outcome-Based Education (OBE), which signalled the beginning of an assessment transition in the South African education system. OBE brought with it Continuous Assessment (CASS), which shifted the focus away from the high-stake summative assessment, of the apartheid education system (Motsamai, 2017) to an assessment system which allowed learners to be assessed on an ongoing basis rather than with written once-off examinations (Jansen, 1998; Maile, 2013; Motsamai, 2017). This assessment transition became the birth of School-Based Assessment (SBA) which will be discussed in greater detail later in Section 2.3.1 of this chapter.

Section 2.2 of this chapter outlines Geography education from the South African perspective. The challenges, as well as the changes in policy, will thus be looked at in greater detail here. Section 2.3 takes a look at formative assessment and summative

assessment in Geography education and the proposed shift in the SBA implementation as well as the role that learners play in the assessment. Section 2.4 focuses the discussion on the conceptual framework aligned to the main research question and the sub-questions of this study. Section 2.5 summarises the chapter by giving the synopsis of the chapter and concluding the chapter's overall discussions.

## **2.2 GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION**

According to Mitchell and Lambert (2015), Geography is

“[a] discipline which stimulates learners’ interest and encourages learners to make sense of wonder about places. It helps learners to make sense of a complex and dynamically ever-changing world. It explains where places are, how places and landscapes are formed, how people and their environment interact, and how a diverse range of economies, societies, and environments are interconnected. It builds on learners’ own experiences to investigate places at all scales, from the personal to the global” (Mitchell & Lambert, 2015, p. 7).

Schell, Roth and Mohan (2014) posit that Geography is an interdisciplinary subject which incorporates its content from various fields of studies such as science, art, health, humanities, law, business, engineering and technology. Furthermore, they argue that Geography as a subject is not something that learners should know; however, it should be what learners must do. Schell et al.’s (2014) point of view is supported by the Geography subject policy’s aims, which advocate developing learners who are committed to sustainable development and who will continuously be at the forefront of creating awareness and sensitivity towards the world’s inequality (Education & Africa, 2011, p. 8).

### **2.2.1 Geography education in the South African context**

As highlighted in Chapter 1, there is very little information to be found on Geography education in South Africa. Despite this shortage of literature an attempt is made in this section to give an overview of Geography education from a South African perspective. Reference is drawn from various subjects sharing similar encounters as well as from Geography education internationally, to accomplish this. In South Africa, Geography is the subject which is presented in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase

as an elective when a learner enters the phase in Grade 10. Geography can also be found at the lower grades of the General Education and Training (GET) phase as part of social sciences, which comprises of history and Geography. In the FET phase learners are required to have at least seven subjects which they must choose, with three of those subjects, Home Language (HL); First Additional Language (FAL) and Life Orientation being compulsory. Thus, the choice of the learners' subjects can be attributed to various factors ranging from the relationship between the intended future career/field of study to their marks in grade 9 Social Sciences (SS) if they decide to take Geography.

Geography, like any other subject in South Africa, was heavily affected by the apartheid education system. Motsamai (2017) regarded the apartheid education system as being driven by undemocratic ideologies which intended not to empower the black people akin to what Jansen (1998) called a content-heavy curriculum. Vithal and Volmink (2005) similarly assert that under the apartheid dispensation, the education system for black learners was designed with the purpose of continuous supply of cheap labour to mines and industries. It was designed to equip learners to be functional and practical as unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. Moreover, a small amount of research has taken place in South Africa concerning Geography education. However, the research conducted in the Czech Republic and Central Europe on Geography education share similar characteristics with the apartheid education system in South Africa which was designed for black learners (Karvánková, Popjaková, Vančura, & Mládek, 2017; Vithal & Volmink, 2005). The findings in the Czech Republic and Central Europe indicate that Geography was only limited to a map with great emphasis placed on the history of an area rather than on themes related to Geography (Karvánková, et al., 2017).

Post-1994, the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), which was later known as Curriculum 2005 (C2005), saw the only change in Geography being in the GET phase where the subject merged with history to form subject called Human and Social Sciences (HSS). This change meant that the teacher who was only qualified to teach history now had to teach Geography content as well. The question and issue of teacher Subject Content Knowledge (SCK) came to light, however, the transmission of factual knowledge in Geography remained the main focus. More on this topic will be discussed later in this chapter. The criticism of Geography education under the

apartheid syllabus of only focusing on assessing learners' performance without looking to feedback into teaching and learning was also evident in the early course of the Geography syllabus under the democratic education system (Beets & Le Grange, 2008). The transmission of factual knowledge in Geography remained the main focus. This focus did not take into consideration the development of learners' enquiry skills and their ability to apply geographic knowledge and understanding of real-life issues and context. According to Beets and Le Grange (2008), this assessment practice was as a result of the new approach which was teacher-centred and their continued reliance on summative assessment (SA) that led to learners recalling memorised facts (Higgs & Van Wyk, 2007).

In the past five years, in the Gauteng province, the overall average performance for Geography has never exceeded 50%, which is of great concern. Table 2.1 below provides a summary of the overall average performance and the pass rate for five years for Grade 12.

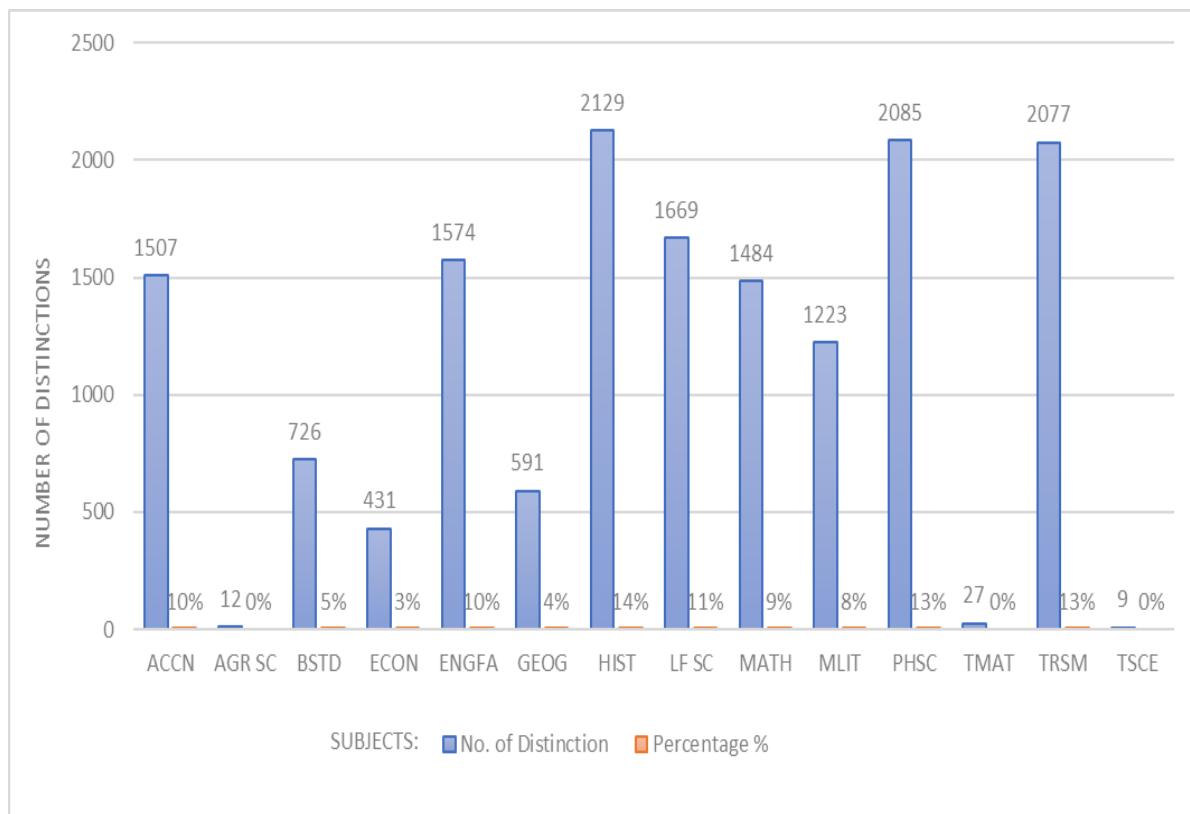
**Table 2.1: Gauteng province Geography grade 12 result 2014 – 2018**

| Year | Total enrolment | Total wrote | Achieved pass % | Subject average % |
|------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 2014 | 41570           | 41090       | 89%             | 47%               |
| 2015 | 50148           | 49348       | 85%             | 50%               |
| 2016 | 52616           | 50006       | 85%             | 46%               |
| 2017 | 51499           | 47299       | 86%             | 47%               |
| 2018 | 52454           | 47299       | 85%             | 46%               |

**(Education, 2019, p. 88)**

The above statistics are indicative of learners' performance in Geography for five consecutive years. The pass percentage is well above 80%, which is good; however, the quality of these Grade 12 learners' pass rate remains a question. The learners' pass rate is good; however, how learners pass their grade 12 Geography is of concern with a low average as indicated by the statistics above. The technical report for the 2018 NSC examination also compares the subjects in terms of the number of

distinctions per subject and Geography still indicate only 4% of the learners achieving distinctions, which is low compared to other subjects in the province. Figure 2.1 below depicts a summary of all subjects' distinctions.



**Figure 2.1: Distinction per subject (Education, 2019, p. 78)**

### 2.2.2 Challenges in Geography education

Even though there has been a significant shift in the system of assessment pre and post-apartheid times in South Africa, there are still several questions which remain unresolved and unanswered when it comes to Geography assessment and instruction (Beets & Le Grange, 2008; Innes, 2012). The first sign of change was the separation of the Geography themes when the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was introduced (Beets & Le Grange, 2008; Innes, 2012; Le Grange & Beets, 2005). Human Geography was located in Human and Social Sciences (HSS), while physical Geography was merged with Natural Sciences (NS) which are two different disciplines. However, in 2011 the CAPS was introduced and for Geography this paved a way to reclaim Geography themes from NS such as climate, weather, and geomorphology.

Beets and Le Grange (2008) cautioned about the split of Geography as a subject in the GET Phase because the separation of Geography themes meant that when a learner leaves GET phase and take Geography as a subject in the FET phase the learner might not have enough foundation for the subject. Likewise, Innes (2012) supports the argument by saying that “there was no reference to the development of geographical skills and techniques and this cohort of learners went up to FET phase without the benefit of a spatial skills foundation” (Innes, 2012, p. 96).

Even though there are curriculum changes and policy changes in the education system, twenty-five years later into the democratic education, Geography teaching has remained the same (Beets & Le Grange, 2008; Higgs & Van Wyk, 2007; McDormott & Rakgokong, 2013). The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills in the United Kingdom (Ofsted) makes us understand the danger of the traditional approach of teaching Geography by affirming that the Geography subject matters are forever changing; therefore, it is crucial to equip learners with inquiry skills so that they can make sense of the ever-changing world around them (Ofsted, 2011).

The ability of learners to interact with the world around them during Geography education makes learning Geography about more than just memorising facts. Thus, assessment can also be used to play a pivotal role in delivering and instituting quality Geography education. However, the body of literature indicates that in South Africa, the implementation of classroom assessment (CA) is rarely effective. Browne (2016) acknowledges the policy shift which stipulates the use of CA on a regular basis only to find that teachers do not use it but find themselves teaching what is predicted to be part of the examination which he termed “teaching to the test”.

According to Browne (2016), the following factors can attribute to teachers’ rarely implementing CA:

- “Lack of support material in teaching the subject effectively;
- Lack of proper training with regard to the use of CA’
- Parental pressure; and
- Exam driven system” (Browne, 2016, p. 2)

Drawing from Browne’s (2016) argument in relation to the effective use of CA, Geography also shares the same sentiment. Practically, in South Africa, assessment in Geography prioritises formal assessment over informal assessment. This

assessment practice means that activities which fall under formal assessment will be marked, recorded, and quality assured. On the other hand, informal activities add no value to learner's marks at the end of the year, which confirms the argument made by Beets and Le Grange (2008) in Section 2.2.1 of the heavy reliance in SA on learning to test which can result in learners ending up memorising facts. Kanjee and Sayed (2013) are of the same view that this CA practice is measurement-driven rather than focusing on improving teaching and learning.

### **2.2.3 The quality of the Geography teacher**

Teachers remain at the forefront of curriculum delivery. Teachers will interpret the subject policy matters, prepare the lessons and evaluate the lesson outcomes. Thus, the imperative role that teachers play in teaching and learning cannot be underestimated. According to Usman (2015), the quality and success of any education system rely heavily on the quality input of the teachers. Identifying capable quality teachers is still a major challenge in this profession. The system currently used for appointing new teachers into the system does not always guarantee that the most suitable candidate gets the job. This challenge can be observed in the school setting where teachers are often appointed to teach subjects in which they have no training. This lack of training and knowledge in the subjects being offered by teachers can often lead to a question of the quality of work to be produced.

There are a number of traits and characteristics that can be used to identify quality teachers. These teachers can be identified using demographics, qualifications as well as teaching experience as pointed out by Hanushek (as quoted by Armstrong, 2009, p. 171). These traits and characteristics of a quality teacher identified by Hanushek suggest that teachers of Geography need to be assessed and identified in terms of their demographics, qualifications and number of years of experience to see whether they correlate with learners' performance. De Jager, Coetzee, Maulana, Helms-Lorenz, and van de Grift's (2017) and Hofmeyer's (2015) findings point to the same conclusion as Hanushek's identified attributes of what makes a quality teacher in terms of experience. Their work points out that more experienced teachers lack motivation, and some may have had insufficient training about the implementation of interactive and differential teaching methods, which may be required for effective teaching practices. These methods are integral to cater for the learning needs of today's learners in the classroom (de Jager et al., 2017). The gap in skills possessed by older



teachers and how learners learn today, calls into question the quality of work produced by teachers who acquired their training long before the curriculum endorsed the use of more formative assessment than summative assessment. Times have changed, so too have the kind of learners taught in the classrooms today. Today's classroom is dominated by learners who are technologically advanced and exposed to Geography matters on social media platforms. Thus, if experienced teachers still hold by what might have been taught to them during their training years of textbook lessons, de Jager et al.'s (2017) arguments might be accurate and these teachers might not be capable of producing quality results with today's learners. The current learners are exposed to the use of technology and may be interested in the lesson should technology be incorporated.

Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, and Major (2014) suggest "domains such as pedagogical content knowledge, quality of instruction, classroom climate, classroom management, teacher beliefs, and teacher professional behaviours" (Coe et al., 2014, p. 413) as part of the things that determine the quality of a teacher. Danielson (2013) share a similar view with Coe et al. (2014) that "various domains that include effective characteristics of teacher practices can be interrelated with one another and could all contribute to teacher quality" (Danielson, 2013, p. 414). However, teaching is seen as a knowledge-rich profession where a teacher is regarded as a "subject specialist". As professionals in the subject, a Geography teacher is expected to process and evaluate new content knowledge relating to the subject continuously. As cautioned by Mitchel and Lambert (2015), Geography consists of ever-changing knowledge and, therefore, Geography teachers need to improve their teaching methods to meet the demands in teaching the subject (Guerriero, 2013). For this study, I am going to look at the teacher's subject content knowledge and teacher qualifications and experience.

### **2.2.3.1      *Teacher subject content knowledge***

In order to conceptualise teacher subject content knowledge for this study, literature highlights features that characterise expert teachers. Some of these features include "extensive pedagogical content knowledge, better problem-solving strategies, better adaptation for diverse learners, better decision making, better perception of classroom events, greater sensitivity to context, and greater respect for learners" (Guerriero, 2013, p. 3). Blömeke and Delaney (2014) postulate that even though teacher subject content knowledge remains the main component of teacher professionalism, the

competence of a professional teacher requires more than just subject content knowledge. Based on these two authors' work, this translates that a Geography teacher is required to possess the skill of bringing the subject matters into real life for learners to understand geographic concepts better.

For instance, when dealing with map-work concepts such as contour lines and cross-section, a learner must be able to understand that contour lines are not just lines drawn on the map to indicate places with equal height, but it is a visual representation of the physical landscape. Furthermore, cross-sections are not only line graphs as prescribed by the syllabus, but a specialised Geography teacher must possess subject content knowledge to enable learners to interpret these concepts appropriately and address the misconception with the correct geographic knowledge. Guerriero (2013) pinpoints two main components of teachers' professional competence which are adapted from Blömeke and Delaney's (2012) model of "*cognitive abilities and affective-motivational characteristics*" (Blömeke & Delaney, 2012, p 3). Weinert (2001) defined competence in general, but his definition will be understood much better if aided by Bromme (1997) who defines it by explicitly focusing on teaching as "having the cognitive ability to develop effective solutions for job-related problems and, in addition, having the motivational, volitional and social willingness to successfully and responsibly apply these solutions in various situations" (Browne, 1997, p. 227).

Blömeke and Delaney (2014) recommend that a "subject specialist" which in this instance or for this research means a Geography teacher, requires cognitive abilities which encompass the following types of professional knowledge:

1. "general pedagogical knowledge (GPK)";
2. "subject content knowledge (SCK)"; and
3. "pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)" (Blömeke & Delaney, 2014).

Guerriero (2013) offers a better understanding of the two types of professional knowledge above (GPK and PCK) as he defines GPK as "principles and strategies of classroom management and organisation that are cross-curricular" and PCK "as the knowledge which integrates the content knowledge of a specific subject and the pedagogical knowledge for teaching that particular subject" (Guerriero, 2013, p. 5). However, Motsamai (2017) explores these two types of knowledge deeper. Motsamai (2017) understanding of GPK includes having the knowledge about learners'

background and type of errors which they tend to commit. In practice, this means knowing to identify the misconception and misunderstanding which learners bring to class. She defines PCK as examples chosen to be used to deepen the understanding of learners' subject content knowledge (SCK) and the advantages and the disadvantages of such examples chosen.

The content of Geography as a subject can lead to many learners having numerous misconceptions and misunderstanding of the subject content. Themes like climate and weather, for instance, are themes that a learner experience daily, however, it will require a teacher's PCK to clarify the misconceptions or misunderstanding that a learner brings to class akin to what Shulman (1986, 1987, as quoted in Motsamai, 2017) calls pedagogical knowledge (PK). Shulman (1986, as quoted in Motsamai, 2017) posits that PK refers to the degree of flexibility of teacher's teaching styles and general knowledge of instructional methods. The PK can be adapted to learners with different backgrounds, complexity, and environments which are common in Geography when it comes to themes such as climate and weather or economic Geography.

The concentration in teachers' subject content knowledge is however, not ultimately the only concern, but how it improves learners' achievement in Geography also remains a concern. Different research in mathematics education has been conducted in an attempt to find the link between learners' performance versus teachers' subject content knowledge (Blömeke & Delaney, 2014; Vos, Kunter & Baumert, 2011). However, Guerriero (2013) gives a clear overview regarding the link between teachers' subject content knowledge and the possible influence it has on learners' performance in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Possible effects of Teacher Knowledge on Learner Outcomes**

| Implications  |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Better content knowledge of teachers</b>   | —————→ Higher learner achievement   |
| <b>Better pedagogical content knowledge</b>   | —————→ Higher learner achievement   |
| <b>Pedagogical content knowledge has more impact on learner achievement than content knowledge;</b> |   |
| <b>Only pedagogical content knowledge seems to have an impact on the quality of instruction</b>     |   |
| <b>Higher general pedagogical/psychological knowledge</b>   | Higher quality of instruction according to learner perception (e.g. Higher cognitive activation, better instructional pacing, better learner-teacher relationships) |

**Adapted from Guerriero (2013, p. 4)**

Guerrero's (2013) model shows that a good Geography teacher must have good SCK and PCK to improve learners' achievement, however, the PCK has more impact than the SCK. Furthermore, Guerrero (2013) is of the view that PCK has more influence on the quality of instruction than SCK because as a Geography teacher you will be able to deliver the subject matter in a way that it eradicates the misconceptions or misunderstanding from learners' experience.

### **2.2.3.2 Teacher qualification and experience**

The body of research internationally has proven that for any country's education system to achieve success it has to ensure that it attracts the best candidates into the teaching profession (Amrein-Beardsley, 2012; Armstrong, 2014; Spaul, 2013; Usman, 2015). However, yet again the literature also reveals that many countries are not following the above statement, but they prefer to instead to try and improve those experienced, tried and tested teachers that already exist in their system in the pursuit of improving the education system and the overall performance of their learners in selected major subjects.

Amrein-Beardsley (2012) postulates that to improve learners' performance it is of the utmost importance that qualified teachers are placed in every classroom, whereas Spaul (2013) assumes that the one most important variable that influences learners' performance is the quality of their teacher. Furthermore, Amrein-Beardsley (2012)

says that these teachers (qualified teachers) develop their expertise within three to five years in the profession. Armstrong (2014) believe that it is caused by the fact that the best academic candidates are roped into the teaching profession. Armstrong (2014) however, in line with the strong emphasis of recruiting the best academic candidates, acknowledges that academic ability on its own will not translate into classroom effectiveness or pedagogical skill. But McMeekin (2000) posits that academic ability must be the minimum requirement into the teaching profession with more investment to be allocated at the training of these highly academic selected candidates to bridge their academic skills and classroom effectiveness or pedagogical skills gap.

Armstrong (2014) believes that the top-performing education systems in the world's success can be attributed to their recruitment policies which place a strong emphasis on having highly qualified teachers in their classrooms. Hofmeyer (2015) states that the majority of teachers in South Africa either hold a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree, a Diploma in Education or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Armstrong (2014) highlights that it might be as a result of different reasons why most teachers do not proceed with their education after completion of their undergraduate studies. In comparison with Finland where teachers are required to obtain at least a minimum qualification of a master's degree, South African teachers are lacking behind.

Geography has, in the past, been identified as a subject taught by the most unqualified teachers with low morale (Hartshorn, 1992). Geography is a well-established subject in South African secondary schools, but it lacks specialist teachers (Innes, 2012). The study conducted by Innes (2012) shows that there is a decline in the number of qualified and experienced Geography teachers due to experienced teachers exiting the profession due for various reasons. This decline in Geography teachers in schools led to the Department of Basic Education listing Geography as a priority subject for funding. This decline in Geography teachers in schools, in turn, made it a priority to fund student teachers who intend to take Geography as a field of specialisation with the hope of attracting student teachers into the subject.

The study further reveals that the more experienced Geography teachers in the classroom felt underprepared to teach map-skills and to adequately integrate the newly introduced Geographic Information System (GIS) with Geography content in the classroom (Innes, 2012). According to Rambuda and Fraser (2004), this under

preparedness might be a result of the type of training the teachers received during their pre-training in the subject. The majority of those teachers who were trained under the apartheid dispensation were taught with a teacher-centred technique which was dominated by a strong focus on summative assessment and GIS was not part of the curriculum at the time of their undergraduate training (Rambuda & Fraser, 2004).

### **2.3 FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

Jonsson et al. (2015) define formative assessment as the “evidence about learners’ achievement which can be used to make decisions about the next steps in instructions that are likely to be better or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited” (Jonsson et al., 2015, p. 76). Black and William (1998) define formative assessment as “all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by learners, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged”.

The focus of these two definitions is on “using evidence” which means that formative assessment can go a long way in gathering information from learners by teachers in classrooms. Thus, using evidence through formative assessment to support teaching and learning can be done through the School-Based Assessment (SBA). This may include mid-year or June examinations to elucidate challenges faced by Geography learners before an external or end-year examination (summative assessment). The view held by Reddy (2014) is that formative assessment will forever be present in the lives of South African teachers and many have seen it as a process which is used to determine the learners’ achievement, which tends to contradict with what formative assessment entails.

According to Herbst (2018), to improve learners’ learning, teachers must incorporate formative assessment in their teaching because it will allow teachers to determine where their learners are in understanding the subject’s concepts and align their teaching accordingly. Likewise, Dirksen (2011) posits that the use of formative assessment enables learners to master and understand the basic concepts of a subject and allow learners to perform better in the subject. Both Herbst (2018) and Dirksen (2011) advocate the use of formative assessment in the classroom as a tool that will enhance the learners’ learning and to a greater extent, improve their achievement. Their findings are supported by a large body of research that mostly

seem to suggest that formative assessment can have a positive impact on learners' achievement if used effectively (Chemeli, 2019; Hattie, 1999; Popham, 2005; William, Lee, Harrison & Black, 2004). But Clark (2011) argues that the starting point of formative assessment is providing effective feedback to learners so they can learn from their mistakes.

According to Carless (2007) feedback needs to allow learners to develop a better understanding of concepts and be able to move learning forward, which he termed "feedback as feedforward". Thus, it means formative assessment enables learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to recognise the concepts that still need to be refined (Chemeli, 2019; Gibbs & Simpson, 2005). There are numerous formative assessment strategies to choose from that teachers can deploy in their classrooms when teaching or conducting assessment and providing learners with feedback is one of them. However, the view held by Clark (2011) here "is that for feedback to be regarded as formative strategy it has to include learners being provided with scaffolded instruction or thoughtful questioning that serve as prompt introductions for sustained and deeper discussion" (Clark, 2011, p. 162).

Meissner (2018) sums up the argument regarding the use of feedback as a formative strategy by stating that learners must be allowed to actively engage with the feedback to improve their performance (Ferris, 2014). Meissner (2018) and Ferris (2014)'s views can be interpreted as; if Geography teachers are only giving feedback as per requisite by the subject assessment policy, they will be summing up the learning and not helping Geography learners improve their performance. However, in the formal education system (teaching and learning) providing meaningful feedback can be regarded as difficult taking into consideration the time constraints embedded on covering the curriculum at all costs. Furthermore, several studies have shown that if the purpose of feedback is to summarise the learner's performance rather than to indicate the possible future improvement, the whole purpose of feedback as a formative strategy would have been lost (Meissner, 2018).

Formative assessment should not be used as a once-off assessment but should rather be used continuously. The continuous assessment allows teachers to adjust their teaching strategies and the content delivery pace to accommodate the uniqueness of all learners in front of them. Several studies have found that formative assessment is used in the classroom by teachers; however, it has been found that how it is used is

inaccurate and inconsistent (Kenyon, 2019). According to Kenyon (2019) and Herbst (2018), the most inaccurate use of formative assessment by most teachers is through the use of comments as a formative strategy. Teachers tend to use comments such as “relook at your work” or “you did not master this concept” which, according to these researchers, does not help learners to rectify their misconceptions or even make learners understand the relationship between their misconceptions and how they performed in their summative assessments (Curry, Mwavita, Holter & Harris, 2016; Clark, 2011).

However, formative assessment cannot operate in isolation without summative assessment in the classroom. Kanjee and Sayed (2013) and Randel, Apthorp, Beesley, Clark, and Wang (2016) are of the same view that formative assessment is the continuous process that will help facilitate teaching and learning. In contrast, summative assessment will engulf everything after the learning process to categorise whether the learner has passed the term or not and whether the learner progresses to the next grade or not, this being determined by looking at the end of the year examination results. Torrance (2011) sums up the arguments made by Kanjee and Sayed (2013) and Randel et al. (2016) by stating that “summative assessment will always drive out formative assessment if they are set in opposition to one another, therefore we need to join them together in an attempt to create the perfect chimera, the perfect genetically modified assessment system”.

The study conducted by Curry et al. (2016) on the impact of formative assessment on learners’ performance in their summative assessment reveals that teachers do not understand the relationship between teachers’ formative assessment information and how it was used to adjust their teaching strategies to address learners’ misconceptions and improve learners’ overall performance. Their study was based on the formative classroom assessment and learners’ performance data which suggest that re-teaching concepts as a result of formative information did not show improvement on learners’ performance and the overall school performance at the end of the year. Therefore, these findings tells a story that should formative assessment and summative assessment be set in isolation, it will never yield positive results on learner performance (Torrance, 2011).



### **2.3.1 Role of School-Based Assessment (SBA) in the formative and summative assessment**

Assessment in the South African schools' system comprises of school-based assessment (SBA) as stated in the CAPS for Geography (DBE, 2011, p. 49). DBE (2011) defines SBA "as all formal assessments, excluding the end-of-year examination, conducted by the school throughout the year on a continuous basis" (RSA, p. xi). According to DBE (2011), formal assessment refers to "a systematic way of assessment used by teachers to determine how well learners are progressing in a grade and in a particular subject" (RSA, p. 6) which sums up the learning process and is regarded by many researchers as the summative assessment component. Maile (2013) has defined SBA as the "process of measuring learners' achievements against the defined outcomes conducted by the teacher" (Maile, 2013, p. 12).

The composition of the SBA differs across all the four school phases. CAPS for the FET phase stipulates that 25% of the summative assessment will comprise of the SBA and 75% will be the end-year examination, and the two combined will be used for the progression of learners to the next grade in the phase. Furthermore, the National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 (NPPPPR) stresses that SBA is a compulsory component in the promotional marks of learners across all the phases (DBE, 2011) and the table below gives the breakdown summary of SBA and its contribution across all phases.

**Table 2.3: SBA Components in different school phases.**

| Phase                               | SBA Component % | End-of-year examination % |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Foundation Phase                    | 100             | 0                         |
| Intermediate Phase                  | 75              | 25                        |
| Senior Phase                        | 40              | 60                        |
| Further Education and Training Band | 25              | 75                        |

(DBE, 2011, p. 7)

Although the NPPPR gives guidance on the breaking down of the SBA component across all four phases, the subject policy will indicate the way forward as to which SBA components to assess, their weight as well as when in the term they should be assessed. CAPS for Geography in Section 4 of the assessment guidelines, outlines the composition of the SBA across the FET Phase. The Geography programme of assessment comprises seven tasks for Grade 10 and 11, which are internally assessed and quality assured. Of the seven tasks, six of them form part of the SBA and the seventh is the end-year examination. However, the Grade 12 programme of assessment is in two phases: Phase 1 is the seven formal assessment tasks which are internally assessed and make up 25% of the SBA while Phase 2 is the externally set, moderated examination that is quality assured by UMALUSI (the quality assurance body) which completes the remaining 75% of the assessment (DBE, 2019). The table below outlines the Geography SBA between Grade 10 and 12 and the weighting.

**Table 2.4: Summary of SBA and their weight.**

| Grade | Formal Assessment       | CASS (25%)  | Final Exam (75%)                                  | Total |
|-------|-------------------------|-------------|---|-------|
| 10    | 3 Assessment tasks      | 3 x 20 = 60 |   | 400   |
|       | 2 tests                 | 2 x 10 = 20 |   |       |
|       | Mid-year examination    | 1 x 20 = 20 |   |       |
|       |                         | 100         |   |       |
|       | End-of-year examination |             | Paper 1= 225 (3x75)<br>Paper 2 = 75<br><b>300</b> |       |
|       |                         |             |   |       |
| 11    | 3 Assessment tasks      | 3 x 20 = 60 |   | 400   |
|       | 2 tests                 | 2 x 10 = 20 |   |       |
|       | Mid-year examination    | 1 x 20 = 20 |   |       |
|       |                         | 100         |   |       |
|       | End-of-year examination |             | Paper 1= 225 (3x75)<br>Paper 2 = 75<br><b>300</b> |       |
|       |                         |             |   |       |
| 12    | 3 Assessment tasks      | 3 x 20 = 60 |   | 400   |
|       | 2 tests                 | 2 x 10 = 20 |   |       |
|       | Mid-year examination    | 1 x 10 = 10 |   |       |
|       | Trial examination       | 1 x 10 = 10 |   |       |
|       |                         | 100         |   |       |
|       | End-of-year examination |             | Paper 1= 225 (3x75)<br>Paper 2 = 75<br><b>300</b> |       |

(DBE, 2011, p. 50)

In September 2018 the minister of basic education, minister Angie Motshekga called for the public participation on her department's intention to amend Section 4 of the CAPS for grade R – 12 and Section 3 of certain subjects. Geography in the FET phase saw the proposed amendment of Section 4 of the assessment guidelines. Table 2.5

below gives the summary of the proposed Section 4 for Geography FET phase in regard to the SBA and final examinations (DBE, 2011; 2012).

**Table 2.5: Proposed summary of formal assessments expected in Grades 10 to 12**

| Grade | Formal Assessment  | SBA (25%)   | Final Exam (75%)   | Total |
|-------|--|---|--|-------|
| 10    | 2 Assessment tasks<br>2 tests<br>Mid-year examination  | 2 x 20 = 40<br>2 x 20 = 40<br>1 x 20 = 20<br>100                |  | 400   |
|       | End-of-year examination  |   | Paper 1= 120 (2x60)<br>30 (1x30)<br><b>Total: 150</b><br>Paper 2= 120 (2x60)<br>30 (1x30)<br><b>Total: 150</b> |       |
| 11    | 2 Assessment tasks<br>2 tests<br>Mid-year examination  | 2 x 20 = 40<br>2 x 20 = 40<br>1 x 20 = 20<br>100                |  | 400   |
|       | End-of-year examination  |   | Paper 1= 120 (2x60)<br>30 (1x30)<br><b>Total: 150</b><br>Paper 2= 120 (2x60)<br>30 (1x30)<br><b>Total: 150</b> |       |
| 12    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 2 Assessment tasks</li> <li>▪ 2 tests</li> <li>▪ Mid-year examination</li> <li>▪ Trial examination</li> </ul> | 2 x 15 = 30<br>2 x 15 = 30<br>1 x 20 = 20<br>1 x 20 = 20<br>100 |  | 400   |
|       | End-of-year examination  |   | Paper 1= 120 (2x60)<br>30 (1x30)<br><b>Total: 150</b><br>Paper 2= 120 (2x60)<br>30 (1x30)<br><b>Total: 150</b> |       |

The proposed Geography programme of assessment which will commence in 2020 if approved will include the reduction of the assessment tasks for Grade 10 and 11 from

seven to six tasks. Five tasks, will still be internally assessed, quality assured and form part of the 25% of SBA, while the sixth is the end-year examination which weighs 75%. The weighting of these SBA tasks will increase to 20% per task in Grade 10 and 11, however, the Grade 12 programme of assessment remains in two phases with the decreased number of SBA tasks to six tasks annually. The final examination will have two papers across all the FET phases which will be written on separate dates, unlike the current set up of 225 marks of Paper 1 written in the morning and 75 marks of Paper 2 written later in the afternoon of the same day. The marks will be split into 150 marks per paper, and the Geography themes will be spread across the two papers, giving learners enough time to prepare for the examination and maybe also improve the learners' performance in the subject. However, for this study, the focus still remains on the programme of assessment as summarised in Table 2.4, as nothing has changed yet.

The quality of the SBA can be questionable in South Africa, as teacher unions have recently agreed to do away with common examinations or external examinations for Grade 10 and 11 mid-year and final examinations. However, the use of SBA is the system that countries like New Zealand have endorsed for decades as their policy commits to the use of formative assessment as their main assessment strategy (Crooks, Castleden, & Meerveld, 2010). This move of phasing out the use of external examination is means that many teachers would be left uncertain about the demand and their role in SBA. Teachers and schools would be left to decide what to assess, which then gives rise to the question of validity and reliability of the SBA. This argument is supported by Williamson (2016) and Poliah (2014) when they argue that SBA is an important tool for formative assessment. However, since in South Africa SBA serve as part of summative assessment, it needs to be thoroughly controlled and quality assured, because it is part of a high stake for progression in Grade 10 and 11 as well as the exit qualification for Grade 12. Stiggins (1998) is of the view that the current assessment system disadvantages learners as it is failing to strike a balance when it comes to the use of standardised examinations and tests. In Geography across the FET phase, the SBA tasks differ from one district to another within the same province as the South African education system is silent about the administration of external common assessment tasks in the grades below Grade 12. Thus, this leaves the SBA components in the hand of teachers in schools (Motsamai, 2017).

SBA can be regarded as either part of formative assessment or/and summative assessment as it is administered throughout the year (Motsamai, 2017). According to Motsamai (2017), SBA should be used to provide feedback to the teaching and learning process akin to Williamson's (2017) view of SBA as a continuous assessment (CA) as it shares similar characteristics of CA with a different number of tasks administered throughout the year. Likewise, Williamson (2017) views SBA as an assessment which will bring teachers and assessment together for the benefit of learners and provides the opportunity for teachers to uniquely assess their learners which might lead to improved results in the final examination.

Studies of SBA conducted by Vlachou (2015) suggest that the number of educational systems around the world that have incorporated the use of SBA in their policies has increased. Reyneke (2016) posits that for the operating of formative assessment in the examination driven education systems, the SBA has to be infused into the formal assessment programme, which, in South African CAPS affirms, as indicated by Table 2.3.1b for the Geography programme of assessment. Although in Geography SBA forms part of the formal assessment programme, the assessment policy is silent regarding learners' role in SBA. As already highlighted above, SBA in the South African education system is used mainly as a summative assessment component as it is strictly aligned to the end-year examination in the FET phase (Reyneke, 2016). However, Vlachou (2015) suggests that SBA should not be used to judge learners' performance, but rather to give learners a more central role in SBA to achieve better learning. Furthermore, Reyneke (2016) acknowledges that South Africa faces challenges concerning the implementation of SBA on a large scale compared to countries like Finland and Sweden.

Based on Reyneke's (2016) argument, it is clear that the South African education system is still faced with the challenge of large-scale implementation of SBA across the FET phase and Geography as a subject is no exception to the challenge. According to Williamson (2016), the first challenge posed by the implementation of SBA around the world is the fact that it has been regarded as a high-stake qualification component; therefore it must be comparable across different schools. Furthermore, Williamson (2016) argues that for SBA to be comparable across schools, moderation of SBA needs to be done thoroughly to address the question of comparability. However, a study conducted by Motsamai (2017) shows that there is a variance in

terms of SBA moderation. The study further reveals that Head of Departments (HODs) for the subject simply focus on pre-moderation of the SBA tasks, and little evidence of post-moderation was present.

According to the DBE (2011), all formal assessment tasks undertaken by learners need to be moderated to ensure the quality of the tasks and fairness on marking. However, Williamson (2017) cautions against the influence that teachers might have on the SBA tasks if they are not rigorously moderated and monitored in public schools. Drawing from Motsamai's (2017) findings that HODs are not post-moderating SBA tasks, some learners will be over-compensated while others are unfairly penalised (Williamson, 2017). Lamprianou and Christie (2009) give a summary of the three main challenges in the implementation of SBA in public schools:

- a conflict between the psychometric model and classroom assessment practice variances;
- the difference in school effectiveness; and
- the bias in teachers' judgement.

In the South African context, Lamprianou and Christies' (2009) challenges of SBA are already visible and embedded in the CAPS policy. Firstly, the SBA serves as part of both formative assessment and summative assessment components as it is made up of informal and formal assessment tasks. Informal assessment is in the form of homework, classwork and class discussion, which is regarded as formative assessment. This dual service by SBA in assessment can give rise to classroom assessment practice variances as each Geography teacher can decide which tasks to administer and they are rarely moderated, or quality assured (Poliah, 2014). Secondly, the challenges highlighted in Section 2.2.2 of this chapter has already outlined the issue of difference in school effectiveness across South Africa and across the Geography classroom. Thirdly, Williamson (2017) and Motsamai (2017) indicated the need for moderation of SBA tasks "pre and post" moderation to reduce teachers' bias in judgement because only the grade 12 SBA are externally moderated quarterly but all the lower grades are still in the hands of teachers.

According to Umalusi (2018) SBA marks "are a compulsory component of the final promotion marks for all candidates registered for the National Senior Certificate (NSC)" (Umlausi, 2018, p. 45). Therefore, moderation of SBA is an important element

to ensure that SBAs meet the required standards and procedures as stipulated in the CAPS document (DBE, 2011). Moderation is a key element to quality assurance of SBA and Umalusi (2018) outlines nine purposes of SBA moderation to maintain credible assessment:

- a) to confirm if the assessment instrument and marking process are valid, fair and practical;
- b) to establish whether the assessment was conducted in a fair and consistent manner;
- c) to establish whether the assessment score is fair and reliable;
- d) to provide feedback on the moderation findings with a view to improving the quality of learner performance and inform the standards of teaching and learning in the classroom;
- e) to ensure that all cognitive levels are met as outlined by CAPS;
- f) to ensure that content and language used on the assessment instrument is not biased;
- g) to take into consideration the contextual factors for all learners taking the assessment instrument;
- h) to give clarity and avoid unambiguity in the questions; and
- i) to ensure that all diagrams, pictures, and graphs used in the assessment instrument are visible.

Currently the moderation process which is visible at the school levels is the grade 12 SBA tasks. Learners portfolio file which contains SBA tasks per term are sent to the district where they external moderated in three phases across the year. The appointed teacher moderator ensures that there is fairness in the quality of the marking and policy compliance of the SBAs. This quality assurance process focuses only on the post moderation of the SBA tasks for the grade 12. The teacher moderator will give recommendation where compliance or variance in marking was identify and need to be implemented for the next phase of the moderation.



### **2.3.2 Learners' role in formative assessment and summative assessment**

According to Brown and Harris, "Self-assessment is an evaluation of learner's own work product and process in the classroom setting" (Brown & Harris, 2014, p. 22). According to Panadero, Jonsson, and Strijbos (2016), it is important to actively involve learners in assessment if the country's education system promotes formative assessment use. In the South African context, CAPS endorse the importance of learners' active involvement in assessment as part of a continuous collection of information by learners and teachers. This can be used to improve learning (DBE, 2011), and this type of assessment will help free learners from dependency on teachers (Brown & Harris, 2014).

Panadero et al.'s (2016) and Brown and Harris' (2014) agree with the DBE (2011), endorsing the learner's involvement in assessment. However, their acknowledgement is limited to informal activities which are regarded by many researchers as formative assessment activities, and not a lot is said about learners' involvement in the summative assessment. The DBE (2011) stresses that assessment conducted by learners should not be used for reporting and certification purposes. Brown and Harris (2014) agree with the DBE (2011) that the usefulness of learner assessment is dependent on whether their judgement is accurate and realistic, akin to Brown's (2015) caution of learners' ability to report self-assessment.

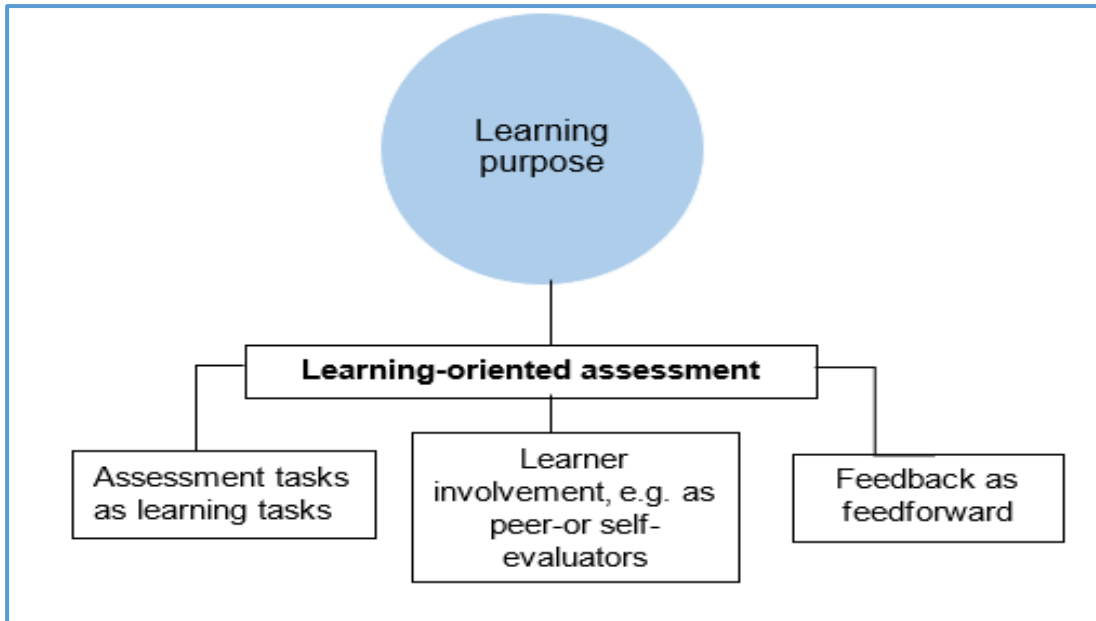
A multiple case-study conducted in New Zealand by Harris and Brown (2013) shows that learners are actively involved in formative assessment. Still, when it comes to summative assessment, these researchers acknowledge that teachers have a duty to report learners' performance to parents and the community, thus making it difficult to value learners' assessment over their own within a high-stakes assessment. The findings from these three case-studies indicate that the use of self and peer assessment (SAPA) decreases as learners move to higher grades (Harris & Brown, 2013). Learners in higher grades, according to these researchers are more cautious of their marks and SAPA can be biased. The interviews conducted by Harris and Brown (2013) with higher grade learners and teachers prove that learners trust the assessment conducted by teachers more than SAPA. Furthermore, teachers revealed that the use of SAPA is to make learners set their own standards in summative assessment and learn from each other's work (Panadero, Brown, & Courtney, 2014).

## 2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THIS STUDY

All assessment should lead learners to some sort of learning opportunity; however the challenge is to stimulate the right kind of learning (Carless, 2007). Assessment in the South African context has been explained in detail in Section 2.3 of this chapter. However, Boud (2000) asserts that assessment might fail to provide learners with the opportunity to learn and develop life-long learning skills due to its limitation when it comes to summative assessment tasks. As already indicated in Section 2.3.2 of this chapter, learners need to be more active when it comes to assessment so that they can learn from their mistakes and be given feedback timeously to move their learning forward. Therefore, the conceptual framework for this study is guided by the theory developed by Carless (2007), which follows three key principles of devised practice viewed as formative:

1. “Principle 1: Assessment tasks should be designed to stimulate sound learning practices amongst students.
2. Principle 2: Assessment should involve students actively in engaging with criteria, quality, their own and/or peers’ performance.
3. Principle 3: Feedback should be timely and forward-looking so as to support current and future student learning” (Carless, p. 59-60).

The three key principles of this conceptual framework are summarised in the figure below to demonstrate the intertwined relationship between role players in formative assessment.



**Figure 2.2: Framework for learning-oriented assessment - Adapted (Carless, 2007:60)**

A learning-oriented assessment (LOA) framework sees the teacher, learners (as a peer or self-assessor) and the assessment tasks as the mediators of the learning process (Carless, 2007). The main purpose of assessment is certification based on the evaluation of learner’s achievement and the learning process (DBE, 2011), nonetheless, this study will not focus on certification as the study is focusing on the possible role of formative assessment on learners’ achievement. For assessment to be functional, there must be an overlap between assessing learners’ performance and the learning element of it. The first part of LOA is characterised by assessment tasks as learning tasks akin to what Herbst (2018) termed bell ringers in the classroom. According to Herbst (2018) assessment tasks are key components of formative assessment as teachers will use these tasks to check whether learners have mastered the concepts and align their next lesson based on the information collected from these assessment tasks. This concept suggests that assessment tasks should stimulate a deep learning experience, akin to what Biggs (2003) describes as the “constructive alignment of objectives, content, and assessment, which does not lead to a short-term burst of sustained study for an end of term’s work”.

Secondly, in LOA, learners are involved in assessment for them to develop a better understanding of learning goals and actively participate with the criteria and standards,

through peer assessment or peer feedback (Carless, 2007). Moreover, this practice will give learners a sense of ownership when it comes to their learning process and also enable them to develop awareness regarding the quality of their work and criteria used in the assessment of their work (Brown & Harris, 2014). Panadero et al. (2014) similarly found that self-assessment and peer assessment has a great potential to improve learners' achievement; however, both studies still cautioned about the reliability of learners' assessment abilities. Thirdly, for assessment to promote learning, learners need to receive feedback that moves learning forward. This feedback must be received timeously, if not so, the feedback will be irrelevant (Gibbs & Simpson, 2005). Furthermore, Gibbs and Simpson (2005) argue that feedback on its own may not promote learning unless learners are engaged with it and act upon it.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

The main purpose of this chapter was to outline relevant literature to attempt to answer the research question for the study. The main research question for this study is: "What is the role of formative assessment in the quality of learners' performance in Geography in the FET phase?" Geography education in the South African context was discussed in detail, and the review brought forward more emphasis on Geography under different curriculum transitions as the years went by. Furthermore, the challenges faced in Geography were brought to the fore with the literature drawn from around the world and other subjects in South Africa that faces similar challenges. Moreover, special attention was given to the quality of Geography teachers, with the emphasis on their subject knowledge, teacher qualification, and experience, to bring to light the research question of the study.

The literature further reviewed the role of SBA on formative assessment and summative assessment and its implementation and the possible impact after that. The learners' role in assessment was sought with specific reference to formative assessment and summative assessment and concluded with the review of the conceptual framework in relation to the main research question and sub-question for the study which was also brought fore. Chapter 3 outlines a comprehensive discussion of the research methodology and design used to gather data for the study and further explores how it will be analysed.

### **3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH APPROACH, DESIGN AND METHOD**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 outlined the theoretical framework, which underpins this study in detail based on the relevant literature. As such, this chapter seeks to provide insight into the research approach, design and methods used to investigate the role played by formative assessment in the FET phase (Grade 10 to 12) on learners' achievement in Geography.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

This research study aims to investigate the role of classroom formative assessment on learner achievement in Geography in Grade 10 to 12. To be able to achieve this objective, the study adopted a qualitative research methodology approach. Creswell and Poth (2018) define qualitative research as an activity which locates the researcher in a world consisting of a set of interpretive material practice that makes the world visible. The qualitative research approach is thus appropriate for this study as it is “typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of a phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' points of view” (Pacho, 2015, p. 2). This research approach will enable the researcher to describe and understand why Geography learners in the FET phase (Grade 10 to 12) are passing the subject with low marks from the participants' points of view as discussed in Chapter 2, with reference to the national Geography averages.

Creswell and Creswell (2017) posit that “a qualitative approach is one in which the researcher often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 18) which translates to individual Geography teachers constructing multiple meanings based on their experiences regarding their classroom assessment practices to enable the researcher to develop a theory or pattern. Marshall and Rossman (2016) and Maree (2016) suggest that qualitative research seeks to acquire more understanding of underlying reasons and focuses on natural settings where interaction occurs. Furthermore, Allen (2017) is of a view that if qualitative research focuses on the natural settings, it must do so through the generation of knowledge creation and an understanding of the social world of the study. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2014), the generation and creation of an understanding of the social world is possible through qualitative research as it is

interpretative research. This approach means it can place the researcher in a position to be more involved in a constant and intensive experience along with the participants.

The use of the qualitative research approach and method comes with the advantage of giving the researcher a detailed description of participants' experiences, feelings and opinions regarding the phenomenon under research (Rahman, 2017). With regard to the interpretation of Geography assessment, administration and design, the qualitative research approach provides a deeper insight into these issues. And through the interpretivism approach, "it has the ability to understand different people's voices, meanings and events" (Rahman, 2017, p. 104) which means different events are the main source of knowledge extracted through this approach (Richardson, 2012).

Qualitative research data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations also allow the researcher to interact with the participants directly as the data is collected and events happen which elicit their feelings, perceptions and views of classroom formative assessment (Buchan & Daly, 2016). Lastly because of the "differences in how the data is collected and analysed, and what the data and analyses are able to tell about the phenomenon under study, the knowledge which is gained through qualitative investigations is more informative, richer and offers enhanced understandings compared to that which can be obtained via quantitative research" (Tewksbury, 2013, p. 1). Maxwell (2012) asserts that through a qualitative approach with appropriate data analysis, complex issues can be studied and understood.

Although there are numerous advantages associated with the use of the qualitative research approach, there are downsides and limitations to the research approach as well. According to Rahman (2017), the main focus of the qualitative research approach is on the personal views, opinions and experiences of the participants. And as important as these personal experiences are according to Silverman (2010, as quoted in Rahman, 2017), it can also leave out important aspects of the study, such as contextual sensitivity. Similarly, Wilson (2014) posits that the use of the phenomenological approach in qualitative research advocates the need to understand participants' experience, to uncover and interpret. This approach is, therefore, limiting; for instance, if sampling is selective and purposive in the investigation of the impact of assessment on learner performance, the contextual influence on assessment can

never be explored (Rahman, 2017) because the focus would be on specific selected criteria met by the participants.

### **3.2.1 Research paradigm**

Choosing the right paradigm for research is an important part of the research process. The paradigm will determine whether the research question is answered at the end of the research or not. Maree (2016) defines a paradigm as “a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which give rise to a particular worldview.” Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) further assert that a paradigm “constitutes the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world, and how s/he interprets and acts within that world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 26). According to Creswell (2014), constructivism is another way of viewing the world because in constructivism individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work. Thus, constructivism will be followed for this study because epistemology will enable the researcher to develop subjective meaning and experience that teachers have regarding classroom formative assessment practice. As posited by Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholl and Ormston (2013) epistemology is “concerned with the nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired.” Therefore, in the study of the nature of knowledge and justification regarding classroom formative assessment practice in Geography, meaning and definitions are varied, “leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing the meaning into a few categories or ideas” (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **3.2.2 Constructivism**

Creswell and Creswell (2017) define constructivism as “a school of thought which individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 8). In a constructivist paradigm, the researcher starts with an assumption that the truth about the social world cannot be established through the use of natural science methods but rather accepts that “there is an objective reality with which our mind has to work with to create meaning” (Poni, 2014, p. 409). Similarly, Von Glasersfeld (2013) asserts that a constructivist paradigm “is an unconventional approach to the problems of knowledge and knowing. It starts from the assumption that knowledge, no matter how it can be defined, is in the heads of individuals, and that the thinking subject has no alternative but to construct what he or she knows on

the basis of his or her own experience” (Von Glaserfeld, 2013, p. 18). Since this study aims to investigate the role of classroom formative assessment practice in Geography, a constructivist paradigm was followed as its ontology acknowledges that knowledge is constructed by the participants from their own experiences and understanding. The use of this paradigm is relevant for this study as it will enable me as a researcher to understand the participants’ perception and their understanding of formative assessment and how it can be used in the Geography classroom.

Constructivism proposes that multiple realities of a phenomenon exist across the sphere of the classroom setting and from different locations. As a result of these multiple realities, different Geography teachers with a different number of years in the field and teaching different grades in the FET phase will be engaged to participate in the study. The involvement of different teachers across the FET phase was done to obtain a rich, in-depth perspective and construct different understanding when it comes to the use of formative assessment in Geography.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.3.1 Case study**

Case studies are usually personal and involve the close study of people, groups or situations for lengthy periods. They have been known to go hand in hand with the constructivism paradigm (Starman, 2013). Bartlett and Vavrus (2016) posit that the word “case” is often regarded as a place although it can be used interchangeably for a place, a person, a phenomenon or setting. Goodrick (2014) defines a case study as an “in-depth examination, often undertaken over time, of a single case” (Goodrick, 2014, p. 108). A case study, according to Starman (2013) “is a comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis” (Starman, 2013, p. 31). This comprehensive description is done with the “purpose of identifying variables, structures, forms and orders of interaction between the participants under study in order to assess the performance of work” (Starman, 2013, p. 32). The term case study is usually used to explore a single phenomenon under qualitative research study (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Walker, 2014).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that “given that qualitative researchers generally assume that social reality is a human creation, they interpret and contextualise meanings from people’s beliefs, perceptions and practices” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011,



p. 2). Unlike quantitative research where the primary concern is to test the hypothesis and have a generalisation of the results, qualitative research, instead, focuses on understanding the nature of the research problem under study instead of quantifying data and employing statistical procedures (Baskarada, 2014). The case study allows the researcher to look deeper into the participants' real world, at actions in context and for a particular study. This approach allows the researcher to look at how Geography teachers go about their teaching and their use of formative assessment in their classrooms. Similarly, Grosseohme (2014) is of a view that case studies are used to explore the meaning of social phenomena which participants' experience individually, and this exploration is conducted in the participants' natural setting. Therefore, the case study in this study allowed participants (Geography teachers) to share their individual classroom formative assessment practices, experiences, their advantages and disadvantages of such practices.

According to Motsamai (2017), a case study research design allows the exploration of in-depth data for a single case by enabling the researcher to interact with the participants from their natural setting. However, Creswell (2011) is of a view that the multiple sources of information is the one which allows for in-depth exploration of the single phenomenon which Creswell and Poth (2018) termed collective case study. According to these authors, the use of multiple case studies enables the researcher to select one issue; however, the researcher can select multiple sites to show different perspectives of the issue under investigation. Thus, it is against this background that this study explores a single phenomenon from different cases (sites) or schools with different Geography educators across the Further Education and Training phase (FET). Moreover, the use of different schools (cases) may provide insight or contradiction as to whether the use of formative assessment in the Geography classroom possibly plays a role in learners' performance (Motsamai, 2017).

Thus, the use of the case study approach was ideal for this study as it placed me in the natural setting of the participants, which is their classroom. This approach again enabled me to position myself and to encounter the participants' perception, beliefs, experiences and their choice of classroom formative assessment for their lesson first-hand. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a case study "is a good approach when the researcher has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seek to provide in-depth understanding of the cases" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 100).

Based on the above backdrop, a case study research design offers numerous advantages if applied correctly in a research study. According to Tumele (2015) “one valuable strength of a case study research paradigm is its conceptual validity” (Tumele, 2015, p. 74). Conceptual validity, in this case, refers to its ability to explore challenging social phenomena which cannot be quantified, but instead requires to be analysed taking into consideration its contextual factors. Furthermore, another benefit of using a case study is embedded in its feasibility to apply multiple data collection techniques, which can enhance the credibility of the research and lead to deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Tumele, 2015; Yin, 2016). For this study, the multiple data collection techniques that will be applied include semi-structured interviews, document analysis of the educator’s assessment files and Geography classroom observation to try and enhance the credibility of collected data and obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study. Moreover, a case study research design, according to Yin (2016), enables the research to be more flexible to the arising new insights of the phenomenon to broaden the investigation of the research question.

In spite of the numerous advantages that case study research design enjoys, there are several disadvantages associated with this approach. Firstly, the case study research design is criticised for its attachment to the researcher’s subjectivity, which may have a huge influence on the results (Tumele, 2015). Furthermore, the case study results cannot be generalised according to this researcher, however, Thollander and Rohdin (2011) are of a view that this criticism is only partly true because case study research design aims to expand and generalise the theory which Yin (2009) calls analytical generalisation.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHOD**

According to Walliman (2017) and Yin (2016), research methods refers to the techniques which the researcher uses to conduct research. These research techniques need to be applicable and relevant for the study to get useful data that will help to answer the research question. Walliman (2017) asserts that the research methodology presents and provides the researcher with detailed guidelines for how research sites, participants, ways of collecting data, sorting and analysing the collected information should be selected, to come to some sort of conclusion. Walliman (2017) further posit that should the researcher use the right methodology for a research project that is coherent with the research question, it should be easily able to generate data that is credible and trustworthy.

The following discussion regarding the characteristics of research methods and how they relate to the study is unpacked in detail in the next sections.

#### **3.4.1 Sampling**

To get authentic results, the researcher needs to develop sampling techniques which are appropriate for the research study (Hignett & McDermott, 2015). Furthermore, Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) posit that the development of appropriate and proper sampling techniques ensures that participants selected for the study are representative of the population because it will not be possible to study the entire population due to the time and cost restraints involved (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013). Thus, the sample selection for this study was guided by Carless' Learning-Oriented Assessment conceptual framework, which has been discussed in Chapter 2 (Motsamai, 2017; Silverman, 2013).

Joubert and Omidire (2013, as cited in Motsamai, 2017) posit that for qualitative research to obtain rich information from the sample and to understand the problem under study deeply, qualitative studies seek a relatively convenient and small sample, which is selected purposefully. Patton (2015) further adds that the use of purposive sampling in qualitative research empowers the researcher to select participants who pose rich information for the study. According to Patton (2015), purposive sampling will assist the researcher in getting in-depth information about the issue under study. Moreover, Marshall and Rossman (2016) argue that in qualitative research, the

appropriate size of the sample is the one from which the information can be drawn and that would be able to adequately answer the research question.

In a qualitative study, purposive sampling is the most commonly used method (Etikan et al., 2016; Motsamai, 2017; Patton, 2015). Purposive sampling is “used to indicate that interviewees or participants are selected based on their knowledge and verbal eloquence to describe a group or (sub)culture to which they belong” (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015, p. 1778). It was against this backdrop that purposive sampling was followed for this study. I purposefully selected which participants to include or exclude based on whether the participants have the characteristics required to answer the research questions at hand. According to Etikan et al. (2016), purposive sampling is based on the researcher’s judgement regarding his/her study needs. The researcher purposefully selected participants which provided the study with the best information. Etikan et al. (2016) further state that the researcher will pay attention to those participants who are willing to share their experience regarding the phenomenon under study and the participants who share the same experiences to extract the relevant information needed for the study.

Section 3.4.1.1 and 3.4.1.2 is a detailed elaboration of how the site and participants’ selection for the research as well as the context at which the study take places were decided on.

#### **3.4.1.1 Site selection**

The site selection was purposefully chosen to include the public high schools in Tshwane West District (D15), which offer Geography in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. Tshwane West District is located in the Gauteng Province in Tshwane. This district comprises of schools ranging from township schools to suburban schools as well as inner-city schools. According to Acharya et al. (2013), the site selection must also be based on convenience for the researcher to be able to reach the schools. All these were taken into account thus the research site selection for this study covered all three types of schools mentioned above to collect multiple sources of information, which allows the researcher the in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

For this study, I purposefully selected three sites (schools) as a case study. The schools were easily accessible to the researcher and were willing to participate in the

study. The details are reflected in Table 3.1 of the next section. The three selected schools mirrored the types of schools D15 has. The first school was selected from the inner-city schools, the second school was from the suburban schools, and the third school came from the township schools.

### 3.4.1.2 Selection of participants

The participants for this study were purposively drawn from the Geography FET Phase teachers in Tshwane West district, GP. I selected these participants because they have been teaching Geography as a subject in the FET Phase or across the Phase for at least three years minimum. The participants were also selected because they have been involved in administering the Geography SBAs and have vast experience in the implementation of various classroom assessment strategies. It is against this backdrop that the selected participants could provide relevant information concerning the implementation and the quality of SBAs and also share their valuable experience when it came to the classroom formative assessment strategies which they used. The details of sample of participants is summarised in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Summary of the sample of participants**

| Case                    | No. of participants | Gender | Age | Teaching experience in the FET Phase | Post level |
|-------------------------|---------------------|--------|-----|--------------------------------------|------------|
| School A:<br>Inner city | 2                   | Male   | 27  | 5 years                              | 1          |
|                         |                     | Female | 63  | 10 years                             | 1          |
| School B:<br>Suburban   | 3                   | Female | 52  | More than 20 years                   | 2          |
|                         |                     | Male   | 52  | 25 years                             | 1          |
|                         |                     | Male   | 36  | 3 years                              | 1          |
| School C:<br>Township   | 1                   | Female | 48  | 10 years                             | 1          |

Table 3.1 shows the sample of the selected participants of three different schools. In total, there were six participants that could be divided into three females and three males for the study. The post level on the table refers to a position or rank which is held by a school-based teacher in the South African context. For the school-based

educators in public schools, the post levels are ranked from Post Level 1 to 4. Post Level 1, according to the Personnel Administrative Measure (PAM) document of 1999 are educators whose core duty is to teach, while Post Level 2 describes Heads of Departments (HOD) whose core duty includes the heading of a subject or more.

School A comprised of two participants, the first participant was a male aged 27 with five years teaching experience in the FET phase, currently teaching Grade 10 and holding a Post Level 1 rank in the school. The second participant from school A was a female aged 63 with ten years of teaching experience in the FET phase, currently teaching Grade 11 and 12, and holding a Post Level 1 rank. School B had three participants. The first participant in this school was a female aged 52 with more than 20 years of experience in teaching Geography, currently teaching Grade 11 and 12. She holds a Post Level 2 rank in the school as the subject head for Geography, which is commonly known as Head of Department (HOD) in the South African context. The second participant was a male aged 52 with 25 years of teaching experience, currently teaching Grade 10 and holding a Post Level 1 rank at the school. The third participant from school B was a male aged 36 with three years of teaching experience, currently teaching Grade 10 and 9 social sciences and also holding a Post Level 1 rank. School C had one participant who was a female aged 48 with ten years of teaching experience and currently teaching Grade 11 and 12. She also holds a Post Level 1 rank in her school.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

#### **3.5.1 Data collection instruments**

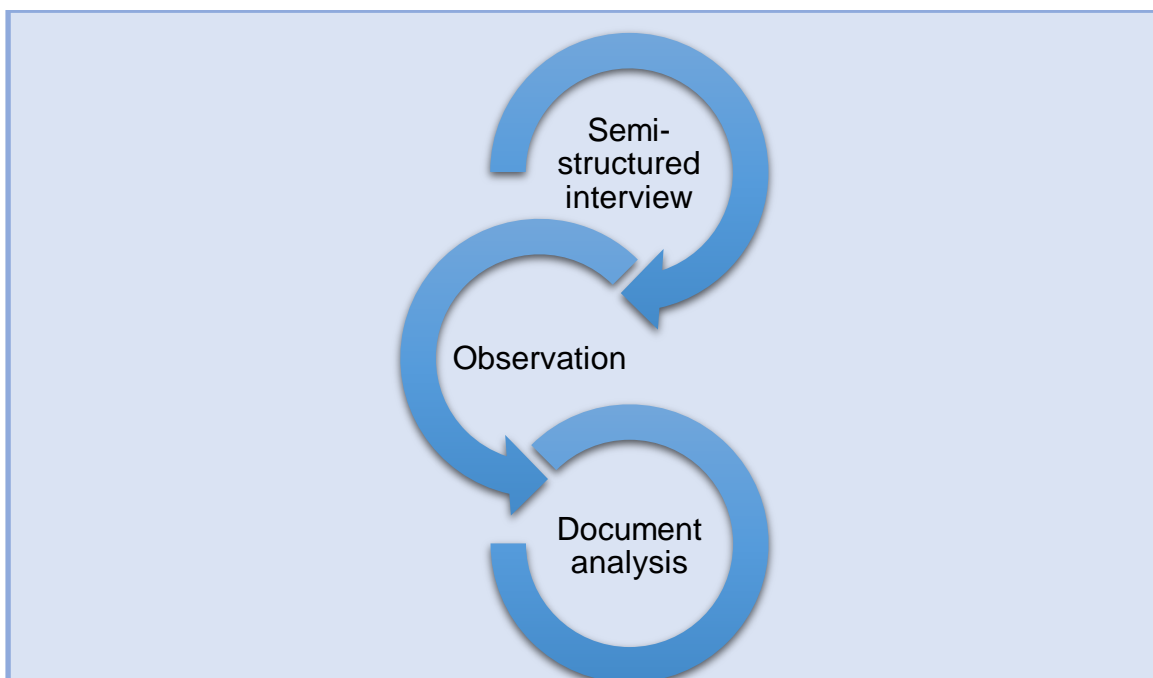
In qualitative studies, different data collection methods are applied to tell a story about the phenomenon under study (Tewkbury, 2013). The type of data which is usually collected in the qualitative study is written text or data which is collected through the generation of audio tapes (usually of face to face interviews) and observations (Ranney et al., 2015). Heath, Williamson and Harcourt (2018) argue that these different data collection methods will enhance the trustworthiness of the research findings as different methods ensure a simultaneous rigorous data collection and analysis process.

It is against this background that the data collection instruments for this study were carefully selected, designed and adopted to support this study, which intended to

investigate the possible role of classroom formative assessment practice on learners' achievement in Geography. Heath et al. (2018) point out that the use of multiple data collection methods enhances the trustworthiness of results in qualitative research. Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014) believe that trustworthiness of results can be achieved through triangulation because it can mitigate one's bias (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). In addition, Carter et al. (2014) posit that triangulation refers "to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena" (Carter et al., 545). According to Heath et al. (2018), triangulation helps the researcher to reduce bias and being able to cross-examine the participants' response integrity, which can enhance the credibility of the analysed data because data is being contributed from multiple sources (Anney, 2014).

Therefore, this study adopted multiple data collection methods which include the use of semi-structured interviews, document analysis and classroom observations. The primary data collection methods for this study allowed the researcher to discover the participants' views, perceptions, experiences and understanding with regard to the use of classroom formative assessment in Geography (Motsamai, 2017).

The data collection methods used in this study are illustrated in Figure 3.2 and elaborated on in Table 3.2.



**Figure 3.2: Data collection methods used for this study**

**Table 3.2: Summary of the data collection and instruments used in this study**

| Conceptual framework   | Research questions   | Data collection method                          | Analysis               |
|--|--|---|------------------------|
| Assessment tasks should be designed to stimulate sound learning practices amongst learners                           | To what extent is School-Based Assessment (SBA) effective as a form of formative assessment and how does it affect learners' performance in Geography? | Document analysis and semi-structured interview | Thematic data analysis |
|  | To what extent are summative evidence reflective of formative practices?   | Document analysis                               | Thematic data analysis |
| Assessment should involve students actively in engaging with criteria, quality, their own and/or peers' performance. | What role do learners play in formative assessment with regard to peer or self-evaluation?   | Document analysis and semi-structured interview | Thematic data analysis |
| Feedback should be timely and forward-looking so as to support current and future student learning.                  | What formative assessment techniques and strategies do Geography teachers apply in their classroom?  | Semi-structured interview and observations      | Thematic data analysis |

### **3.5.1.1 Semi-structured interviews**

In the pursuit to make sense of Geography teachers' experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the use of formative assessment in their classrooms, a face-to-face semi-structured interview was considered an appropriate data collection method for this study. Van Teijlingen (2014) posits that semi-structured interviews are well suited to explore attitudes, values, beliefs, and motives, and they can potentially increase the response rate of the participants. Carter et al. (2014) describe interviews in the qualitative study as powerful tools, which a researcher can use to attain an understanding of human beings and explore the phenomenon under study in depth. However, for this study, semi-structured interviews were used as a primary data collection method. Such interviews enable the researcher to establish the subjective



responses from the participants based on their knowledge and experiences of the phenomenon under study (McIntosh, & Morse, 2015).

The use of semi-structured interviews was appropriate for this study because it allows flexibility on how the open-ended questions may be answered and the participants could take their time in answering the questions however, not often in depth (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). In this study, the open-ended questions were planned before the scheduled interviews to avoid the omission of the key aspects from the main research question of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Motsamai, 2017). The semi-structured interviews also provide the researcher with an option of changing the sequence of the questions from one participant to the next (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013). However, in this study, the sequence of the questions was kept the same throughout for all participants. Furthermore, the use of semi-structured interviews enables the researcher to do follow up queries if clarity is required on an issue (McIntosh, & Morse, 2015; Newcomer, Hatry, & Wholey, 2015; Pathak, & Intrat, 2016). I conducted semi-structured interviews to ascertain the participants' experiences and knowledge concerning the use of formative assessment in the Geography classroom and also to learn how the quality of SBAs may play a role in learners' performance in the subject. An interview schedule is attached in Appendix A.

The interviews lasted about 15 to 20 minutes on average, depending on how each participant felt about the issue. Moreover, follow-up questions or probing questions were introduced during the interview to get clarity from the participants on certain issues. The probing we used as "thought-provoking interjections" as described by Pathak and Intrat (2016). These thought-provoking questions were introduced mainly to indicate to the participants that I would like to hear more about the issue. The interviews were scheduled during the educators' free periods, as many could not meet after school due to personal commitments. Interviews were conducted in English and in few instances, participants used their home languages to communicate their ideas better.

### **3.5.1.2 Observations**

Creswell (2014) defines observation as "the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects, and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with the participants" (p. 125). However, Bogomolova (2017) views observation as "any research which collects empirical data not by

questioning respondents, but by observing behaviour and/or other forms of activity” (Bongomolova, 2017, p. 126). Ary et al. (2018) posit that observation allows the researcher to supplement the interviewed data and record the occurrences of incidents as they unfold. According to Boxstaens, Blay, Pereto, and Décarpes (2015), the use of interviews or survey-based data as a sole data collection method can only lead to assumptions that the researcher’s knowledge regarding the phenomenon under study is purely based on what the participant says and with little knowledge on what actually happens in the natural setting. Bongomolova (2017) argues that to reduce the discrepancy that exists between what the participants say and what they actually do in practice, thus observational data remains an ideal source of supplementing what was said in the interview with what actually transpired in reality.

Boxteans et al. (2015) distinguish between two types of observation methods that a qualitative research study can employ, namely, unstructured or open observation and structured or systematic observation. According to these authors, unstructured or open observation describes and makes sense of a social situation in general whereas, the structured or systematic observation follows an explicit rule in the recording and observing of the participants’ behaviour. It was against this background that I chose a structured observational data collection method for this study. Observations enabled me to bridge the gap between the claimed and the actual participants’ behaviour (Bongomolova, 2017; Boxteans et al., 2015; Motsamai, 2017;). In this instance, observation added to what the educators claimed to employ during the interviews as their Geography classroom formative strategies and what actually transpired during the lesson (Bongomolova, 2017). Furthermore, as distinguished by Boxteans et al. (2015), this study employed the structured or systematic observation as the observation tools, and the observation sheet were planned beforehand to guide me as to what to observe and what to ignore during the lesson presentation. The observation took place during school hours when the educators were presenting Geography lessons in different grades across the FET phase. The observation schedule is attached in Appendix B.

### **3.5.1.3 Document analysis**

Document analysis was another data collection method that was employed in this study. The use of document analysis was deemed appropriate because to investigate the role which classroom formative assessment practice plays in Geography learners’

performance in the FET phase I had to verify whether what the participant said was reflected in the learners' marks. Secondly, document analysis could verify whether the quality of SBAs played a role in learners' performance, and this, therefore, led to the perusal of documents such as teachers' assessment files. This exercise was undertaken to peruse the pre- and post-moderation of assessment instruments (tests/tasks) reports conducted either by the HOD or subject heads to quality assure the tasks. Glen (2014) asserts that the use of interviews or document analysis alone as data collection method will not produce enough depth in the data set. It is, therefore, appropriate to employ both techniques to gain rich information about the phenomenon under study, hence this study adopted both data collection methods together with classroom observations.

According to Flick (2013), document analysis refers to "the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it" (Flick, 2013, p. 5). Furthermore, Wach and Ward (2013) posit that the researcher must decide on the type of documents that need to be perused before going to the field to collect data. According to these authors, this practice is employed to avoid accessing irrelevant documents/information that will not add value to the study. It was against this background that after the interviews and classroom observations were conducted, the following documents were analysed to corroborate and to clarify any contradictions that might have arisen during the previous two phases of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The documents accessed from Geography teachers for analysis comprise:

- Learners exercise books;
- Learners marked scripts or/Learners' SBA tasks; and
- Teachers' assessment files.

Each of the above-mentioned documents was analysed to check whether formative assessment was indeed practised in the classroom. For instance, from learners' exercise books, I checked whether learners were practising peer/self-assessment, the written feedback by teachers as well as the number of informal and formal activities. See Appendix C for this process. From learners' marked scripts or SBA tasks (See Appendix D), I mainly focused on the feedback and timeframe between the

administered task/test and date in which feedback was provided to learners. I rigorously went through the teachers' assessment file to check the quality assurance of all SBA tasks by checking the pre- and post-moderation reports. Also, the formal and informal tasks given to learners to complete for both mapwork and theory and the comments made by the moderator were checked. Appendix E, which deals with this procedure, is attached. Addition to the above discussed, field notes were captured on a regular basis to capture data that emerge from documents that were analysed and were not anticipated before planning the document analysis.

### **3.5.2 Data analysis**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define data analysis as a “systematic process of coding, categorising, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 367). Graue (2015) defines qualitative data analysis as “a process of description, classification and interconnection of phenomena with researcher’s concepts”. Ngulube (2015) further asserts that “qualitative data analysis is concerned with transforming raw data by searching, evaluating, recognising, coding, mapping, exploring and describing patterns, trends, themes and categories in the raw data, in order to interpret them and provide their underlying meanings” (Ngulube, 2015, p. 1). The descriptive case report will be used to provide a clear chain of evidence linking the findings back to the raw data collected. This process will help the researcher to integrate the observed data with non-observed data (Morgan, Pullon, Macdonald, McKinlay, & Gray, 2017). However, data analysis is not clearly formulated and the process to be followed is not predetermined but rather it is an organised, systematic process with intentions of recognising patterns that offer meaningful answers to the research question (Morgan et al. 2017).

Thematic data analysis was adopted for this study. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) describe thematic data analysis as “a process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 353) and this process is well suited to this research, as it will allow the researcher to identify themes and patterns of meaning across the dataset concerning a research question (Graue, 2015; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Ngulube, 2015; Taole, 2013). Through thematic data analysis, collected data from interviews was transcribed thoroughly. Thorough transcription enabled the researcher to code across the entire dataset. During this stage, the researchers could

familiarise themselves with their data piece by piece based on the transcription and label the data by themes. After that the data was reviewed by provisional mapping of themes and to how they related to one another. Braun and Clarke (2014) suggested six steps in the thematic analysis that a researcher should follow. The six steps to thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2014), adopted for this study, included:

1. “familiarising yourself with the data and identifying items of potential interest;
2. generating initial codes;
3. searching for themes;
4. reviewing potential themes;
5. defining and naming themes; and
6. producing the report” (Braun & Clarke, 2014).

These steps were utilised in the study. According to Khan (2014) “qualitative research is a systematic and subjective approach to highlight and explain daily life experiences and to further give them proper meaning (p .230)”. The data analysis process involved organising the semi-structured interviews, observation field notes and documents analysis notes as part of familiarising myself with the data and to potentially identifying points of interests. Initially, the data from semi-structured interviews, observation and filed notes were transcribed for the purpose of analysis. With the aid of 2019 ATLAS.ti version 8.4.24 computer software, also known as the Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) I was able to generate 20 codes. According to (Charmaz, 2015) codes refers to short description of summaries of the gathered information into categories.

Out of the codes which were created through CAQDAS, five themes such as Geography teacher quality, classroom formative strategies, learners’ performance in geography, quality assurance of school-based assessment, and learners’ role in assessment in Geography were developed for analysis purpose. Conclusions were drawn considering all stages of data collection, organising and analysis to ensure consistency in the report.

### **3.6 ENHANCING QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH**

According to Kornbluh (2015); in a qualitative research study, the researcher aims to develop an understanding with regards to the phenomenon under study. The researcher will develop an understanding through careful examination of the participants' experiences, how the participant perceives certain aspects and how they make sense of their lives. It is, therefore, important to establish trustworthiness in the qualitative study to assess whether one's analysis reflects the participants' lived experiences (Anney, 2014). Anney (2014) recommends four ways to develop trustworthiness in qualitative data, namely:

1. credibility;
2. dependability;
3. transferability; and
4. confirmability.

According to Connelly (2016), trustworthiness in qualitative research refers "to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study" (Connelly, 2016, p. 435). In each qualitative research study, the researcher needs to ensure that the study is credible, dependable, transferable and confirmable by other researchers (Amankwaa, 2016; Connelly, 2016). Amankwaa (2016) posits that a researcher must develop protocols and procedures that will make the study considered as worthy by the reader.

#### **3.6.1 Credibility**

Anney (2014) defines credibility as "the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings" (Anney, 2014, p. 276). Credibility of the study is the criterion which ensures that the study actually measures what it intended to. Fusch, Fusch, and Ness (2018) argues that credibility is one of the most important facets in ensuring the trustworthiness of the study. It is therefore, against this backdrop that triangulation was deemed a suitable design in ensuring the credibility of this study. Natow, (2020) refers to triangulation as a process whereby the researcher employs more one qualitative data collection procedure which will ensure what was said during the interview correlate with the data observed or document reviewed. In this study, data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis. This

process was followed to compare and contrast the different findings which emerged during each data collection method in order to produce validated conclusion.

### **3.6.2 Dependability**

Cope (2014) views dependability in qualitative research as a degree of accuracy and consistency of data over similar conditions. Moreover, Connelly (2016) is of a view that a study will be considered as dependable if it can be replicated with different participants in similar conditions. For this study, dependability was achieved through the application of similar data collection strategies for all six participants in the different natural setting (Connelly, 2016; Kornbluh, 2015) and the participants of this study were interviewed and observed under similar conditions.

### **3.6.3 Transferability**

Kornbluh (2015) defined transferability as “the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents” (Kornbluh, 2015, p. 278). Qualitative research study does not aim to generalise its findings, however Amankwaa (2016) suggests that if the findings of the study can be related to the next participant or the reader, it is considered transferable. Furthermore, since the findings of this qualitative study are originating from a relatively small sample and are mostly purposive to a specific group it will be transferable if similar context of the study is undertaken.

### **3.6.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability in a qualitative study denotes that the research findings represent the participants’ responses and not the researcher’s bias. Cope (2014) suggests that this confirmability can be achieved through the use of triangulation which helps to eliminate researcher’s biases. The findings of this study resonate with the participants’ voices and throughout the discussions, where possible I provide rich quotations from the participants’ transcribed interviews. By providing these quotations, I am providing evidence for themes and demonstrating that the findings were derived from the collected data and not what the researcher thinks emerged (Amankwaa, 2016; Cope, 2014).

### 3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

According to Blair, Czaja, and Blair (2013), it is crucial to consider ethics when conducting a research study. These authors argue that as a researcher, one must be prepared to honestly answer all the questions posed by the participants about the project. These questions sometimes may comprise the revelation of who sponsors the research project, its primary purpose, the amount of time and the effort that will be required of respondents, the general nature of the subject matter and how it will be the collected data used (Blair et al., 2013).

Prior to the data collection process, an ethical clearance certificate was sought from the University of Pretoria's ethics committee. As soon as the clearance was approved, permission was requested from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to conduct research at the sampled schools in Tshwane West District (D15) from the HOD. After permission was granted by the GDE, the sampled Geography teachers who met the criteria for selection were informed of the details of the study, and their voluntarily consent to participate in the study was obtained. Subsequently, permission to do research at the sampled school was also sought and obtained.

The participants, together with their school, were informed about the aims and the objectives of the study before the commencement of the data collection process. The participants for this study did not receive any form of remuneration, and participation was on a voluntary basis. I had explained to the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalties. Consent was sought from the participants and schools by obtaining signed consent forms. Consent was verbally asked before the commencement of interviews, observations and analysing documents.

Furthermore, the participants' right to privacy and confidentiality was maintained throughout through the use of pseudonyms. It was, therefore, communicated to the participants that pseudonyms would be used and only my supervisor and I would know who formed part of the study. I assured the participants that their names would not be known by anyone apart from the supervisor and myself, and they were assured that the records of interviews would be password protected. The data will also be stored at the Science, Mathematics and Technology Education (SMTE) Department at the University of Pretoria, and only the supervisor and I will have access to the raw data.



### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

Chapter 3 detailed the process of the qualitative research approach, the design and the methodology this study followed. The advantages and disadvantages of the choice of the research approach, the design and methodology this study adopted were outlined. This chapter further explored the research paradigm in line with the main research question. It ended with the issue of how to enhance the quality of the research findings as well the ethical consideration applicable to the study.

## **4 CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study aimed to investigate the possible role played by classroom formative assessment on Grade 10 to 12 learners' achievement in Geography. The study sought to better understand the perception that Geography teachers in the FET phase hold with regards to the use of formative assessment in their classrooms. The study followed the qualitative approach in collecting data from real-life settings through the administration of semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis as discussed in Chapter 3. The participants came from three different schools and comprised of six participants in total. The data for this study was coded and arranged according to their themes and sub-themes as they emerged from the raw data. The arrangement of themes and sub-themes was guided by the main research question, the sub-questions as well as the conceptual framework which underpinned the study. The interpretations and findings, which will be presented in the following sections, address the main research question for the study which state:

“What is the role of formative assessment in the quality of learners' performance in Geography in the FET phase?”

The main research question was further sub-divided into the following sub-questions.

To what extent is SBA effective as a form of formative assessment, and how does it affect learners' performance in Geography?

To what extent is summative evidence reflective of formative practices?

What role do learners play in formative assessment concerning peer or self-evaluation?

What formative assessment techniques and strategies do Geography teachers apply in their classroom?

### **4.2 THEMES EMERGING FROM ANALYSED DATA**

This section presents the results according to themes and sub-themes, which emanated from the collected data and were analysed through the thematic analysis process. Table 4.1 presents the research questions and themes and how they correlate with the conceptual framework, which has been discussed in Chapter 2. The

research questions and themes in Table 4.1 were linked to the conceptual framework based on how they related to the framework for learning-oriented assessment.

**Table 4.1: Research questions and themes related to the conceptual framework**

| Conceptual framework                                  | Research questions  | Themes and sub-themes  | Data collection method  |
|---|---|--|---|
| Feedback as feedforward                               | What formative assessment techniques and strategies do Geography teachers apply in their classroom?   | <p>Theme 1: Geography teacher quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participant's age and gender</li> <li>Qualification and experience</li> </ul> <p>Theme 2: Classroom formative strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching strategies</li> <li>Teaching quality and curriculum coverage</li> <li>Provision of feedback to learners</li> </ul> | <p>Semi-structured interview</p> <p>Observations</p> <p>Document analysis</p> |
| Assessment tasks as learning tasks                    | To what extent is School-Based Assessment (SBA) effective as a form of formative assessment, and how does it affect learners' performance in Geography? | <p>Theme 3: Learners' performance in Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learners' performance in SBA versus exams</li> <li>Quality of Geography SBAs and learners' performance</li> <li>School-Based Assessment (SBA) as a formative strategy</li> </ul> <p>Theme 4: Quality assurance of School-Based Assessment</p>  | <p>Document analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured interview</p>                     |
|   | To what extent are summative evidence reflective of formative practices?  |  | <p>Document analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured interview</p>                     |
| Learner involvement, e.g. as peer- or self-evaluators | What role do learners play in formative assessment with regard to peer or self-evaluation?  | Theme 5: Learners' role in assessment in Geography   | <p>Semi-structured interview</p> <p>Document analysis</p>                     |

### **4.3 THEME 1: GEOGRAPHY TEACHER QUALITY**

The first theme that was identified during the thematic data analysis was the Geography teacher quality. According to Armstrong (2009), there are many ways that can be employed in categorising teacher quality. Teachers' quality can range from their age, gender, qualification and teaching experience. However, teacher quality is not limited to these four traits according to Coe et al. (2014). These authors add the traits of subject content knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge to teacher quality; but for this study, I will focus on the age, gender, qualifications and teaching experience to categorise the teacher quality. Two sub-themes were identified to expand the understanding and to explore the main theme, namely, participants' age and gender; qualifications and experience.

#### **4.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Participant's age and gender**

The participants for the study were drawn from males (50%) and females (50%). However, in the whole sample, there was only one HoD who was also in an acting capacity. The age group of the participants was diverse as it ranged from 27 to 63, which is indicative of both young and older teachers represented in the study. Interestingly to note was that only one teacher from school A was aged below 35, which is still considered to be youthful in South Africa and in line with the DBE's strategy to get younger professionals into the system (DBE, 2014), whilst the rest were from age 36 and above which is considered mature to elderly.

#### **4.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Qualifications and experience**

In order to understand the possible role that teachers play in learners' performance in Geography, teachers' qualifications and experience became an important teacher quality indicator. These teachers' traits are vital because for learners to receive quality instruction and to improve their performance in the subject, a lot still depends heavily on the deployment of well qualified teachers who have been trained to teach that particular subject (Amrein-Beardsley, 2012; Spaul, 2013).

The amended Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) Act of 2016 stipulates that for any teacher to be employed in South Africa, such an individual should at least have a minimum of a three-year qualification, be trained as a teacher and must be in possession of a South African Council of Educators (SACE) certificate (Government Gazette, 2016). The PAM act of 2016 is in line with the Employment of Educators Act

(EEA) no.76 of 1998, which states that “in order to qualify for appointment as an educator a person must have at least a recognised three-year qualification (REQV 13) which must include appropriate training as a teacher” (DoE, 2009c, p. 10). Although, almost all sampled teachers in this study meet the requirements to be appointed as teachers, only two teachers were not highly qualified according to the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPTFED). According to the NPTFED, a highly qualified teacher should be in possession of four years’ qualification post the secondary school. Armstrong (2014) believes that the best performing education systems in the world can credit their standing to their ability of recruiting highly qualified teachers into the system. Table 4.2 summarises the teachers’ qualifications and experience.

**Table 4.2: Teachers’ qualifications and experience**

| Case                    | Teacher | Qualifications            | Teaching experience in the FET Phase |
|-------------------------|---------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| School A:<br>Inner city | 1       | 4 years B.Ed.             | 5 years                              |
|                         | 2       | B.Ed. (FET)               | 10 years                             |
| School B:<br>Suburban   | 3       | BA (Honours in Geography) | More than 20 years                   |
|                         | 4       | Diploma in education      | 25 years                             |
|                         | 5       | PGCE (English)            | 3 years                              |
| School C:<br>Township   | 6       | Secondary Teacher Diploma | 10 years                             |

The collected data indicated that all sampled teachers for the study met the minimum requirements and were professionally trained teachers. Only one teacher from school B had a qualification beyond the mandatory degree and was highly qualified as a Geography teacher. Teacher 3 from school B holds a postgraduate degree which is an honours degree specialising in Geography. Teacher 4 from school B and Teacher 6 from school C were the most underqualified if measured against the NPTFED, which stipulates that all new recruits should possess a four-year teacher qualification (REQV

14) to meet international standards, however, these two teachers are still in possession of a diploma. Interestingly to note, all participants have admitted that they have specialised in Geography in their qualifications except for Teacher 5 in school B who holds a PGCE with a specialisation in English. When the teacher was asked to explain how he became a Geography teacher the response was:

“Aah...! that was based on the post they had at the school.”

Although Teacher 5 can be classified as highly qualified by the NPTFED, he was asked to teach a subject which he did not specialise in, which is what Innes (2012) cautioned against by saying that Geography has grown in popularity at schools however it lacks specialised teachers. However, Teacher 5 acknowledged his shortcomings in the subject, and he mentioned that he was taking a course with the University of Johannesburg to improve his Geography knowledge. The course was provided by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) in partnership with the university.

“... there is a SETA<sup>1</sup> that which we are also doing, advance courses relating to Geography via U.J. So I think avenue are there to help.”

In addition to the teachers' qualifications, to determine the Geography teacher quality, experience was also considered. The literature has revealed that the more experienced teachers may have had insufficient training with regard to the implementation of interactive and differential teaching methods, which may be required for effective teaching practices in today's classroom (de Jager et al., 2017). Teacher 2 from school A and Teacher 4 at school B both had teaching experience of more than ten years, which can be regarded as more experienced in the sample. However, the view held by de Jager et al. (2017) that experienced teachers may lack training in the implementation of differential teaching methods in today's classroom was not evident during the lesson observation of these two teachers. The use of technology characterises today's classroom as it emerged during the observation lesson of Teacher 2 from school A and Teacher 4 at school B, who were both using technology to present their Geography lessons and had a vast amount of experience

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<sup>1</sup> SETA is the programme facilitated by the Department of Geography, Environmental Management & Energy Studies (GEMES) at the University of Johannesburg to address the identified gap and skill shortage of geography teachers. The programme focuses on areas of Geomorphology & Climatology, Economic Geography & Basic Map Work skills as well as Advanced Map Work Skill and Geographic Information System (GIS).

in the profession. Furthermore, Teacher 6 at school C was also more experienced, although her lesson presentation was not through the use of technology. During the interview, she acknowledged the importance of using visuals and technology in teaching Geography by stating that:

*On a daily basis I think if we had technology in my school I would like 'gore' (to) just type my own simple questions and give them maybe a diagram, maybe a picture, I prefer a real picture because when is just a diagram they don't associate those diagrams with reality. But I would prefer 'gore' (to) if I can have the real pictures maybe let's say maybe is a waterfall and then the formation of a waterfall then I find this picture with a gorge then I think and ask them based on something they can see. (Teacher 6)*

The acknowledgement of incorporating technological gadgets by Teacher 6 was an indication that regardless of the number of years of experience teaching Geography, the teacher acknowledges the necessity to cater for the current group of learners who are constantly exposed to technology in their lives.

Teacher 1 in School A and Teacher 5 from school B were both fairly inexperienced out of the sampled teachers as they had been teaching Geography in the FET phase for five years or less. The view held by de Jager et al. (2017) and Hofmeyer (2015) was that newly trained teachers possess teaching methods that are integral to cater for the learning needs of today's learners in the classroom. Teacher 1 seemed to possess the teaching methods which are important for today's classroom, which is the use of technology. Teacher 1, during his lesson presentation, used PowerPoint slides and a model demonstration of different phases of water and learners were fully engaged and captivated. Although the same topic was presented by Teacher 5, his lesson was purely reading paragraphs by paragraph from the textbook and the learners' discipline was a challenge as there was no control during the lesson. This teacher's teaching methods did not seem to support the view held by de Jager et al. (2017) and Hofmeyer (2015) with regards to the newly trained teachers, as his lessons did not cater for today's classroom and the learners seemed not interested in the lesson except for few who were participating.

## 4.4 THEME 2: CLASSROOM FORMATIVE STRATEGIES

During the data analysis stage, the classroom formative strategy theme emanated from the data. In order to explore the main research question, it was vital to understand the role of teachers' formative strategies in the classroom. According to Fisher and Frey (2014) it is very important in a formative assessment classroom to design strategies which can be able to address common educational initiative that support the lesson and to give precise instructions. These strategies are able to close the gap between learners' achievement, differentiation and helps the teacher in decision making.

Teachers are faced with a complex task of implementing the curriculum and classroom assessment simultaneously. It is against this backdrop that in the following section I discuss the sub-themes: teaching strategies, teaching quality and curriculum coverage, and provision of feedback to learners.

### 4.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Teaching strategies

How teachers deliver their lessons and how they conduct classroom assessment plays a major role in how both learners and the teacher learn (William & Leahy, 2016). Kumar (2013) asserts that in a formative classroom, both teachers and learners collaboratively enhance learning through adjustment of how teachers teach and how learners receive the lesson. The response that came from Teacher 1 when asked about his teaching strategy was that *"I only teach and do not allow formative assessment. I keep the learners interactive; keep on reminding or asking them questions so that they can recall the information being taught."* This practice was also admitted by Teacher 6 who said, *"I've got continuous assessment, verbal one maybe when you are teaching, you ask them questions but in most cases learners if you are choosing them randomly, some will not give you correct answers."* Both Teacher 1 and 6 shared similar teaching strategies, and subsequently, this practice was observed during the lesson as learners were continuously engaged in factual knowledge questions and answers throughout the lesson to see if they recalled certain concepts. Furthermore, when a similar question was posed to Teacher 2 and 5, they had a different view of their classroom strategies from that of Teacher 1 and 6, but both teachers shared a more similar approach. The formative classroom strategies Teacher 1 and 6 were the use of questions during the lesson presentation with less written



activities given to learners. At the same time, Teacher 2 and 5 preferred the use of written activities to be incorporated in their lessons. Teacher 2's response to the question was, "*I have a lot of informal, I have worksheets and activities and my activities I use sometimes as internal assessment, but sometimes I use it as a task then I mark it*". This practice was similar to what Teacher 5 said about their teaching strategy, "*at the same time, I think class activities are very helpful because when it comes to the formal assessment, it will be just be a sort of revision of what we've been all doing in terms of assessment as a class activity.*" The differences between the written activities of Teacher 2 and 5 were the fact that Teacher 2 marked those class activities, while Teacher 5 let learners mark their own work. Teacher 6 supported the practice of Teacher 5 by justifying the reason behind the use of classroom activities as teaching strategies and stating that the activities are used to prepare learners for formal assessment, "*I can also give them class activities, sometimes "di" homework to do at home then we have got formal assessment.*"

Teacher 4 held a different view of his classroom practice to the other participants. When asked to share his classroom strategies, his response was

*My own way of doing this is to check the understanding on the topic before I embark on the actual topic. That's general knowledge to check learners if the learners know that topic and I will answer and I encourage even learners to answer some questions so that it doesn't become a one way traffic, it becomes a two way traffic because it doesn't necessarily mean that the teacher knows all the answers.*  
(Teacher 4)

This practice by Teacher 4 was very interesting to note because the other participants seemed to share similar practices except for this teacher. Teacher 4 believed in conducting baseline assessment to check learners' previous knowledge before introducing the topic which other participants did not practice. Nevertheless, when I came to classroom observation, there was a contradiction to what was said during the face to face interview and what actually transpired in class. It was difficult to observe the difference in classroom strategies from other participants to that of Teacher 4. All participants seemed to share similar practices. This observation was further supported by document analysis, where the sampled learners' books of Teacher 4 contained

worksheets or activities to reinforce the concepts taught as it was the case with the other five participants. The difference probably emerged on how they approached their classroom assessment strategies.

#### **4.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Teaching quality and curriculum coverage**

Mitchel and Lambert (2015) warn against the ever-changing content dynamics in Geography, as the subject is all about what happens around us. It is vital for Geography teachers to constantly adapt their teaching methods to meet the new demands posed by the subject (Guerriero, 2013). Teaching quality becomes evident when the teacher is able to use the learners' previous knowledge and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. A general agreement emerged from the interviews amongst the participants about the need to align their teaching methods with the needs of their learners. Teacher 1 from school A acknowledged this by saying "*I feel as an educator I have a responsibility towards my learners. In the end their results reflect on me*" and he went further to say, "*I plan my lesson structure given to me according to the needs of my students.*" These two utterances are evident that the teacher feels the need to align his instructions to meet the needs of his learners. It also emerged that Teacher 3 shared the same sentiment to that of Teacher 1 when it came to meeting learners need when teaching. Teacher 3 stated:

*The needs of the learners because sometimes if you follow the ATP you will end up moving alone, so every time you know I will be little bit slower but the most important part is that when the learner understand, when they understand then I will move to the next topic.*  
(Teacher 3)

Furthermore, Teacher 2, 4, and 5 also found it important to always align their teaching methods and lessons according to the needs of learners. They all strongly highlighted the fact that should they follow the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) most of their learners will be left behind without understanding the concepts for that particular unit, as stated by teacher 4, "*it is pointless to go to another topic having not hammered the topic you dealt with today.*"

In addition to the need to adjust her teaching methods to ensure that all learners were catered for, Teacher 3 revealed interestingly that in her class, there were learners who learned slowly compared to others. These kinds of learners were also mentioned by

Teacher 6 who said it frustrated her that the system expected her to include those learners. Teacher 6 explained her frustration as follows:

*another thing, another frustration I think is because of this inclusivity, inclusive education. Don't forget we need to finish the ATP (Annual Teaching Plan) at highest speed, yet you have got those ones who needs special attention. So, the overcrowding classes deprive those learners who learn slowly to understand better Geography. (Teacher 6)*

However, Teacher 3 shared her strategy on how she accommodated learners who seemed to be slow in her classroom. Her strategy targeting those slow learners was:

More informal activities to the slow learners, and not only slow learners, all learners because if now you say slow learners then it means that you are now bringing that division, so you give more work then at the very same time you know that you are targeting the slow learners. (Teacher 3)

This practice, according to Teacher 3, allowed her to meet the different needs of learners.

In addition to the teaching quality, three of the sampled teachers indicated that curriculum coverage was a challenge for them in delivering quality teaching in Geography. It appeared that Teacher 1, 2 and 6 had concerns about the need to cover all the topics in the ATP at all cost for learners to be able to write or answer the external papers and this practice compromised their teaching quality. Teacher 1 raised this concern by saying, *“the problem is because curriculum is so packed. We need to push to get done so that later on, we can focus on the academics. So we, in the curriculum play back and forth, back and forth.”* Teacher 1 further indicated that even though he would like to give quality teaching, the curriculum does not allow the opportunity to do more informal assessments with learners and he said,

*during the second term I was a bit late with my Grade 10 schedule, so I had to push with my Grade 10's in order to finish the syllabus before an assessment or formal assessment from the district are implemented, so time is my biggest problem. (Teacher 1)*

It emerged that quality teaching is compromised in fear of accountability when learners perform poorly on external assessments. This challenge also emerged from Teacher 6 during the interview who stated, “*I have the facilitator who are behind me, I’ve got the HOD, I’ve got the syllabus coverage which doesn’t satisfy the real needs of these learners*”. When I tried to understand her explanation, I posed the question to Teacher 6 asking if it mattered or not that her learners understood the concepts and will she proceed to the next unit and her answer was simply “yes”. She was reiterating the issue of curriculum coverage at all cost. Teacher 6, therefore, moved along with the ATP irrespective of her learners understanding the concepts or not so that she would not be found guilty by her supervisors of not completing the syllabus before the external exams.

#### **4.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Provision of feedback to learners**

In the learning experience of learners, formative feedback is an instrumental tool which Geography teachers can use in their classrooms. Hatziapostolou and Paraskakis (2010) perceive feedback as any information which a teacher communicates to learners in response to their formative assessment work. All sampled teachers during the interviews agreed to have ways in which they provide feedback to their learners. What emerged from this study was the fact that there were similarities in the way in which the sampled teachers provided their feedback, although variation emerged in both document analysis and face to face interviews to lesser extent.

During the interview process, Teacher 2 expressed the importance of providing her learners with feedback and also shared how she learned from it. Teacher 2 expressed her views as follows:

*It is important to give feedback because they differ in answering the questions. The moment that you show them individually I found like I told them when I mark the grade 12 test I saw wow it worked they answered the paragraph questions perfectly after a lot of mistakes from grade 11 or when is said “describe” they really described it. Previously they wrote one sentence so in they the way they interpreted their question that is very important to look at that.*  
(Teacher 2)

All participating teachers agreed that they provide their learners with feedback after an assessment has been written. However, their feedback seemed to pay more attention to formal assessment, and less feedback was given to the informal activities.

When I further asked how the feedback was given back to learners, it was interesting to note the different ways of how sampled teachers viewed the provision of feedback. Teacher 1 answered,

*I tell them in general, let's look at it, and maps skills you lack. In theory, source based aspect you do not know how to read the source or interpret the questions, for example, terms such as distinguish they do not understand, then I do provide them with a list of those words "substantiate". (Teacher 1)*

This was his way of providing feedback to his learners. He further explained his feelings when he gives feedback, and he expresses his disappointment when his learners do not perform according to his expectations on external assessments. The disappointed was evident in his words when he said,

*I'm usually cross (angry) because my standard to my students because I know what I taught them and then what they do provide me with during exam or assessment and I mark it and it is not that standard, I do get crossed (angry). (Teacher 1)*

Teacher 2 and Teacher 1 came from the same school; however, they had a different way of providing feedback to their learners. Teacher 2's feedback was given in the form of writing. The feedback is written inside learners' scripts next to their mistakes, and subsequently, when I conducted document analysis, I noticed that the feedback only focused on formal tests. The learners' daily exercise books barely had comments made on them except for the HOD stamp for book control. This practice was similar to that of Teacher 1, and during the interview Teacher 1 mentioned nothing on the provision of feedback from informal assessments and the learners' book for this teacher had no written comments except for the HOD stamp as well.

Teacher 3,4 and 5 came from the same school, and all three had very similar ways of providing feedback to their learners. The similarities in feedback provision by these teachers was due to the school's assessment policy directives. Teacher 5 mentioned

that their school policy provided direction in terms of feedback, and it was interesting to note because the other two schools did not mention anything of policy regarding feedback. In his remarks, Teacher 5 said the following: “the policy in our school it says after handing in the marks to the reception, make sure that you go back with learners and do corrections.”

During the interview, all three teachers from school B admitted that after every formal assessment, learners must be given corrections as a form of feedback. This practice was supported by Teacher 4 who said:

*Feedback is provided by giving them their scripts, where they see how they performed and obviously they get to compare with one another that I think I have done well and so on. And then after that you get to embark on doing corrections as a way of remedial work to some and even those who did miss certain concepts, they are able to realise where they missed it as well. (Teacher 4)*

The use of correction as feedback also emanated from Teacher 6 at school C. She also said her learners received feedback in the form of correction after a formal test. Although all participants kept referring to correction as feedback for only formal assessments, during the document analysis it emerged that all learners’ exercise books from all sampled teachers had correction after each activity written in pencil next to the wrong answers. This evidence from document analysis means if these teachers perceived correction as a way of providing feedback, then they were providing feedback on informal activities, although little acknowledgement of this activity was given. It was also noted that those learners who were said to under-perform in Geography all had fewer activities as well as corrections in their books, more specially from school C.

There was a general consensus amongst all the participants that the use of corrections was the best practice in providing Geography learners feedback with exception of Teacher 2 in school A who gave her learners written feedback. The use of correction as feedback is when all learners in the classroom are given correct answers for all the wrong responses they provided during an assessment, while written feedback is more detailed on mistakes made on the assessment and learner specific rather than addressing the whole class. The document analysis gave an overview that the majority

of the sample relied heavily on the use of correction as feedback, and their learners' scripts had no comments or feedback written on it.

Kenyon (2019) maintain that for feedback to be effective, the key traits such as providing feedback individually to learners is critical. Similarly, HatziaPOSTOLOU and Paraskakis (2010) posit that individual feedback allows the teacher to identify the strength and weaknesses of their learners. Teacher 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 admitted that they provided feedback individually to a certain extent, but their approaches were different. Teacher 3 said she focused on learners who were underperforming as she taught both Grade 11 and 12 classes, thus time and large number of learners under her could not allow consistent individual feedback to all the learners. She explained her individual feedback strategy as follows:

*if I see that a learner performed poorly then I will always call a learner, call her aside and sit down with a learner ad try to show her or him that you know what, this is how you were supposed to answer this question. (Teacher 3)*

Teacher 3 said this practice was the best way to provide feedback individually to her learners, citing a larger group as a challenge to individual feedback. This challenge is exactly what Teacher 6 also cited as the reason why she could not provide her learners feedback individually. Moreover, Teacher 5 said he would wait for his learners to come and consult with him after receiving their scripts and use the consultation time as an opportunity to provide individual feedback. Teacher 1 clearly stated that he preferred group feedback as it allowed him to address the common mistakes which he picked up while marking, and it was the best strategy for him which yielded results he desired.

Under this theme, it was also important to establish how quickly feedback was given to learners. School A and B had an assessment policy which provided guidelines on how long the teacher should spend on marking before returning scripts to learners. According to Teacher 2, School A had a timeframe of five days to mark learners' scripts but acknowledge that it was not something she managed to achieve regularly, saying " {the] school time frame it is five days and we must be done marking and I do not always cover it because I have 102 grade 11s."

Teacher 1, who was also from school A, contradicted the statement made by his colleague concerning the timeframe for feedback. Teacher 1 said "*There is no time*

*frame when it comes to feedback. That goes for any teacher, its own way of feedback.”*

Thus, it emerged that even though both teachers came from the same school, they both had contradicting views when it came to timeous feedback to learners. It was difficult to establish the truth about this policy of five days for marking in school A through document analysis as the learners’ marked scripts were not dated by either the learner or the marker. The teachers from school B all maintained that they had a three days’ timeframe to give learners feedback. Similarly, through document analysis, I could not establish the credibility of the statements made by the teachers from school B. Two learners’ test scripts from Teacher 3 had the date interval of four days from the date written to the marked date, but this observation did not provide conclusive evidence. In school C, the teacher admitted that she did not have a timeframe, and she made no mention if there was a policy that guided teachers on providing feedback. Thus, as to how long it took for learners to receive feedback, it seemed only to depend on the teacher. She commented:

*Nna [I] personally, I can’t say I have timeframe because sometimes I give them very early. If I’ve got time to mark, mark, it depends on which day they did they write and then I mark, mark, and then I give them. Sometimes I don’t have enough time, and then I give them later, so I don’t have specific timeframe. (Teacher 6)*

It was, therefore, evident that Geography learners from school C did not receive timeous feedback which could be attributed to the issue of overcrowded classes as mentioned by Teacher 6 during the interview. This teacher also mentioned that she taught grade 11 and 12 in the FET phase and grade 9 at the General Education and Training (GET) phase, thus more learners’ scripts to mark which can take more time before learners receive their feedback.



## 4.5 THEME 3: LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN GEOGRAPHY

Learner performance in Geography, particularly in Grade 12 for Gauteng province between 2014 and 2018 has shown good results in terms of pass rates as discussed in Chapter 2. However, the concern remains on the low averages, which accompany these good annual pass rates. Mji and Makgato (2006) indicate that poor learner performance can be attributed to several issues such as outdated teaching methods as well as incorrect use of assessment. This study sought to establish the connection between learners' performance variation in the SBA and the examination across the FET phase. It further sought to investigate the effective use of SBA in Geography as a formative strategy.

### 4.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Learners' performance in SBA versus exams

The teachers were asked to explain their learners' performance when it comes to the SBA throughout the year and at the end year examination. Teacher 1, 4 and Teacher 6 shared similar experiences when it comes to this issue. They all explained that according to their experiences, the performance of their learners was erratic throughout the year. However, to a greater extent, they agreed that their learners tended to do better on SBAs than in the final exams. Teacher 6 emphasised, "*My experience is that learners perform well on the SBA than on the final exam*". When questioned to explain the reasons for the differences in learners' performance on SBAs and at the end of the year examinations further, numerous reasons emerged. Teacher 3 from school B raised one of the attributes she thought might be the reason behind the different performance in SBA and end year examination for her learners and said: "*sometimes you may find that learners are copying(cheating) then you may think that this learner is doing well but as you teach, as a teacher you will know your learners.*" Teacher 5 from school B said he did not experience a similar challenge to that of Teacher 3, but he highlighted one attribute which he thought resulted in higher SBAs marks compared to the examination.

*Portfolio allows them to go and do research on their own and also helped by other peers or either by parents and in that way to me it's a free marks, free marks, yeah it does help. (Teacher 5)*

Therefore, according to Teacher 5, the SBA task (research assignment) which is conducted in term 2 allows learners to improve their SBA marks as it a take home

assignment and learners may be assisted at home. Teacher 1 from school A said his school allowed learners an extended opportunity to improve their test score if they write a test and underperform. Teacher 1 said:

What I would say is we use intervention and intervention schedule as a second attempt. So when students write a specific assessment, and I see majority of them under performed we allow them or I allow them as an educator, I set another test and then in that intervention period I allow them to engage with the second attempt. So they get another opportunity to write a test, not a similar or the same test. (Teacher 1)

The GDE endorses this practice, and it will definitely increase the learners' SBA marks in Geography (GDE, 2017). Learners who underperform in formal tasks will always get a second opportunity to improve their results, which in turn increase their SBA marks. However, this intervention of extended opportunity practice is not allowed when it comes to examinations. If a learner underperforms in the examination, that will be the mark recorded for that particular learner, and they will not be granted a second opportunity to improve the examination mark. Hence a variation of marks is recorded between the SBAs and the end year examinations.

It emerged from this study that learners in Geography across the FET phase tended to perform better in the SBAs than the end year examinations. It appeared during the document analysis that most of the teachers drilled previous question papers with their learners as informal activities, which can lead to the memorising of concepts rather than understanding these concepts. Learners will perform better on SBAs because the teacher might develop informal activities that are in line with the formal tasks but not in line with the examination. This practice was raised by Teacher 6, who said:

*That is why I was saying if the SBA informed the final exam neh, I think that was going to be better. So you will find that the SBA sometimes is about something different and then these learners enjoys to do this SBA than to sit down and study and try to answer the questions. (Teacher 6)*

The Grade 11 term 3 SBA task perused was similar to many of the activities that Teacher 2 in School A and Teacher 3 from School B used as informal activities. Such a practice may improve learners' performance on SBA compared to the examination

as learners get used to the questions through these informal activities. However, when it comes to the question paper in the exams, such learners might underperform as indicated by Teacher 6 with her learners because they only memorised the concepts during the SBA assessment, thus failing to apply it in the examinations.

With regards to how learners of the sampled schools performed in the SBA compared to examination, the document analysis of this study focused on the Term 1 and Term 2 Geography results. Across all three sampled schools, it emerged that learners performed better in Term 1 as there was no examination conducted because Term 1 consisted of a test and a data handling task compared to Term 2. Term 2 consisted of one SBA task, which was a take-home assignment across all three grades and the June examination. The comparisons of the results of the two terms are presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Term 1 and 2 Learners' Performance Comparisons of SBA and Examination.**

| School A        |   |        |      |      |        |      |      |          |      |      |
|-----------------|---|--------|------|------|--------|------|------|----------|------|------|
|                 |   | Term 1 |      |      | Term 2 |      |      | Variance |      |      |
| Grade           |   | 10     | 11   | 12   | 10     | 11   | 12   | 10       | 11   | 12   |
| No. of Learners |   | 71     | 101  | 67   | 68     | 101  | 67   |          |      |      |
| Level Achieved  | 1 | 10     | 5    | 4    | 2      | 11   | 8    |          |      |      |
|                 | 2 | 15     | 24   | 10   | 9      | 19   | 14   |          |      |      |
|                 | 3 | 19     | 35   | 16   | 21     | 36   | 22   |          |      |      |
|                 | 4 | 12     | 19   | 17   | 25     | 17   | 13   |          |      |      |
|                 | 5 | 12     | 15   | 9    | 9      | 9    | 5    |          |      |      |
|                 | 6 | 3      | 2    | 9    | 2      | 8    | 5    |          |      |      |
|                 | 7 | 0      | 1    | 2    | 0      | 1    | 0    |          |      |      |
| Average         |   | 44,4   | 46,4 | 51,7 | 49,4   | 45,5 | 44,4 | 5        | -0.9 | -7.3 |
| Pass %          |   | 85,9   | 95,0 | 94,0 | 97,1   | 89,1 | 88,1 | 11.2     | -5.9 | -5.9 |

School B

|                 |   | Term 1 |     |    | Term 2 |     |    | Variance |    |    |
|-----------------|---|--------|-----|----|--------|-----|----|----------|----|----|
| Grade           |   | 10     | 11  | 12 | 10     | 11  | 12 | 10       | 11 | 12 |
| No. of Learners |   | 135    | 106 | 39 | 140    | 106 | 39 |          |    |    |
| Level Achieved  | 1 | 89     | 19  | 0  | 78     | 35  | 7  |          |    |    |
|                 | 2 | 29     | 44  | 6  | 37     | 13  | 12 |          |    |    |
|                 | 3 | 15     | 24  | 15 | 23     | 33  | 9  |          |    |    |
|                 | 4 | 2      | 13  | 15 | 2      | 19  | 7  |          |    |    |
|                 | 5 | 0      | 5   | 2  | 0      | 5   | 4  |          |    |    |
|                 | 6 | 0      | 1   | 1  | 0      | 0   | 0  |          |    |    |
|                 | 7 | 0      | 0   | 0  | 0      | 1   | 0  |          |    |    |

|         |      |      |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|---------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Average | 25,2 | 37,3 | 48,5  | 22,6 | 36,4 | 39,8 | -2.6 | -0.9 | -8.7 |
| Pass %  | 34,1 | 82,1 | 100,0 | 44,3 | 67,0 | 82,1 | 10.2 | 15.1 | 17.9 |

School C

|                             |   | Term 1 |      |      | Term 2 |      |      | Variance |     |       |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|------|------|--------|------|------|----------|-----|-------|
| Grade                       |   | 10     | 11   | 12   | 10     | 11   | 12   | 10       | 11  | 12    |
| No. of Learners             |   | 247    | 173  | 99   | 245    | 169  | 98   |          |     |       |
| Level Achieved <sup>2</sup> | 1 | 36     | 32   | 1    | 78     | 24   | 24   |          |     |       |
|                             | 2 | 81     | 49   | 28   | 115    | 57   | 24   |          |     |       |
|                             | 3 | 75     | 56   | 24   | 40     | 60   | 21   |          |     |       |
|                             | 4 | 33     | 28   | 23   | 10     | 20   | 13   |          |     |       |
|                             | 5 | 14     | 6    | 18   | 2      | 7    | 12   |          |     |       |
|                             | 6 | 8      | 2    | 4    | 0      | 0    | 3    |          |     |       |
|                             | 7 | 0      | 0    | 1    | 0      | 1    | 1    |          |     |       |
| Average                     |   | 40,2   | 38,7 | 48,9 | 30,7   | 39,0 | 39,8 | -9.5     | 0.3 | -9.1  |
| Pass %                      |   | 85,4   | 81,5 | 99,0 | 68,2   | 85,8 | 75,5 | -17.2    | 4.3 | -23.5 |

Table 4.3 lays out the results of term 1 and 2 of the three sampled schools for all the grades in the FET phase. The results are presented in terms of the levels achieved, averages and the pass percentage of learners in each grade. The variance of average and pass percentage between the two terms is also presented. It can be seen from Table 4.3 that the majority of the learners in all three schools achieved between level 1 and level 2, there are only a few learners whose performance is between level 6 and 7. In total, there are only eight learners who obtained a term mark of above 80% in all three grades for all combined sampled schools for both terms. Moreover, in terms of averages, all three schools had achieved below 50% for both terms, with school A

<sup>2</sup> Level achieved refers to the term marks obtained by a learner ranging from Level 1 – 7. Level 1 means learners achieved the term mark between (0% – 29%), Level 2 (30% – 39%); Level 3 (40% – 49%); Level 4 (50% – 59%); Level 5 (60% – 69%); Level 6 (70% – 79%) and Level 7 (80% - 100%)

Grade 10 and School C Grade 11 achieving a positive average variance. This negative average variance is a clear indication that most learners perform well in the SBAs compared to the examinations.

This lower performance of Geography learners in the examinations is also substantiated by the pass rate of learners in all three schools. In School B, the Grade 12 learners in Term 1 had achieved a 100% pass rate, but that pass rate dropped significantly by 17.9% in Term 2, where learners wrote an external examination. Similarly, school C had the same huge drop of pass rate in Term 2 compared to Term 1 where they had a pass rate of 99%, but in Term 2 it dropped by a margin of 23.5%. There was an increase in the pass rate for Grade 10 at school A and B and Grade 11 from school C as their Term 2 marks were calculated including the assignment which they took home to complete, for which Teacher 5 and 6 cautioned that it might increase the learners' term marks. This increase in learners' performance as a result of take-home assignments was evident from these results in Term 2 for Grade 10 and 11. However, the Grade 12 results for Term 2 only comprised of June/Mid-year examination results, and their assignment was not included in the calculation of the term mark which was a clear indication of the Geography learners struggling in the exams.

#### **4.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Quality of Geography SBAs and learners' performance**

The Geography School-Based Assessment (SBA) in the FET phase is not developed by the teachers at a school level, but it is provided by the subject advisors from district office. As stated by Teacher 6: *"in the FET level, we are given the assessment; we do not produce our own assessment."* When it came to the issue of quality with regards to the SBA tasks which they receive from the district, Teacher 3 and Teacher 6 shared different opinions on the matter. Teacher 6 said: *"In Geography I don't think I will be fair if I say these SBAs are not of quality, they are of quality.* At the same time Teacher 3 stated:

*Okay, like I said that some of these SBAs because they are coming from the district, sometimes you may find that, you know what? A person may just give you a question paper and at the same time it is not a 'Pause' not of a good quality. (Teacher 3)*

These two teachers, therefore, did not seem to share the same view with regard to the quality of SBAs from the district.

This study, however, sought to establish whether the quality of SBA tasks received from the district played a role on the performance of learners in Geography at the end of the year examination. Teacher 2 condemned the quality of the SBA tasks received, stating that the SBAs received were not of the learners' standard or too difficult at times. She also cautioned that this differential SBA standard might have a negative impact on her learners' performance if the SBA structure and the quality is not aligned with the end year examination. Teacher 6 also shared the same sentiment saying:

*to me I was of idea that these SBAs from those people when they give us SBAs they supposed to give us exactly the same topics and the same types of questions that learners will face at the end of the year, I think that would be make learners perform very good and very well.*

(Teacher 6)

Teacher 5 also maintained that he felt as if the standard of the tasks was not that of Grade 10 level. Teacher 5 said the standard of the SBA task “*should not be as if you are examining the people in the varsity level.*”

Teacher 6 further raised the concern regarding the SBAs quality stating that ‘*the problem is that you will find that at the end of the year the questions that come they might be the same as those ones in the SBA but with a different diagram.*’ According to these teachers, they felt that the quality of SBAs from the district were not doing enough to prepare their learners for final examinations. As stated by Teacher 6, who said: “*[The SBAs] are not doing enough to expose them*” referring to the quality of SBAs and learners' performance at the end of the year. Moreover, Teacher 1 also felt that the SBAs were not preparing his learners for exams. He expressed his feeling as follows: “*if I have to give them an assignment or an assessment or SBA task, they are not really well prepared with the SBA given from the district.*”

Teacher 2 pointed out that some tasks are not aligned with the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) and felt it might deter her learners from acquiring the concepts needed in the final examinations. It emerged from this study that the participants shared similar views about the impact of the SBAs on the performance of their learners at the end year examinations. It was challenging to establish these views fully, as many of the

teachers kept referring to “quality” as “standards”, thereby confusing the two concepts irrespective of probing questions.

Teacher 5 raised an interesting issue which he felt might be a contributing factor on the quality of SBAs coming from the district when he said:

*let’s say specifically for Grade 10, I don’t think, usually getting question papers from the district but I don’t think the consultation it’s enough in trying to understand how they need to ask these learners.*

(Teacher 5)

This teacher believes that proper consultation with the teachers who teach that grade by the subject facilitator before the setting of SBA tasks could alleviate the challenge of SBAs quality not doing enough to prepare Geography learners for end year examination. Teacher 3 also supported the statement made by her colleague saying:

*that is why I said time and again our facilitator must invite all the teachers teaching that subject or grade to come and to come up with questions, I don’t know how they come up with these question papers.*

(Teacher 3)

But Teacher 3 further acknowledged the steps taken by her district subject advisor to address this issue of SBA quality. In her acknowledgement, she said:

*last month when we attended a meeting, our facilitator invited all grade 10 teachers to come and set the question papers and I think that is a good strategy because we are the teachers, the ones teaching those learners we know what we have covered, we know the books that we are using.* (Teacher 3)

According to Teacher 3 this initiative was a step in the right direction to address the issue and concerns which were raised by the other participants concerning the SBA quality and the possible impact it had on their learners’ performance. Even though, none of the other participants made mention of this plan, I presumed that maybe they did not know about it leading to these interviews.



### 4.5.3 Sub-theme 3: School-Based Assessment (SBA) as a formative strategy

Formative assessment advocates the use of learners' performance by teachers as evidence to adapt their instructions. On the one hand, SBA in the CAPS document is treated as a crucial tool for learners' progress in the grade, and it was evident from this study that the sampled teachers treated SBAs as such. During the interviews, it was difficult to establish if teachers viewed SBA as part of formative assessment, however, the document analysis revealed some issues on this theme. Firstly, in all learners' scripts that were perused, the formal tests were part of the SBAs in line with the CAPS requirements for Geography and were kept in a portfolio file with no evidence of informal tests in the file. The SBA question papers were also kept by teachers as indicated by Teacher 3 who said, "*after writing the teacher must take in all the question papers*" although the retrieval of question papers from all learners after writing a test was her strategy to avoid paper leakage for those learners who were absent for the formal test and presumably for neighbouring schools as well, as they probably received the same task. This practice of paper safekeeping meant learners wrote the test, then received results and only engaged with their mistakes during the correction phase. Teacher 2, during the interview, pointed out how she engaged with the SBA tasks with her learners to help them learn from it. Her explanation was as follows:

*I discovered it now with my grade 12s. I think they struggled through this task it had the correct structure but not content related. But then I explained to them how to think out of the box and I will take that as correct answer. I taught them not to stay with the content that I gave them they must think out of the box. I saw it now with the test they did it and it worked well. (Teacher 2)*

Teacher 2 was, therefore, able to use the SBA to guide her learners for the next assessment based on their mistakes in the current SBA task and presumed it yielded the desired outcomes for her. It emerged from the other participating teachers that this practice was once-off and only took place during the correction phase.

#### 4.6 THEME 4: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

An assumption held by Maile (2013) is that the quality outcomes of learners' performance are as a result of the quality process applied at the school level. Maile (2013) presumes that “*if schools are to implement quality standards, the outcomes of assessment will be of quality*” (Maile, 2013, p. 17). School-Based Assessment (SBA) tasks in Geography currently forms an integral part of learners' progression across the FET phase. A learner is expected to complete all seven SBA tasks before sitting for a final examination, and it is, therefore, crucial that these tasks are quality assured. For the exit grade in this phase, which is Grade 12, Umalusi is an external body which quality assures the SBA tasks and the examination. However, Grade 10 and 11 remain an internal school process. The National Protocol for Assessment grade R–12 is silent about the guidelines with regards to quality assurance of SBAs, which means there will be variations from school to school in respect of the quality assurance process application.

Teachers were asked to explain the measures which are available in their schools to ensure the quality of the SBAs that are received from the district. The common thread in the quality assurance process of Geography SBAs, which the sampled teachers made mention of, was pre-moderation and post-moderation which was conducted by the subject HOD or senior Geography teacher in the absence of the HOD. This was stated by Teacher 5 from school B who said;

*The HOD's are there and here as well I think the strategy that they are using usually you will always have that senior educator so it's a big school with experience educators, so now and then senior educators will always try to help out and to check as to whether the assessment is meeting the standard and yeah. (Teacher 5)*

Since school B was a big school, some HOD tasks were delegated to a more senior Geography teacher to ensure that the quality assurance process takes place.

The moderation process as outlined by Umalusi (2018) includes the quality assurance of assessment tools for both formal and informal activities, to check the cognitive levels as outlined by CAPS and evaluate the difficulty level of the questions. The moderation process also includes the quality assurance of marks and the language used on the assessment instrument to clear ambiguous questions. An essential part of quality

assurance was raised by all participants, as Teacher 1 from school A mentioned that the moderation process was to check the curriculum and whether the assessment instruments met the cognitive levels as per requisite by the CAPS. The sampled teachers further said moderation was done to minimise the mistakes on the question paper, which could hamper the performance of their learners.

An interesting note during the interview process was that the teachers indicated that the post-moderation process was followed after each and every formal assessment, but they did not indicate the reason behind conducting this process. Teacher 5 from school B said, *“You need to do the corrections after you have done with the post-moderation, then you need to give it back to learners and make corrections.”* Likewise, Teacher 1 from school A uttered similar comments and said: *“What I usually do is I mark it, send it to moderation, after moderation as we go through the paper.”* The post-moderation comments made by Teacher 1 and Teacher 5 clearly indicate that the post-moderation process was followed at their respective schools, but the implementation of corrections was not emphasised. For example, both teachers mentioned that they go through the learners’ marked scripts after post-moderation has been conducted by the HOD with learners. However, none of them mentioned if the corrections which they conducted were informed by the post-moderation report or whether it was done to show learners where they made mistakes in the test. However, Teacher 4 from school B mentioned that, *“doing corrections as a way of remedial work to some and even those who did miss certain concepts, they are able to realise where they missed it as well.”* This statement means their process was not informed by the quality assurance report, but rather to revise the concepts and for learners to see their mistakes in the test.

It emerged during the document analysis that all participating schools conducted quality assurance processes for compliance. In School A, both teachers had the pre- and post-moderation reports on file, but it was a checklist with little comments made on it. The comments were only visible on the pre-moderation of the question paper, where changes were made to incorrect numbering, and spelling errors on the paper were corrected. Other than that, nothing else was evident. The post-moderation was a checklist that was completed by the HOD with few comments made on it, and the names of learners whose scripts were moderated were indicated on the report. In School B and C, the Grade 10 and 11 teachers’ assessment files were not present for

perusal, only the Grade 12 files were presented. Both schools' Grade 12 files contained the moderation reports by the HOD and the district moderation report from the Teacher Moderator, but there was no new information that emerged from school B and C akin to what emanated from school A.

Lastly, document analysis revealed that the informal activities which were given to learners in the form of worksheets were not quality assured as there was no evidence to indicate otherwise. The pre-and post-moderation reports in the files only referred to the formal administered tests. Across all participating schools, the Grade 10 and 11 learners' books showed a lot of informal activities from previous question papers, but these activities' quality assurance process could not be confirmed. However, the Grade 12 learners' exercise books contained their previous question paper worksheets from end-of-year examination papers which were quality assured by Umalusi. However, the concern that remains with the Grade 12's informal activities is the adaptation of these worksheets to the current content. For example, if the previous years' questions focused on the impact of the tropical cyclone in Japan, the worksheets could be adapted to the tropical cyclone which affected Mozambique at the time. As pointed out by Teacher 6, her learners reportedly struggled with the interpretation of different diagrams in the exams. This adaptation strategy could have been the perfect opportunity to incorporate different types of sources and align them to the already quality assured previous question papers by Umalusi. Additionally, Umalusi advocates for the school internal quality assurance process, therefore, the schools are still expected to quality assure all informal activities given to learners, irrespective of the quality assured worksheets from the previous years.

#### **4.7 THEME 5: LEARNERS' ROLE IN ASSESSMENT IN GEOGRAPHY**

The participating teachers had varied approaches to include the Geography learners in assessment. These assessment strategies need to be aligned with the teachers' learning outcomes to identify the areas that required attention to improve. This study found out that teachers gave more attention to summative assessment strategies and little opportunity was afforded to learners in developing their abilities to become successful. During the interview, teachers were asked to explain their views on learners taking an active role in Geography assessment. Teacher 1 responded saying: *"When it comes to formal assessment, I believe that the educator needs to take active role because obviously the educator knows exactly what is expected."* Almost all

participating teachers shared this belief as they believed teachers had more knowledge when it came to Geography assessment and believed that a teacher had received better training in conducting assessment than the learners.

Teacher 1 also indicated that he did not believe in the capabilities of his learners to identify their own mistakes which was the same viewpoint Teacher 6 raised. Contrary to this point of view, Teacher 4 believed that learners should be at the forefront of Geography assessment although he did not practice it, saying:

*That would be something really helpful because it will actively involve them to know questions are approached and the best way of answering as opposed to when they get only the correction they are not sure if they correct but that will even encourage active participation to say but what about my answer and so on. (Teacher 4)*

The sustained belief of teachers' active, central role in Geography assessment was aligned with the marking of the summative assessment. The sampled teachers outlined few concerns because learners were aware that the formal activities' marks were used as progression marks, therefore, the learners could not be objective in the process. As Teacher 3 cautioned: "*those looking for certain answer so they will just mark anything that they think of*" to ensure that they get good marks for the assessment. Teacher 4 was also in agreement with Teacher 3, saying "*trust element because with learners at times, you think those particularly if you say they must mark their own some are not really trustworthy.*" Teacher 2 believed that learners do not concentrate on the instructions issued and therefore, as such they learned nothing from their own assessment and presumed that they learned a lot from her as an active assessor. Teacher 5 raised an interesting view by saying:

*Obviously the one marked by an educator. Because marking allows a person to reflect because there is no way where I can mark 20 scripts out of 35 a class then the learners fail one question then I say I did well on that topic. (Teacher 5)*

In addition, the teacher believed that him taking an active role as an assessor allowed him to identify the mistakes he might have made during lesson presentation and was then able to seek help from other teachers who might be good at certain topics to come and help him.

This study revealed that learners' active role as assessors in Geography, according to the participating teachers, was limited to informal activities. As declared by Teacher 1: *"informally, peer and self-evaluation and then when it comes to formal assessment, the educator needs to take that one, obviously."* Teacher 2 explained that instead of giving her learners a memorandum, she actively engaged learners through the question paper while they assessed their own work. Furthermore, the teacher indicated the value in allowing learners to engage with their own assessment tasks, stating that learners will be able to see their mistakes and learn from them.

At school C, Teacher 6 used group work where learners are grouped according to their abilities to assist each other. In her statement she said: *"We group them sometimes to help each other, maybe those ones that are performing well, we put them together with those ones who are not performing well, and I think that helps."* According to this teacher, this practice allowed the underperforming learners to engage with their peers in a group and learn from each other. The teacher further pointed out that underperforming learners were able to ask questions during these group sessions and be actively involved, which is something that they would not normally do during class time.

The evidence emanated from the document analysis also justified that the learners' active role in Geography assessment was from informal activities. The question papers that Teacher 2 referred to were worksheets where learners marked their own work instead of a formal assessment that was conducted by the teacher. This practice yet again was a common thread across the sampled schools and teachers. Lastly, there was no evidence of peer assessment from learners' exercise books or any other activities.

#### **4.8 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Chapter 4 presented the analysed data, the findings of the results which emerged from data analysis, as well as the interpretation of the findings. The themes were constructed from the data which was gathered through face to face interviews, document analysis, classroom observations and field notes. Moreover, the themes were constructed in line with the Learning-Oriented Assessment framework discussed in Chapter 2, as well as the research questions.

In this chapter I have described the participants' experiences, beliefs and perceptions concerning their classroom formative strategies in Geography. Furthermore, I have demonstrated the views of the participants regarding the provision of feedback to learners, and the learners' varied performance in Geography examinations in comparison with performance in SBAs. In addition, the issue of quality assurance of SBAs was presented in this chapter as well as the views of the participants with regards to learners taking an active role in Geography assessment.

Chapter 5 will be concluding the study by providing the summaries of the result findings, outlining the conclusion of the study and providing recommendations for further studies.

## 5 CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken to explore the possible role played by classroom formative assessment strategies on the achievement of Grade 10 to 12 Geography learners. The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the findings which emanated from the preceding chapter through the data analysis and themes which emerged from this research and to consolidate the findings. In this final chapter of the study, the summary of the findings will be presented, substantiated by the findings from the data. Moreover, conclusions for the study will be drawn in relation to the main research question and the sub-question which guided this research. The main research question for this study was:

“What is the role of formative assessment in the quality of learners’ performance in Geography in the FET phase?”

The main research question was further sub-divided into the following sub-questions.

- To what extent is SBA effective as a form of formative assessment, and how does it affect learners’ performance in Geography?
- To what extent are summative evidence reflective of formative practices?
- What role do learners play in formative assessment concerning peer or self-evaluation?
- What formative assessment techniques and strategies do Geography teachers apply in their classroom?

Section 5.2 will present the summary of the research process as it unfolded for this study, while Section 5.3 will draw the conclusions from the research findings. These conclusions will take into account the main research question and sub-questions developed for the study as well as the conceptual framework which underpins the study. Section 5.4 will give a brief reflection of the conceptual framework and the research methods and design, while Section 5.5 states the limitation of the study. The recommendations for further research study are briefly discussed and presented in Section 5.6, while Section 5.7 draws the conclusions of this chapter and give the reflection of the researcher’s view.



## 5.2 THE RESEARCH PROCESS SUMMARY

This study sought to establish evidence of the role played by classroom formative strategies on learners' performance in Geography. It was important for Chapter 1 to provide the synopsis of the study briefly as well as the rationale of the study and break down a statement of the research problem to achieve these objectives. The prime focus of the problem statement was to create the picture of the learners' performance challenges in Geography, more especially in the FET phase. It looked at how Geography learners perform in the Grade 12 final examination in terms of the overall pass rate versus the overall average nationally. One other issue which emerged in the rationale of the study was the incorrect use of SBAs as formative assessment tool and its ineffectiveness in promoting learners' sustained learning in the subject (Reyneke, 2016). In addition, the issue of the quality of the SBAs in school emerged and how these SBA quality differentials can hamper the learners' performance in Geography. Furthermore, the importance of the study was presented along with the research questions which guided this research. In conclusion, the structure of the dissertation was outlined.

Chapter 2 presented a review of the literature relevant to this study. The review took a look at the Geography education from the South African context and around the world and the shortcomings in the teaching of the subject (Karvánková, et al., 2017). In addition, it further presented the challenges faced by Geography education in South Africa which ranged from teaching strategies to classroom assessment techniques. Another issue which come to fore from the literature was the teacher quality in Geography as well as the subject content knowledge. These issues highlighted the correlation of these shortcomings in teachers with the possible role evident on learner performance. McDormott and Rakgokong (2013) in addition reveals the issue of curriculum changes as one of the factors faced by Geography education and the merging of history and Geography in the GET Phase which leads to a skill deficit for learners taking Geography in the FET phase. Furthermore, one of the issues that emerged from the literature was the application of SBAs in schools. It emerged that SBAs in South African education serve as summative components, but Vlachou (2015) and Reyneke (2016) stressed the importance of infusing SBAs as formative assessment components in the examination driven system to help both teachers and learners to obtain crucial information from the SBAs.

The literature further raised the issue of quality assurance of SBAs at the school level. According to Poliah (2010), the quality assurance of SBAs is crucial as it ensures the reliability, credibility and validity of the SBA tasks. The study sought to evaluate the quality assurance procedure and the possible impact it has on learner performance based on the findings of Poliah (2010) that learners might obtain high marks as a result of the quality of examination papers at the school level. Williamson (2017) is of the opinion that should the quality assurance process be neglected by schools; certain learners may be overcompensated while some will be unfairly penalised by teachers. Chapter 2 further looked at the role of learners in Geography assessment as well as the provision of feedback to learners by teachers. In closure, it took a look at the conceptual framework for the study. Carless' model was conceptualised in a qualitative point of view to guide this study. The Learning-Oriented Assessment model was adapted for this study to further assist in identifying the issue of learners' performance in Geography. This model indicated the importance of incorporating assessment tasks which are SBAs in this instance as learning tasks for both the learner and the teacher in the classroom. It further revealed the importance of learners taking an active role in Geography assessment and teachers giving timeous feedback to learners as feedforward, to help learners use the feedback to move their learning process forward.

The research approach, design and methods were discussed in Chapter 3. This study followed a qualitative research approach using a case study design. The use of the case study was to allow the researcher to interact with the participants in their natural settings. Unlike quantitative research, the case study further enables the researcher to understand the phenomenon deeper without generalising the results (Baskarada, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Grosseohme, 2014). Structured face to face interviews were conducted individually to understand the participants' experiences better. In Chapter 3, I explained that six participants from three different schools were purposefully selected as they all taught Geography in the FET phase. The data collection instruments used were semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observations aided by field notes. The constructivism paradigm was followed to allow the participants to construct their own experiences and understanding when it came to the issue of classroom formative strategies and learners' performance in

Geography. This chapter was concluded by reviewing the ethical issues and the strategies which enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

In Chapter 4, a detailed report of the analysed data and the interpretation of the findings emanated from the raw data collected through the data collection instruments discussed in Chapter 3 were outlined. Thematic data analysis was followed in this chapter to analyse the data, and the data was presented in the form of themes and sub-themes.

The final chapter concludes the study. It discusses and presents the findings which emerged from the qualitative data and the literature. Moreover, the conclusions, reflections and recommendations for further studies are presented together with the limitations of the study.

Section 5.3 discusses and presents the research findings from the data analysis.

### **5.3 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The research findings of the role of classroom formative assessment practices in Geography are discussed in the following sections. These sections will be addressing the main research question for the study as well as the sub-questions. This section will first discuss and present the responses which answer the sub-questions separately to create the foundation for a comprehensive discussion response to answering the main research question. It will then conclude by answering the main research question of the research study.

#### **5.3.1 Sub-question 1: Formative assessment techniques and strategies applied by Geography teachers in their classrooms**

Teachers need to teach and assess learners' learning process; however, different teachers will apply different teaching techniques and procedures to their day to day classroom environment. It was important to establish the evidence from data analysis of formative assessment techniques and strategies which Geography teachers employ daily into their classrooms to answer this question. According to the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2009), "improving the efficiency and equity of schooling depends, in large measure, on ensuring that teachers are highly skilled, well resourced, and motivated to perform at their best". The minimum qualifications of teachers who participated in this study were either at a

Diploma or bachelor's degree level. In terms of the professional level, it ranged between post level one to post level two.

The exploration of the effect of teacher quality on learners' performance revealed that Geography teachers need to be well acquainted in the subject matter to deliver quality instructions and select appropriate teaching methods for their classes. This study provided evidence that meeting the minimum qualification requirements to be appointed as a Geography teacher at a school level might not necessarily translate to competency in the subject. In such schools where teacher quality affected learners' performance, it became evident that there was a need for time to be set aside by the education authorities to train both experienced and inexperienced teachers. This initiative would improve their methodology, techniques and approaches in teaching Geography and in understanding the assessment instruments (OECD, 2009).

There were a lot of conflicted views amongst the participants with regards to the suitable teaching strategies in delivering Geography content matter. It is worth noting that in this era of high stakes of accountability in learner performance, teachers need to select and employ appropriate teaching strategies for their learners based on the information received through formative strategies (Alvarez & Anderson-Ketchmark, 2011; Kumar, 2013). Two teachers in this study believed that continuous use of prompt factual content-related questions verbally throughout the lesson presentation was the best way to engage learners and keep them interested in the lesson. Shahrill (2013) and Delcourt and McKinnon (2011) believe that once a teacher masters the art of questioning, it can be a useful tool in guiding learners during the lesson. This practice was generally practiced by most of the participating teachers in this study as it was observed. Shahrill (2013) asserts that the appropriate use of questions in the classroom will enhance learning for both the teacher and the learner. This study found that the use of verbal questioning in the classroom was employed by teachers to establish whether learners understood the geographic concepts which were taught.

This study also found that participating teachers relied heavily on the use of classwork, homework and group work to ensure that learning takes place. These informal activities strongly emphasised the use of previous question papers to familiarise learners with exam related questions and action/commanding words frequently used in the examination question papers. According to these teachers, such informal assessments enabled them to track what was happening in the classroom and allowed

the teachers to align their teaching strategy accordingly. Document analysis of this study from all participating schools also validated the heavy reliance on the use of previous question papers as worksheets for informal assessment. Teachers claimed that it was important to use these worksheets because it allowed their learners to learn from exam aligned activities, but Duckor and Perlstein (2014) call this practice teaching to the test. They warn against this practice as it will lead to high test scores but hamper the ability of learners to reach their full academic potential. For instance, at Schools A and B the study found that the worksheets designed by the Grade 11 teachers were precisely aligned with the test that learners were expected to write in Term 3. This study can, therefore, conclude that the participating teachers employed limited formative assessment techniques to ensure that learning takes place and move forward.

It is worth noting that the participating teachers for this study raised the concerns of curriculum coverage at all cost and claimed that it affected their quality teaching and instructions in the classroom. It emerged that the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) dictated the pace at which teachers taught geographic concepts. In fear of accountability from their supervisors, teachers claimed that it was very important for them to ensure that all topics on the ATP were covered before external assessments without taking into consideration the needs of learners to acquire important skills in the subject. Despite these claims of curriculum coverage at the highest priority before exams, these teachers could employ other strategies such as theme/topic merging to ensure that important skills for learners in Geography were met.

In addition to the formative assessment techniques and strategies used in Geography classrooms, this study found the importance of providing timeous feedback to learners. It found that feedback provisions allow learners to learn from their own mistakes and the mistake of their peers. It also became evident that for feedback to be effective, learners must be engaged through constructive feedback sessions. Akin to Meissner (2018), who asserts that for feedback to be effective and improve learners' performance in a subject, learners need to be actively involved in the feedback process. The evidence further points out that schools need to have policy directives on the issue of feedback provision. The policy will guide Geography teachers on how and when the teachers should provide feedback to learners, as was evident during the data analysis with school B, which followed the school policy on this issue. This study

can conclude that a common practice of feedback provision in Geography by the participating schools was through the use of corrections. Also, the feedback was generally limited to learners who were struggling in the subject, receiving their feedback individually. The limited use of individual feedback provision was attributed to class size and time constraints claimed by the participating teachers. Similarly, the same factors were also attributed for the lack of timeous feedback.

### **5.3.2 Sub-question 2: Effectiveness of School-Based Assessment (SBA) as a form of formative assessment and the effect it has on learners' performance in Geography**

According to Lamprianou and Christies (2009), SBA in South Africa serves as both a formative assessment and summative assessment component. The dual service of SBA on assessment will result in differential effectiveness at the school level, as some teachers will only treat the SBA as a summative component while others treat it as a formative component of assessment. However, this study sought to establish evidence on the effective use of SBAs as a formative component of assessment as highlighted by Poliah (2010) that in South African SBA has been seen as summative assessment component. This study established that SBAs in Geography in the FET Phase are used to determine whether learners meet the set targets and levels by schools and district.

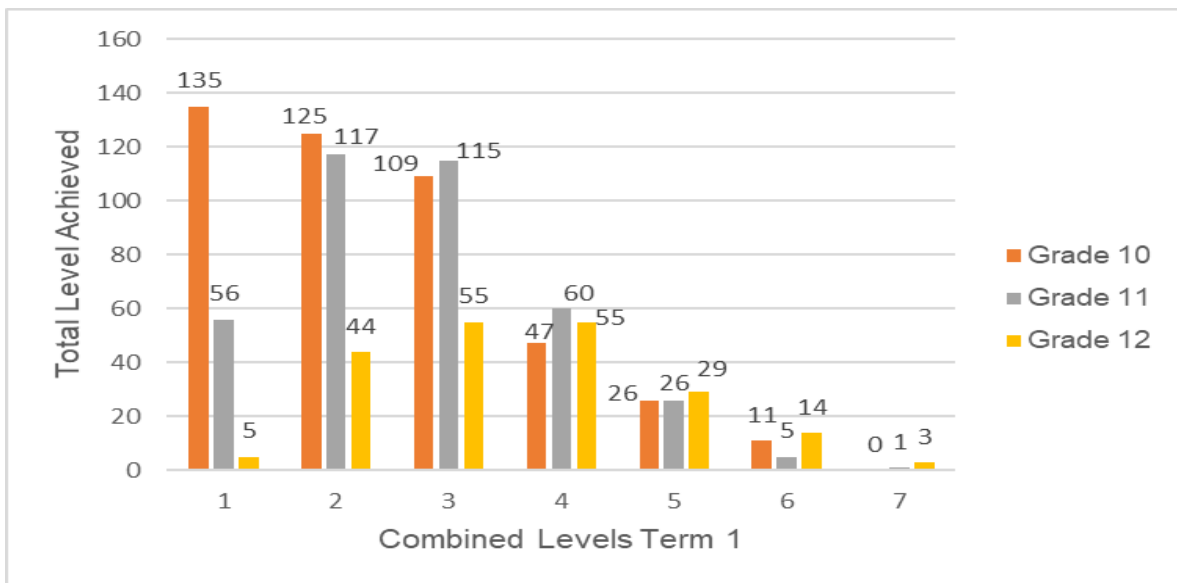
It was evident from the findings when Teacher 1 from school A said he gets angry when his Grade 10 learners do not perform according to his expectations that SBA is used to measure learners' performance rather than to learn from it. It also emerged from the findings of document analysis that teachers treated SBAs as a summative assessment component. From these teachers' assessment files, it emerged that the only work which was filed was the SBAs as stipulated by the CAPS assessment requirement. Furthermore, the SBA question papers which learners wrote from were also kept safe, but teachers claimed that this practice was to avoid paper leakage as neighbouring schools also administered the same SBA tasks.

Carless (2012) believes that formative assessment results could guide the teacher to either simply re-teach the section or part of the content where learners struggled in the assessment or to an extent to guide learners about their learning. Carless (2012) then proposed the "use of test results to guide self-reflection or peer collaboration to improve learning outcomes" which he termed Formative Use of Summative Testing

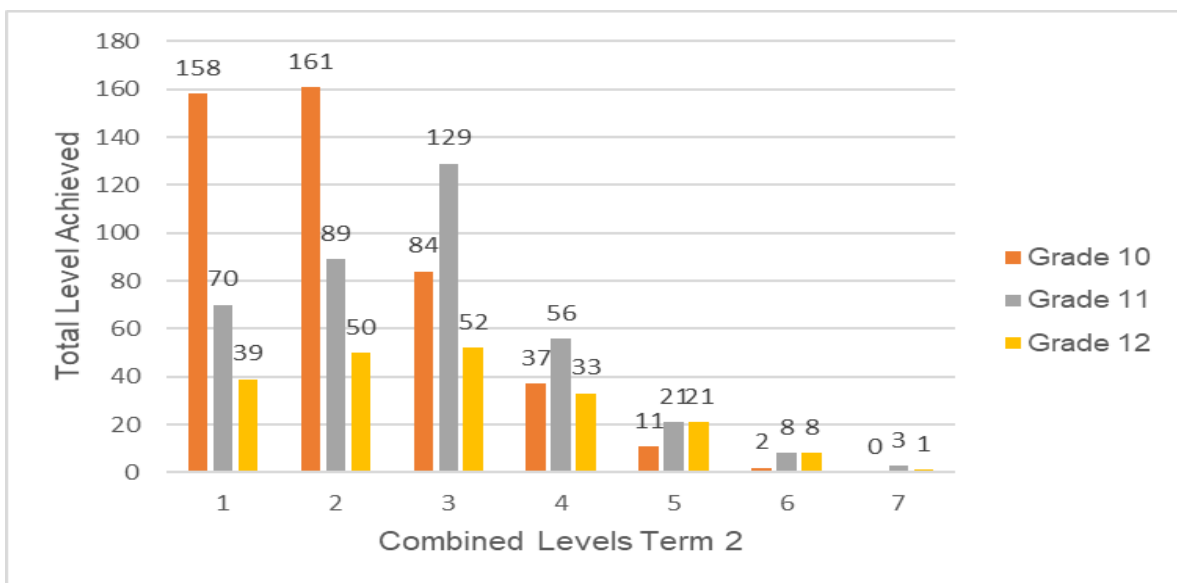
(FUST). However, the document analysis found that the post-moderation reports issued by an HOD or senior Geography teacher on these SBAs did not indicate any directives of formative assessment components. There was no evidence which indicated some sort of diagnostic/statistical analysis to help and guide both the teacher and the learner on the subsequent learning decision to be made based on the SBA results. Thus, this lack of evidence was enough to conclude that learners and teachers in this study did not use the information provided by the SBA results to align their teaching and learning but rather, the SBAs were used to summarise learning with the focus on performance and reporting to parents.

This study further established that the performance of Geography learners on the SBA was much better than the examination results. There was documented evidence which indicated a disjoint between how learners performed in the SBAs and subsequent examinations. According to the participating teachers, there were several reasons for the difference in performance in the SBAs and examinations. Teachers claimed that the higher performance on SBAs could be attributed to specific tasks which were allowed for learners to be completed at home, and their parents might have assisted them. One other claim was that Geography learners lacked the mathematical skills required for mapwork which brought their performance in the examination down. Also, they lacked skills when it came to studying techniques and how to prepare for external examinations. It was also evident that learners were afforded second opportunities on SBA tasks to improve their results should they fail in their first attempt.

The main concern of the participating teachers was clearly on learners' performance rather than improving the skills needed in the subject. Therefore, the likelihood is that teachers may prepare learners on how to answer specific questions expected in the examinations. The challenge with this practice is that "when learners are unfamiliar with the underlying concepts that will be assessed in the common examinations they may move back and forth among the performance levels" (Dliwayo, 2019, p. 155). Figure 5.1 and 5.2 depict the documented results of participating schools in terms of levels for Grade 10 to 12 in Term 1 and Term 2.



**Figure 5.1: Term 1 Level distributions**



**Figure 5.2: Term 2 Level distributions**

Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 provide an overview of how the participating schools performed in the SBAs in Term 1 compared to Term 2 which consisted of an examination as discussed and presented in Section 4.5.1, Table 4.3 in Chapter 4. Level achieved refers to the term marks obtained by a learner ranging from Level 1 – 7. Level 1 means learners achieved the term mark between (0% – 29%), Level 2 (30% – 39%); Level 3 (40% – 49%); Level 4 (50% – 59%); Level 5 (60% – 69%); Level 6



(70% – 79%) and Level 7 (80% - 100%). The document analysis found that only the Grade 12 results in Term 2 were presented with the June/Mid-year examination marks.

As can be glanced from the figures, for the combined three Grade 12 classes of the participating schools, there was only one learner who managed to achieve above 80% in the June/Mid-year examination, while the majority of the learners performed between level 1 and level 3. The number of learners who achieved between level 5 and level 7 across all the grades in the FET phase indicated a drop from Term 1 to Term 2, which is a clear indication that the Geography learners of the participating schools struggled to perform in the examination. Also, there was documented evidence of low averages across the FET phase of the participating schools which support the achieved levels presented in Figure 5.1 and 5.2. For instance, the combined Grade 12 average for the June/Mid-year examination was 41,3%.

This study found that Geography teachers in the FET phase did not set their own SBA tasks, but they had been provided for by the subject facilitator. There were claims from the interviews that the quality of SBAs which they received from the district played a role in how learners performed in Geography. Teachers claimed that the SBAs hampered the performance of their learners in the examinations as some of the tasks were not aligned to the ATP and the content, which meant these tasks could not prepare learners for external assessments. Furthermore, it was found that in the preparation process of the SBAs, the respective grade teachers were not consulted to provide inputs on the types of SBAs they would receive. The Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) (2009) maintain that teachers needed to be trained to develop well-thought-out assessment tasks which would bring innovation and flexibility in the assessment. The teachers were in agreement with a call that when SBAs were being designed, they should be part of the designing process as this practice would enhance the credibility and validity of these SBA tasks and reduce the possible negative effect on learner achievement.

### **5.3.3 Sub-question 3: The extent of summative evidence as per reflection of formative practice**

The findings of this study indicated an over-dependence on past examination papers to familiarise learners with external assessments from the districts. The participating teachers believed that it was necessary to familiarise learners with the examination structure and the questioning style to improve the learners' performance at the end of

the year examination. For instance, Teacher 6 from school C indicated that she believed the SBAs were supposed to be the same structure and content as to what learners are expected to get in the examination. This teacher believed that such practice could improve the learners' results in the examination. Hence strong emphasis was placed on revision through the use of past examination questions on daily informal assessments. Dliwayo (2019) cautions against this practice as she believes that it can only lead to learners being programmed on how to answer examination related questions and parroting memorised facts rather than learning from these previous question papers.

Torrance (2011) believes that summative and formative assessment cannot operate in isolation as they both depend on each other. Curry et al. (2016) assert that teachers do not understand the relationship between formative assessment practice and learners' performance. Similarly, this study found that teachers could not clearly indicate the relationship between their classroom formative assessment practice as well as learners' performance in Geography. It is, therefore, crucial that teachers acquire relevant knowledge about Geography assessment and the teaching of the subject as it might have a direct effect "on what and how to teach in preparation for assessments" (Dliwayo, 2019, p. 160).

It is worth noting that both summative assessment and formative assessment were evident from the participating teachers in their classroom practices. However, it was found that the two-assessment were disjoint. For instance, there was documented evidence from learners' books which indicated the use of formative assessment through the use of homework and worksheets, but the results indicated that activities were not improving the learning of learners as they still struggled with certain concepts in the formal assessments. The formative assessment activities were not graded, which made it difficult for the teachers to detect the effectiveness of their teaching earlier and it could only reflect on the performance of learners on the summative assessment (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Dixson and Worrell (2016) view is akin to the view of Teacher 5 from school B. He indicated that he only sought assistance from other teachers on certain concepts he struggled with after his learners wrote a test when he realised that the underperformance of learners on that topic was due to his ineffectiveness in delivering the particular topic.

This study attributed the dichotomy between summative assessment and formative assessment to a lack of a proper quality assurance process at a school level. The literature further confirms that quality assurance is vital for both the informal and formal assessments as it provides the teacher with direction on the quality and effectiveness of their assessments for learning which subsequently can be used to improve learners' performance. There was an indication from the participating teachers that they were aware of the importance of the quality assurance process. However, the study found that moderation prioritised formal assessments rather than informal activities. If the moderation prioritised the informal tasks, it could help teachers detect the skills deficiency from learners' much earlier before they sit for formal assessment. It was further found that the book control conducted by HODs was for policy compliance rather than teacher and learner development.

It further emerged through document analysis that the moderation process focused on pre-moderation of the test, and there was less evidence to indicate a post-moderation process with constructive feedback for development. The study conducted by OECD (2009) found that feedback regarding teachers' lesson planning, teaching and assessments practices could improve learners' performance. This study found that the moderation reports issued by HODs were checklists which indicated the compliance of teachers in terms of the marking process and the stamps on learners' exercise books to check the curriculum coverage with no constructive feedback on how to improve the assessment quality or reflection on the teacher's teaching. Similarly, a study conducted by Motsamai (2017) discovered that the rigorous moderation and monitoring process by subject HODs was minimal and subsequently hampered learners' performance.

Although the participating schools comply with the quality assurance process through pre-and post-moderation, this study can conclude that such a moderation process could more effectively pave the way for Geography teachers to reflect on their own teaching and assessment practice. The aim should be to align the formative assessment with the summative assessment to improve learners' performance in the subject.

#### **5.3.4 Sub-question 4: Learners' role in formative assessment as either self or peer evaluators**

Brown and Harris (2014) believe that there is a greater reward in the classroom if learners are actively involved in the assessment as either peer or self-assessors. A study conducted by these two researchers discovered a positive contribution to learners' performance through the effective use of self-assessment by teachers in the classroom. Panadero, Jonsson and Botella (2017) are of a view that the implementation of peer or self-assessment and its complexity in intervention implementation by teachers determines whether learners' performance will improve or not in a subject. This study found that peer assessment was used in the form of group sessions where learners were paired according to their abilities to encourage them to learn from their peers. However, its effectiveness on learners' performance could not be accounted for as the document analysis showed low morale by the underperforming learners to complete their homework or class activities given to them. The study also found that the number of informal activities which the top-performing Geography learners completed was slightly higher compared to those of the underperforming learners in the subject for all sampled schools. Teachers claimed that the group work encouraged a work ethic from all learners and boosted their moral to take an active role in their assessment. Despite these claims, the study found conclusive evidence that the intervention implementation of peer assessment by these educators did not boost the learners' morale in taking a more active role in Geography assessment.

It was further found that participating teachers believed that an active role by Geography learners in formal assessment could lead to low reliability of assessment results. Similarly, Brown and Harris (2014) shared their concern when it comes to the reliability and credibility of self-assessment results, indicating that the older learners are aware of the contribution of these high-stake assessments on their results. How teachers in this study treated peer or self-assessment in the classroom context clearly indicated their fear that learners will unrealistically judge their own abilities and overinflate marks. Panadero et al. (2017) suggested that the use of self-assessment should not be limited to self-grading but rather encourage learners to rigorously analyse their weaknesses and strengths and provide their own explicit feedback. The findings in this study further reveal that teachers were concerned about learners

unfairly self-awarding marks during self-assessment practice as learners were not properly imparted with the necessary skills to deal with formal Geography assessment tasks. There was a general consensus amongst all participants that when it comes to a formal assessment, teachers were more qualified and had the appropriate expertise to execute this task with honesty and thus, they had to take an active role.

According to the evidence presented in this study, the possible contributing role of Geography learners in assessment lies in the informal activities. However, teachers could not effectively seize the opportunity to use learners' role in Geography assessment for learning. The study found documented evidence of learners' active role in informal assessments, but as Panadero et al. (2017) cautioned, it was found that the purpose of this assessment was to grade learners' performance as many of these activities consisted of marks without feedback which could have allowed learners to reflect on these assessments. This practice by the participating teachers can be attributed to the CAPS Assessment policy which stipulates that learners' assessment should be not be used for certification or promotion of learners in the grade (DBE, 2011). Thus, this study can conclude that learners' involvement in Geography was for policy compliance rather than learning and the reduction of learner dependency on teachers to improve their learning (Brown & Harris, 2014).

### **5.3.5 Main research question: The role of formative assessment in the quality of learners' performance in Geography in the FET phase**

The findings of this study provided conclusive evidence of the role of formative assessment in the quality of learners' performance in Geography. The key conclusion which can be drawn from the findings is that the participating Geography teachers in the FET phase were committed to using differential assessment practices in their classroom to improve their learners' results. However, their main focus was on summative assessment, and little attention was given to the formative assessment practice.

The following sections will explain the conclusions drawn from the study in line with the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 2 and in relation to the sub-questions presented in Chapter 1 of this study and the discussions of the preceding section.

### **5.3.5.1 Effective use of classroom formative strategies**

Initially, this study was concerned with exploring the classroom formative strategies that Geography teachers employ in their classrooms. However, after collecting data, it was discovered that participating teachers shared varied classroom formative strategies or techniques, but they were not effective in improving learners' performance in Geography. Marks (2014) suggested that the ineffectiveness of classroom assessment strategies can be prevented through the use of formative assessment which focuses on learners' needs and development. Various formative assessment strategies such as prompt factual questioning were employed by participating teachers; however, the teachers did not use the information to alter their approaches of instruction for the next lesson. Thus, continuous support by both the HOD at the school level and facilitators from district level could help strengthen the teachers' practice through the provision of constructive feedback on their classroom practice.

Furthermore, teachers at the school level are required to prepare learners before taking external examinations. When learners sit for these summative assessments, all concepts in the ATP should have been covered in class and assessed informally. The findings suggest that teachers struggle with the pace needed for the completion of these tasks and consequently, learners' performance suffer as a result of limited time to cover the ATP, leaving the learners inadequately prepared for examinations. According to Klassen and Chiu (2010) "insufficient time for planning and preparation and a heavy teaching workload reduces satisfaction obtained from teaching". The conclusion which can be drawn from these arguments is that teachers do not have enough time dedicated for lesson planning to balance the demand of the heavily loaded curriculum and assessment requirements. As such learners are sent to examinations with inadequate preparation of geographic concepts covered and might underperform as a result.

Moreover, the study found that the feedback is not given to learners timeously and subsequently, when the feedback is made available to learners, it is no longer relevant as the teachers have proceeded with other curriculum matters. Hence there was a heavy reliance on the previous examination papers to try and close the gap. The DEB (2017) report indicated that emphasis was placed on training teachers to effectively use these past examination papers without leading to learners anticipating what to

expect in an examination based on the very same past question papers (Dliwayo, 2019). The deduction which can be drawn from this discussion is that teachers need to innovatively use past examination papers rather than teaching to the test as was discovered in this study.

### **5.3.5.2 Effective use of SBAs as formative tool**

In attempting to find out how the quality of SBAs affects learner performance in Geography, teachers gave contrasting views as some believed that the SBAs were of good quality, and some said they were not. In the end, it was discovered that the SBA tasks were of good quality, but the challenge lies in the implementation from one school to the next. This challenge was raised by Maile (2013) concerning differences in the implementation of SBAs from one school to another and district to district. For instance, this study found that one school treated SBA as an important component of assessment and could not make any changes to it irrespective of mistakes it had, while another school was able to align it to the ATP content covered to ensure fairness for the learners.

Although SBAs are used as a high-stake summative assessment component in South Africa, there is a need to infuse it as a formative assessment to allow both the learner and teacher to gain important learning information from it (Crooks et al., 2010; Reyneke 2016). This study revealed that SBAs were treated as once-off summative components by the participating schools, but Williamson (2017) indicated that there were greater benefits for teachers to assess individual learners uniquely should SBAs be infused into the formative assessment. It was evident through the results of learners which was presented in Section 5.3.2 that Geography learners performed well in the SBAs as compared with the examinations. In addition, the lack of reliability and validity from the SBA results, as highlighted by Poliah (2014), were evident in this study. The HODs' moderation process was conducted for policy compliance at school level. Therefore, it is a clear indication of the dichotomy that exists in SBAs being treated as a formative tool by teachers. Furthermore, it also indicated the lack of policy clarification in terms of the role SBA as formative assessment in Geography. The conclusion which can be drawn from this study is that the objectives of SBAs to provide feedback into learning could not be realised as the learners' performance data still indicated that a majority of learners performed below the 50% mark in the examinations.

### ***5.3.5.3 Aligning formative assessment and summative assessment to improve learners' performance***

The implementation of assessment tasks in line with the ATP by teachers is very crucial in ensuring that correct content and concepts are taught in class. The learners' performance data presented in this study paint a contrasting picture with regards to the alignment of the two assessments in class. According to Wei (2011) "formative assessment and summative assessment are interactive, and they seldom stand alone in construction or effect". What can be deduced from the findings of this study, is that formative assessments and summative assessments are treated in isolation, hence their effect on learner participation and performance differs in Geography. The main concern which emerged from this study from the teachers was accountability for learners' results. Teachers tried to do everything they could to ensure that learners' performance was in line with the targets set by the schools and districts. They went as far as giving learners expanded opportunities to improve their results, but in the process neglected the learning process for learners in mastering important skills.

For instance, none of the participating teachers formally or informally assessed any aspect of mapwork for the term according to data that was collected for this study, as the formal assessment plan did not indicate the need to formally assess mapwork. Therefore, this practice clearly indicates that what went into informal assessment in the class was what was expected to be assessed formally for the grading of learners' term marks. Furthermore, learners are aware that the formative assessment tasks do not count for their report mark, hence low participation in these activities was likely. For example, as detailed in Chapter 4, Teacher 4 at school B related that his learners only paid attention to assessment when it came to examinations. Perhaps if learners' formative assessment could be integrated into their term reports marks that would encourage active learner participation in informal activities (Wei, 2011).

In conclusion, there seems to be confusion in aligning formative assessment with summative assessment to improve learner performance by the participating teachers. The efforts made by these teachers to improve learners' performance was acceptable, however, to reach all learners learning potential and subsequently improve their results, teachers' assessment knowledge and practice needed to be improved. Taylor (2013) asserted that a lack of improvement in learners' performance could be



attributed to a lack of assessment accuracy and feedback from teachers' assessments.

#### **5.3.5.4 *Integrating learners into assessment***

Learners need to be seen as active participants in assessment to improve their self-esteem, efficacy and motivation in the subject (Yan & Brown, 2017). The finding of this study revealed that learners take a passive role when it comes to assessment in Geography. There was a lack of development of learners' assessment skills, hence the majority of the participating teachers kept bringing up the issue of trust when asked about the role of learners in Geography assessment. Precisely so, learners are not professionally trained as assessors in Geography as quoted by teachers but Carless (2007)'s view is that these skills need to be imparted to learners to enhance transparency in the assessment. The benefit of learners' active involvement in assessment is that they can immediately access feedback rather than wait for when it comes from an external marker.

Although research indicates low reliability and validity of peer or self-assessment, Harris, Brown and Harnett (2015) found that high school learners can judge whether enough effort was put in the preparation of the assessment and can determine what went wrong in the assessment. Similarly, the findings of this study indicate that teachers' use of peer or self-assessment in Geography was to try to help learners discover what went wrong during the informal assessment.

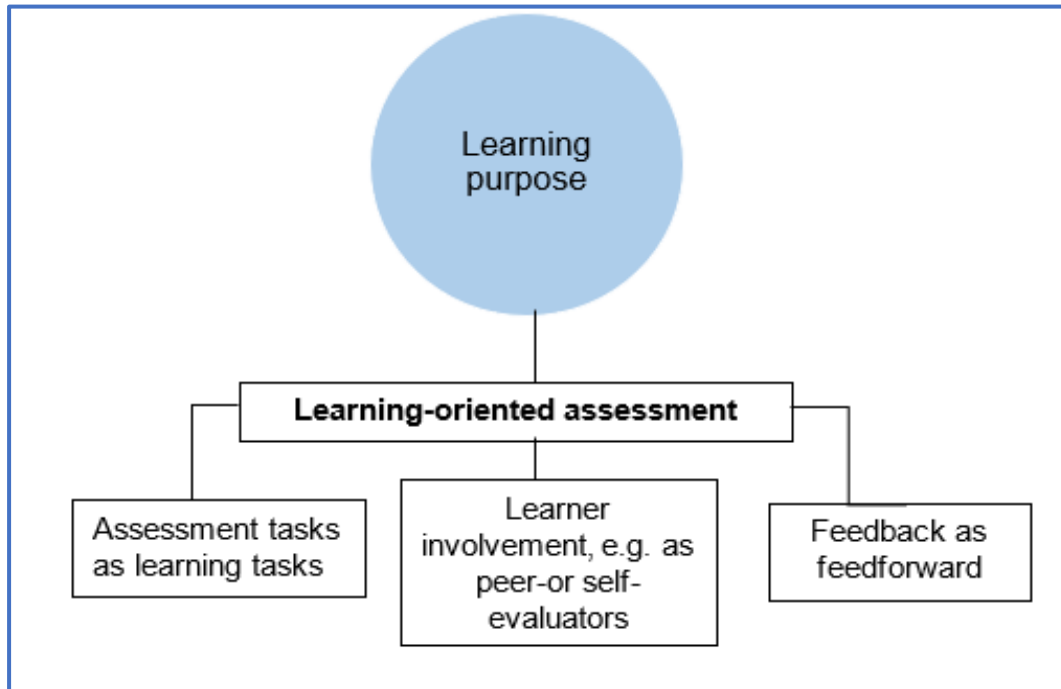
The conclusion which can be drawn from this study is that learners are not actively involved in the assessment. It can be attributed to the lack of assessment knowledge by teachers and the assessment policy's silence on the role of learners in assessment. Hence it was left to individual teachers to decide how to go about integrating learners effectively into Geography assessment.

### **5.4 REFLECTIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **5.4.1 Reflection of the conceptual framework**

As indicated in Chapter 2, this study intended to explore how learning through the use of formative assessment practice occurs in the classroom. The exploration was glanced from a module promoted by Carless (2007) which is known as a Framework for Learning-Oriented Assessment. This model considers the following elements in the

learning process: Assessment tasks; learner involvement and feedback, as illustrated in figure 5.3.



**Figure 5.3: Framework for learning-oriented assessment**

Adapted from Carless (2007, p. 60)

The reflection of the conceptual framework, as indicated in figure 5.3, recognises that teachers in this study acknowledged that the first principle to assessment practice in the classroom is learning. The central role of this study was to establish how teachers incorporated assessment tasks which were SBAs, learners and feedback into the learning aspect of classroom assessment. Teachers mainly indicated the need to be part of the development of the SBA tasks to improve the quality of the assessment tools. Although the SBA tasks were prepared and provided for by the subject advisor, there is a need for teacher development in constructing quality assessment tasks which will yield an improved classroom assessment practice (Tsui, 2011). However, a paradigm shift in assessment is necessary where teachers will collaboratively develop formative assessment tasks with the purpose of learning and improving assessment practice.

The LOA framework upholds the need to engage learners actively in assessment as participants and with feedback for a better understanding of concepts learnt. Teachers

from the sampled schools were primarily concerned with learner performance; hence there was an over-dependence on corrections where learners were told where they went wrong in the assessment. This practice requires teachers with skills to provide learners with the opportunity to engage with their mistakes, but this study found this aspect from teachers lacking. Furthermore, participating teachers did not devote their time to teaching learners how to learn from their own assessment; hence assessment for learning was found lacking in their practice (Dliwayo, 2019). Thus, teachers should continuously encourage learners to assess their homework and class activities and provide themselves with constructive feedback. Also, they should stress the importance of learner participation in the assessment as it will help them gain an understanding of these formative assessment tasks.

#### **5.4.2 Reflection on the research methods and design**

This study followed a qualitative research approach guided by the case study design through the use of face to face interviews. A constructivist paradigm underpinned the study as I sought to get first-hand information from the participants through sharing their classroom formative assessment practice experiences, beliefs and perceptions. The participants were drawn purposefully from three different schools in Tshwane West district (D15). The schools' representations varied from townships and suburban to the city school area. The participants consisted of only FET Geography teachers with varied experiences in the field.

The study used semi-structured interviews as the main data collection instrument, which were tape-recorded and supported by document analysis and classroom observations. The use of the three different data collection instruments was to triangulate data to corroborate the findings with each other (Cope, 2014). Reflection on these data collection instruments will first look at the semi-structured interviews. On this data collection instrument, there were certain items/questions which could have been revised to elucidate more information about the phenomenon under study. For instance, Question 3 and 5 (Appendix A) could have been rephrased to allow teachers to explain what exactly their classroom formative assessment strategies in Geography are. Also, Question 7 and 9 (Appendix A) sounded familiar to the participants, and they struggled to verbalise their perceptions, beliefs or experiences on the matter, thus similarly one of the two could have been rephrased. Furthermore, the use of classroom observation (Appendix B) did not provide the much-needed

information or evidence as it was initially anticipated. The only evidence extracted from this data collection instrument was the use of prompt questioning during lesson presentation by teachers as a formative strategy. Still, other than that, more information could have come out of this instrument with increased, repeated classroom visits.

## **5.5 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The research focused on issues related to other research done in South Africa, and the findings of this study similarly are aligned to those of the preceding studies. Due to a smaller sample size, the resulting findings of this study cannot be generalised to all the South African schools or even the districts sharing Geography locations with the district that formed part of this study.

The interviews of this study focused only on teachers from school level and did not include learners, HODs or subject advisors. The study might have generated more valuable evidence if learners' perspectives were added on the issue as well as the role of HODs and subject advisors. Another possible limitation could be around the scheduling of interviews. Most teachers were not willing to conduct the interviews outside their schooling hours; thus, I had to schedule all the interviews around their free periods or even breaks. It also became a challenge to find quiet and suitable venues to conduct interviews as most of the teachers did not have offices, and there was noise in the background and in some instances, their colleagues walked in on the interviews in the staffrooms which interrupted the participants in answering questions. At school C, for instance initially I had scheduled interviews with three teachers but for some other reasons, two teachers decided not to participate on the last minute. Their withdrawal from the study has, therefore, provided limited opportunity to gain more insight of the phenomenon under study.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings and conclusions of this study have revealed some challenges which are experienced by Geography teachers to deploy formative strategies in their classroom effectively. It is therefore, against this background that the following recommendation are made.

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** Training/workshop of teachers on assessment

This study has found that the emphasis has been placed on improving teacher content in Geography with the hope of improving learner performance. However, the study has discovered that teachers are implementing the assessment for the sake of policy compliance which might play a role in how learners perform. It was evident that teachers could not differentiate between the role of formative assessment and summative assessment and how it affects their learners' performance in the subject. Therefore, there is a need for teachers to be trained on how to use formative assessments effectively in their classes to improve learners' performance. Secondly, teachers need to be trained to acknowledge learners effectively as active participants in assessment to reduce the heavy reliance on teachers for feedback for learning purpose.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** The use of SBAs as an effective formative assessment tool to improve learner performance

The use of SBAs in assessment should not be seen as a once-off activity, but it should be seen as an integral part of teaching and learning. The key argument from this research is that SBA in South Africa is treated as a once-off event with no emphasis on creating a balance between formative assessment and summative assessment. The diagnostic and statistical analysis of SBA instruments and learners' performance on SBAs are crucial evidence necessary for remedial instruction which teachers can use to develop the culture of learning. Moreover, the necessary skills for rigorous analysis for teachers should be developed by relevant stakeholders at school and district level to subsequently unify the role and the implementation of SBAs on the school level.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** For future studies

The significance of assessment for learning in education in the South African context should be strengthened through further research. The effectiveness of SBAs as a formative assessment tool and the possible effect on learners' performance in external examinations is recommended for further research.

## 5.7 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION

The study explored the possible role of classroom formative assessment on learners' performance in Geography in the FET phase. Despite the limited application of formative assessment strategies in the Geography classroom, the study has found some pocket of good practices. These include the use of technology in lesson presentation, the provision of feedback which might still need strengthening through continuous support and interventions to try to meet the departmental set targets. In conclusion, Acar-Erdol and Yildizli (2018) can be quoted asking several questions about assessment saying "*How will I check whether my students have learned today or not? What assessment tools will use? How will I use these assessment tools? When will I assess them? What kind of feedbacks will I give them? What do the assessments that I made mean in terms of my teaching process and the learning processes of my students?*" these are crucial questions which every teacher should be asking themselves daily going into a classroom.

This study allowed me to understand the importance of classroom formative assessment in Geography better. As a Geography teacher in the field of education, I had realised that the emphasis from the district and schools is on learner performance based on pass rates irrespective of how learners pass. Due to this pressure, all measures are put in place to ensure that the sets targets are met. For instance, in Grade 12 I had relied heavily on the use of previous examination papers to ensure that my learners were familiar with the examination questions to help them pass, but such a practice, as mirrored by the participants of this study, has only led to teaching to the test. However, ever since taking part in this research, I incorporated the use of formative assessment techniques frequently in my teaching with the hope of helping my learners to understand the geographic concepts better without me teaching to the test. Through this research, I now have learnt to extract more learning information through informal assessments which informs my next lessons for the upcoming units.

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## 7 APPENDICES

### 7.1 APPENDIX A: THE PARTICIPANT'S SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The participant's semi-structured interview

|   |             |           |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| Date:   | Province:   | District: |
| Place:  | Gender:     | Age:      |
| Duration:                                       | Start time: | End time: |
| Interviewee:                                    | Pseudonyms: |           |
| <b>Interviewer:</b> Victor Rhulani Nkuna        |             |           |
| Interviewer's supervisor: Dr Surette Van Staden |             |           |

The aim of this study is to investigate the possible role of classroom formative assessment practice on learners' achievement in Geography. False names will be used in the interviews, data analysis, and the findings. The data collected in this study will serve purposely for this research and treated as confidential. Access to the data will be granted to the researcher and the supervisor only. Please sign the consent form at the back of this document. Thank you for your participation.

Questions:

1. How long have you been teaching Geography in the FET Phase?
2. What qualification do you hold? Did you specialise in Geography?
3. What is it that you would describe as the biggest frustration when it comes to geography assessment?
4. How would you describe your classroom assessment strategies?
5. What is the best classroom assessment practice a Geography teacher in the FET phase should deploy?
6. How often are your lessons determined by the prescribed curriculum than by how well your learners performed in the previous lesson?
7. Can you briefly explain the role of the quality of School-Based Assessment (SBA) on your learners' performance at the of the year?
8. What measures are there in your school to ensure the quality of the School-Based Assessment?
9. Is there a relationship between the quality of the SBA set throughout the year and the learners' performance at the end-year examination?
10. What is your view on learners taking an active role in assessment in Geography?

11. Between the assessment conducted through peer/self and the assessment conducted by the teacher, which one do you consider to be worthwhile and why?
12. Is there a timeframe for feedback to be given back to learners after a written test? If yes, how is the feedback provided?

Thank you for your patience and participation in this interview...!!

## 7.2 APPENDIX B: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

### Teacher Assessment Practice Observation

|   |             |           |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| Date:   | Province:   | District: |
| Grade:  | LoLT:       | Subject:  |
| Lesson Topic:                                 |             |           |
| Duration of the lesson:                       | Start time: | End time: |
| Name of School:                               |             |           |
| Name of Teacher:                              |             |           |
| <b>Name of Observer:</b> Victor Rhulani Nkuna |             |           |
| Observer's Supervisor: Dr Surette Van Staden  |             |           |

The purpose of this observation is to record the teacher's use of assessment during the lessons. False names will be used in the observation, data analysis, and the findings. The data collected in this study will serve purposely for this research and treated as confidential. Access to the data will be granted to the researcher and the supervisor only. Please sign the consent form at the back of this document. Thank you for your participation.

- i. A copy of a lesson plan that the teacher plan to use.
- ii. Ask for **5 exercise books of low**-performing learners and **5 of high**-performing learners from the 2019 class. **Select** one book for a low-performing learner and one book for a high-performing learner to complete Section 11.

|   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| Copy of lesson plan attached <sup>#</sup> | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|

## Description of the classroom context

| Description  | Yes, No or N/A & Relevant Comments |
|--|------------------------------------|
| iii. Number of learners  |                                    |
| iv. Classroom walls have relevant (phase, grade, and subject appropriate) wall charts, pictures, etc.<br><br>(If necessary, estimate any relevant percentages out of the total on display to indicate the extent of availability.) |                                    |
| v. The classroom has a data projector  |                                    |
| vi. The classroom has a Smart Board  |                                    |
| vii. Any other information   |                                    |

## Beginning of lesson

|   |
|---|
| 1. Record how the teacher started the lesson. Observe whether the teacher linked it to previous lessons or learner's previous experience. How did learners respond? |
|   |



|  |     |    |   |     |    |
|--|-----|----|---|-----|----|
|  |     |    |   |     |    |
| <b>2.</b> Does the teacher introduce the lesson objective  | Yes | No | <b>3.</b> Does the teacher use Assessment Criteria in the introduction                | Yes | No |
| If YES, please write the Learning objective using the <u>EXACT</u> words of the teacher                                    |     |    | If YES, please write the Success Criteria using the <u>EXACT</u> words of the teacher |     |    |
| <b>4.</b> The lesson is determined more by the prescribed curriculum than by how well the learners did in the last lesson. |     |    |   | Yes | No |

Please indicate if you found any evidence for the activities listed below, and mark: either 'Seen', or 'Not Seen', or as otherwise relevant.

| 5. Formative Assessment  |                  |                      |                  |                        |        |          |
|--|------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------|----------|
| a) The teacher uses words ( <b>for example 'We are learning to...'</b> ) then introducing the Lesson objective (LO)      |                  |                      |                  |                        | Seen   | Not Seen |
| b) The LO is:  | Presented orally | Written on the board | Written on chart | Provided in a hand-out | Other: |          |
| c) The teacher uses words ( <b>for example 'What I'm looking for...'</b> ) when introducing the Assessment Criteria (AC) |                  |                      |                  |                        | Seen   | Not Seen |
| d) The AC are:   | Presented orally | Written on the board | Written on chart | Provided in a hand-out | Other: |          |

During the lesson

|  |        |            |          |
|--|--------|------------|----------|
| <p><b>6.1</b> What materials does the teacher use? How does the teacher encourage participation? What kind of questions did the teacher ask? Did the teacher invite answers from the learners? Specific evidence of learner-learner interaction in the classroom? Are learners given a chance for discussions?</p> |        |            |          |
| <p><b>6.2</b> (Questioning and interaction during the lesson)</p>  |        |            |          |
|  | Always | Some times | Not seen |
| a) When the teacher asks questions, learners put their hands up.   |        |            |          |
| b) The teacher only asks learners that have their hands up.  |        |            |          |
| c) The teacher involves more than one learner to answer a single question.   |        |            |          |
| d) The teacher asks questions for the "whole" class to respond.  |        |            |          |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| e) The teacher waits a few seconds before getting a response from a learner.                 |  |  |  |
| f) The teacher answers her/his own questions.  |  |  |  |
| g) The teacher uses names to select learners.  |  |  |  |
| h) Questions are mainly to elicit factual knowledge from learners.                           |  |  |  |
| i) Learners' errors are valued for the insights they reveal about how learners are thinking. |  |  |  |
| j) Learners are given opportunities to assess one another's work.                            |  |  |  |
| k) Guidance is provided to help learners assess their own learning.                          |  |  |  |

| 7. Feedback (Lesson assessment)   | Yes  | No       |
|---|------|----------|
| a) After giving learners classwork, the teacher walks around to check how learners are doing. | Seen | Not Seen |
| b) When checking learners' work, the teacher gives guidance or makes comments.                | Seen | Not Seen |
| c) The teacher indicates the correct answers to the learners.                                 | Seen | Not Seen |

| 8. Does the teacher use <b>Peer assessment</b> during the lesson? If yes, complete Question 8 a)-d), else go to Question 9 | Yes  | No       |
|--|------|----------|
| a) Learners are given the opportunities to assess one another's work.  | Seen | Not Seen |
| b) Teacher reminds learners how they should use peer assessment.   | Seen | Not Seen |
| c) Teacher visits a few learners to check how they conduct peer assessment.  | Seen | Not Seen |
| d) Teacher gives feedback on how the peer assessments were conducted.  | Seen | Not Seen |

| 9. Does the teacher use <b>Self-assessment</b> during the lesson? If yes, complete Question 9 a)-d), else go to Question 10 | Yes  | No       |
|---|------|----------|
| a) Learners are given the opportunity to assess their own work.   | Seen | Not Seen |
| b) Teacher reminds learners how to use self-assessment, e.g. process and rules are reviewed.                                | Seen | Not Seen |
| c) Teacher visits few learners to check how they conduct the self-assessment.   | Seen | Not Seen |
| d) Teacher gives feedback on how the self-assessments were conducted.   | Seen | Not Seen |

End of lesson

| 10. Indicate how the teacher ends her/his lesson. How does the teacher sum up/conclude the lesson? Does the teacher refer to the lesson objectives? |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
|   |     |    |
| a) Did the teacher complete the lesson?   | Yes | No |

### 7.3 APPENDIX C: LEARNERS EXERCISE BOOKS OBSERVATION SHEET

**11. Written Feedback:** Select the 2019 exercise book/s of ONE high- and ONE low-performing learner. (Note: There could be more than 1 book for a subject.)

After the lesson, review the learner work **STARTING** from the first lesson.

Count the number of activities and signatures seen and write down, **EXACTLY**, any comments/symbols that the teacher wrote in the learner's book.

11a. Low-performing learner

No of activities \_\_\_\_\_ No of signatures \_\_\_\_\_ Number of stamps \_\_\_\_\_

(Note what the stamps refer to)

How many exercises were completed in total? \_\_\_\_\_ (Do not count "Corrections")

With reference to Geography work, indicate how many exercises covered per term:

Theory \_\_\_\_\_ Mapwork \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/symbols seen

11b. High-performing learner

No of activities \_\_\_\_\_ No of signatures \_\_\_\_\_ Number of stamps \_\_\_\_\_

(Note what the stamps refer to)

How many exercises were completed in total? \_\_\_\_\_ (Do not count "Corrections")

With reference to Geography work, indicate how many exercises covered per term:

Theory \_\_\_\_\_ Mapwork \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/symbols seen

## 7.4 APPENDIX D: LEARNERS' TASKS/TESTS OBSERVATION SHEET

**12. Providing Feedback to Learner Tests:** Select the test booklet/portfolio file of one low performing and one high-performing learner.

After the lesson observation visit to the classroom, record exactly and in detail, how the teacher provides feedback to the learner on having marked the tests (SBA Tasks).

Captures the date in which the tests are administered, the possible return date to learners seen and write down, **EXACTLY**, any comments/symbols that the teacher wrote in the learner's test book.

12a. Low-performing learner

Test date \_\_\_\_\_ Signatures date \_\_\_\_\_ Dates interval \_\_\_\_\_

How many SBA Tasks were completed in total? \_\_\_\_\_ (Do not count "Corrections")

With reference to Geography work, indicate how many exercises covered per term:

Theory \_\_\_\_\_ Mapwork \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/symbols seen



12a. High-performing learner

Test date \_\_\_\_\_ Signatures date \_\_\_\_\_ Dates interval \_\_\_\_\_

How many exercises were completed in total? \_\_\_\_\_ (Do not count "Corrections")

With reference to Geography work, indicate how many exercises covered per term:

Theory \_\_\_\_\_ Mapwork \_\_\_\_\_

Comments/symbols seen

## 7.5 APPENDIX E: ASSESSMENT FILE OBSERVATION SHEET

**13. *The quality assurance of SBA tasks:*** Ask for the assessment file to peruse the kinds of SBA tasks sets by the educator or provided by the district subject advisor.

### 13a. Theory Tests

Number of tests \_\_\_\_\_ Formal Tests \_\_\_\_\_ Informal Tests \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-moderations: 

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Moderated | Not |
|-----------|-----|

Post-moderation: 

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Moderated | Not |
|-----------|-----|

Comments by the moderator seen/Any comments about the SBA tasks:

### 13b. Mapwork Tests

Number of tests \_\_\_\_\_ Formal Tests \_\_\_\_\_ Informal Tests \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-moderations: 

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| Moderated | Not moderated |
|-----------|---------------|

Post-moderations: 

|           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| Moderated | Not moderated |
|-----------|---------------|

Comments by the moderator seen/Any comments about the SBA tasks: