

**STRENGTHENING THE PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN  
GRADE 12 AT VHEMBE EAST DISTRICT**

by

**NEMUTANDANI NTSANDENI**

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**SUPERVISOR: Dr AT Nesengani  
CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof TS Mashau**

## DECLARATION

I, **NTSANDENI NEMUTANDANI** declare that:

### **STRENGTHENING PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12 AT VHEMBE EAST DISTRICT**

Is my own work and has never been submitted in any manner to this university or any other educational institution for degree or examination purposes by myself or anyone else. All sources that I have utilized or cited have been cited and properly cited using full references.

*N. Nemutandani*

**NTSANDENI NEMUTANDANI**

**DATE: 08 – 07 - 2023**

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I am greatly thankful to my lovely husband Phalanndwa Alexander for being there for me. To my sons, Mulweli, Andani and Tshilidzi, your support and love has been wonderful.

My sincere gratitude goes to God Almighty for His guidance and the provision of strength and wisdom for the completion of this study.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

- God Almighty who gave me courage, endurance and wisdom to complete this study.
- My husband Phalandwa Alexander, my sons Mulweli, Andani and Tshilidzi for their support and encouragement throughout the study.

## ABSTRACT

In the context of this study a progressed learner refers to learner who has failed Grade 11 twice and cannot be kept in this grade but must be permitted to go to Grade 12. Moreover, progressed learners are learners who do not meet the pass requirements and find themselves repeating the grade and who are likely to stay in a phase for more than four years, who need special attention in order to move to the next grade. A learner must meet all National Senior Certificate (NSC) criteria in order to be given the matric certificate at the completion of the Grade 12. This research aims to explore the requirements, analyze the performance and find out the intervention strategies that may be utilized to enhance the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 in the Vhembe East District. Recorded interviews along with field notes and a review of documents such as circulars concerning progressed learners, minutes of the School Management Team meetings, schedules, and quarterly outcomes statistics were utilized to gather data. The population in this study consisted of secondary school principals, SMT members, Grade 12 teachers of progressed learners, circuit managers, and curriculum advisers. Using purposeful sampling, the researcher selected three secondary school principals with a high enrollment of progressed learners, three SMT members, each from three different circuits in Vhembe East District, three curriculum advisers from different circuits, six educators from different circuits, and three circuit managers. This study's findings will assist school principals, School Management Teams, circuit managers, curriculum advisers, and educators in developing, implementing, and monitoring intervention strategies to improve the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 in South African and international schools.

**Key Concepts:** Academic Performance Progressed Learners, Grade Progression, Grade 12.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPS	:	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	:	Department of Basic Education
DBST	:	District-Based Support Team
DoE	:	Department of Education
FET	:	Further Education and Training
GET	:	General Education Training
IEPs	:	Individual Education Programmes
LoLT	:	Language of Learning and Teaching
MEO	:	Multiple Examination Opportunities
NCLB	:	No Child is Left Behind Act
NSC	:	National Senior Certificate
SASAMS	:	South African Schools Administration and Management System
SBT	:	School-Based Tasks
SBST	:	School-Based Support Team
SMT	:	School Management Team

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the performance of progressed learners. Progressed learners are those learners who need necessary support in order to reach an expected level. On the other hand, there are learners who reach the expected levels without much intervention. Progressed learners were moved to Grade 12 without mastering the basics of the content that was taught in Grade 11. In this regard, they are not ready for Grade 12. Those who succeeded naturally have acquired the necessary skills and the basics of the content that was taught in the previous grade.

There is a huge difference between progressed learners and those who passed on their own abilities. Progressed learners are those who failed Grade 11 and then progressed to Grade 12 without meeting the promotion requirements whereas those who succeed naturally met the promotion requirements for Grade 11 and are rightfully in Grade 12. The level of competency between these learners is quite different. The reason behind failing a grade is incompetency, in this regard; progressed learners are incompetent while those who succeed naturally are found to be competent.

Regarding learning, progressed learners experience learning barriers and they, therefore, need differentiated support in order to do well in Grade 12. According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:1), all Further Education and Training Phase (FET) schools are given the mandate to progress learners from Grade 11 to Grade 12 to allow them to move with their age cohort. There is a possibility that a learner who fails Grade 11 might have failed other grades in either the Foundation, Intermediate or Senior Phase. In this regard, this learner is much older than learners who never failed a grade in their entire schooling. Possibly, learners who are older than the rest in a grade cause disciplinary problem. To avoid that problem, they should progress to Grade 12. Continuous repetition demoralizes learners (Leepo, 2015:186). Learners should progress from Grades 11 to 12 in order to

regain their confidence which was lost due to failure. A learner who is demoralized develops a negative self-concept and therefore loses hope. Moreover, learners without hope respond by dropping out of the education system. To prevent all these, Grade 11 learners should be progressed to Grade 12 (Leepo, 2015:187).

Learners who repeat a grade place financial constraints on the state funds, they need double payment for the Nutrition Programme, Learner Support Material and the norms and standards funds in no-fee schools. Every fund allocated to schools depends on the number of learners who are there in a school.

In order to learn new information, a learner needs existing knowledge to build on. However, the difference between progressed learners and those who succeed naturally is that progressed learners lack preexisting knowledge of Grade 11 while others have, learning new information in Grade 12 will be very much difficult for progressed learners while it will be easy for those who succeed naturally (Margolis & MacCabe, 2010:242).

In this regard, Margolis and McCabe (2010:241) indicate that struggling learners resist academics' thinking that they lack the ability to succeed. They have low efficiency in academics and therefore lack the effort needed to master academics. This makes them give up or ignore tasks that are similar to those that they previously failed.

On the other hand, DBE (2014:vii) states that every learner needs support, but some learners, for whatever reason, may require additional support for learning, which can arise from any factor that causes a barrier to learning. In support of this, the Department of Basic Education (2001:7) adds that different learning barriers arise from factors including physical, mental, sensory, neurological, and developmental impairment, psychological disturbances and differences in intellectual abilities. However, the most important thing that reduces barriers to learning within all education and training lies in a strengthened education support service (DBE, 2001:28).

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The issue investigated in this study was the intervention strategies that can be used to enhance the achievement of progressed learners in Grade 12. Nevertheless, these learners are in the same Grade 12. However, when progressed learners and learners who have passed on their own are learning together, it is extremely difficult for educators to provide effective learning. The activities to be completed in a lesson may either be too difficult for progressed learners and too easy for learners who passed normally. Progressed learners are behind schedule in a grade, in which they are, they failed to achieve according to the requirements of the grade in which they were, Grade 11. Their performance is far behind learners who succeed by themselves. They performed below the standard set, they failed to meet the requirements of promotion in Grade 11, in this regard, and they are likely to underperform in Grade 12 especially when they are taught together with those with a straight pass. However, learners who succeed by themselves managed to meet the requirements of promotion in Grade 11, while they are in this grade they perform at an expected level. Unlike progressed learners, these learners will perform very well in Grade 12 as they have already mastered the skills and content taught in Grade 11. Whatever they are learning is a continuation of what they have learnt in Grade 11. There is a content and knowledge gap between progressed learners and learners who succeed by themselves and needs to be filled or bridged. Progressed learners' performance is poor and possibly, if they are not supported their performance may be poor which may even drop Grade 12 performance.

Resolving the gap between progressed learners and those who succeed by themselves is something that should be taken very seriously. All educators who teach Grade 12 need to be equipped with knowledge of how to teach learners with learning barriers. The Department of Basic Education needs to train Grade 12 teachers with remedial teaching to enable them to support progressed learners in all schools. According to DBE (2010:1) progressed learners need special and differentiated support which needs to be offered by every school which has progressed learners from Grade 11 to Grade 12. Furthermore, the school has to discuss the differential support that will be provided to parents of all learners who progressed to Grade 12 (DBE, 2012). However, every school needs to identify and

assess the learning levels of all progressed learners. Then all progressed learners need to be grouped according to their individual learning incompetence. Moreover, Leepo (2015:187) suggests that all schools must have an active School Management Team (SMT) that will develop intervention strategies to improve the performance of progressed learners, monitor the implementation of all strategies and ensure that parents are aware of their children's learning deficiencies. Progressed learners also need motivation and encouragement. Nevertheless, every slight achievement must be encouraged and rewarded.

In support of these, Margolis and McCabe (2010:242) suggest that getting struggling learners with low self-efficiency to exert sufficient effort, persist on tasks, work to overcome difficulty, work in order to overcome challenging tasks, and develop an interest in academics, teachers should systematically develop learners' high efficiency. For struggling learners to develop their self-efficiency, Newcomer (1986:20) asserts that teachers need to avoid tasks that the learners find frustrating or anxiety-provoking. Moreover, teachers need to adjust the instructional and independent levels of criteria for struggling learners. They should therefore establish guidelines that would set the stage for success. Therefore, this study intends to explore strategies that can be used to strengthen the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District.

### **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The main aim of this study was to explore the intervention strategies that can be used to improve the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District. In this study, the main aim was analyzed through the following objectives:

- To explore the requirements of progressed learners in terms of Acts and Policies in the South African context.
- To analyze the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.
- To examine challenges encountered in schools assisting progressed learners at Grade 12.

- To find strategies that may ameliorate the low performance of progressed learners.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- **Main research question**

Which intervention strategies can be used to strengthen the performance of progressed learners at Grade 12 in Vhembe East District?

The following research questions will emanate from the above research question:

- What are the requirements of progressed learners in terms of Acts and Policies in the South African context?
- How have progressed learners performed in Grade 12?
- What are the challenges encountered in schools in assisting progressed learners in Grade 12?
- Which strategies may be used to ameliorate the low performance of progressed learners?

## 1.5 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, a review of the literature is done as follows:

### 1.5.1 The Requirements of Progressed Learners in Terms of Acts and Policies in South African Context

The policy on the Progression of learners was introduced for the first time in the General Education and Training (GET) band while Curriculum 2005 was in use, and then again in the Further Education and Training (FET) band in 2013 (DBE, 2017:1). In 2014, the first batch of progressed learners reached the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

However, the implementation of the learner progression policy was motivated by a desire to reduce the high attrition rate and increase school retention. Another

objective of the learner progression policy was to reduce national expenditures. When students repeat a grade, the country incurs additional expenses for stationary, LTSM support materials, food provided by the National School Nutrition Program, and furniture. Moreover, the Minister of Basic Education adopted Regulation 6(4), (d) and (e) as Regulation Notice No. 1114. According to Government Gazette No. 36041 dated 28 December 2012, a learner may only fail once in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase (Grades 10 to 12), preventing them from remaining in a phase for more than four years (DBE, 2016:1). However, failing a grade a second time does not guarantee that the student will automatically advance. In addition to the fundamental condition of not spending more than four years in a phase, they must fulfill other criteria. According to DBE (2017:1), FET learners who advanced should have satisfied the following criteria:

- They must pass a minimum of seven courses, including Life Orientation.
- They must pass the Language of Learning and Teaching Examination (LoLT).
- They must have consistently attended school.
- They must have administered all School-Based Assessment Tasks across all disciplines.

The South African Department of Education (DoE), currently known as the Department of Basic Education (DBE), implemented a policy limiting grade repetition to once each phase in 1998. The policy mandated social promotion till 9th grade and again from 10th to 12th grade (Stott et al., 2015:90). In addition to guaranteeing that learners spend at least four years in a phase, the policy on learner progression tries to ensure that learners advance through a phase with the appropriate age cohort (DBE, 2012:1). In this respect, the policy suggests that a learner who is repeating a grade and is not performing at the expected level should be provided with the required help in order to advance to the following grade.

According to DBE (2012:1), the policy of learner progression requires that advancement in Grades 10-12 not only ensures a learner's final certification in Grade 12, but also satisfies the certification criteria of the National Senior Certificate (NSC).

The provincial Education Department is responsible for overseeing the implementation of progression policy in all South African institutions. Since its implementation in 2013, the policy of learner progression has been beset by numerous obstacles that have led to its failure. However, this study will fill in the spaces left by inadequate support in schools, which contributes to poor Grade 12 results.

### **1.5.2 The Performance of Progressed Learners in Grade 12**

According to Leepo (2015:61), the Free State Province's Grade 12 class of 2014 had 3913 advanced learners. This accounted for 14.8% of all learners who took the final year National Senior Certificate examination. Fifty-nine percent of these students failed. It goes without saying that the progression criteria contribute significantly to the province's low quality of results, as well as the 4.6% decline in the overall pass rate in the Free State Province.

According to Leepo (2015:179), the majority of School Management Teams contacted in the Free State Province acknowledged that progressed learners brought performance index. The principals questioned said that they have mechanisms in place to assist the advanced learners. It was also critical to determine if such tactics would boost the performance of progressed learners.

In the Eastern Cape 2015 Grade 12 results painted a gloomy picture in terms of performance due to progressed learners. Out of 11709 progressed learners who wrote the 2015 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, only 2626 passed. This contributed to a drop rate pass of 5.5% compared to the 2014 Grade 12 results. Meanwhile, the biggest jump was in KwaZulu Natal where the figure increased from 10633 in 2015 to 28036 in 2017. Of all 107430 progressed learners who wrote the 2017 NSC examinations, 18751 passed, which represents 55.7% of them. A total of 5.6% achieved bachelor passes, 2.5% achieved diploma passes while 24.3% achieved higher certificates passes (Matshediso, 2017:1). Moreover, DBE (2017:1) adds that the number of progressed learners pushed down Grade 12 results pass rate in 2015. The results announced by the Minister of Education in January 2016 indicated that the national pass rate dropped to 70.7% from 75.8% in 2014. The

cause of the drop was the learners who progressed to Grade 12 without meeting the pass requirements.

Ngoepe (2016:1) further indicated Motshekga's glimpse of what the results would have been if there were no progressed learners in all the provinces of South Africa. The results will best be indicated in the table below:

**Table 1.1: 2014 Grade 12 Results in South African Provinces**

Province	Expected Pass Percentage	Actual Pass Percentage	Percentage drop
Western Cape	88%	84.5%	3.5%
Free State	87.7%	81.5%	6.2%
Gauteng	85%	84.2%	0,8%
North West	84%	81.5%	2.5%
Mpumalanga	82%	78.6%	3.4%
Northern Cape	77.2%	69.4%	7.8%
Limpopo	71.1%	65.1%	12%
KwaZulu Natal	61.6%	60.7%	0.9%
Eastern Cape	62%	56%	6%

This data will alert the body of knowledge that the performance of Grade 12 progressed learners has declined. Regardless of the poor performance indicated by these statistics, this study will alert the department to implement some of the strategies that can be used nationwide to improve the performance of progressed learners.

However, DBE (2016:1), further states that the Minister of Basic Education did not regret the decision of progressing learners because many of the 65000 progressed learners managed to pass the matric examination in 2015. The Department of Basic Education managed to obtain 1081 from those progressed learners. This ranges from a total of 40 in Mathematics, 30 in Physical Science and 31 in Accounting.

Moreover, the performance of progressed learners ranged from 1% to 4% of the dropping to individual subjects.

### **1.5.3 Challenges Encountered in Schools in Assisting Progressed Learners at Grade 12**

When aiding progressed learners, secondary schools encountered several obstacles, which negatively impacted the performance of progressed learners. The Department did not outline the implementation and management strategy to be used when aiding progressed learners. Despite the fact that the policy theoretically says that learners should be progressed after failing a grade, they are not provided with sufficient assistance to allow them to handle the rigors of the current grade (Munje & Maarman, 2016:195). However, this often results in misunderstandings and sloppy application of progression policy by the School Management Team. In addition, the policy does not specify the roles of School Management Teams and the manner in which they should monitor and assess the policy's success in their particular schools.

Although Prinsloo (2003:189) notes that the School Management Team is responsible for policy implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, in reality, the Department of Basic Education lacks standardized techniques and monitoring and evaluation systems. In this sense, schools were given sufficient autonomy to execute the policy in their own time and manner. As a result, conflicting and opposing perspectives on how to handle progressed learners emerged in various institutions.

According to Munje and Maarman (2016:196), there were no formal intervention procedures in schools that provided the differentiated assistance outlined by the policy, and there was no clear direction on how the information on the learner report card must be transmitted and used in the classroom. In the meanwhile, teachers behaved and acted differently in response to governmental mandates. Due to a lack of an implementation plan and intervention strategies for supporting learners, some schools disregarded all of the stipulated requirements of the school progression policy and taught their lessons in a conventional manner without taking into account progressed learners who desired individual support.

On the other hand, Leepo (2015:187) says that progressed posed several difficulties for Grade 12 teachers and School Management Teams. In Grade 12, progressed had knowledge gaps. Therefore, they lack fundamental abilities. They were expected to get individualized monitoring and assistance. Due to limited time and the amount of work they had in 12th Grade, instructors were unable to provide them with the necessary assistance. Leepo (2015:187) adds that progressed learners caused disciplinary issues since they were unable to comprehend the material of the current grade. Some progressed learners do not participate in the catch-up activities planned for them by teachers and school management.

Moreover, Leepo (2015:178) states that if learners are aware that they are going to be progressed at the end of the year, they no longer work hard during the year. On the other hand, the American Federation of Teachers (1997:5) indicates that the progression of learners hides school failure and creates problems for learners who are deluded that they have learned the skills to be successful or to get the message that achievement does not count, and for teachers who must face students who know that teachers wield no credible authority to demand hard work.

Munje and Maarman (2016:196) show that educators grapple with difficulties transferred from the previous grade prior to tackling the curriculum of the current grade; often regressing, which may lead to degeneration. Educators are likewise passionate about the capacity of their learners to comprehend, focusing their attention on improving the performance of underachieving students. As a result, they unwittingly fail to complete the curriculum and maintain the required level. Due to a lack of preparedness and inability to deal with the new material, this obviously results in students being overwhelmed with freedom in the next grade. Some teachers in schools disregard the entire policy on learner progression because they should have been informed at the beginning of each school year of all students with special needs, while principals argue that it is the educators' responsibility to monitor progressed learners in their respective classrooms. However, there was a possibility that teacher effort was misdirected by the kind of information gained from report cards, since the majority of the material did not adequately describe learners' issues (Munje & Maarman, 2016:197).

A further difficulty in the implementation of the school progression policy examined by Munje and Maarman (2016:197) relates to the manner in which the comments in the schedules were provided, which did not provide a proper explanation of the type of support required by individual learners in each subject. Learner report cards contained insufficient information or ambiguous comments, such as "the learner needs support in all learning areas, needs support in English and Mathematics, or needs support in Mathematics and Languages," but failed to specify which aspect of the subject the pupil was struggling to master. In this respect, teachers were hindered from providing the necessary assistance to learners, so compromising their right to study and pass. Theoretically, teachers were required to provide a list of students they classified as needing help; nonetheless, they are obliged to provide an accurate description of the type of needs they want.

In addition, Leepo (2015:61) noted that learners who are aware that they will be promoted at the end of the year are unable to concentrate and, as a result, exhibit unruly behavior that has a detrimental effect on their performance. These learners are less dedicated than their colleagues in the same grade. In Grade 12, progressed learners suffer knowledge gaps. Teachers are unable to provide differentiated help due to a shortage of time and the quantity of work they are expected to do in Grade 12. The majority of principals believe that progressed learners do not attend enrichment programs and also fail to complete the assignments teachers provide in order to comprehend current curriculum subjects (Leepo, 2015:179).

As a result, the Grade 12 scores continued to decline, more students remained in the education system, due to the poorly implemented policy on learner progression. Such learners eventually contributed more to the rates of students who stopped attending school. Nonetheless, the study's findings and suggestions will help the Department of Basic Education better implement the policy of learner development.

#### **1.5.4 Intervention Strategies that may be used to Ameliorate Low Performance of Progressed Learners**

According to Leepo (2015:166), Grade 12 results of 2015 have taught the Department of Basic Education (DBE) a lesson. However, all schools were tasked

with establishing intervention measures to aid progressed learners in their particular institutions. Meanwhile, the majority of tactics employed to aid progressed learners are effective in classrooms with low enrollment. In general, few teachers received training on how to support progressed learners. Moreover, the Department of Basic Education did not put forward understandable strategies to be employed when assisting progressed learners to perform well in Grade 12.

At least 61.7% of School Management Teams interviewed in Leepo (2015:168) agreed that they developed intervention strategies to improve performance of progressed learners in their schools, while 28.7% of the SMT members indicated that they did not develop intervention strategies in their respective schools. However, those who developed strategies had problems with the implementation due to the large numbers of learners they have. And the demand of work that teachers had. In the Eastern Cape, some of the learners who failed grade nine and were progressed to grade ten posed a very serious problem to grade ten teachers. They had to start teaching them the basics and go back to as far as Grade 4. As the curriculum is results-oriented, teachers need to work on finishing the syllabus in time (DBE, 2015:1).

In Free State, 58.2% of questioned School Management Teams reported that they established intervention strategies to support progressed learners in their schools, whilst 28.5% of interviewed School Management Teams lacked intervention methods to assist progressed learners. 13,3 % of School Management Teams were comprised of members who were unsure about their school's intervention measures. This shows that a handful of schools in the province have partly adopted intervention measures. (Leepo, 2015:149).

On the other hand, according to Munje and Maarman (2016:196), schools employing intervention tactics did not have a strategy for helping progressed learners. However, the policy on learner progression does not specify how monitoring and assessment of the program's efficacy should be conducted.

However, Margolis and McCabe (2010:242) assert that the most important academic decision teachers make for progressed learners is to determine the necessary way

of supporting them. Teachers should develop effective intervention strategies to assist learners with learning disabilities. They therefore identify the following intervention strategies that can improve the performance of progressed learners.

#### **1.5.4.1 Frequently linking new work to recent success**

Success is a guaranteed natural consequence of having a healthy brain stimulated in a natural, nurturing and information-rich learning environment. According to Margolis and McCabe (2010:244) linking new work with recent success requires learners to have many recent successes. Teachers need to adhere to progressed learners' proper instructional and independent levels, stimulating the recall of the prerequisite learning, shortening, and simplifying words and giving them moderate challenging work that they can succeed on. Furthermore, Margolis and McCabe (2010:244) indicate that the only way to enable progressed learners to achieve at a high rate is to frequently monitor learners' rate of success, at the same time designing instructions and assignments that match their achievements. Teachers can then start linking new work with the previous one once learner have recent success to draw on. Moreover, examining prior success provides learners with opportunities to employ teaching strategies and eliminate any stigma associated with them.

However, there are some progressed learners who according to Margolis and McCabe (2010:244) lack the ability to succeed and who avoid involvement in schoolwork. These learners need teachers who provide them with extrinsic age appropriate reinforces such as stickers and stressing work that progressed learners find important and interesting so that they can realize their successes.

#### **1.5.4.2 Reinforce effort and persistence**

To reinforce effort and persistence is when teachers select tasks within the abilities of progressed learners, sequence tasks from easy to difficult, help learners to realize that they have skills to succeed, provide learners with help and encouragement teach them to correct their mistakes and introduce difficult tasks when they are no longer difficult (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:244). Reinforcing effort enhances students' understanding of the relationship between effort and achievement by addressing their attitudes and beliefs. Hill and Miller (2013:40) explain that these assist students to attribute success to ability and effort. However, teachers must

understand the relationship between effort and achievement and assist students to connect between effort and achievement. Schunk (1991:2020) divides effort into two categories, that is, moderate effort and effort feedback indicating that progressed learners will be able to complete their tasks effectively using moderate effort. Furthermore, Schunk (1991:130) explains persistence as a continuation of effort and striving in the face of difficulty, opposition, or failure. It is the key characteristic of successful people across the academic disciplines. Henceforth being a driving force to help students to achieve their academic tasks as well as their personal goals.

#### **1.5.4.3 Teaching students to make facilitative attributions**

Attributions are ways in which people explain their beliefs on why things happen to them that guide their behavior (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:244). According to Weiner (2000:14), attributions refer to people's attempt to maintain a positive self-image, when they do well in an activity, they are likely to attribute their success to their own efforts and abilities, while they associate failure with factors that they do not have control of. However, teachers need to stress accurate, facilitative attributions throughout the day and teach progressed learners to do the same. Facilitative attributions link successes to ability, thus learners with facilitative attributions reject failure and poor performance and start struggling for good performance (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:245).

Moreover, in a classroom situation wherein attributions are applied, learners always receive constant information about their performance on academic tasks (Slavin, 2014:312). Teachers should always praise and motivate students for every effort they make to enhance their achievements.

#### **1.5.4.4 Help students to make personal important goals**

Personal important goals refer to goals that students want to achieve, goals that students think will make a difference in their achievements (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:245). They are goals that positively influence progressed learners' self-efficacy. However, teachers need to set short-term goals that are specific and achievable in order to allow progressed learners to gain motivation. According to Schunk (1991:132), short-term goals are goals that people set for themselves, that can be accomplished within a year. It is something that a person wants to do soon.

Teachers need to teach progressed learners to monitor their work frequently and evaluate themselves using simple evaluation forms, rubrics, learning strategy reference cards and learning strategy checklists (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:246).

Teaching progressed learners requires teachers to set realistic goals that can help them achieve with moderate effort, that are more motivating or excessively easy goals. If progressed learners are making good progress, both teachers and learners should discuss what they are doing in order to produce success. Meanwhile, if they find that the progress is poor, they must come up with ways of improving them (Schunk, 1991:133).

#### **1.5.4.5 Incorporate motivational factors**

Motivational factors refer to the instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation and self-regulating strategies that are used purposefully by individual students to manage their level of motivation (Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008:55). On the other hand, Bundgaard (2017:1) states that motivational factors include achievement, advancement, autonomy, personal growth, recognition, responsibility and work itself. However, progressed learners need teachers who incorporate motivational factors that enable them to succeed. Teachers also need to assess the amount of help that they offer to progressed learners. Moreover, teachers who teach progressed learners should exercise the following traits alluded to by Margolis and McCabe (2010:247):

- Show interest in students.
- Engage students in collaborative activities.
- Use a variety of teaching approaches that are relevant to lesson objectives.
- Compare student's achievements to their past achievements.
- Provide frequent, immediate, task-specific feedback.
- Emphasize what is right about students' work.
- Provide help whenever needed.
- Ensure that students have the prerequisite knowledge and skill to master new topics and assignments. Make expectations clear and realistic.
- Relate curriculum to students' lives and interests, in and out of the school.

All these motivational factors will help improve the performance of progressed learners.

#### **1.5.4.6 Stress peer modeling**

Peer modeling is a strategy that involves placing students in pairs or small groups to participate in learning activities that support academic instruction and social skills (Wood, 2015:1). This strategy does not need extra funding or extra staff. However, it is an intervention strategy that yields positive results related to learner achievement and a sense of belonging over a period. Wood (2015:1) further asserts that peer modeling is a support that can be used to get students to learn academic and provides the teacher an opportunity to use peers to assist with instruction, clarifying directions and giving social reminders with little or no disruption of the lesson.

Margolis and McCabe (2010:244) concur adding that an advantage of peer modeling is that it shows progressed learners how other learners overcome the mistakes that they make in acquiring new skills and learning strategies. They further outline the following ways in which teachers can implement peer modeling strategy effectively:

- Choose modeling learners who are respected by progressed learners.
- Select a strategy that is more challenging to progressed learners.
- Break complicated skills and strategies into manageable components.
- Have models to correct their mistakes.
- Reinforce struggling learners and
- Have struggling learners observe their models

#### **1.5.4.7 Needed teaching and learning strategies**

According to Weinstern (1991:494), learning strategies refer to methods that students use to learn. This ranges from techniques for improved memory to better studying or test writing strategies such as using question papers before, during and after the lesson to increase the degree of learning. However, progressed learners do not know how to approach a task, what learning strategies they are to use and

how to use them. Therefore, teachers need to effectively teach them the secrets of learning, i.e., the strategies that produce success (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:243). Furthermore, sequencing, modeling, explicit step-by-step directions, feedback, correction, practice and learner involvement in cooperative learning activities are different kinds of learning strategies which can assist progressed learners to acquire knowledge (Margolis & MacCabe, 2010:243).

In this regard, each of the intervention options that have been explored in this research will be of use to the Department of Basic Education in addressing the issues that are faced in schools while aiding learners who have progressed further.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Several educational and learning theories explain the application, interpretation and purpose of learning. However, this study focuses on the multiple intelligence theory which is discussed below:

### **1.6.1 Multiple Intelligence Theory**

Multiple Intelligence theory is based on the assumption that all people have different kinds of intelligence. An individual might be strong or weak in one or several areas (Woolfolk, 2016:150). All humans possess each of the intelligences to some degree. However, some individuals have more potential intelligence; therefore, learning in context is important for many of these forms of intelligence. Kezar (2001:147) adds that the theory of multiple intelligence suggests that all individuals have natural talents that could be refined; in this regard teachers should take the individuals seriously and differentiate their instruction to connect with each student in the classroom.

Woolfolk (2016:151) further asserts that multiple intelligence theory implies that schools explore an increased way of individualized curricular through independent study, experiential learning opportunities, self-paced learning and other curriculum modifications to include multiple intelligence. If students need to receive feedback, teachers need to understand their complex intellectual make-up.

On the other hand, Zhou and Brown (2015:84) assert that multiple intelligence theory is based on the nine multiple intelligences verbal or linguistic, logical or mathematical, visual or spatial, bodily, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic and existential that can be measured through an individual ability and used to define humans differently. However, educators need to find a way of incorporating multiple intelligence theory into the curriculum and in a lesson plan. It is important for teachers to carefully select activities that are realistic to the subject matter.

Zhou and Brown (2016:84) further state that multiple intelligence theory requires educators to plan and implement the type of lesson which revolves around the student, with types of activities and assignments that support students' abilities, meanwhile allowing them to exercise their weaker intelligences. Furthermore, Zhou and Brown (2016:87) allude to the following benefits of using multiple intelligence theory in the classroom.

- All forms of intelligence are equally celebrated.
- Students develop a strong sense of problem-solving that they can use in real-life situations.
- Students have a sense of increased self-worth that builds their strength and develops their potential.

Moreover, Woolfolk (2016:152) argues that anything worth knowing has different representatives and multiple connections. The theory of multiple intelligence suggests that an understanding can be expressed in words, images, movements, tables, charts, numbers and equations. However, all these expressions should guide the educational interventions which expand human thinking about abilities and avenues for teaching and learning.

In this regard, this study focuses on multiple intelligence theory because it is based on developing learners' different intelligences hence focusing on learners who are weak. Multiple intelligence theory allows teachers to incorporate strategies of involving all learners with different potentials. This theory believes that learning is

acquired in different ways. Learners who are weak will feel that they are not left behind. Moreover, the multiple intelligence theory caters for learners and their different potentials. Teaching must consider that individuals are different, and they gain knowledge in different ways. The implementation of multiple intelligence theory in classrooms will improve the performance of progressed learners.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

In this section, the following key terms that individuals outside the field of study may not understand are defined:

### **1.7.1 Academic Performance**

Performance is understood as an achievement of the organization in relation to its set goals. It includes outcomes achieved or accomplished through the contribution of individuals or teams to the organization's strategic goals (Williams, 2016:94). According to Kane (1993:83), performance is defined at the level of everyone within the organization as an understanding of the achieved results. It is the act of doing something successfully, using knowledge as distinguished from merely using it. On the other hand, Campbell et al. (1993:40) state that performance is a synonym for behavior. It is something that people do and can be observed. It includes actions or behaviors that are relevant to the organization's goals that can be measured in terms of each individual's proficiency. Furthermore, Williams (2016:40) adds that performance is the relevant actions that are under the control of the individual, regardless of whether they are cognitive, motor, psychomotor or interpersonal. However, in this study, academic performance refers to the level of learners' achieved results at a school.

### **1.7.2 Progressed Learners**

Progressed learners are learners who fail the same grade twice and are subsequently advanced to the next grade and helped in terms of the knowledge deficit they have accrued over the years (DBE, 2017:1). In addition, a progressing learner is a learner who does not make any progress and finds himself/herself

repeating the grade and who is likely to stay in the phase for four years or more and who needs get extra care in order to advance to the following grade. In this research, the term "progressed learners" refers to students who fail 11th Grade a second time and are subsequently immediately moved to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade without reaching the pass standards.

### **1.7.3 Grade Progression**

DBE (2015:1) defines progression as the movement of a learner from one grade to the next, with the exception of Grade R, regardless of meeting promotion criteria. However, progression may be used to prevent a student from being held in a phase for more than four years, as required by the admission policy for ordinary public schools, provided that the student's poor performance in the grade prior to promotion is addressed in the grade upon which the student is promoted. Transitioning from one thing to another is progression. It is a progressive movement, particularly one that strives towards some accomplishment. For the purpose of this study, grade progression refers to the advancement or movement of students from Grade 11 to Grade 12.

### **1.7.4 Grade 12**

Grade 12 refers to the 12th year of a formal or mandatory education, commonly referred to as the senior year or the 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. Most places in the world consider it to be the last year of secondary school. This grade's students are typically between the ages of 17 and 18. According to Williams (2016:4), learners who are in Grade 12 are called senior learners. The end of grade 12 marks the end of one chapter and the start of another in the American Educational System, preparing students for upcoming obstacles including college admissions, job decisions, and other life adventures. Grade 12 is the final year of high school (DBE, 2017:1). In South Africa, Grade 12 is also regarded as a high grade because students must pass it in order to receive a National Senior certificate, which is required for enrollment in higher institutions. For the purpose of this study, Grade 12 is the last year of secondary school studies before learners are promoted to tertiary institutions like universities and colleges.

## **1.8 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM**

According to Burton and Barlett (2009:18), a research paradigm is a model of research that reflects a consensus on the research methods that are relevant and acceptable for data gathering. However, there are three types of paradigms that verify the theoretical propositions, that is, positivism, anti-positivism or interpretivism and critical paradigm (Nirod & Dash, 2005:1). The study uses anti-positivism which is also called interpretivism. Anti-positivism emphasizes human interaction with phenomena in their daily lives. People interpret and attach meanings to different actions and construct new experiences. The rationale behind the choice of anti-positivism is that the researcher seeks to understand the participants' meaning and how they interpret their own experiences. Furthermore, participants were studied in their school which is their natural setting (Cresswell, 2007:112).

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The researcher describes the study's research strategy and methods in this part.

### **1.9.1 Research Design**

This study will use a qualitative research design and suitable data gathering techniques. The definition of qualitative research design is the methodology for data collecting, analysis, and report writing. It is a method for assessing and recognizing the significance people or groups ascribe to a communal or human issue (Cresswell, 2007:124). On the other side, qualitative research design is defined by Patton (2002:39) as a technique that takes a naturalistic approach to comprehend certain conditions, such as real-world settings, without the researcher attempting to affect the interest. Additionally, the researcher identified patterns of thinking and opinion and dug deeper into the issue. The qualitative research method is selected because the researcher wishes to comprehend the participants' perspectives on how they assist progressed learners in their respective institutions.

## **1.9.2 Research Methodology**

The procedures that were used to gather information from the participants are described in this section.

### **1.9.2.1 Population**

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014:59), population refers to an explicit collection of individuals having common, binding characteristics or traits. On the other hand, Tuckman (1972:201) defines population as the conditions which specify who shall be included in the population. It is the group about which there is interest in gaining information and drawing conclusions. In this study, the population was made up of secondary school principals, members of SMT, Grade 12 educators teaching progressed learners, circuit managers and curriculum advisors.

### **1.9.2.2 Population sampling**

Making choices regarding which individuals, environments, activities, or behaviors to include in the study is known as sampling (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:59). Researchers need to decide the number of individuals, groups, and objects they want to collect data from. In this section, aspects such as population, sampling procedures and sample are addressed.

There were 103 high school principals, 222 SMT members, 52 curriculum advisors, 18 circuit managers, and 43 Grade 12 educators in the Vhembe East District.

#### **1.9.2.2.1 Sampling procedure**

Bertram and Christiansen (2014:60) define sampling procedure as a technique used to select the members of the sample. Furthermore, Bertram and Christiansen (2014:60) categorized sampling procedures into random sampling, purposeful sampling, stratified sampling, and convenience sampling procedure.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to choose the site and the people that are supposed to be involved in the research. Purposeful sampling is a sampling technique at which a researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study (Dudovskiy, 2012:1).

Researchers often believe that they can obtain a representative sample by using a sound judgment, which will result in saving time and money. According to Punch (2009:162), purposeful sampling means sampling in a deliberate way, with some purpose or focus on mind.

Vhembe East District had a total of 103 Principals of senior secondary schools. 3 high school principals who have extensive experience with and knowledge of progressed learners were chosen for this study. The SMT consisted of 222 people. 3 members of the School Management Team (SMT) from different secondary schools were chosen for their experience and ability in working with progressed learners. In Vhembe East District, 52 curriculum advisors were employed. However, 3 Curriculum Advisors were chosen via purposeful sampling since they were most likely to have experience with progressed learners in their respective fields of work. Of the 18 Circuit Managers in Vhembe East District, 3 were chosen because I knew they would be excellent sources of information regarding the topic I was studying. There was a total of 43 secondary school teachers who were responsible for 12th graders. 6 of these teachers were chosen because they were likely to provide useful data on progressed learners.

This brought the number of sampled participants involved in the study to eighteen (18). All the participants were chosen, hoping that they will give a clear picture of how progressed learners are managed in secondary schools.

#### **1.9.2.2.2 Sample**

The term sample is a group of people, objects or items that are taken from a larger population for measurement (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017:140). The sample should be representative of the population to ensure that the researcher generalizes the findings from the research sample to the population. Furthermore, Nolan (1994:10) defines a sample as a fragment of data in the population that has been chosen from it.

For the purpose of this study, the sample consisted of six (6) educators out of a total of forty-three (43), three (3) Circuit Managers out of a total of eighteen (18), three (3) Curriculum Advisors out of a total of fifty-two (52), and three (3) School Management

Team members out of a total of two hundred twenty-two (222). The preceding sample was obtained through the process of Purposeful sampling.

### **1.9.3 Data Collection Strategies**

The following strategies of data collection are discussed:

#### **1.9.3.1 Interviews**

Burns (1997:329) defines an interview as a one-on-one oral exchange, in which an interviewer tries to obtain information, beliefs, or opinions from an interviewee. Kumar (2011:144) adds that an interview is a person-to-person interaction which can be face-to-face or otherwise, between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind. In this study, the researcher used individual interviews to elicit data from school principals, SMT members, secondary educators, circuit managers and curriculum advisors in their respective settings.

During individual interviews, data was gathered through recording and field notes. According to Schumacher and MacMillan (1997:433), a tape recorder does not prevent the researcher to take notes to help reformulate questions and probes. The researcher then transcribed all tape recordings. The following data was collected during interviews:

- (i) School principals gave data on the way they manage the implementation of the policy of learner progression in their respective schools.
- (ii) School Management Teams were interviewed to find out the role they play during the implementation of the policy of learner progression.
- (iii) Secondary educators were interviewed to find out the methods that they use when they teach progressed learners.
- (iv) Circuit Managers were interviewed to find out how they assist schools during the implementation of the policy of learner progression.

(v) Curriculum Advisors were interviewed to find out the way in which they support educators during the implementation of the policy of learner progression.

Data collected from these participants assisted in identifying the strategies that schools can use to help improve the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.

### **1.9.3.2 Documents analysis**

Documents are written data about every school and place of education that the researcher can collect data from (Burton & Bartlet, 2009:133). This includes written documents that may be helpful such as minutes of staff, department and governors' meetings. However, these sources can provide valuable data about aspects of life in different educational settings. Cresswell (2009:180) contends that such documents may be public, that is, newspapers, office reports and schedules, or private, that is, diaries, personal journals and letters.

The researcher also collected data using the method of document analysis. Documents such as departmental policies about progressed learners from the Department of Basic Education, departmental circulars instructing schools to manage progressed learners, teaching and learning policies saying something about progressed learners in a school, minutes of school management teams where they discuss strategies to improve performance of progressed learners in a school, reporting templates sent to circuits about the progress of progressed learners, progressed learners workbooks wherein they write class work and homework and the attendance registers with a record of learner absenteeism. Quarterly schedules and statistics, the researcher did not create new data but used existing documents as sources of data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:97). The following documents were analyzed to elicit the following data:

(i) Departmental policies and circulars. This were analyzed to find the requirements and the meaning of progressed learners.

- (ii) The schools' teaching and learning policies. These were analyzed in order to find out if the school set out some guidelines to follow during the implementation of the learner progression policy.
- (iii) SMT minutes. These were analyzed to find out if School Management Teams discuss progressed learners in their meetings.
- (iv) Reporting Templates sent to circuits. These were analyzed to find the information from schools concerning progressed learners required by the department.
- (v) Attendance registers. These were analyzed to find out if progressed learners attend school on a regular basis.
- (vi) Progressed learners' classwork and homework books. These were analyzed to find out if progressed learners write their work.
- (vii) Quarterly schedules and statistics. These were used to analyze the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.

Data collected from all these documents assisted the researcher in identifying strategies that can be used to strengthen the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.

## **1.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data was rigorously examined. The analysis is the division, separation, or dissection of research materials into manageable portions, sections, components, or units (Boeijs, 2010:76). Nonetheless, data analysis is a process of reviewing, cleaning, modifying, and modeling data in order to discover useful information, provide solutions, and justify the results. Data analysis involves several features and methodologies, including a wide array of techniques and terms (Schulze, 2000:49). Rubin and Rubin (2005:201) add that data analysis is the means through which raw interviews are transformed into interpretations based on evidence that serve as the

foundation for public reporting. In this study, the researcher evaluated data in accordance with the phases of Tech's methodology outlined by Schulze (2000:49):

- Evaluate the completeness of all transcripts. In support of this, Seale (1999:114) states that while analyzing data, the researcher reviews the data in order to get familiar with the data in a non-disclosive manner.
- Select one interview and evaluate the fundamental significance of the findings.
- The researcher will document all subjects that pertain directly to the themes and categorize similar issues.
- The topics will be expressed as codes adjacent to the appropriate text to determine whether new categories or codes arise.
- The researcher will reduce the number of categories and highlight their interrelationships.
- The researcher will next draw findings on the contraction of categories and alphabetize codes.
- Collect the information for each category.
- The researcher will compose the concluding report.

### **1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH**

According to Schumacher and McMillan (1993:385) trustworthiness is the vagueness of the explanations and concepts that possess mutual meanings between participants and the researcher. Trustworthiness is all about establishing that the research findings are credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable. However, Shenton (2004:66) proposes the following four criteria which he believes should be considered by the qualitative researchers in pursuit of trustworthy study:

### **1.11.1 Credibility**

According to Kumar (2014:219) credibility involves making sure that qualitative research results are believable from the participant's perspective. It is believed that the respondents are the best judge of whether the findings of the research reflect their feelings, thoughts and emotions accurately. In this study, the researcher used triangulation to assure that the findings are credible.

### **1.11.2 Transferability**

This term refers to the way in which the outcomes of the research can be accessible or disseminated to other settings. However, the researchers need a thorough and extensive description of the adopted process with the intent that other researchers may follow and reproduce it (Kumar, 2014:219). However, this study used thick descriptions to show that this study is applicable to other contexts, circumstances, and situations.

### **1.11.3 Dependability**

Dependability refers to the likelihood that a researcher will obtain the same results if the same object is examined twice (Kumar, 2014:297). Nonetheless, the researcher must keep a thorough and complete record of the procedure so that others can replicate it. In order to establish the dependability of this study, the researcher employed an enquiry audit, which consisted of obtaining a third party to review and examine the research procedure and data analysis to guarantee that the findings are consistent and can be duplicated.

### **1.11.4 Conformability**

Kumar (2014:297) indicates that conformability is the extent to which the findings of the research could be supported or confirmed by other researchers. However, the possibility of conformability relies on the identical manner in which the research process follows so that the results could be followed. In this study, the researcher

provided an audit trail that highlights every step taken when analyzing data in order to provide a reason for decisions made.

### 1.11.5 Triangulation

Triangulation is the process of comparing many sources of evidence to determine the validity of information or events. It is simply a method of validating data by cross-checking (Seale, 1999:114). Further, they say that triangulation refers to the utilization of many data collection techniques while investigating a certain facet of human behavior. In this study, the researcher used a variety of data collection techniques. Including individual interviews with field notes and document analysis, which are the most essential qualitative research methodologies. In this study, the researcher used triangulation in accordance with Seale's (1999:115) three forms of triangulation:

- Data triangulation occurs when the researcher obtains distinct data sets at distinct periods.
- Investigator triangulation, in which the researcher employs several data collectors to validate or refute the study results.
- In theoretical triangulation, the researcher interprets facts from many theoretical perspectives.

The researcher also obtains supporting data from documents to provide a background to and help explain the attitudes and behavior of those in the group under scrutiny.

In this study, the researcher uses the following provisions to promote confidence that she has accurately recorded the phenomena under scrutiny.

- The adoption of research methods well established both in qualitative and in general.

- The development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating organizations before the first data collection dialogues take place; the researcher achieved this by consulting the appropriate documents and preliminary visit to the site herself.
- Random sampling of individuals to serve as participants, although this study used purposeful sampling, a random approach could negate charges of researcher bias in the selection of participants.
- Strategies that assist the researcher to make sure that participants are honest when they give information. Each participant will be given an opportunity to accept or refuse to be part of the study to ensure that data collection process involves people who are willing and also ready to give data freely.
- The researcher will finally draw findings on the contraction of categories and alphabetize codes.
- Methods that aid the researcher in ensuring that participants provide truthful information. Each participant will be given the option to accept or decline participation in the research, ensuring that the data collecting procedure covers individuals who are willing and able to contribute data voluntarily.

### **1.12 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings in this study will assist the circuit managers, curriculum advisors, School Management Teams and educators in Vhembe District. Circuit managers will know how they should support school principals on how to support progressed learners in their respective schools. Furthermore, the results of the study will also strengthen support to be provided by curriculum advisors to educators who are teaching progressed learners in their classrooms. School Management Teams will also know the role they are supposed to play and the strategies they need to employ when they manage progressed learners. Moreover, educators will be assisted on how to teach progressed learners in a way that they cope with their new grades.

The findings of this study will not only help the Vhembe East district, but they will also help all of the other districts and all of the provinces in South Africa. This is due to the fact that the policy of progressed learners was introduced in all of South Africa's provinces. Everything that was going on in the Vhembe East District was something that was happening in every other district and province in South Africa as well. In addition, the outcomes of this research will assist South African schools in improving the performance of progressed learners, which will, in turn, lead to improved Grade 12 results in South Africa. In addition to that, the findings of this study will serve to inform policymakers in South Africa of the errors that have been made, after which they will work to correct those mistakes and acquire knowledge on the successful implementation of policies.

### 1.13 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY



**Figure 1.1: A Map of Vhembe District Situated in the Northern Region of Limpopo Province of South Africa**

**Source: Adapted from <https://www.researchgate.net/figure>**

This study was conducted in Vhembe District. Although there are two Districts in Vhembe, the study will be conducted in Vhembe East. All schools in Vhembe East

District complied with the policy on learner progression. However, this study was limited to secondary schools with a high enrolment of progressed learners.

## **1.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

David and Resnik (2011:6) state that ethical standards encourage the values that are important in collective work, such as believe, liability, conjoint respect and integrity. They add that most researchers want to receive credit for their contributions and do not want their ideas stolen or disclosed prematurely. In this study, the following aspects of ethical consideration were ensured:

### **1.14.1 Anonymity**

The researcher protected the anonymity of the participants by using the following ethical principles that vary codes address as outlined in Shamoo and Resnik (2009:2):

- **Honesty**

The researcher strived for honesty in all scientific communications; she honestly reported data, results, methods, procedures, and publication status. Data was not fabricated or misrepresented.

- **Objectivity**

The research avoided bias in experimental design, data analysis, data interpretation, peer review, personnel decisions, grant writing, expert testimony, and other aspects of research. Objectivity is expected or required, the researcher also disclosed personal or financial interests that may affect the research.

- **Integrity**

The researcher kept all promises and agreements made with the participants. The researcher acted with sincerity and strived for consistency of thought and action.

- **Carefulness**

The researcher avoided error and negligence by keeping good records of research activities, such as data collection, research design and correspondence with agencies or journals.

- **Openness**

The researcher shared data, results ideas, tools, and resources. She also opened to criticism and new ideas.

- **Confidentiality**

The researcher protected confidential communications such as papers or grants submitted for publication, and personnel records.

- **Respect Participants**

The researcher respected all participants and treated them fairly.

- **Social Responsibility**

The researcher strived to promote social good and prevent harm through research public education and advocacy.

- **Non- Discrimination**

The researcher avoided discrimination against participants on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity or other factors that are not related to their scientific competence and integrity.

### **1.14.2 Request for Permission**

The researcher wrote letters to the Provincial Education Department, circuit managers, curriculum advisors, SMT members, school principals and educators to ask for permission to conduct research interviews.

### **1.14.3 Informed Consent Form**

The researcher gave participants an informed consent form which informs them about making a decision to volunteer for the research study. The consent form also gave participants an opportunity to ask questions.

## **1.15 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

This thesis is divided into the following six chapters:

- Background information on the problem, statement of the problem, goal of the study, research questions, objectives, and definitions of essential concepts are included in the first chapter.
- The second chapter provides the required theoretical basis for advanced learners.
- The third chapter is a literature review of progressing learners.
- Chapter Four describes the chosen research paradigm and how it effects the study's design and research technique. In addition, it justifies the selected population, sampling methods, data gathering, and analytic processes.
- The fifth chapter provides an examination and explanation of the data produced.
- The summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the aspects of theoretical frameworks in general and in particular a theoretical framework for research investigating the support which needs to be provided to learners who are progressed to Grade 12. However, theoretical frameworks which were discussed in this study include multiple intelligence theory and attribution theory. The background information and the purpose of these theories and their contribution are outlined. Moreover, an overview of these theories and a detailed explanation of their relevancy to the study are given.

#### 2.2 CONCEPTUALIZING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section outlines the meaning of theory and the rationale of having a theory in the study.

##### 2.2.1 What is a Theory?

Kerlinger (1986:9) defines theory as a collection of interdependent topics for the study, explanations, and thesis that present a structured view of the phenomenon by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomenon. A theory can also be used to make predictions that can help the researcher to ask appropriate research questions successfully.

On the other hand, Zhou and Brown (2015:88) assert that theories provide a basis to understand how people learn and a way to explain, describe, analyze and predict learning. In that sense, a theory helps researchers to make more informed decisions around the design, development and delivery of learning.

According to Fullbrook (2019:1), a theory is a set of principles that explain how best a student can acquire, retain, and recall new information. Furthermore, a theory is

the most important tool for the management of complexity in design in that it assists designers to understand the complexity and explaining how it will impact their design problems and solutions. Theories also assist the researcher to choose the kind of research method they can use in their study. Clune (1987:119) adds that a theory is used to clarify decisions taken when policies and regulations are made. Moreover, a theory is a powerful tool to predict decisions and detect the flaws of decisions taken and helps to predict a set of comprehensive data about educational theory. However, Grant and Osanloo (2014:21) indicate that theory provides the researcher with clear directions for how they can move their research beyond intuition and pretheoretically commitments to a solid foundation for understanding and conceptualizing a topic within the content of the study. In addition to this, Mackensie and Knipes (2016:1) assert that a theory helps the researcher to guide the logic of what the researcher is doing in his or her study. Every decision and direction that the researcher undertakes at every stage of the research process is guided by the theory. Hjerland (2009:1) suggests that different theories could be useful for different purposes. A theory also serves as the basis on which the study is conducted and links theoretical aspects and the practical components of the study.

According to Clune (1987:1), there are two advantages of theory for educational policy research, that is, to predict and clarify important issues in educational policy, and to suggest important issues for future research.

### **2.2.2 The Role of Theoretical Framework to the Study**

According to Grant and Osnloo (2014:21), theory provides a clear direction for how the researcher has moved beyond intuition and pretheoretically comments to a solid basis for understanding and conceptualizing a topic within the contents of the study. Hjerland (2009:1) suggests that different theories could be useful for different purposes. Theory helps to guide the logic of what the researcher is doing in his or her study, every decision and direction that the researcher undertakes at every stage of the research process. It serves as a basis on which the study is conducted and links theoretical aspects and the practical components of the study (Mackensie & Knipes, 2016:1).

However, according to Kerlinger (1973:2), a theoretical framework is a collection of interrelated concepts that may be utilized to conduct research in order to predict and describe the outcomes of the investigation. According to Kerlinger (1973:2), the aims of a theoretical framework in research are to:

- Provide the rationale for conducting research.
- Assist researchers to choose the relevant research questions for the study.
- Connect researchers with existing literature.
- Guide researchers with the choice of research design.
- Guide researchers towards appropriate methods of data collection.
- Provide assumptions that guide the study.
- Persuade the reader of the relevancy of the research questions.
- Help the researcher to predict end results and to analyze data based on existing literature.

The theoretical framework assists researchers in preparing their dissertation research study, including the selection of a subject, formulation of research questions, conceptualization of the literature review, design strategy, and analytic plan (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:12). In addition, a theoretical framework is the foundation upon which all information for a research project is built. Nevertheless, it acts as a framework and supports the study's rationale, issue statement, goal, importance, structure, and research questions. It also establishes a relationship or foundation with the literature review, research techniques, and analysis of research outcomes (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:12).

Furthermore, the theoretical framework allows the researcher to structure and strongly organize their dissertations to allow the flow from one chapter to another without which the vision and the structure of the dissertation will not be clear.

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014:13), the theoretical framework is a blueprint for the dissertation that acts as a guide for building and enhancing the research study. In addition, it explains the philosophy, epistemology, methodology, and analytical approach of the entire dissertation.

The theoretical framework can be used as a guide for logically developing and understanding the different interconnected parts of the literature review and dictates the researcher's plan of data collection and the development of information within the collected data (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:18-19).

## **2.3 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THIS STUDY**

This section outlines the description of the multiple intelligence theory and the attribution theory. However, tables were used to substantiate the description.

### **2.3.1 Multiple Intelligence Theory**

Multiple is a philosophy of education or an attitude of teaching on progressive education, rather than a set program of fixed techniques and strategies. Moreover, it offers educators an opportunity to create a number of educational settings and allows them to expand teaching strategies (Gardener, 1997:20). However, Gardener (1997:30) adds that teachers need to balance the teaching strategies to enable learners who struggle, to obtain equal opportunities in order to gain information through one intelligence and allow them to use their strength they possess for learning. It also assists teachers to expand their teaching methods to include a broader range of methods, materials, and teaching techniques to reach all learners.

Chapman (1993:100) adds that multiple intelligence theory requires educators to change teaching strategies and the way they assess students in the classroom to cater for learners who struggle. On the other hand, Campbell (1997:14) maintains that the multiple intelligence theory allows teachers to expand their repertoire of techniques, tools, and strategies beyond the typical linguistic and logical ones. Moreover, the theory of multiple intelligence does not only function as a specific remedy to one-sidedness in teaching, but also as an organizational tool that facilitates and synthesizes existing educational pedagogy. Champbell (1997:15) further states that multiple intelligence theory provides an avenue for finishing what teachers have started and reaching beyond the text in order to create a variety of opportunities for students to learn and show evidence of learning. However,

teachers are able to reflect on their best teaching methods and thereafter understand which method works best for other students.

Furthermore, Chapman (1993:201) further asserts that the multiple intelligence theory makes educators aware of different assessment strategies that allow students to show that they understand the information in unique ways. However, assessment alternatives include logs, journals, graphic organizers, observational checklists, video surplus, rubrics, and portfolios that enable students to demonstrate learning content in different ways.

Chapman (1993:200) categorized multiple intelligence assessments into the following:

- Strength self-checklist. This assessment allows learners to begin self-identity where their strengths are within different intelligence.
- Authentic assessment. This is an assessment which offers opportunities for learners with learning disabilities by allowing an alternative means of measuring growth and development.
- Miscue analysis. This allows teachers to focus specific and intensive instruction on an individual basis by identifying the need of the learner.

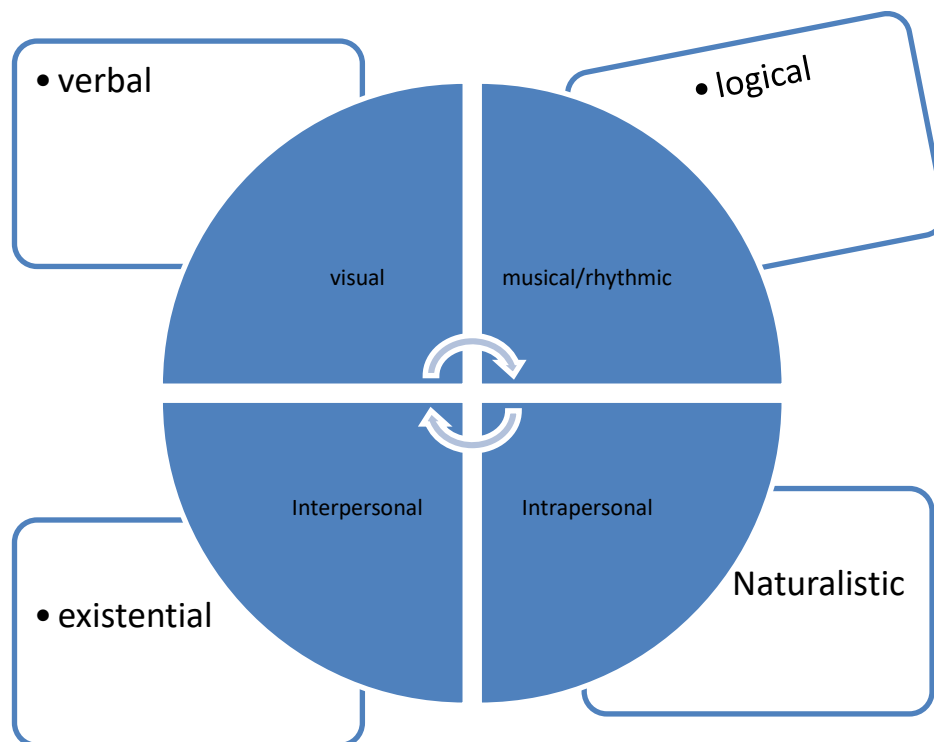
Bellanca et al. (1994:10) elude that classroom assessment in multiple intelligence theory works together with instruction. Teachers use various teaching strategies, authentic assessment and expanded curricula to provide creative and active learning that engages all learners in the construction of their own learning.

Multiple intelligence theory has evolved and has been embraced widely since its development in 1983 and perceives emotional intelligence as a range of interconnected abilities and talents Gardner (1993:30), which includes both interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence which deal with emotions. In addition to this, Stanford (2003:80) affirms that multiple intelligence theory suggests that children are equal, regardless of a quotient produced from extra intelligence academic areas or examinations in which they develop competence.

Henceforth, there are eight basic intelligences in all children which Stanford (2003:80) alludes as follows:

- **Verbal Intelligence:** This is intelligence for language abstract reasoning, symbolic thinking, conceptual, patterning, reading, and writing.
- **Logical-Mathematical Intelligence:** This is for the capacity to recognize patterns, working with numbers and the ability to see the connection between different things.
- **Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence:** This intelligence deals with the capacity to recognize the use of rhythmic and tonal patterns and sensitivity to sounds.
- **Interpersonal Intelligence:** It deals with the ability to cooperate and to communicate verbally and non-verbally with other people.
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence:** This is for internal self-aspects such as knowledge of feelings and emotions.
- **Naturalistic Intelligence:** The ability to recognize patterns in nature and to classify agents and understanding of different species.
- **Existential Intelligence:** This is the human response to be alive in all ways.

Figure 2.1 below shows a range of interconnected basis intelligence as shown in Stanford (2003:80).



**Figure 2.1: A Range of Interconnected Intelligences – the Eight Basic Intelligences (Stanford, 2003:80)**

Meanwhile, Stanford (2003:81) further asserts that Multiple intelligence has the following elements which need to be consisted of:

- Every child has all the eight intelligences
- All eight intelligences work in different ways in every child
- Some possess an extremely high level
- Some children only have the basic aspects of the intelligences. In addition to this, Gardener (1993:2) states that multiple intelligence theory suggests that individuals have natural talents that could be refined. Furthermore, multiple intelligence theory provides intrinsic motivation since it is based on the realization that students have different intelligences.

The theory of multiple intelligences has changed some beliefs about teaching and learning. Multiple intelligence theory provides students with a period of time in their schooling where they become experts, increasing their self-esteem (Kezar, 2001:1).

On the other hand, Gardener (1993:32) states that multiple intelligence classrooms focus on both intelligence and curriculum. Teachers also manage to create opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom. According to Zhou and Brown (2015:80), multiple intelligence theory utilizes aspects of cognitive development, psychology, anthropology, and sociology to expand the human intellect.

### **2.3.2 Attribution Theory**

According to Weiner (2018:1), attribution theory is a theory that supposes that people attempt to understand the behaviour of others by attributing feelings, beliefs, and intentions to them. Moreover, attribution theory is concerned with how individuals interpret events and how it relates to their thinking and behaviour. Weiner (2018:1) further indicates that attribution theory can be categorized into the following three processes:

- Observation of the person's behaviour.
- The person must believe that the behaviour was intentionally performed
- The person was forced by a situation to behave in a particular manner.

Weiner (1974:20) focuses his attribution theory on achievements. He believed that ability, task difficulty and effort are the most important factors that affect a person's achievements. Furthermore, Weiner (1974:21) classifies attribution into three dimensions, that is, the locus control and the stability dimension which captures causes of change over time or not.

Attribution theory is closely related to the concept of motivation. According to Weiner (2018:2), attribution theory has been widely applied in education and has a strong relationship with self-concept and achievement, it also determines reactions to success and failure. However, students with high self-esteem and high school achievements tend to attribute success to stability uncontrollable and internal factors such as ability, whereas they associate failure with internal unstable, uncontrollable factors such as difficult tasks, for example, students who experience repeated failure in reading are likely to see themselves as being less competent in reading. Similarly,

students with learning disabilities seem less likely than non-disabled peers to attribute failure to effort, unstable, controllable factors and attribute failure to ability, stable and uncontrollable factors (Weiner, 1980:382).

Attribution theory is used to explain the difference in motivation between high and low achievers. However, high achievers do not avoid a task, they approach it believing that success is based on ability and effort; on the other hand, low achievers avoid the tasks which are related to success as they believe that success is related to luck or to other factors beyond their control (Wener, 2018:3).

Chodkiewics and Boyle (2014:78) assert that attribution theory focuses on how thinking influences learning. The way in which people think of why they fail will definitely influence how they will learn new skills. Attribution theory has programs that target improving students' academic achievements and learning experiences through the promotion of positive thinking. On the other hand, Weiner (2010:1) states that attribution theory refers to the field of study that tries to investigate how low achievers arrive at answers to why they fail their exams while others have passed.

A great deal of researchers shows that the way in which children attribute causes to their success and failures in school has implications for the development of their academic self-concept (Lohbeck et al., 2017:1). In addition to this, Weiner (2010:558) asserts that attribution analysis that future successful actions depend on perceiving the causes of the past failures. Nonetheless, the most common causes of success and failure are aptitude ability, short and long-term efforts, characteristics of the task, characteristics of the teachers, intrinsic motivation mood and luck.

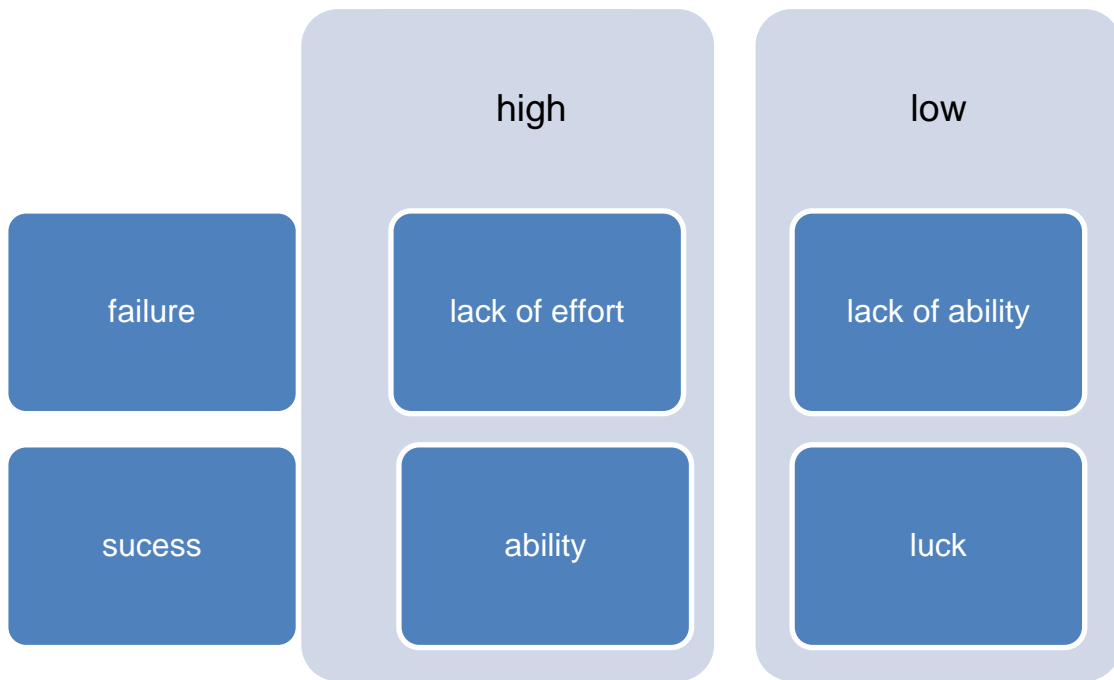
Furthermore, Weiner (2010:559) also indicates that students succeed because they are intelligent and also work hard whereas they fail because they are incompetent, and they do not exert more effort. Meanwhile, it is expected that children and their parents blame teachers and the school for failure. On the other hand, teachers shift the blame to both parents and their children. However, attribution of success to the self gives rise to pride in accomplishment and increments in self-esteem, hence, aspirations of success to ability both promote pride and positive views of the self.

In attribution theory, programs can be developed for attribution interventions made to students with low performance to improve school-related performance. Moreover, in education, attributional analysis is provided for teachers, pupils and parents' evaluation and the cause of good and poor performance (Kelly, 1967:192). On the other hand, Weiner (1980:562) states that attribution theory asserts that our attributions influence our emotional responses to a behaviour which in turn can change if they are influenced by a helping behaviour. However, helping is considered to be more likely if stability is perceived as low, generating optimism for change.

According to Weiner (2010:561), attribution of success to self gives rise to pride in accomplishment and increments in self-esteem. On the other hand, Kelly (1967):240) indicates that self-perception of failure due to insufficient efforts produces behaviour desperate from those observed when failure is perceived as caused by a lack of ability. However, the attributions made by the person determine the results in the future. There are four attribution factors that help determine future expectations for performance, i.e., task, difficulty, luck ability and effort. A person can attribute their performance as high or low.

Attribution theory is used to give managers with insight of the thorough cognitive and psychological mechanisms that influence motivation levels (Weiner, 1972:203).

Causes of failure and success as shown in Figure 2.2 below:



**Figure 2.2: Attributional Factors which Cause Failure and Success (Kelly, 1967:240)**

## 2.4 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY

The importance of having identified theoretical framework for a dissertation study is the ability to use it to support and build the methods used to collect data (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:21). In this study, two theoretical frameworks, that is, multiple intelligence theory and attribution theory and attribution theory are chosen as the theories that contribute to the development of this dissertation. The following theories that contribute to this study are discussed:

### 2.4.1 Multiple Intelligence Theory's Contribution to the Study

The theory of multiple intelligence theory is relevant to this study. The topic of this study is strengthening the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12. Progressed learners are learners who experience learning barriers. They cannot make it in an ordinary or traditional classroom where teachers are at the centre of learning (Chambell, 1997:16). However, learning is both a social and psychological process which enables learners to understand the balance and able to manage their

own learning and value their individual strengths. This will motivate them to learn which also leads to better achievement (Gardener, 1997:21). On the other hand, teachers will understand how students are intelligent and know those students with the potential for strong interpersonal intelligence in order to create an opportunity where strength can be fostered in others. In the meantime, the results of learners who are not capable will improve.

Multiple intelligence theory assists teachers to provide opportunities for authentic learning based on the needs, talents, and interests of learners. Learners become more actively involved in learning, hence their achievement is improved (Gardener, 1997:22). However multiple intelligence theory contributes to the increase in learning performance as it allows students to demonstrate and share their strengths building strengths and motivate them to be specialists which in turn lead to the increased self-esteem.

According to Campbell (1997:18), multiple intelligence theory can help learners and teachers to understand their abilities better. Gardener (1997:20) adds that multiple intelligence theory seeks to help learners to identify and develop their strengths, discovering more effective ways of teaching and learning. Meanwhile, Gardener (1980:29) states that multiple intelligence theory provides learners with an opportunity to learn through their strengths become more successful at learning all subjects and improve their basic skills which in turn help to strengthen their performance.

Gardener (1993:20) adds that multiple intelligence theory helps learners to build up confidence and manage to use their strengths to address their weaknesses. It motivates learners to find where their interest and strength lies and push their abilities further. According to the Policy regulation pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12 of the Department of Basic Education (2011:1), learners are to be progressed from Grade 11 to Grade 12 provided there is differentiated support in their next grade. In this regard, Gardener (1993:30) indicates that multiple intelligence theory is suitable for differentiated and individual learning. For this reason, multiple intelligence is relevant to this study. Moreover, progressed learners are learners who have learning barriers and should be given

extra and individual time. Gardener (1993:40) affirms that in multiple intelligence theory, teachers create opportunities to assist learners outside their classrooms. However, Zhou and Brown (2015:83) indicate that multiple intelligence theory allows educators to understand the different strengths and weaknesses of all learners in their classroom. In this regard, teachers will be able to identify the weaknesses progressed learners have and know how they can assist them.

Multiple intelligence theory will be very useful in the school curriculum for a typical child's development and for learners that are progressed from Grade 11 to 12. Multiple Intelligence Theory will be very helpful for individual with the developmental disability in their different learning styles.

#### **2.4.2 Attribution Theory's Contribution to the Study**

Since this study is about improving the performance of learners who are progressed to Grade 12 without meeting the pass requirements in Grade 11, attribution theory will be very helpful in that teachers will be able to communicate casual information to learners through giving help to learners who are underachievers (Weiner, 2010:560). In attribution theory, teachers believe that learners fail because of lack of studying and that this can be changed. This idea will assist teachers to motivate learners to study hard in order to improve their performance. Furthermore, learners who fail and are reprimanded and assisted for their failure will therefore develop efforts and have high ability. Attribution theory views the teacher as a person who has a contributing factor to learners' results (Weiner, 2010:560).

However, educators are the consequences of casual thinking on expectations, emotions, and behaviour of learners. They are the ones who can inspire learners to have the expectations of success in future. Henceforth, the expectancy of future success in achievement context is by casual beliefs about the cause of poor performance (Weiner, 2010:561). On the other hand, if learners feel that they are not supported, they develop a feeling of dropping out of school environment or lose hope. Meanwhile, ascription to changing factors provides hope that the future may differ from the past. Attribution theory allows teachers to focus their attention on the evaluation and identifying the cause of good and poor performance (Weiner,

2010:562). In this regard, the identified cause of poor performance will assist teachers to support learners with poor performance to improve.

Attribution theory analysts believe in increasing school motivation by improving learner achievement which eliminates school dropout (Weiner, 2010:263). This idea will contribute to this study of strengthening the performance of progressed learners. The main purpose of progressing learners is to eliminate school dropouts. According to DBE (2011:1) the motive behind the policy on learner progression is that of reducing the number of learners who leave school without completing Grade 12 and increase the number of learners who stay in school until completion of degree school retention.

As indicated by Kelly (1967:192) there are programs that can be developed in attribution theories for interventions that can be done for students with low performance to help them improve. In this study, progressed learners are learners with low performance who require intervention strategies that can be employed to help them perform better in Grade 12. In addition to this, (Weiner, 2010:561) indicates that programs that are designed in attribution theory are effective in improving learner performance and decreasing dropout rates because expectations of success increased.

Moreover, the attribution interventions are successful in providing promising tools to improve school-related performance. However, progressed learners need the support of both parents and teachers to enable them to improve their performance. According to DBE (2012:1), a learner who is progressed from Grade 11 to Grade 12 requires differentiated academic support that will be provided by the school to the learner which must be explained to the learner's parents or guardian. Furthermore, parents also need to offer a specialized support to their children to supplement the academic support provided by the school.

In this regard, attribution theory contributes a lot to this study because parents, learners and teachers focus much attention on the causes of poor performance with the intention of supporting learners to improve their performance (Weiner, 2010:562).

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

The theory of multiple intelligence and attribution theory were outlined in detail and the way in which they contribute to this study. These theories will enhance the differentiated support that need to be given to progressed learners in their respective schools. Parents on the other hand will focus their attention on supporting their children at home to help improve their performance. The strength of both these two theories is that both of them focus on the provision of resources and outlining the intervention strategies that can be used in strengthening progressed learners' results. However, lack of relevant resources and the reluctance in the implementation of intervention strategies in most schools in the country will limit the use of these theories. Despite their limitations, these theories are nevertheless found to be relevant and applicable to the study of strengthening the performance of progressed learners who are in Grade 12. Moreover, these theories were useful to the organizing and the findings of this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the literature review on progressed learners in the South African context, paying special attention to the promotion and progression in the Further Education and Training (FET) band. However, the following subtopics will be examined in this chapter: The requirements of progressed learners in terms of Acts and policies, the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12, challenges encountered in schools assisting progressed learners and the strategies to ameliorate the low performance of progressed learners. Furthermore, a glimpse discussion of progression policy in international countries will be given.

#### 3.2 PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN INTERNATIONAL COUNTRIES

The notion of progressing learners who failed a grade is not new in the South African school system. It is also practiced internationally in advanced countries such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Korea, and the United Kingdom (Department of Basic Education, 2017:1) and also developing countries. These countries are doing very well in learner progression, which entails passing learners along from grade to grade with their peers even if they have not satisfied academic requirements (Brophy, 2006:29). However, Scott, Dreyer and Venter (2015:93) indicate that countries like Japan, Denmark, Sweden and Korea have very strong remedial systems in place to support all learners who are promoted without meeting the requirements.

**In the United Kingdom:** The promotion of learners who have not achieved academically is commonly known as social promotions, which means the practice of promoting a student from one grade to another according to their age group instead of academic achievements (Knight, 2014:8).

**USA:** According to the United States Department of Education (2001:1) social promotion is also known as No Child is Left Behind Act (NCLB). However, schools across the United States nation implemented programs to assist learners in their endeavors in an effort to meet the benchmarks established by NCLB. Knight (2014:8) also indicates that there are after-school programs with 504 plans and Individual Education Programme (IEP) which are established to support learners. The rationale behind NCLB is to address the dropout rate that was growing high. Moreover, Brophy (2006:29) indicates that social promotion was implemented in the United States in order to keep learners with their age peers to protect their self-esteem and social adjustment.

**Sweden:** Learners who did not receive a pass in their subjects are referred to as learners who need individual attention and are therefore offered individual programs in upper secondary school studies, where they can supplement a missing grade. (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2005:16). The schools in Sweden do not force learners to repeat a grade; however, learners have the right to choose to repeat a grade. In this regard, Brophy (2006:28) adds that all students with significant difficulties are provided with the necessary educational support in Sweden.

**Japan:** Promotion in public schools is automatic. Learners do not hold back. According to Fan (2020:155), holding learners who did not pass a grade for the first time, allowing them to do the same thing again; separating them from their peers is a way of delaying learners to enter the workforce. In this regard, learners are more likely to drop out than do extra years of school. Japanese education focus on keeping learners with their friends, and with their classmates they have known since the first grade in their correct group rather than separating them from their social group (Fan, 2020:155). In this regard, learners are passed into the next grade level without meeting grade level requirements to avoid learners slacking off, acting up and dropping out. However, better outcomes are achieved by passing them on to the grade they are not prepared for and giving them individual support (Fan, 2020:156).

**Uganda:** Automatic promotion refers to the practice of allowing students to advance from one class to the next regardless of their academic achievement (Brophy, 2006:3). The automatic policy was developed in the 1930s and was adopted and implemented in Uganda in 2005. It is used as a strategy to improve internal efficiency, learner personal development, and educational quality in Ugandan schools. According to Brophy (2006:2), the policy of automatic promotion is only implemented in primary schools where the rate of repetition and dropout is extremely high. Grade repetition, on the other hand, is thought to have a negative impact on students' self-esteem and motivation. The rationale for implementing automatic promotion was to address the issues caused by grade repetition, which would now serve as an alternative (Brophy, 2006:25).

### **3.3 PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

Since 1994, education reform has been a top priority in South Africa, and it has played a critical role in redressing apartheid's injustices (Ischinger, 2008:80). Since 1996, the new government has been working to transform and democratize education in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, and human rights. Due to curriculum transformation, the South African government began to adopt and implement educational policies in the education system with the goal of resolving past challenges (Ischinger, 2008:81). The South African Department of Education (DoE), now known as the Department of Basic Education (DBE), implemented a policy in 1998 that limited grade repetition to once within a phase (Department of Education, 1998:5). Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education (2016:1) states that a learner may only be retained once in the Further Education Training (FET) band (Grade 10-12) to prevent the learner from spending too much time in school.

more than four years in a phase. The policy on progression has been applicable to the General Education and Training band (GET) band since the Curriculum 2005 and has been applied to the Further Education Training (FET) band since 2013. According to Mogale and Modipane (2021:1), the policy on learner progression was introduced by the Department of Basic Education and was fully implemented in South African schools in 2015.

This policy was implemented with the primary objective of reducing the high dropout rate and maximizing school retention. Brophy (2006:420) explains that the intent of learner progression policy was to provide learners with the opportunity to advance to the next grade and additional support, as opposed to forcing them to repeatedly repeat a grade. The purpose of the policy on learner progression, according to Scott, Dreyer, and Venter (2015:89), is to reduce the number of learners who drop out of school as a result of repeating a grade multiple time. Moreover, according to the Department of Education (1998:3), students should progress with their age cohort. Repetition of grades always results in a substantial increase in learning achievement and has the opposite effect. The standard duration for repetition is one year. Multiple repetitions are unacceptable. In addition, the Eastern Cape Department of Education (2017:4) indicates that the rationale for implementing the policy on learner progression was to ensure its enforceability and consistent application in the management of the high dropout rate and the reduction in the number of learners in the FET band, ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to obtain an exit qualification such as the National Senior Certificate.

Moreover, the Department of Education (1998:4) indicates that the purposes of the progression of learners were to minimize unnecessary school dropouts so that learners get the opportunity to achieve the National Senior Certificate qualifications, to enable learners who are retained the previous year to move with their age cohort, to reduce large numbers of learners who were dropping out of the school setting before they reach Grade 12, to prevent learners from staying in a phase for more than four years and also to comply with paragraph 31 of the admission policy for public ordinary schools which says “In principle, learners should progress with their age cohort. Repetition of grades seldom results in significant increases in learning attainment and frequently has the opposite result. The norm for repetition is one year per school phase. Multiple repetitions in one grade are not permissible”. However in international countries such as United States of America and Europe, the policy of learner progression is commonly known as social promotion which refers to as the practice of promoting students from one grade to another on the basis of age rather than their academic achievement (Knight, 2014:8). In Japan the policy on learner progression is called automatic promotion. The rationale for the implementation of automatic promotion in Japan was to avoid separating learners with their friends or

peers, because keeping the learners in the same grade with their classmates they have known since the first grade in their correct age group is important (Fan, 2020:155). The researcher's prediction is that the policy on learner progression was adopted in other international countries which are doing it very well. However, the method of implementation in South Africa is challenging. In this regard policy implementers in South Africa need to follow the way in which the policy on learner progression is done in countries which are doing this well.

### **3.3.1 Promotion Requirements in the FET Band (Grade 10 - 12)**

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:29), the duration of the Further Education and Training band is three years. Meanwhile, a learner who is in Grade 10 has to do seven subjects, four of which are mandatory: home language, First Additional Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation. However, a learner must select three more disciplines from Accounting, Agricultural Sciences, Business Studies, Dramatic Arts, Economics, Engineering and Graphic, Geography, History, Consumer Studies, Information Technology, Life Science, Music, Physical Sciences and Religious Studies.

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:32), learners in Grades 10, 11, and 12 will be promoted to the next grade if they successfully complete the School Based Assessment (SBA) tasks, which include practical tasks in subjects such as Life Orientation, Consumer Studies, Information Technology, oral assessment in Languages, and the requirements of the final year examination as outlined in the Department of Basic Education (2012:38) as follows:

- Home language pass rate of 40%
- Pass Additional Language I with a 40%
- Pass Math with a 40% grade
- Pass three more courses with a minimum score of 30 percent, providing the School-Based Assessment is submitted in the areas given.
- Earn a level between 0 and 29 percent in only one subject.

In secondary schools, the notion of grade adjustment is not implemented until the ninth grade. Mark adjustment must be provided to learners who have achieved a mark within 5% of the pass requirements for specific courses, which can result in the learner meeting the overall pass standards outlined in the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2015:2). Moreover, there is a special condonation in Mathematics for learners in the Senior Phase who fail to achieve a level 3 (40%) if they achieve a minimum of 20%, which also applies in schools that may have dropped two subjects in the Senior Phase. This means that learners who pass all other subjects but fail Mathematics with a minimum of 20% were condoned to the next grade (DBE, 2015:3). In the Further Education and Training, however, just learner growth is utilized.

### **3.3.2 Progression Requirements in the FET Band**

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:38), a learner who does not satisfy the promotion standards may advance from Grade 10 to Grade 11 or Grade 11 to Grade 12. However, students who fail a second time must not automatically advance to the following grade: they must have failed to meet the promotion standards of either Grade 10 or Grade 11 and must have repeated either Grade 10 or Grade 11. In addition, requirements such as passing the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), passing at least three (3) of the seven subjects, including Life Orientation, regular school attendance without absenteeism of more than 20 days without a valid reason, and administering of School Based Assessment (SBA) requirements for all subjects offered in the Further Education and Training (FET) band, including the subjects that the learner has not achieved. All students who failed to satisfy these standards were not expected to advance to the following grade.

### **3.3.3 Procedures to be followed in Learner Progression in the FET Band**

In the Further Education and Training (FET) band, certain criteria must be followed to determine if a student should be kept or advanced to the following grade (Department of Basic Education, 2012:39). If a learner qualifies, there are processes

that must be followed to ensure that everyone is consulted before a decision is made on learner progression.

Department of Basic Education (2012:40) recommends that it is essential for the school to convene a special meeting of relevant subject educators to determine whether or not each learner who has failed to achieve the standards for promotion more than once in Grade 10 or 11 should be maintained. However, the school administrator and SMT members should have periodically notified the parents or guardians of the students during the year of their poor performance. On the learner's side, there should be proof that the learner responded favorably to all interventions offered by the school to enhance learner performance. Schools that were to promote students from one grade to the next were responsible for determining if the student attended school regularly.

Moreover, it was the responsibility of the principal and the educators to check learners to see if they have done all the school tasks that were prescribed for a particular year.

According to the Eastern Cape Department of Education (2017:6), each learner's case must be reviewed holistically, including evidence from the subject educators throughout the year. The principal will next counsel the parents based on the evidence.

The Department of Basic Education (2012:40) requires the school to speak with the parent or guardian of a learner who should be kept in the present grade. The objective of the meeting is to explain the school's decision to the parent or guardian in a manner that is easily understood. Nonetheless, the School Management Team should conduct the meeting (SMT). During the meeting between the school and the parents or guardians of the learner, the learner and parent or guardian must be explicitly informed of the requirements for retention. The SMT must present sufficient information and then explain the learner's performance with supporting evidence.

Parents have to be told the advantage of retaining the learner at the current grade, including the option of changing subjects and its implications. The school also needs to assure the parents about the support they will give to learners if they progress to the next grade. The meeting should end with a signed agreement between the parents and the school that they will join together to assist the learner in the next grade.

The decision reached at the meeting between the SMT, and the parent/guardian must be reflected on the learner's report card. If the is retained, this must be confirmed in writing by the parent. However, the parent's decision should be based on substantive evidence of the learner's holistic performance at the school and through a consultative process involving the learner, parent and teachers (Eastern Cape Department of Education, 2017:8). If the parent disagrees with the learner's retention, the learner must advance to the following grade. However, the learner's report card must indicate that he or she has advanced to the next grade despite not meeting the promotion standards for the current school year. The conditions for progressing the learner must be fully discussed and agreed upon by the school, and the parent/ guardian and they should include conditions which are: the option for the learner to change subjects and the implications of the subject changes must be clearly explained, the differentiated support that the school will offer which also includes the supplementary interventions of the parent/guardian and the partnership contract stipulating the collaborated support should be completed and signed by both parties.

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:41), a parent/guardian has the right to appeal the final decision taken by the school to retain or progress a learner. Those who appeal to the final decision must submit a written request not later than three (3) days after the official opening of the schools, to the principal specifying the reasons why the progression or retention decision should be overruled. Moreover, within fourteen days of receiving a request to appeal, the Head of the Department or his/her designer shall make a final determination in this regard. It is the responsibility of the parent as the appealing party to show why the retention or progression should be overruled. Despite the requirements of learner progression, the Department of Basic Education (2012:40) states that the

progression of learners in Grades 10-12 does not guarantee the final certification of a learner in Grade 12. That learner needs to comply with the certification requirements as stipulated in the promotion requirements in order to obtain a National Senior Certificate.

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:38) learners who are progressed from Grades 10 or 11 need differentiated support that must be provided by the school and be supplemented by the parent/guardian of the learner. In support of this, the Department of Basic Education (2014:vii) indicates that every learner needs support, but some learners, for whatever reason, may require additional support for learning. Additional support arises from any factor that causes a barrier to learning. Eastern Cape Department of Education (2017:8) indicates that the responsibility of curriculum support to be given to progressed learners should be done at the district level by the DBST, at the school level by SBST and by the parents or guardians of the learners at home. The DBST was expected to keep a database or a register of progressed learners which reflects the subjects that caused a learner to fail. Furthermore, the district had to support schools to identify core content per subject that put progressed learners at risk, identifying core content per subject that progressed learners should master as part of the remedial plan, and subject advisors to assist teachers in crafting intervention strategies and improvement plans as per subject specifics and to offer ongoing training to schools and teaches and teachers on teaching communication and social behavioral factors.

On the other hand, the school also needs to compile a list of all progressed learners, monitor and support progressed learners, develop and implement a remedial program to support all learners that they have progressed for example, study guides extra classes during holidays or weekends and revision of the previous question and memoranda, offer regular meetings with progressed learners' parents to address progress and challenges, inform parents of the identified learners' performance and the action to improve performance, ensure that there is regular testing and re-testing of subjects content areas that challenge learners, identify core content per subject that progressed learners should master as part of the remedial plan and to offer workshops for parents of identified learners to support teaching and learning (DBE, 2012:38).

According to DBE (2012:39), parents are also responsible for differentiated support to their children who have progressed to the next grade. Their responsibilities are to monitor and control learner's tasks, homework, preparation for projects and readiness for tests and examinations, to attend all meetings as requested by the School Management Teams, to visit the school regularly to enquire about the progress of their children, to arrange additional tuition in identified subjects based on the performance of the learner, to ensure that learners complete the remedial programs successfully.

In Japan there are no requirements set for automatic promotion; students are passed into the next grade level without meeting grade level requirements. Learners who did not pass are never held back. However, allowing learners to repeat a grade is a delay to learners to enter a working environment in Japan. Although there are no requirements for promoting learners who failed, students who are passed are given support to assist them in their difficulties (Boerke, 2008:1).

In Sweden, the school does not force a learner who failed to repeat the grade. Therefore, a learner has the right to choose to repeat a grade. In this regard, all students with significant difficulties are provided with the necessary educational support (Swedish National Agency for Education (2005:16). Despite the requirements set for learner progression in South Africa, poor understanding of this policy due to inadequate training forced many schools to progress learners who did not satisfy the set requirements of progressing learners who did not pass.

### **3.4 THE PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12**

According to Leepo (2015:61), there were a large number of progressed learners in South African schools in 2014. In 2015 and 2016, the performance of advanced students led to the drop in national Grade 12 scores. Mogale and Modipano (2021:1) contend that the 2013 implementation of the progression strategy contributed to a decline in Grade 12 performance. However, the techniques utilized throughout the execution of the policy on learner progression had an effect on the performance of learners who were progressed and the total results for Grade 12. In

2015, a total of 65671 advanced learners enrolled in the National Senior Certificate, of which 22060 passed, or 37.6%.

Leepo (2015:179) adds that in the Free State province, the 2015 results were negatively impacted by the performance of progressed learners. In 2014, the Free State Department of Basic Education has 3,913 12th graders with advanced standing. This represented 14.8% of the total number of learners that sat for the National Senior Certificate examination at the conclusion of the year. The minister of basic education claimed that 50.9% of these students failed the National Senior Certificate. This demonstrates that the development of students substantially contributed to the poor quality of outcomes in the province. In addition, the Department of Basic Education (2017:1) reports that the 2015 results were particularly low due to the number of students who advanced from Grade 11 to Grade 12 without satisfying the standards for promotion. In addition, the Department of Basic Education (2006:1) reports that the Further Education and Training band in Grade 12 in 2015 had the highest proportion of advanced learners since the program was adopted in 2013. Of the 799306 applicants for the Matriculation examination, 65 671 enrolled as progressed learners and 58 656 were able to write the final exam. 22 060 passed (37.6%), whereas 7 015 did not. In this regard, 3,297 students earned bachelor's degrees, 8,473 students earned diplomas, and 10,264 students earned higher certificates.

Nevertheless, Leepo (2015:170) argues that these results suggest that grade progression in South African schools is poorly linked to actual ability. More importantly, these results point to a system that may be failing a certain group of South African learners. Moreover, Leepo (2015:171) suggests that the policy of progressing learners may require revising, as learners who do not meet the requirement for progressing along the academic pathway may be pushed into the technical and vocational education streams.

The Department of Basic Education (2017:1) reports that in 2015, more than 100,000 progressed learners sat the final examination in the province of Gauteng. Nevertheless, their performance had a substantial effect on the National Senior

Certificate (NSC) pass rate. The overall performance of 2015 results were 70.7% including progressed learners.

DBE (2016:2) outlines the performance of learners who wrote Grade 12 examinations in provinces, districts and the circuit in South Africa as follows:

### 3.4.1 2015 Grade 12 Results of Progressed Learners per Province

Since the introduction of progression policy in the FET in 2013, 2015 Grade 12 results dropped in South African schools due to progressed learners (Mogale & Madipane (2021:2). However, the following is a record of the performance of progressed learners per province:

- North West had the highest percentage pass rate of progressed learners at 59, 9%.
- In 2014, the Free State Department of Basic Education had 3,913 progressed learners in Grade 12. This represented 14.8% of the total number of learners that sat for the National Senior Certificate examination at the conclusion of the year (DBE, 2016:2). According to reports, 50.9% of these learners did not pass the National Senior Certificate. This is evidence that the progression requirement significantly contributes to the low quality of results in the province and contributed to the 4.6% decline in the Free State's overall pass rate.
- KwaZulu Natal had 47%
- Eastern Cape had 22.4%, whereas
- Limpopo had 26.8%, as seen in the table below:

**Table 3.1: Limpopo Grade 12 2015 Progressed Learners' Results**

Total Number of Progressed Learners	Number Wrote	Number Passed	% Passed
13 227	13 022	3 492	26.8%

Of these results, progressed learners had 1 081 distinctions, which range from 40 in Mathematics, 30 in Physical Science and 31 in Accounting.

The following provinces achieved below 70% with progressed learners included:

- KwaZulu Natal had 162 658 candidates. Of this huge number, the province achieved 60.7%. There is a decline of 9% from 2014.
- Eastern Cape had 87 090 candidates and achieved 56.8%. There is a decline of 8.6% from 2014.
- Limpopo had 101 575 candidates and achieved 65.9% down from 72.4% in 2014.
- Northern Cape had 11 623 candidates and achieved 69.4% down from 76.4% in 2014. There is a decline of 7%.

However, Mpumalanga is the only province which achieved 78%, and 6% including progressed learners. This percentage is almost the same as the pass rate as that of 2014. The number of candidates was 54 980 (DBE, 2016:3).

The following provinces achieved above 80% with progressed learners included in 2015 Grade 12 results (DBE, 2016:4) as indicated in the table below:

**Table 3.2: 2015 Top Performing Provinces in Grade 12 Results Including Progressed Learners**

Province	No. Wrote	% Achieved
Western Cape	53721	84,7%
Gauteng	108442	84,2%
North West	31161	81,6%

### 3.4.2 2015 Grade 12 Results per District

According to DBE (2016:8), there are 81 districts in South Africa. Of these 81 districts, 59 attained a pass rate of 60% and above. 29 districts achieved 80% and

above. The districts and their performance which include progressed learners are indicated in the following table:

**Figure.3.3: 2015 Grade 12 Results per District, Including Progressed Learners**

Province	District	% Achieved
Gauteng	Sedibeng East	90.4%
Gauteng	Gauteng West	90.2%
Western Cape	Overberg	89.7%
Western Cape	West Coast	88.9%
Western Cape	Cape Town Metropole Central	87.6%
Gauteng	Johannesburg South	87.6%
Gauteng	Ekurhuleni North	86.8%
Gauteng	Tshwane South	86.8%
Gauteng	Johannesburg West	86.7%
North West	Bojanana	85.3%
Eastern Cape	Cradock	71.6%
KwaZulu Natal	Umlazi	72.6%
Limpopo	Vhembe	74.7%
Northern Cape	Namaqua	76.5%
Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	82.4%

Furthermore, DBE (2016:8) indicates that eight districts performed below 50%. Seven of those districts are in the Eastern Cape and one is in KwaZulu Natal.

### 3.4.3 2015 Grade 12 Results per Circuits

DBE (2016:8) indicates that all South African circuits are expected to perform at 60%. However, in 2015, there was an increase in the number of circuits that did not perform due to progressed learners, that is, they performed below 60%. Moreover,

South African Government (2015:1) summarizes the performance of circuits in Limpopo Province as follows:

**Table 3.4: Comparison of 2014 and 2015 Grade 12 Results per Circuit in Limpopo Province**

Districts	No of Circuits	2014 Performing Circuits	2014 Underperforming Circuits	2015 Performing Circuits	2015 Underperforming Circuits
Capricorn	32	29	3	23	9
Sekhukhune	33	20	13	11	22
Mopani	24	23	1	16	8
Vhembe	27	27	0	26	1
Waterberg	18	14	4	8	10
<b>Province</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>50</b>

Leepo (2015:179) argues the implementation of the policy of learner progression caused the decline of the Grade 12 results, coupled with insufficient support provided to some of the learners in other provinces. In 2016, the Department of Basic Education revised the policy on learner progression and came up with stringent measures that must be met before learners can be progressed within the FET band.

#### **3.4.4 Multiple Examination Opportunities**

Due to the negative impact of progressed learners on Grade 12 results, the Department of Basic Education suggested a way of supporting progressed learners with the aim of ameliorating their achievement. Some of these progressed learners were not coping with the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) when they were to register for all seven subjects (DBE, 2016:1). In addition, DBE (2017:1) states that these learners struggle based on their performance throughout the year.

The Department of Education introduced the Policy on Multiple Examination Opportunities (MEO) to mitigate the struggle of progressed learners. They were allowed to write the final examination in two parts. This implies that the learner writes a minimum of three subjects (excluding Life Orientation) in the November examination sitting and the remaining subjects in the June examination the following Year.

However, the number of subjects the learner writes in November will be determined by the learner's performance in the preparatory examination. All schools had to follow specific criteria to ensure uniformity in the application of Multiple Examination Opportunity. The learner must: be a progressed learner, have completed all his /her School Based Assessment (SBA) requirements in all seven subjects, have attended school regularly, have written the preparatory examination, and have failed a minimum of three subjects. According to DBE (2016:2), all progressed learners who were given chance to modularize their examination need to be supported by both the district and their schools. In support of these learners, the district was expected to do the following:

- Make sure that all schools hold meetings with the parents of progressed learners.
- Tag progressed learners in the system.
- Establish a database of all learners who opted for modularized examination.
- Track the performance of all progressed learners every quarter.
- Report the progress of progressed learners to the province on a quarterly basis.

On the other hand, DBE (2016:2) outlines the following responsibilities of schools:

- Helping progressed learners to register and write their first modularized examination sitting.
- Advising progressed learners and their parents of the opportunity to modularize their NSC examinations.
- Tracking the performance of progressed learners using the South African Schools Administration and Management System (SASAMS).

- Making sure that progressed learners are treated in the same manner as other learners in the school.
- Submitting reports on progressed learners' progress to the district every quarter.
- Guiding progressed learners together with their parents on the choice of subjects for modulation after trial examination.
- Ensuring that progress learners have completed and submitted their School Based Assessment (SBA) in all seven subjects.

However, South African Government News Agency (2017:1) argues that the Department of Basic Education announced in 2019 that it will no longer offer Multiple Examination Opportunity (MEO) to progressed learners in 2020. The Department of Basic Education realized that some schools were using Multiple Examination Opportunities to pick out learners from school, instead of identifying them and supporting them. According to Mogale and Modipane (2021:7), parents believed that Multiple Examination Opportunity is an instrument that is used to demotivate learners and make them lose interest in sitting for the next examination in the following year. In the meantime, the department presents learners with an opportunity to apply to write exams in an effort to improve results. Learners are also allowed to bridge courses which allow them to upgrade their marks for specific subjects.

Furthermore, South African Government News Agency (2017:1) indicates that the Department of Basic Education offers Early Childhood Development as its next step to enhance the achievement rates and decrease the dropout rate that was created by Multiple Examination Opportunities in some schools. Another opportunity the Department of Basic Education wants to offer to enhance the success rate and decrease the drop-out rate is the implementation of Robotics which the DBE believes will improve creativity, critical thinking and design thinking.

In addition, South African Government News Agency (2017:2) states that learners who fail Grade 12 can do supplementary examinations later in the year or either return to school to repeat Grade 12 or go to another school to complete Grade 12 to

improve their results so that they can get NSC certificates. They can also complete matric via distance learning.

In Sweden, students who did not pass a grade and opted not to repeat such grade were experiencing difficulties in the upper secondary school studies where they were moved to. Their performance was very poor which forced the Swedish Department of Education to refer them to the individual program in the upper secondary school where they can supplement a missing grade (National Assessment in Sweden, 2005:16).

From the literature reviewed above, it can be seen that the performance of progressed learners needs special attention in South Africa. Within the framework of the South African school system, the Department of Basic Education needs to devise strategies that would allow for an improvement in the level of help provided to learners who have progressed.

### **3.5 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN SCHOOLS ASSISTING PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12**

South Africa has been through a number of different educational policies since the end of apartheid (Spren & Valley, 2010:442). Henceforth, the main problem with policies is that policymakers have not taken into consideration day to day functionality of the school. Policymakers seem to have looked at the success rate of the policy from other countries and overlooked how the circumstances and the contexts are different in South Africa (Spren & Valley, 2010:442).

Due to the absence of a defined structure and management strategy, the policy on learner progression in secondary schools is fraught with obstacles and consequences for learner performance. Although the policy explicitly says that learners who fail a phase will be progressed, they are not provided the required support to enable them to meet the demands of a new grade (Munje & Maarman, 2016:195).

As a consequence of the ineffective implementation of the policy on learner progression, the Grade 12 results may continue to decline, while more students

remain in the education system. Such students are eventually more likely to contribute to school dropout rates. This study will help the Department of Basic Education implement some of the ideas and recommendations to strengthen learner progression policies.

### **3.5.1 Challenges Encountered by School Management Teams (SMT)**

The Department of Basic Education (2012:40) says the Schools Management Team has the responsibility of implementing the policy of learner progression in their schools. They also have to follow all consultative processes to ensure that all people are involved in order to make an informed decision. Prinsloo (2003:189) adds that the responsibility of implementing, monitoring and evaluating the policy on learner progression was assigned to the School Management Teams. However, the Department of Basic Education did not provide standardized strategies, controlling and checking mechanisms to be followed during the implementation procedure. In this regard, schools are left on their own to come up with their own unique ways, thus there were conflicting and contradicting approaches by individual schools (Munje & Maarman, 2016:196).

According to Munje and Maarman (2016:195), the policy on learner progression does not specify how the implementation chain functions in terms of roles, monitoring, and assessment of functioning in specific schools.

Leepo (2015:166) states that the Schools Management Teams were anticipated to develop their own intervention strategies to support progressed learners in their respective schools. Meanwhile, some School Management Teams were faced with overcrowded classrooms which prevented them from implanting their intervention strategies effectively. In addition to this, Mogale and Modipane (2021:7) indicate that some secondary schools do not offer curriculum support and monitoring support due to a large number of learners in the classroom coupled with a lack of resources.

According to George (2019:73), the School Management Teams were expected to take their own contexts and realities into account. However, the absence of effective

interventions targeted at progressed learners resulted in generic, homogeneous approaches which ineffectively address progressed learners' needs.

### **3.5.2 Teachers' Challenges**

The Department of Basic Education (2012:50) says that educators are responsible for implementing assistance measures to alleviate the learning difficulties of progressed learners. However, Munje and Maarman (2015:196) say that teachers have difficulties when attempting to help advanced students. Before beginning the curriculum for the current grade, they struggle to complete programs from the previous grade. Educators focus on bringing struggling students to comprehension and disregard the required curriculum. Educators also struggle with a lack of monitoring and evaluation skills and communication breakdown. Due to the quantity of students in their class with distinct requirements that must be handled, they disregard the entire procedure (Munje & Maarman, 2020:197).

On the other hand, according to Leepo (2015:179), educators are unable to give specialized help due to time constraints and the volume of work they had to do in Grade 12. They are prevented from giving learners the support they deserve because of comments that are indicated in the learner's report card, which do not clearly indicate the kind of support the learner needs. Brahmbhatt (2020:65) points out that the large classroom sizes in some schools make it difficult for educators to do differentiation support and individual attention.

Moreover, many teachers are not qualified or trained to deal with learners with learning barriers. Teachers have a lot of content to cover for the current year, which makes it impossible for them to focus on progressed learners (Brahmbhatt, 2020:64). Some educators feel that support measures provided by the school and the Department of Basic Education had limited positive effect. They criticized the quality of intervention provided by the school, indicating that they have little effect on improving the performance of learners (George, 2019:60).

The labeling of progressed learners caused educators to underestimate the potential of progressed learners in their classrooms. Some educators focus on ascribed

labels rather than the learners' actual abilities (George, 2019:68). In this regard, educators evaluate learners according to their learning difficulty rather than individual potential. They are unable to determine the cause of underperforming in progressed learners and do not have knowledge of specific interventions.

and support measures that should be implemented in relation to the identified learner needs. In this regard, they found it difficult to support progressed learners, hence describing it as frustrating and non-responsive (George, 2019:69).

Furthermore, George (2019:42) indicates that educators raised a concern about the poor attendance of progressed learners to the extra lessons that they try to offer. Some of the educators are not committed to extra programs. They often go late or do not go at all. George (2019:43) states that educators view supporting progressed learners as frustrating. Furthermore, Brambahatt (2020:60) summarizes the challenges that teachers face when they support progressed learners as follows:

- Limited time available to support progressed learners.
- Teachers not trained to deal with progressed learners.
- Overcrowded classrooms.
- Too much workload.
- Lack of discipline in learners.
- Extensive content coverage.
- Poor parental support.
- Language barrier.

### **3.5.3 Learners' Challenges**

According to Brambhatt (2020:64), progressed learners tend to be disruptive in class and deprive other learners of valuable teaching and learning time. Some progressed learners cause disciplinary problems in the class which prevent teachers from focusing on academic issues. Moreover, some progressed learners lose interest since they feel there is no point in working hard because they would pass at the end of the year anyhow (Brambhatt, 2020:65). In addition, Scotte, Dreyer and Venter

(2015:93) imply that learners who have been automatically advanced are not motivated to work since they know they will be advanced. Students who know they will advance at the end of the year will not strain themselves to the required degree. They will inevitably lose concentration and demonstrate disobedient conduct, which will have a bad influence on their performance (Leepo, 2015:61).

Leepo (2015:187) notes that advanced students face discipline issues since they fail to comprehend academic information. Some of them do not even attend the specified additional lessons.

In addition, Leepo (2015:187) argues that progressed learners provide a unique challenge to educators and School Management Teams in Grade 12. Due to a lack of core abilities, learners face knowledge gaps all the way up to Grade 12. According to Brahmbhatt (2020:66), advanced students frequently exhibit low work ethic. They deny assistance and do not finish the activities. The majority of them make little attempt to enhance their performance. Even academically talented students place less focus on academics when they are aware of the progressed policy.

Moreover, progressed learners lack attention and academic assistance in school. They are not targeted for intervention strategies to try and address the problem areas that led to repetition of the previous grade (George, 2019:42). Many of the progressed learners usually absent themselves from school without a valid reason, hence educators expect them to be at school and show their efforts at all times. In this regard, the relationship between learners and educators becomes negative.

On the other hand, George (2019:50) indicates that learners are faced with the challenge of family dynamics which negatively affect them. They are critical of the support measures which were ineffective due to the way the intervention had been implemented. Progressed learners are not provided with adequate support structures in their academic competencies. Some educators fail to formalize support measures for progressed learners through remedial lessons and exercises that are structured and target the specific needs of a learner (George, 2019:56). Henceforth,

negative peer pressure and engagement in substance abuse also have a negative impact on learners' performance.

### **3.5.4 Poor Parental Involvement**

The Department of Basic Education (2012:50) indicates that the policy of learner progression assigns parents with the responsibility of controlling and monitoring learners' tasks, readiness for formal tasks, school attendance, arranging extra tuition in subjects where possible, ensuring that their children complete all assigned School Based Tasks and visiting the school to obtain information on the progress of their children. George (2019:49) adds that the family has to play a major role in making sure that their children are successful in their progressed years. They are to play a supportive role and show an interest in their children's academic progress.

Nevertheless, some parents fail to support their children. They do not communicate with the school to get an understanding of the challenges their children face at school. Learners feel that their parents had insufficient contact with the school to discuss their performance or to get an understanding of their current educational requirements and the criteria on how to provide support. In addition to this, Brahmbhatt (2020:65) argues that a lot of learners come from impoverished families with little or no parental involvement, and nobody is able to monitor homework or assist them with learning tasks, some are in denial, they do not accept that their children need extra support (Brahmbhatt, 2020:65).

Parental involvement is minimal. Progressed learners lack parental support. However, the absence of parental support led to progressed learners believing that no one cares about them. If they feel that no one is helping them, they are definitely demoralized. Some educators feel that parents expect the school to do an extraordinary job to pass their children. Parents never visit schools to check on the progress of their children (George, 2019:50). In this regard, George (2019:51) adds that many parents fail to offer the required support because they are illiterate. Parents who are illiterate do nothing about schoolwork. However, parents rely on educators to provide the requisite support to progressed learners. Therefore, parents end up being led by the school to provide extra support.

In international countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Korea and the United Kingdom, the issue of promoting learners who did not meet the pass requirements is not riddled with challenges. All these countries are well developed countries having strong remediation systems in place and they are performing well in the international comparative tests (Scott, Dreyer & Venter, 2015:93). Uganda also did not experience any challenge when implementing automatic promotion. It operated effectively and efficiently in improving the teaching and learning outcomes in Uganda (Okurut, 2015:2).

To sum up, the researcher would like to emphasize that all schools that implemented the policy on learner progression experienced challenges in one way or another. However, all the challenges need to be addressed to improve the performance of progressed learners in South Africa.

### **3.6 STRATEGIES THAT MAY AMELIORATE LOW PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS**

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:40), progressed learners require differentiating help to improve their performance in their next grade levels. However, specific intervention techniques to help progressed learners were not provided to School Management Teams in all schools with progressed learners. They were supposed to create and implement their own intervention plans in their individual schools (Leepo, 2015:166). In this aspect, the Grade 12 results for 2015 did not reflect progressing students properly. Leepo (2015:166) further reveals that the poor performance of progressed learners negatively impacted the 2015 Grade 12 National Senior Certificate Exams. In the meanwhile, the primary cause of low performance is that many schools throughout South African provinces lack intervention measures to assist learners who have been promoted without satisfying promotion standards (Leepo, 2015:59).

In addition, Leepo (2015:149) suggests that 58.2% of School Management Teams in the province of Free State stated that they utilize intervention measures to improve the performance of advanced learners. 28.5 percent of School Management Teams

stated that they lack intervention techniques, while 13.3 percent were unsure. However, as suggested by the Department of Basic Education, progressed learners require assistance (2012:41). The following improvement options for progressed learners with low performance will be discussed:

### **3.6.1 Differentiated Teaching**

According to Tomlinson and Imbeau (2011:10), differentiation is a method of instruction that recognizes the inevitability of academic diversity in contemporary classrooms which guides teachers in making decisions that attend to learners' differences rather than ignoring them. It suggests that teachers are more effective when they teach with learner differences in mind and that students are the beneficiaries of such teachers. On the other hand, Algozzine and Anderson (2007:49) state that differentiated teaching is learner-centered with a focus on appropriate instructional and assessment tools that are fair, challenging, and flexible and also engage learners in a curriculum in a very meaningful way. It stems from a belief that learners are different in the way they learn and what they prefer to learn. Nonetheless, Tomlinson and Imbeau (2011:33) outline the characteristics of a teacher in a differentiated class as follows:

- Show respect for every learner in the class.
- Be clear about doing your best.
- Be a good listener.
- Ensure the participation of every learner in the class.
- Always remind students of their shared goals of a class that works for everyone.
- Praise learners who do well.

In this regard, all learners will feel that they are important and strive to do their best. Leepo (2015:55) agrees that differentiated teaching can improve the low performance of progressed learners, indicating that teachers feel that differentiation will make a change in progressed learners. Teachers think that differentiated teaching is a good way of supporting learners who experience difficulties as it

focuses on teaching them at their own pace. In differentiated teaching, teachers try to equip learners with essential qualities to enable them to master the content well (Brahmbhatt, 2020:54). The following are the principles of effective differentiation that work in a real classroom with real learners as outlined by Tomlinson & Imbeau (2011:14-17):

### **3.6.1.1 Respectful tasks for all learners**

In this principle, teachers show respect for the capacity of all learners. Every learner's work looks equally interesting and inviting. Teachers have to expect every learner to think and are supported to think at high levels by giving the type of tasks that enable them to think on a daily basis. In this regard, teachers emphasize that they believe that all learners can be achievers and productive thinkers (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011:15).

### **3.6.1.2 Quality Curriculum**

The principle of the quality curriculum focuses on what matters most in the content rather than accepting that the goal of learning is to absorb a maximum amount of data in a minimum time. A quality curriculum helps learners to understand how content is organized and how it relates to their daily life experiences. Moreover, a quality curriculum is planned to involve learners to capture their imaginations, tap into their interests and help them to realize the purpose of learning (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011:13).

### **3.6.1.3 Creating a classroom that works for all**

This principle allows teachers to plan for the most advanced learners first and then ask how they can support other learners in achieving those complex goals. In the meantime, teachers will be able to encourage and give learners the necessary support to accomplish what they once believed was beyond their reach. In this regard, learners will be able to have some days when they simply need to practice a new skill or work with new information (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011:15).

### **3.6.1.4 Ongoing assessment**

The ongoing assessment always informs responsive teaching. It creates a pre-assessment once they specify what learners need to know and understand to enable

teachers a good sense of learners with learning gaps that must be addressed. In addition, Tomlinson and Imbeau (2011:15) indicate that pre-assessment of learners' interest and preferred ways of learning contribute to a teacher's evolving understanding of instructional approaches that will be most effective for the variety of learners in the classroom.

#### **3.6.1.5 Flexible grouping**

The principle of flexible grouping contributes to academic success. It allows learners to work with peers of a similar readiness level on tasks planned for their particular needs. Most importantly, tasks that are designed in flexible groups should ensure that each learner contributes as a member of a group. Flexible grouping also allows teachers to test learners in different settings and always give attention to the strengths and interests of learners that were previously hidden (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011:17).

#### **3.6.1.6 Flexible classroom management**

The principle of flexible classroom management allows the balance of structure and openness which is important for differentiation and for effective learning for all learners in the classroom. On the other hand, some teachers believe that differentiated classrooms are disorderly, not bearing in mind that differentiated classrooms can be designed in a manner that will match learners' needs while still attending to the needs of the class as a whole. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2011:17) add that differentiated classrooms are planned to ensure both order and flexibility that result in an opportunity to learn.

#### **3.6.1.7 A strong classroom community**

The principle of a strong classroom community supports learning for all learners in the classroom. In this principle, all learners should feel that they are appreciated and respected. Teachers create an atmosphere where there is a sense of mutual trust among all learners in a group. Each learner consistently encounters high challenges and high support for accomplishing the encountered challenge (Tomlinson & Imbeau, (2011:14).

### **3.6.2 Early Identification of Learners' Needs**

According to Noessel (2003:15), learners' needs represent the gap between what learners want to get out of learning experiences and their current state of knowledge, enthusiasm and skills. On the other hand, Brophy (2006:24) asserts that School Management Teams need to identify the chronic patterns of learners with difficulties and provide early support rather than waiting until learners are frustrated and demoralized. Learners' needs can be identified by assessing students formally or informally by observing their behavior. In addition to this, Noessel (2003:15) indicates that learners' needs can be identified in three categories, that is, cognitive-affective and psychomotor.

Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education (2014:29) states that every school should have a School Based Support Team that will assist in screening and identifying learners that are at risk, who have learning barriers. Teachers need to take the role of manager and facilitate the process of supporting learners with learning needs. The information of learners who are vulnerable and who have learning barriers should be captured in a profile that must be kept in a school for reference (DBE, 2014:29). Noessel (2003:15) further indicates that teachers have to identify needs such as skills, self-awareness, prompting, learning circles, positive attitude, learning resources and goals. However, all identified need early intervention aiming at improving the performance of progressed learners (Brophy, 2006:24).

### **3.6.3 Partnership with Parents**

According to the Department of Basic Education (2012:41), the parents or guardians of the learners who have been progressed to the next grade without meeting promotion requirements should offer differentiated support to their children to enable them to cope and improve their performance. There are different forms of support that parents can offer such as encouraging and assisting their learners to complete the School Based Tasks, providing them with a tutor for extra lessons that can be done after school and seeing to it that their children attend the school regularly. In addition to this, Brophy (2006:24) states that schools should form partnerships with

the parents of learners who have learning barriers. However, the relationship with parents should be maintained through close communication, inviting them to visit the classrooms and providing their children with instructional materials to use in support of them at home. Similarly, the Department of Basic Education (2014:29) also adds that the parents or caregivers of learners who are in the Further Education and Training band must be involved throughout the decision-making process of screening, identification, assessment and support for learners with learning barriers. Henceforth, teachers in collaboration with parents or caregivers capture the learners' areas of concern, strengths and needs of the learner, and thereafter formulate an action plan to support the learners, which includes the review dates per term. Moreover, learners who are struggling need to see their teachers and their parents working together to help them succeed, who also appreciate their efforts and progress even if they sometimes lag behind their classmates (Brophy, 2006:25).

#### **3.6.4 Close Monitoring Strategy**

Progressed learners need to be monitored to see whether they participate in lessons and when they do their formal tasks such as assignments, projects, practical, investigations, tests and oral in languages (Brophy, 2006:25). However, teachers in collaboration with parents or guardians have to make sure that they understand what to do and do it at their best. Regular checks and interventions by both the parents and the teachers are necessary. Furthermore, Brophy (2006:25) indicates that teachers can assess learners by monitoring their participation in lessons and performance on assignments and use this information to identify gaps or misconceptions. In this regard, teachers will be able to identify follow-up on unmet instructional needs, not just to record failure and move on (Brophy, 2006:25).

On the other hand, Cotton (1988:1) states that monitoring involves watching over, supervising, scrutinizing and checking systematically with a view to collecting certain specific categories of information. Monitoring is identified as a practice which strongly predicts learner achievement. Moreover, Cotton (1988:2) outlines the following characteristics a teacher should have when monitoring learners with learning barriers:

- Administering and correcting tests and recording all the scores.
- Questioning students during the lessons to check their understanding of the content
- Moving around the classroom when they are teaching,
- Engaging in one-on-one contact with students about their work,
- Giving learners homework and correcting them regularly,
- Identifying learners' gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the content,
- Conducting periodic reviews with learners to confirm their grasp of learning material,
- Reviewing learners' performance information to make needed adjustments in instructions.

By contrast, Cotton (1988:6) argues that many teachers are reluctant to make instructional changes even if the learners 'progress is very poor. Some teachers have inadequate monitoring skills, and they need the training to expand their capabilities.

### **3.6.5 Remedial Teaching Strategy**

Remedial teaching is a way of teaching whereby teachers' direct learners through the educational process using a variety of strategies such as more clarification, repeating content, and devoting more time to working on skills (Vallikat, 2021:1). However, some learners lag behind in every learning situation who require remedial teaching. Remedial teaching is meant to provide support and assistance to learners with difficulty so that they do not fall behind and acquire low performance.

Vallikat (2021:2) adds that learners who experience some difficulties in grasping different educational strategies such as individual attention. However, in remedial teaching, teachers start by identifying learning difficulties such as poor memorization, lack of motivation towards learning, failure to understand, inability to grasp instructions and implement abstract ideas, need additional time to complete certain tasks, low self-assurance with minimum self-expectation and difficulties in problem-

solving. Henceforth, teachers need to administer remedial teaching relevantly to all identified needs (Vallikat, 2021:2). In addition, Taukeni (2019:6) asserts that remedial teaching should be started immediately so that learners do not fall behind in their studies permanently.

In remedial teaching, teachers use different materials and always find new ways of addressing the topic that needs to be taught. Taukeni (2019:7) also indicates that remedial teachers need to use different teaching activities and teaching strategies to assist students to achieve their potential and overcome barriers to learning. On the other hand, Leepo (2015:187) argues that teachers do not have the skills to offer remedial or give individual attention due to a lack of training. In support of this, Cotton (1988:2) indicates that teachers need to be trained on how to support learners who experience learning difficulties. Teachers need the training to enable them access to resource persons with expertise in remediation and special education (Brophy, 2006:25). Remedial teaching enables learners to learn how to rely on their strengths, talents and abilities, hence overcoming their mistakes.

### **3.6.6 Regular Connection of New Work with Future Success**

Success is a guaranteed natural consequence of having a healthy brain stimulated in a natural, nurturing and information-rich learning environment. According to Margolis and McCabe (2010:244), linking new work with recent success requires learners to have more recent knowledge of success. Teachers need to adhere to progressed learners 'proper instructional and independent levels, stimulating the recall of the prerequisite learning, shortening, and simplifying words and giving them moderate challenging work that they can continuously succeed on. Furthermore, Margolis and McCabe (2010:244) indicate that the only way to enable progressed learners to achieve at a high rate is to frequently monitor learners 'rate of success, at the same time designing instructions and assignments that match their achievements. Teachers can then start linking new work with the previous once learners have recent success to draw on. Moreover, examining prior success provides learners with opportunities to employ teaching strategies and eliminate any stigma associated with them. However, there are some progressed learners who according to Margolis and McCabe (2010:244), lack the ability to succeed and who avoid involvement in

schoolwork. These learners need teachers who provide them with extrinsic age appropriate reinforces such as stickers and stressing work that progressed learners find important and interesting so that they can realize their successes.

### **3.6.7 Strengthening Effort and Persistence**

To strengthen effort and persistence is when teachers select tasks within the abilities of progressed learners, sequence tasks from easy to difficult, help them to realize that they have skills to succeed, provide learners with help and encouragement, teach them to correct their mistakes and introduce difficult tasks when they are no longer difficult (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:244). Strengthening effort enhances students' understanding of the relationship between effort and achievement by addressing their attitudes and beliefs (Hill & Miller, 2013:40). These assists students to attribute success to ability and effort. However, teachers must understand the relationship between effort and achievement and assist students to connect between effort and achievement. Schunk (1991:20) divides effort into two categories, that is, moderate effort and effort feedback indicating that progressed learners will be able to complete their tasks effectively using moderate effort. Furthermore, Schunk (1991:130) explains persistence as a continuation of effort and striving in the face of difficulty, opposition, or failure. It is the key characteristic of successful people across academic disciplines. Henceforth being a driving force to help students to achieve their academic tasks as well as their personal goals.

### **3.6.8 Teaching Students to Make Facilitative Attributions**

Attributions are ways in which people explain their beliefs on why things happen to them That guide their behavior (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:244). According to Weiner (2000:14), attributions refer to people's attempts to maintain a positive self-image. When they do well in an activity, they are likely to attribute their success to their own efforts and abilities, while they associate failure with factors they do not have control over. However, teachers need to stress accurate, facilitative attributions throughout the day and teach progressed learners to do the same. Facilitative attributions link success to ability, thus learners with facilitative attributions reject failure and poor performance and start struggling for good performance (Margolis &

McCabe, 2010:245). Moreover, in a classroom situation wherein an attribution is applied, learners always receive constant information about their performance on academic tasks (Slavin, 2014:312). Teachers should always praise and motivate students for every effort they make to enhance their achievements.

### **3.6.9 Encouraging Learners to Set Personal Goals**

Personal important goals refer to goals that students want to achieve, goals that students think will make a difference in their achievements (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:245). They are goals that positively influence progressed learners 'self-efficacy. However, teachers need to set short-term goals that are specific and achievable in order to allow progressed learners to gain motivation. According to Schunk (1991:132), short-term goals are goals that people set for themselves, that can be accomplished within a year. It is something that a person wants to do soon. Teachers need to teach progressed learners to monitor their work frequently and evaluate themselves using simple evaluation forms, rubrics, learning strategy reference cards and learning strategy checklists (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:246).

Teaching progressed learners requires teachers to set realistic goals that can help them achieve with moderate effort, that are more motivating or excessively easy goals. If progressed learners are making good progress, both teachers and learners should discuss what they are doing in order to produce success. Meanwhile, if they find that the progress is poor, they must come up with ways of improving them (Schunk, 1991:133).

### **3.6.10 Engaging Motivational Factors**

Motivational factors refer to the instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation and self-regulating strategies that are used purposefully by individual students to manage their level of motivation (Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008:55). On the other hand, Bundgaard (2017:1) states that motivational factors include the achievement, advancement, autonomy, personal growth, recognition, responsibility and hard work. However, progressed learners need teachers who incorporate motivational factors that enable them to succeed.

Teachers also need to assess the amount of help that they offer to progress learners. Moreover, teachers who teach progressed learners should exercise the following traits alluded to by Margolis and McCabe (2010:247):

- Show interest in students.
- Engage students in collaborative activities.
- Use a variety of teaching approaches that are relevant to lesson objectives.
- Compare students' achievements to their past achievements.
- Provide frequent, immediate, task-specific feedback.
- Emphasize what is right about students' work.
- Provide help whenever needed. Ensure that students have the prerequisite knowledge and skill to master new topics and assignments. Make expectations clear and realistic.
- Relate curriculum to students' lives and interests, in and out of the school.

All these motivational factors will help improve the performance of progressed learners.

### **3.6.11 Encourage Peer Modeling**

Peer modeling is a strategy that involves placing students in pairs or small groups to participate in learning activities that support academic instruction and social skills (Wood, 2015:1). This strategy does not need extra funding or extra staff. However, it is an intervention strategy that yields positive results related to learner achievement and a sense of belonging over a period. Wood (2015:1) further asserts that peer modeling is a support that can be used to get students to learn academics and provides the teacher an opportunity to use peers to assist with instruction, clarifying directions and giving social reminders with little or no disruption of the lesson. Margolis and McCabe (2010:244) concur adding that an advantage of peer modeling is that it shows progressed learners how other learners overcome the mistakes that they make in acquiring new skills and learning strategies. For teachers to implement peer modeling strategy, they should: have the ability to choose modeling learners who are respected by progressed learners, select a strategy that

is more challenging to progressed learners, break complicated skills and strategies into manageable components, have models to correct their mistakes, reinforce struggling learners and have struggling learners to observe their models.

### **3.6.12 Teach Needed Learning Strategies**

According to Weinstern (1991:494), learning strategies refer to methods that students use to learn. This ranges from techniques for improved memory to better studying or test writing strategies such as using question papers before, during and after the lesson to increase the degree of learning. However, progressed learners do not know how to approach a task, what learning strategies they are to use and how to use them. Therefore, teachers need to effectively teach them the secrets of learning, i.e., the strategies that produce success (Margolis & McCabe, 2010:243). Furthermore, sequencing, modeling, explicit step-by-step directions, feedback, correction, practice and learner involvement in cooperative learning activities are different kinds of learning strategies which can assist progressed learners to acquire knowledge (Margolis & MacCabe, 2010:243). Sweden, like other international countries mentioned above, had remedial system in place to support learners they have promoted regardless of their poor achievement. One of the strategies they used was individual programme in the upper secondary which was meant to supplement a missing grade (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2005:16). The researcher's prediction was that the intervention strategies to improve progressed learners need not be compromised for the betterment of the policy on learner progression. In this regard, all the intervention strategies discussed above can be used to enhance the achievement of progressed learners in Grade 12.

## **3.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter's objective was to provide a literature overview of the South African perspective on the learner progression policy. It is imperative that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) view the policy on learner progression as a necessary and extremely challenging issue that must be monitored by all stakeholders in order to address the challenges that arise during the implementation of this policy in different schools. The Department of Basic Education should create and disseminate to all

South African schools intervention measures that can be employed to improve the performance of progressed learners. The next chapter will give a comprehensive examination of research methodology and the manner in which qualitative data was obtained.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter expands the qualitative research technique as a tool used to collect data on participants' perspectives on how the performance of advanced learners in Grade 12 in Vhembe East District might be enhanced. Outlined were the talks of the study design, research paradigm, research methodology, equipment and strategies for data collecting. Nonetheless, the study's methodology will be described.

#### 4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Nirod and Dash (2005:1), a research paradigm is an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems that are attached to the corresponding methodological approaches and tools. Kuhn (1970:175) adds that research paradigms are the constellation of trust, techniques and principles shared by members of a specific community. On the other hand, Burton and Barlett (2009:18) state that a research paradigm is a model of research that reflects a general consensus on the research methods that are suitable and acceptable for the collection of data and together with those that are not appropriate. Nirod and Dash (2005:1) categorized research paradigms into the following three types:

- **Positivism** regards human behavior as passive, controlled and determined by the external environment.
- **Anti-positivism or Interpretivist** emphasized that social reality is viewed and interpreted by individuals themselves according to the ideological positions they possess.
- **Critical Theory** requires the researcher to engage the participants in a dialogue with the aim of transforming the situation.

This study used the anti-positivism paradigm to collect data from educators, SMT members, principals, curriculum advisors and circuit managers based on their experiences of the support provided to progressed learners in Grade 12 in different schools. The researcher used individual interviews to collect data from participants.

### **4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Kerlinger (1986:279), a research design is the plan, structure, and strategy of an inquiry devised to answer research questions and control variation. On the other hand, Creswell (2014:79) defines research design as the overall plan connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent and achievable empirical research. Moreover, the research design is an inquiry which provides a specific direction for procedures in research. However, Robson (1993:38) advises that the general principle in the descriptive design is that the research strategies and the methods or techniques employed must be appropriate in order for the research questions to be answered. Mason (2002:30) concurs with Robson (1993:38) stating that research design is the logic by which the researcher goes about answering the research questions.

Creswell (2012:293) further indicates that a research design is a pattern that is followed by the researcher for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. However, in selecting the research design, researchers should consider what and how data should be gathered and analyzed.

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research design and a suitable technique of data gathering. Neuman (1997:327) describes qualitative research design as a multi-method approach with an interpretative, naturalistic perspective on its topic. This, however, implies that qualitative researchers examine the participants in their natural contexts, aiming to make sense of or interpret the occurrences based on the meaning's individuals attribute to them. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:372) agree, adding that the qualitative research approach is founded on a naturalistic phenomenological philosophy that sees reality as multilayered, interactive, and a shared social experience. Neuman (1997:327) further states that in qualitative research, data analysis is done by extracting themes or generalizing

data to present a coherent and consistent picture. On the other hand, Horberg (1999:76) asserts that qualitative research focuses on what people say with their words, gestures, tone, thoughts and perceptions. Horberg (1999:76) further states that data collected in qualitative methodology must be rich in description of people and places.

Shimahara (1998:80) agrees that qualitative research produces findings that cannot be found by means of statistical procedures. Fraekel and Wallen (1993:367) add that qualitative research is concerned about the quality of a specific activity rather than how often it occurs. In this study, the qualitative method was an adequate approach since the aim is to determine the support provided to progressed learners in Grade 12 in Vhembe East District as expressed by educators, SMT members, curriculum advisors and Circuit managers.

#### **4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to Ellen (1984:9), research methodology is the strategy, plan of action, a design that informs the researcher's choice of research methods. Crotty (1998:3) indicates that research methodology is concerned with the discussion of how a particular piece of research should be undertaken. Crotty (1998:4) further states that research guides the researcher in deciding what type of study is required and which data collection tools will be most appropriate.

##### **4.4.1 Population**

Population refers to a group of people who share similar attributes or traits. (Creswell, 2012:142). It comprises of the whole population that the researcher is interested in, and the findings may be generalized. In support of this, Polit and Hungler (1999:43) explain that a population is the sum of all subjects that meet a set of criteria, including the whole group of people who are of interest to the researcher and to whom the study findings may be generalized. Furthermore, Sayre (2001:40) adds that in qualitative research, researchers look for people who are willing to share their thoughts to help them illuminate, interpret, and understand the phenomenon better. In this study, the population comprised all educators, School Management

Teams, principals, curriculum advisors, and circuit managers from Mvudi, Dzindi, Sibasa, Luvuvhu, Vhumbedzi and Tshinane circuits in Vhembe East District.

#### 4.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURES

According to Christiansen and Bertram (2014:59), sampling is a process which involves making decisions about the participants, natural setting, events and behaviors the researchers want to include in their study. Punch and Oancea (2014:382) state that sampling is a way of choosing a number of individuals for the study in a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they are selected, which is also part of the population whence they are selected. In this study, purposeful sampling and random sampling were used to identify the participants as follows:

- **Purposeful Sampling** is a form of sampling method that enables the researcher to recruit participants who can provide in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation (Gray, 2009:152). Purposeful sampling was used to select three (3) principals from three different circuits (Dzindi, Vhumbedzi and Luvuvhu) and three (3) circuit managers from three (3) different circuits (Tshinane, Dzindi and Vhumbedzi). These participants were purposefully sampled because they have more information and a deeper understanding of the way in which they manage and support progressed learners in their schools.
- **Random Sampling** is an approach of selecting the participants from a population in a way that all the members have an equal opportunity of selection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:476). For this study, the researcher randomly selected six (6) Grade 12 teachers from a pool of forty-three (43) in Vhembe East District, three (3) school management teams from a pool of two-hundred and twenty-two (222) in Vhembe East District, three (3) secondary school principals from a pool of 103 in Vhembe East District, three (3) curriculum advisors from a pool of fifty-two (52) in Vhembe East District's various circuits (Dzindi, Sibasa and Luvuvhu) and three circuit managers from

the pool of 18 circuit managers in Vhembe East District. Individual interviews were conducted with each of the 18 subjects.

## **4.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection instruments are the instruments that are applied by researchers to collect data (Neuman, 1997:369). In this study, qualitative research instruments were used, which are interviews and document analysis.

### **4.6.1 Interviews**

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014:80), an interview is a dialogue between a researcher and a responder in which the researcher establishes the topic and asks the questions. According to Punch (2009:145), an interview is a direct means of gathering data in a one-on-one setting and an exchange of opinions between two or more individuals on a particular issue of mutual interest. The exchange is between the researcher who desires the participants' experiences in order to offer answers to the research questions and the participants who are eager to share their experiences on a certain issue. Furthermore, an interview is a dialogue, the skill of asking questions and listening, and not a neutral instrument, since the interviewer constructs the reality of the interview environment in which responses are delivered (Briggs et al., 2012:79).

#### **4.6.1.1 Interview schedule**

According to Schumacher and McMillan (1993:373), an interview schedule is a list including a collection of structured questions that have been developed to act as a guide for researchers in gathering data about a given topic. Kumar (2014:145) explains that an interview schedule is a written list of open-ended or closed questions, prepared for use by the researcher in a person-to-person encounter, that is led by a literature review and focuses on the most important questions to be asked.

In this study, all educators, SMT members, principals, curriculum advisors and circuit managers responded to a semi-structured interview that focused on the list of

structured questions prepared to collect data on the way in which progressed learners are supported intending to enhance their achievement in Grade 12. The interviews were administered through personal visits on appointments with the participants. Interviews with the educators, SMT members and principals were conducted in their respective schools after school to prevent the disruption of school lessons. However, the duration was 45 minutes depending on the response given during the interviews.

Interviews with curriculum advisors and circuit managers were conducted in their circuits after working hours. The duration was 45 minutes depending on the responses given during the interviews. Gray (2009:384) suggests that the words of the interviewee need to be captured accurately to allow the interviewer to concentrate on the interview rather than writing notes which can be time-consuming. Following this, the researcher used audio recordings to capture participants' perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations.

The main questions asked included the following:

- What do you understand by the requirements of learner progression in the FET band?
- Do you encounter challenges when you assist progressed learners in school?
- What has been the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 for the past five years?
- What can you say about the quality of assistance provided to progressed learners in schools?
- Do you have planned intervention strategies you can utilize to enhance the achievement of progressed learners?

#### **4.6.2 Documents Analysis**

It is crucial to differentiate between documents as part of the study's data gathering approach and literature review. To incorporate documents as part of a data-gathering approach is distinct from the literature review that researchers do for their studies. According to Bowen (2009:2), document analysis is a methodical process

for assessing or evaluating printed and electronic documents. It necessitates that data be analyzed and studied so that meaning, comprehension, and empirical knowledge may be gleaned. Document analysis, according to Bertram and Christiansen (2014:97), is a kind of qualitative research that use a systematic approach to assess documentary evidence and answer particular research questions.

In this study, document analysis was concerned with the support that is provided to progressed learners who are in Grade 12 in different schools in Vhembe East District. Documents analyzed in one sampled school allowed the researcher to identify the challenges encountered in schools when assisting progressed learners. Factors causing different challenges in schools were noted. As indicated by Best and Kahn (2006:257), data contained in documents can be unrelated and contorted. To avoid this, the researcher thoroughly scrutinized departmental circulars and policies relating to progressed learners, the school policy, minutes of the School Management Teams, attendance registers and quarterly schedules. Documents analysis was used to triangulate what transpired from the interviews with various participants and from the research objectives.

According to Creswell (2005:220), there are useful guidelines such as identification of useful documents, obtaining permission to use documents determining the accuracy and usefulness of the documents which need to be followed in the documents analysis process. In this study, the researcher first identified the useful documents and obtained permission to analyze documents from the school principal of the secondary school with a high enrolment of progressed learners in one of the circuits in Vhembe East District. After receiving authorization, the researcher visited the school to examine all departmental policies and circulars concerning progressed pupils, including the school policy, School Management minutes, Grade 12 attendance registers, and Grade 12 quarterly schedules.

#### **4.7 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES**

Data gathering was done by means of interviews together with document analysis. In the interviews, the researcher first wrote letters to educators, School Management

Team Members, principals, curriculum advisors and circuit managers requesting them to be participants in the research. All the letters explained the topic of the research, the research motive and the method that will be used to collect data. All the participants were assured of confidentiality. The researcher also showed the participants copies of permission from the province. Arrangements were made with the participants on the days and times when they will be visited for interviews. The researcher then agreed with the participants whether they wanted to be recorded or not. Data was collected through individual interviews with the circuit managers, curriculum advisors, members of the School Management Teams, school principals of secondary institution and educators who teach progressed learners who are in Grade 12. In document analysis, the researcher asked permission from one secondary school with a high enrolment of progressed learners in Vhembe East. The researcher then went to the school to examine departmental policies and circulars regarding progressed learners, school policy, SMT minutes, learners' attendance registers for Grade 12 and quarterly schedules.

#### **4.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

According to Schumacher and McMillan (1993:482), qualitative analysis gives a structured method for comprehending a specific phenomenon of interest. Qualitative data analysis involves converting raw data by examining, assessing, identifying, coding, mapping, investigating, and documenting patterns, trends, themes, and categories in the raw data in order to comprehend and give their underlying meanings (Ngulube, 2015:1). According to Babbie (2010:394), qualitative analysis is the process of assessing data without converting it to statistics. It remains a valuable method for data analysis. In support of this, Seale (1999:112) notes that the most essential process in qualitative data analysis is the identification of major groups of objects, people, and events, as well as their defining characteristics. In this study, the researcher produced data pertaining to the research's subject matter, which must be properly stated and supported. The researcher devised categorization and coding schemes that were grouped into themes and subthemes. All of the topics were derived from the study's goals. In addition, the researcher analyzed the comments of instructors, SMT members, administrators, curriculum consultants, and circuit managers in order to identify common themes and draw

conclusions. The researcher attempted to determine the participants' perspectives on advanced learners in relation to the studied material. In addition, the researcher examined those elements of the data that were compatible with past study and the theoretical explanation, as well as those that were not.

## 4.9 QUALITATIVE CONTROL MEASURES

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:197), qualitative measures involve making an informed judgment on how difficult the text is, by considering a number of factors. On the other hand, Kumar (2014:220) indicates that qualitative measures refer to what the reader can take out of the text in order to make sense of it, which includes levels of meaning, authors' purpose, the structure and language used, and the knowledge demands required to access the text. The following measures of quality control are discussed below.

### 4.9.1 Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Approach

Trustworthiness of the research refers to the extent of reliance in data, explication and the technique used to guarantee the quality of the study (Pilot & Beck, 2014:12). However, Kumar (2014:219) states that trustworthiness is what makes it rational for the people to accept research findings. Shenton (2004:66) concurs by adding that trustworthiness in qualitative studies is about establishing the following:

- **Credibility** is the researcher's confidence in the veracity of the study's findings. To prove the validity of this investigation, the researcher utilized triangulation to demonstrate the dependability of its findings. According to Briggs et al. (2012:84), triangulation is the use of multiple data collection methods to examine human behavior. The researcher obtained data for this study through individual interviews and document analysis.
- **Transferability** relates to how qualitative researchers demonstrate the applicability of their findings to analogous contexts, populations, and phenomena (Kumar, 2014:219). In this study, the findings can be applied in a variety of

settings, conditions, and locales because the subjects were purposely and randomly selected. A school whose papers were studied was one of the schools in Vhembe East District with the highest enrollment of advanced learners.

- **Confirmability** is the degree to which study findings are neutral. This occurs when the conclusions are based on the replies of the participants and not on the researcher's personal objectives (Kumar, 2014:297). In this study, the conclusions are supported by the fact that, after questioning the participants, the data corroborated what the examined literature revealed about advanced learners in South Africa and elsewhere.
- **Dependability** entails the participants' judgment of the study's findings, interpretation, and suggestions in a way that all are supported by the data received from the study's participants (Kumar, 2014:297). McMillan and Schumacher (1993:198) concur and add that dependability refers to the quality of the integrated data collecting, data analysis, and theoretical generalization processes. In this study, the researcher established reliability by ensuring that no information was overlooked. The researcher ensured that the final report contained no misleading information. The researcher evaluated all interpretations and findings to check if they were supported by the data.

#### 4.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:197), ethical consideration is a set of principles and ideals that should be observed while conducting human affairs. Further, McMillan and Schumacher (1993:197) assert that ethics in the context of education are significant because they include ideas about what is right or wrong, appropriate or improper, good or terrible. David and Resnik (2011:6) agree, adding that ethical norms foster the qualities that are fundamental to collaborative work, including trust, accountability, mutual respect, and justice. The researcher used the following ethical guidelines given by Shamoo and Resnik (2015:2) for this study:

- **Objectivity** is the principle drawn from positivism that as far as possible, the researcher should remain distanced from what they study. Findings depend on the nature of what was studied rather than on personality, beliefs and values of the researcher (Berube, 2005:244). In this study, the researcher-maintained objectivity in data collection by setting up a blind research project to eliminate bias among the participants. Participants were kept unaware of whether they were members of a test group or a control group. The researcher also set up precise and explicit rules to govern how interviews were conducted.
- **Confidentiality** refers to the state in which the researcher is aware of the identities of study participants but takes precautions to prevent their disclosure to others (Gray, 2009:29). In this research, confidentiality was preserved by assuring all participants of their anonymity. All participants were told that the data was gathered exclusively for the study's purposes. In addition, all participants were told that their participation was optional and that they might withdraw from the study at any moment.
- **Honesty** underpins ethical practice in all the activities that comprise data collection and analysis. In this study, the researcher reported data, results, techniques, and procedures and publication status. The data collected was not fabricated or misinterpreted. Moreover, the researcher focused on the research question only.
- **Openness** refers to the principle of freedom of access by all interested persons to the underlying data, to the processes, and to the final results of the research (Shamoo & Resnik, 2009:3). In this study, the researcher is ready to share data, results, ideas, tools and resources. The researcher was open to criticism and new ideas. All the participants in this study were protected.
- **Carefulness** refers to the extent at which the researcher avoids careless errors and negligence. In this study, the researcher carefully and critically examined her own work. The researcher kept records of all the research

activities such as data collection, research design and correspondence with agencies.

- **Transparency** concerns disclosing the methods, materials, assumptions, analysis and other information needed to evaluate the research (Shamoo & Resnik, 2015:3). In this study, participants were told that they will be interviewed, however, the recordings were voluntary.
- **Accountability** suggests the standards of research practice against which the researcher can be judged to determine whether he or she has acted in an appropriate and ethical fashion. In this study, the researcher took responsibility and was prepared to give an account of what is done on the research project.
- **Intellectual Property** refers to the ideas, information and knowledge which can be viewed as the results and outcomes of research. The researcher did not use unpublished data, methods and results without permission. The researcher first sought permission from the provincial department of education, circuit managers, school principals and educators before collecting data. All the people who participated in the study were acknowledged. No plagiarism was done.
- **Human Subjects' Protection** is a collective term for the federal, state, and university policies, procedures, and ethical considerations that protect the integrity and well-being of human beings who take part in research as subjects of the research. In this study, the researcher tried to minimize the risks and harms by giving all participants consent forms to assure them of their privacy and autonomy. The benefits and the burdens of research were fairly distributed (David & Resnik, 2015:4).

#### 4.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter was focused on methods. Design and methods of study, population and sample were explored. This chapter provides a description of the qualitative

study methodology utilized by the researcher to determine how the performance of progressed learners may be enhanced. This chapter also covered interviews as a method of data collection and how they were employed. In addition, data processing and interpretation, reliability and validity, and ethical aspects were discussed. However, the following chapter covers data interpretation and analysis.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows and discusses the data collected through interviews and document analysis from participants. The participants in this study were educators, school principals, School Management Teams (SMT) members, curriculum advisors, and circuit managers. Interviews were conducted with all the participants. Documents analysis was done in one of the schools in the circuit in Vhembe East District. Data analysis was done in line with the objectives and the research questions.

#### 5.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE PARTICIPANTS

This section contains the replies of participants about the number of progressed learners a school had, their teaching experience, age, and gender.

##### 5.2.1 Educators

A total of six secondary educators were interviewed. Four males and two females. Five of the educators taught Grade 12 and only one taught up to Grade 11. However, those who were teaching in Grade 12 also had other subjects that they teach in the lower grades such as Grades 8, 9, 10 and 11.

**Table 5.1: Illustration of Biographical Data of Educators**

<b>EDUCATORS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Female</b>
Average teaching experience in years	24	30	20	22	25	15
Average age group in years	50 Years	55 years	45 years	37 years	51 years	35 years
Number of progressed learners they teach	32	22	17	28	32	52
No of subjects they teach	3	3	3	2	2	1

All these educators provided valuable information on the way they teach progressed learners in their respective schools.

### 5.2.2 School Principals

A total of three school principals were interviewed. All of them were from secondary schools with learners who were progressed to Grade 12. However, they were all from different circuits in Vhembe East District. Two of these interviews were recorded and one was written.

**Table 5.2 Illustration of Biographical Data of School Principals**

<b>SCHOOL PRINCIPALS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Male</b>
Years of experience as a school principal	8	10	6
School enrolment	104	153	55
Number of progressed learners in a school	32	30	20
Average age group in years	64	56	52

The interviews with principals provided insight into the support they received from parents and the Department of Basic Education to assist progressed learners in their respective schools.

### 5.2.3 School Management Teams

Three School Management Team members were questioned in total. One was an Assistant Principal, while the other two were Department Heads. One of the interviews was recorded, while the other two were written.

**Table 5.3: Illustration of Biographical Data of School Management Teams**

<b>SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Female</b>
Years of experience as SMT members	10	8	15
Average age group in years	50	52	58
Number of progressed learners in a school	32	40	61

The interviews with School Management Teams provided insight into the support they gave to progressed learners within the school to enhance the achievement of learners they had progressed to Grade 12.

### 5.2.4 Curriculum Advisors

A total of three curriculum advisors from three different circuits in Vhembe East District were interviewed. All the interviews were written interviews.

**Table 5.4: Illustration of Biographical Data of Curriculum Advisors**

<b>CURRICULUM ADVISORS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Female</b>
Years of experience as a curriculum advisor	13	14	10
Average age group in years	49	52	45
Subjects responsible for	Economics	Business Studies	Accounting

The interviews with curriculum advisors provided insight into the support curriculum they gave to secondary school educators who teach progressed learners in Grade 12.

### **5.2.5 Circuit Managers**

A total of three circuit managers were interviewed. Two interviews were recorded, and one was written. All the interviews were done in English, so there was no need for translation.

**Table 5.5: Illustration of Biographical Data of Circuit Managers**

<b>CIRCUIT MANAGERS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Female</b>
Years of experience as a circuit manager	6	10	12
Average age group in years	56	58	59
Number of secondary schools in a circuit	6	9	6

Interviews with circuit managers provided insight into the support they gave to secondary school principals to strengthen the performance of progressed learners who were in Grade 12.

### 5.2.6 Data Coding

Coding data refers to the process of transforming collected information into a set of meaningful, cohesive categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:486). It implies summarizing and re-presenting data in order to provide a systematic account of the recorded phenomena. On the other hand, Neuman (1997:373) states that coding is the process of labeling and organizing your qualitative data to identify different themes and the relationship between them. In this regard, the researcher organized different themes and their relationships using the following steps of data coding:

Preparing and organizing, printing out the transcripts, and gathering all relevant information.

- Reviewing and exploring data.
- Creating initial codes.
- Combining codes into themes.
- Presenting themes in a cohesive manner. In this study, the researcher divided the data into themes and grouped all the themes into a collection of sub-themes.

**Table 5.6: Illustration of how Data was Coded**

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Theme1: Participants' perceptions regarding the requirements of progressed learners according to departmental policy.	1.1 Principal's knowledge of progression policy 1.2 Communication of the policy to schools 1.3 In-service training for educators and SMT members 1.4 The implementation of progression

	<p>requirements</p> <p>1.5 The role played by curriculum advisors</p> <p>1.6 The role of School Management Teams</p>
Theme 2: The perceptions of participants regarding the challenges encountered when assisting progressed learners	<p>2.1 Lack of Parental involvement</p> <p>2.2 Educators challenges</p> <p>2.3 Inadequate resources.</p> <p>2.4 SMTs' challenges</p>
Theme 3: The perceptions of participants regarding the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.	<p>3.1 Participation in the classroom</p> <p>3.2 Administration of school tasks</p> <p>3.3 Coping with Grade 12 content</p> <p>3.4 The effects of progressed learners to Grade 12 final results</p>
Theme 4: The perceptions of participants regarding the intervention strategies used to improve the performance of progressed learners	<p>4.1 Development of intervention strategies</p> <p>4.2 Availability of intervention strategies</p> <p>4.3 The implementation of the strategies</p> <p>4.4 Types of strategies used in schools</p> <p>4.5 Challenges encountered during the implementation of strategies</p>
Theme 5: The perception of participants regarding the support provided to progressed learners	<p>5.1 Departmental support to progressed learners</p> <p>5.2 Support by School Management Teams</p> <p>5.3 Parental support</p>
Theme 6: The perception of participants regarding learner progression policy.	<p>6.1 Educators 'attitude towards learner progression policy</p> <p>6.2 Parents' understanding of the policy on learner progression</p> <p>6.3 Principals 'feelings about learner progression policy</p> <p>6.4 Progressed learners' morale</p>

	6.5 The views of SMT members
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As the pattern of data coding has been presented, the researcher now focuses on the discussion of six (6) identified themes and the different sub-themes. Subsequent to the presentation of data and different sub-themes reflected in Table 5.6, the researcher analyzed data with regard to participants' responses to interviews to elicit their opinions about strengthening the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 in order to interpret the results.

**Theme 1: Participants' Perceptions Regarding the Requirements of Progressed Learners According to Departmental Policies and Circulars**

All school principals expressed their views about the requirements of progressed learners. The following sub-themes were identified: Principals' knowledge of progression policy, communication of the policy to schools, in-service training for educators and SMT members, the implementation of progression requirements, the role played by curriculum advisors and the role of School Management Teams.

**Sub-theme 1.1: Principals' Knowledge of Learner Progression Policy**

During interviews, perceptions of school principals were mentioned about their knowledge of the policy on learner progression. Some of the principals fully understand the policy of learner progression and the requirements of progression, while some of the principals have minimal understanding of the policy.

Principal 1 had this to say:

*It is a policy that directs how progression should be managed, i.e., how those learners are to be supported as well.*

Principal 2 said:

*The policy on learner progression is the policy promulgated by the Department to subtract the movement of learners through phases, and which means if a learner has already overstayed in a phase that learner automatically necessarily qualifies for this policy. For the GET band it has to do with learners moving with their age cohort, but for the FET band, it deals with learners moving in terms of meeting the requirements. When a learner is progressed, then that particular learner must have number, must have already failed a grade, and is failing again for the second time. That learner must pass English and three other subjects. That learner will then progress to the other grade.*

Principal 3 had this to say:

*Eh, according to my understanding of this policy is that a learner is not supposed to repeat a grade twice. If a learner happens to repeat a phase twice it means such a learner needs to be progressed. That is my understanding of this policy.*

According to DBE (38-39), the learner has to be progressed in the FET band after meeting the following progression requirements: repeated either Grade 10 or 11, pass at least four subjects, attended school on regular basis and should have complied with the SBA in all the subjects including the one that the learner has failed. Principals should have a thorough knowledge of the policy on learner progression as they were compelled to implement it in their schools.

### **Sub-theme 1.2 Communication of the Policy to schools**

It was the duty of the Department of Basic Education to communicate the policy on learner progression to schools. Almost all circuit managers interviewed in this study indicated that the policy on learner progression was communicated to schools through workshops, provision of hard copies and soft copies to schools, policy documents sent to schools, departmental circulars and meetings with school principals.

One circuit manager said:

*The policy was communicated to schools through WhatsApp, what we mean is that all those documents that are necessary for progression, we send them through WhatsApp, emails and then sometimes we communicate with schools by doing workshops and meetings.*

Another circuit manager added:

*Initially it will be a policy that will come to them, and as they are surprised, then the district will be calling them for the workshop.*

In support of this, one of the SMT members confirmed that the policy on learner progression was communicated to schools through the workshops.

He said:

*We attend workshops wherein they will be telling us how we should progress learners". Another SMT member added that the workshops and training were done only once a year after the final examination when schools were about to result the learners.*

He explained:

*The circuit manager calls us every year before we release the schedules. They call us as school managers to talk about the way in which we should progress learners.*

Almost all principals confirmed that the policy of learner progression was communicated to them through circulars, workshops and meetings.

One principal explained:

*The Department of Education sends us circulars as principals on many policy issues including policy on learner progression. Meetings are also held to share more light on learner progression policy.*

Another principal added:

*Ah, I only saw it through a circular, and Eh, and then there was a meeting for mediation of that-that- that circular.*

In the course of the execution of the learner progression policy, the Department of Basic Education communicated the policy on learner progression in different forms explained above (sub-theme 1.2). DBE (2012:40) indicates that the Department of Basic Education developed guidelines to assist schools on the implementation of the policy on learner progression which should be communicated to schools.

### **Sub-theme 1.3: In-service Training for Educators and SMT Members**

All SMT members shared the same experiences regarding the in-service training they received before they implement the policy on learner progression in their schools. They all explained that they received training, but it was inadequate.

SMT 1 has this to say:

*The circuit managers call us every year before we release the schedules. They call us as School Management Teams to talk about the way in which we should progress learners. Another thing is that after the submission of schedules to the circuit, there are some changes that are reflected in the schedules if we have retained a learner who was supposed to be progressed. The training that we receive is that of being told the requirements and the conditions to follow when we implement the policy. This is done once every year.*

SMT 2 said:

*We attend workshops wherein they will be telling us how to progress learners. Once more we are also trained on how we should support progressed learners.*

SMT 3 also said:

*“We attend workshops on the requirements for promotion and progression”.*

All educators mentioned different views about the training they were offered during the implementation of the learner progression policy. Many of them explained that they were trained, but insufficiently. Very few indicated that they were not trained at all. They were using their own experiences.

Educator one has this to say:

*I was trained to engage them in every period in a way of asking those questions during the lesson, or when I ask questions to the whole class, even if they do not raise hands, I have to point at them to try answering those questions.*

Educator 2 said:

*We do attend workshops where we are told what we need to do. We have not received training, but we are encouraged to assist them by being patient with them. Assisting progressed learners needs patience. We used to train ourselves. I usually call learners with problems to come to my office after school so that I can assist them. Progressed learners do not come to me for assistance. Only learners without a problem do come.*

Educator 3 has this to say:

*Ah, there was no specific training that I can say I got, eh, that I should teach like this to those progressed learners. Like I said, we*

*don't teach progressed learners separately. This means that when I am teaching, I just teach them together as they are all learners who are in Grade 12. There is no specific training that I received. In some of the workshops that we attended, what they tell us is that we need to have individual teaching of progressed learners, not in the form of training, just as advice that this is what you can do to learners who are progressed learners. We definitely do not do individual teaching because a normal lesson has only 30 minutes. You cannot do this because if you start doing it you are going to waste time.*

Educator 4 added:

*Jah, I never had received any formal training concerning that. It is the awareness that I develop when teaching learners and find that some are lagging behind whom I group in the category of progressed learners. I will suspect that these are progressed learners if I see that they are not at the same pace as others. So, there was no training, but with me, I train myself different groups of learners in my class. I come with a way of handling them and come with a mechanism to make sure that they also understand what other learners understand as I am teaching.*

Teacher 5 also said:

*The training that we received is only one week in a year. During those trainings, they don't focus only on progressed learners. What we were told is that we have to divide the learners and give them work according to their capabilities. Some are supposed to be given low-level questions. Those who are intelligent are supposed to be given challenging questions.*

According to Brahmbhatt (2020:90), training builds the foundation of the success of policy implementation while lack of training is one of the challenges faced by

educators, which hinders them to provide support to progressed learners in their next grade. In this regard, educators cannot give progressed learners sufficient support unless they are given the best training. On the other hand, Bayat et al. (2014:20) argue that the department makes teachers implementation tools while they are not consulted or trained enough even though they know what can and cannot work.

#### **Sub-theme 1.4: The Implementation of Progression Requirements**

The Department of Basic Education is tasked with the responsibility of identifying learners who should be progressed to the next grade. However, not all learners qualified for progression. Circuit managers interviewed in this study indicated that progression was supposed to be done in line with the requirements per phase. Some of the circuit managers also indicated that these were supposed to be done in consultation with the parents of learners. However, some explained that there were schools without evidence of consultation with parents throughout the year, which forced them to progress the learners who did not meet the requirements because they did not have evidence to prove to parents at the end of the year.

Circuit manager 1 has this to say:

*Eh, according to the policy, it means those learners must satisfy the progression requirements. Eh, no one, it means those learners must have passed at least four subjects, and then they must also have attended school regularly, and they must not be absent for more than 20 days. They must have done the prescribed SBA for all the subjects, including the one they failed. And then they must have consulted the parents together with the teachers so that teachers will be able to assist those learners the following year.*

Circuit manager 2 said:

*Oh! progression should be done in this way, and then you should consider also the issue of absenteeism. If the learner was not attending school well, this one will not qualify, and then, and checking the principals sometimes will not be having record, proper*

*record of attendance where even those that might not qualify to be progressed, will be progressed because they do not have the record.*

DBE (1998:30) indicates that a learner may not be retained in the FET band for more than four years. However, it also has to be noted that a learner who fails the grade for the second time must not be automatically progressed, they have to meet the necessary requirements of progression which must be done at the school level, and the school must have followed the right procedures such as convening a meeting with the learner' parents before taking any decision of retaining or progressing a learner (DBE, 2012:38).

### **Sub-theme 1.5: The Role Played by Curriculum Advisors**

To oversee the application of the learner progression policy, the Department of Basic Education dispersed school curriculum to circuits and schools. Curriculum advisors questioned for this research revealed that they were tasked with monitoring the application of the learner progression policy in all Vhembe East District schools. In addition, they were responsible with facilitating workshops for school principals on the criteria of learner progression. They also recommend that educators establish intervention measures to help progressed learners. In addition, a few of the curriculum advisers said that they verify schedules at the circuit level. Despite the training principals and members of the SMT got on how to apply the learner progression policy, curriculum advisors reported that some schools did not follow the correct approach.

Curriculum advisor 1 has this to say:

*Our role is to train principals on steps to follow when progressing learners. We also verify promotion mark schedules to see whether progression was implemented correctly. If there are mistakes, schools are requested to correct the mistakes and resubmit the schedules.*

Curriculum advisor 2 said:

*My role is to monitor and support teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. I do this by providing or sourcing relevant teaching and learning materials for the subject. With progressed learners, it is my duty to know the number of progressed learners in the district, circuit and individual schools. I enforce the compilation of learner profiles and lists of progressed learners in each school under my jurisdiction. Upon the analysis of results, I am able to detect where challenges are in the subject. Together with the teachers, I suggest strategies for supporting progressed learners. Teachers have to draw individual plans they will follow, based on the suggestions discussed to support those learners.*

Curriculum advisor 3 confirmed:

*To assist the circuit manager to verify school promotion schedules to check if correct progression procedures were implemented. I also assist educators in the development of intervention strategies focused on supporting progressed learners. To monitor and support educators to make progress in the implementation of intervention strategies. To advise educators on how to address content that is challenging to progressed learners. To assist educators in the development of informal assessment that will enable progressed learners to achieve a minimum pass of 30%.*

In support of this, the school principal also indicated that at the end of each year, curriculum advisors checked all the submitted promotion schedules to verify if the progression of learners was done correctly following all the prescribed requirements.

One of the interviewed school principals confirmed:

*But when the schedules are verified, the department deploys curriculum advisors who advise us on, whether the learner is meeting the requirements.*

Members of the School Management Teams who were interviewed also explained that they sometimes made mistakes which needed to be rectified immediately after the verification of promotion schedules by the curriculum advisors.

One SMT member said:

*Another thing is that after submission of schedules to the circuit, there are some changes which are reflected in the schedules if we have retained a learner who was supposed to be progressed.*

According to Winter (2016:25), a good curriculum advisor needs to be aware of the variety of ways in which a learner's progress can and should be assessed. Most of the curriculum advisors are a misfit. What then can one expect from such an unqualified curriculum advisor? In most schools, some of the mistakes made are caused by curriculum advisors.

### **Sub-theme 1.5: The role of School Management Teams**

All School Management Team members expressed their views on the role they played during the implementation of the learner progression policy within their specific schools. All of them indicated that they were making sure that the process and procedures are followed when progressing learners.

SMT 1 has this to say:

*Ah, my role is to check whether learners are meeting the requirements of progression even if they have not met the promotion requirements. We also check the number of years in a phase. We check whether learners qualify for the conditions laid down by the policy itself.*

SMT 2:

*My role is to plan for the progression of learners to enable educators to select learning opportunities in their short term. We*

*also supervise educators when they progress learners making sure we plan for the necessary intervention strategies to improve the performance of progressed learners.*

### SMT 3:

*Firstly, we identify learners who are repeating the grade or phase. After that we check if those learners are meeting the progression requirements, i.e., passing at least four subjects. These learners are the learners who must progress according to the policy. Then we make an indication of progressed learners on the hard copy and make a submission to the SASAMS officials who will then ensure that these learners progress to the next grade.*

To summarize, all of the people who were interviewed mentioned that there are protocols or conditions that need to be met before the learners may be progressed to the next grade. On the other hand, some of the people who were interviewed stated that despite of the requirements that were established, some of the schools ignored that, and they just progressed learners who did not meet all of the conditions that were established. According to Munje and Maarman (2016:196), schools were given the autonomy to devise their own one-of-a-kind ways of doing things; as a result, there were a variety of competing and contradictory approaches taken by separate schools. On the other hand, Prinsloo (2003:189) suggests that a communication of the processes to be followed while progressing learners was detailed regardless of the defects that happened. This is the case despite the fact that the flaws occurred.

## **Theme 2: The Perceptions of Participants Regarding the Challenges Encountered when Assisting Progressed Learners**

All educators, SMT members, principals, curriculum advisors and circuit managers expressed their views regarding the challenges that schools encounter when they assist progressed learners in different schools. They all agreed that they encounter challenges when they assist progressed learners. The following sub-themes were

identified: lack of parent involvement, educators' challenges, inadequate resources and SMT's challenges.

### **Sub-theme 2.1: Lack of Parental Involvement**

All educators who were interviewed complained about a lack of parent involvement in areas such as assisting their children with school tasks, attending meetings called by the school on how to support progressed learners, checking or tracking the progress of their children at school and collecting their children's report cards.

One of the educators explained:

*As teachers, we always invite parents to come and see how their children are doing. Only the parents of learners without a problem often come. They don't even come and collect their children's reports that are issued on a quarterly basis. They only wait for the final results.*

However, some of the educators expressed their views about the necessity of parental involvement in learners who are progressed from Grade 11 to Grade 12.

One of them said:

*As teachers, we need parents to come to school and check the works of their children so that they can help them.*

The reasons for the failure to support the children are that some of the children are illiterate, some of the learners do not stay together with their parents, others care less about school activities while other learners do not tell their parents about school tasks that they are given.

In support of this, one educator said:

*How can they support them if they cannot take the work home to their parents because some of them do not even bother themselves with taking their work to their parents.*

Another educator added:

*Many progressed learners do not even tell their parents that they have a task to do. It is obvious that when we give them tasks to do at their homes, we expect that they are not staying alone; they are staying with their parents. And for those who are staying with their parents, there are two categories of parents, there are parents who do not do anything with their children's homework. I want you to understand that there are also learners who are not staying with their parents, they are left alone with their brothers or sisters.*

An interviewed school principal added:

*First the background of those learners, the majority of them you find they come from child-headed families, because they are orphans; some of them have parents who work away from homes.*

Some of the School Management Team members agree with the reason parents are not supporting their children because they do not receive the information about school meetings due to the fact that their children do not tell them.

One of the SMT members said:

*When given invitation letters to their parents to discuss their performance, so that they support them at home, they don't give them those letters.*

Another SMT member added:

*"These learners make me tired. They do not give parents letters of invitation to meetings".*

Principals also agreed that parents of progressed learners should be active in their children's education. They advised that parents should hire tutors to instruct their children after school. One principal said:

*“You will remember that education is now a societal issue which means parents as one of the stakeholders, they are also supposed to support these learners. If they have to go to an extent of getting private tutors, they need to do so.”*

In support of this, another principal explained:

*“Parents should at all times support their children. They must actually try to work with educators and the principals”.*

Parent involvement was one of the biggest challenges faced by schools when supporting progressed learners. However, parents were tasked with the role of supporting their children after they have decided that they should be progressed to the next grade, especially Grade 12. According to DBE (2012:50), parents, together with the school have to be responsible for differentiated support that should be provided to all learners who are progressed. On the other hand, Brahmbahat (2020:65) states that parental support given to progressed learners is minimal. Progressed learners lack parental support. The absence of parental support leads to progressed learners believing that no one cares.

### **Sub-theme 2.2: Educators' Challenges**

All educators who were interviewed expressed their views about the challenges they experienced. They all agree that assisting progressed learners was very challenging for them. Some of the challenges mentioned are extensive content coverage, limited time available to support progressed learners, lack of commitment and understanding in progressed learners, content gap, misbehavior of progressed learners lack of support from curriculum advisors and lack of training to deal with progressed learners.

Teacher 1 said:

*Most of them do not put more effort in schoolwork as they have that mentality that they will be progressed at the end of the year, because of that attitude they are careless about schoolwork, e.g., they don't care about homework and other activities given to them.*

Teacher 2 has this to say:

*"The challenge is that when you teach progressed learners if you do not check when they are writing, they will copy the answers from others. They encounter a challenge when they write examinations".*

Teacher 3 said:

*"When you teach progressed learners, eh, most of them when you are teaching them there is lack of concentration. Eh, I don't know why, what I find is that when you are teaching them concentration is here and there, which makes them not to understand. Most of the progressed learners are always absent from school. Coming to school, if maybe we can talk of the percentage, most of the learners who are not coming to school are progressed learners. If you give them a task that they are supposed to do at home, it may be in the form of homework or assignment; they end up copying from other learners that they know they do better in the class".*

Teacher 4 confirmed:

*Eh, like a said I don't notice that there are progressed learners in my class, I only notice that there are learners who do not follow me at their own pace. So, the challenge would be, if I am giving one example, like when I am teaching when asking questions, I will realize that there are learners who are not answering questions. The challenge is that if I do not give more to them, definitely they*

*will lag behind. When I give them homework, they do not write most of them. But in the class when I give them classwork, I will notice that some learners take time to write. Another challenge is that if I give them work to do at home, laziness and ignorance occur.*

Teacher 5 has this to say:

*They don't write the school tasks, and some of them do not understand how the questions are asked. Most of them end up saying the work is too difficult for them. They seem to have been pushed into a place where they are not coping with the demands of Grade 12 tasks. Due to the problem of failure to understand what is being taught, they always make noise in class. Ah, they are uncontrollable.*

Teacher 6 also expressed:

*We really experience a lot of challenges. They disrupt the class. They also have a negative influence towards other learners. The most serious challenge is that they bunk classes.*

Curriculum advisors who were interviewed also confirmed that educators are experiencing challenges with progressed learners.

One of them has this to say:

*Educators complain that progressed learners are ill-disciplined. Educators are concerned that they do not have support from parents. Educators do not have time to focus on progressed learners because they may fail to cover the content as per ATP. Educators complain that they were not consulted in the development of the policy hence, the policy is complicating their*

*work, by creating difficult working conditions for passing underperforming learners.*

Munje and Maarman (2015:16) assert that educators are faced with many challenges when they teach progressed learners in the classrooms. They struggle to finish programs transferred from the previous grade before commencing with the programs of the current grade. This prevents them from giving the differentiated support that they are expected to give to progressed learners (DBE, 2012:50).

### **Sub-theme 2.3: Inadequate Resources**

Curriculum advisors shared their views regarding the teaching and learning resources at schools. Some of them indicated that there is a challenge of poor distribution of support materials to schools. They also expressed that most educators do not have digital skills to operate and access electronic resources.

One of the curriculum advisors has this to say:

*The major problem is poor or lack of planning by most teachers. Lack of digital skills by most teachers, Additional resources given electronically do not assist most teachers. Some of them do not even have laptops, emails or tablets. They rely on school offices. Those with gadgets struggle with electronic gadgets and complain about data. Poor distribution channel also hinders support. Support materials distributed to schools are delayed in principals' offices.*

School Management Team members also shared their views regarding teaching and learning resources. They indicated that they also have a challenge of lack of resources.

One SMT member explained:

*We also do not have enough resources to assist progressed learners, e.g., classrooms where we can teach them individually.*

Brahmbahatt (2020:65) points out that overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to do differentiation teaching to progressed learners. Brahmbahatt (2020:54) further indicates that some teachers raised a challenge of lack of resources such as classrooms and tangible resources that they can use in the classroom.

#### **Sub-theme 2.4: SMTs' Challenges**

All school management teams expressed their views regarding the challenges they encounter when they support progressed learners in their schools. They all mentioned that they experienced challenges with progressed learners such as absenteeism, failure to attend support programs and lack of parent involvement. Some of them explained that they have no adequate support from curriculum advisors

SMT 1 has this to say:

*Progressed learners do not attend school. For example, after trial examinations, they no longer come to school, they do not even attend extra classes such as spring classes, they do not come, and Progressed learners believe that they are in Grade 12 miraculously. They can't even see that they have been given an opportunity to work hard. They do not participate in class. They don't write want to write. They are like visitors in the class. They just look at educators like they are watching a television drama. These learners make me tired. Another challenge is the lack of parental involvement. Learners do not give their parents letters of invitation to parents meetings at school. We don't even get enough support from curriculum advisors. They often come to us once a year. They do not even address problems of progressed learners.*

SMT 2 said:

*We have a challenge of absenteeism. Progressed learners always absent themselves from school without a valid reason. Most*

*progressed learners seemed not to be ready to be assisted. Many of them do not write their schoolwork. We also do not have enough resources to assist progressed learners such as classrooms where we can teach them individually.*

SMT 3 also said:

*Progressed learners are learners who absent themselves from school. When you give them invitation letters to their parents to discuss their performance so that they support them at home, they don't give them those letters*

In conclusion, all interviewees said they had several obstacles supporting progressed learners in their institutions. They further reported that the Department of Basic Education provided minimal assistance to remedy the issues.

Mogale and Modipane (2021:7) argue that School Management Teams in secondary schools failed to support progressed learners due to a variety of challenges that they were confronted with such as a larger number of classes and ill-disciplined progressed learners.

### **Theme 3: The Perceptions of Participants Regarding the Performance of Progressed Learners in Grade 12**

All circuit managers, curriculum advisors, SMT members, principals and some educators expressed their views regarding the achievement of progressed learners in Grade 12. The following sub-themes were identified: Participation in the classroom, administration of school tasks, coping with Grade 12 content and the effects of progressed learners' performance on Grade 12 results.

#### **Sub-theme 3.1: Participation in the Classroom**

All the educators who were interviewed shared the same experiences of the participation of learners during lesson presentations. They mentioned that progressed learners are very passive in class.

One educator said:

*When you teach progressed learners, eh, most of them when you are teaching them there is lack of concentration. Eh, I don't know why, what I find is that when you are teaching them concentration is here and there, which makes them not understand.*

Another educator has this to say:

*Eh, like I said I don't notice that there are progressed learners in my class; I only notice that there are learners who do not follow as I teach, they have their own pace. So, the challenges would be, if I am giving one example, like when I am teaching when asking questions, I will realize that there are learners who are not answering questions.*

Some School Management Teams also mentioned that progressed learners seem not to understand what they are taught.

One of them has this to say:

*They are like visitors in the class. They just look at educators like they are watching a television drama. These learners make me tired.*

According to Leepo (2015:187), progressed learners lack core abilities since they are aware that they would be progressed at the conclusion of the academic year. Many of them participate passively in the lesson because they do not comprehend what the teacher is teaching.

### **Sub-theme 3.2: Administration of School Tasks**

Educators shared their experiences regarding the administration of tasks. All of them mentioned that progressed learners do not do the school tasks such as homework, assignments and projects.

Educator 1 has this to say:

*They don't write the school tasks, and some of them do not understand how the questions are asked. Most of them end up saying the work is too difficult for them. They seem to have been pushed into a place where they are not coping with the demands of Grade 12 tasks. Due to the problem of failure to understand what is being taught, they always make noise in class. Ah, they are uncontrollable.*

Educator 2 said:

*Most of them do not put more effort in schoolwork as they have that mentality that they will be progressed at the end of the year, because of that attitude they are careless about schoolwork, e.g., they don't care about homework and other activities given to them.*

Educator 2 expressed:

*The challenge is that when you teach progressed learners if you do not check when they are writing, they will copy the answers from others. They encounter a challenge when they write examinations.*

Educator 3 said:

*If you give them a task that they are supposed to do at home, it may be in the form of homework or assignment; they end up copying from other learners that they know they do better in the class.*

Educator 4 confirmed:

*When I give them homework, they do not write most of them. But in the class when I give them classwork, I will notice that some*

*learners take time to write. Another challenge is that if I give them work to do at home, laziness and ignorance occur.*

Progressed learners often show poor work ethics. They refuse to be helped and do not complete given activities. Most of them do not even make any effort to improve their performance (Brahmbahatt, 2020:66). In order for them to perform better in Grade 12, they must be encouraged to put more emphasis on schoolwork. According to DBE (2012:38), learners were not supposed to be progressed to the next grade if they did not comply with the SBA requirements in all the subjects. This has to be emphasized in the lower grades and should be adhered to in all schools.

### **Sub-theme 3.3: Coping with Grade 12 Content**

All educators expressed their views regarding progressed learners and Grade 12 content. All of them mentioned that it is difficult for them to cope with the content taught in Grade 12.

Educator 1 explained:

*To me, I always see them behind the syllabus because they are not active participants in the class, which is very true because how can they cope well whereas they couldn't make it with the previous grade.*

Educator 2 has this to say:

*Progressed learners do not have a link between Grade 11 content and Grade 12 content because they were progressed to Grade 12 without mastering Grade 11 content. Grade 12 is the continuation of the content taught in Grade 11. As for progressed learners, Grades 11 and 12 are the same. They still experience the same difficulty which they have experienced in Grade 11.*

Educator 3 said:

*It is very difficult, it is very difficult for them to cope with the content of the new grade, reason being, most especially this time of the...of the pandemic, the COVID thing. Eh, most of the content they did not master in Grade 11. It becomes very difficult for them because they lack the background information of what is taught in Grade 12. So, this makes us spend a lot of time teaching them the work that they should have been taught in the previous grade. It is very much difficult for them to understand the challenging topics that are there in the new syllabus.*

Educator 4 has this to say:

*Ja, it is very difficult, very much difficult. I will again say lagging behind. It is very much difficult for them to cope because all these grades are covering a syllabus. The syllabus of a previous grade forms a foundation that some of the basics will apply to the following grade. For me as a teacher, it is very much difficult for me to find out learners who do not know the previous subject matter. Definitely there is a challenge. For them to be well acquitted with the syllabus of the previous grade, it requires the teacher to dig dip down, eh, from the previous work and then try to combine the two together.*

Educator 5 said:

*They have got the same knowledge which they did not accomplish in the previous grade. They do not catch up further in the next grade”.*

Educator 6 confirmed:

*Progressed learners do not cope at all with the content of Grade 12. It is difficult for them to understand what they are taught. That is why many of them fail from term one up to term 4.*

Leepo (2015:187) asserts that progressed learners cannot handle academic information. Due to a lack of foundational skills, pupils endure knowledge gaps all the way until the 12th grade. In this sense, they provide a number of challenges for 12th grade educators who are expected to concentrate on completing the Annual Teaching Plans' required themes.

### **Sub-theme 3.4: The Effects of Progressed Learners' Performance on Grade 12 Results**

All principals expressed different views regarding the effects of progressed learners' performance on Grade 12 final results. Some mentioned that the way in which progressed learners perform in the school depends upon the support they received from the school. They indicated that it depends on the commitment of progressed learners to schoolwork. Some mentioned that the performance of progressed learners has a negative impact on Grade 12 final results.

Principal 1 said:

*It affects our Grade 12 results very badly as most of them cannot cope with the demands of the higher grade.*

Principal 2 Said:

*Eh, we are unable to pass all the learners, and when we check, we generally find that, eh, of those learners who fail, almost 50% of them come from the same group, the group of the progressed learners. I will say that our efforts are spent on these kids, on these learners, in such a way that at times one would have thought if we had learners who passed Grade 11 on their own, we have been performing better.*

Principal 3 also said:

*No, we are just fortunate because last year, eh, they all happened to pass. We obtained 100%. If we were to go back to all the years, eh like I said in the beginning, it depends on the commitment of learners. If I take into account, the learners who were in Grade 12 last year, they were very committed which is why they passed. So, they affected our results positively, but going back learners who were actually failing are the progressed ones, but at the same time, some of them getting diplomas and bachelors. That is why I said it depends on the level of commitment.*

In support of this, all circuit managers also shared different views about the effects of the performance of progressed learners to Grade 12 final results. Some mentioned that the effects are very negative while some said it depends on the way in which the school is supporting them.

Circuit manager 1 has this to say:

*It depends on the kind of support they have given to their learners. There are schools that will be having very strong programmes for supporting progressed learners. Those schools will end up making it. So, my observation has been that they are not giving them support. If you are to check, you will find that there might not even be two days, three days wherein the school will be focusing only on progressed learners. or even the educators saying maybe from seven o'clock we will be having morning studies where we will be specifically for progressed learners. It will be just business as usual. They don't find it within themselves to say we must find out exactly what the challenges are with these learners, and then they attack those challenges to make sure they are supported.*

Circuit Manager 2 said:

*Ah, to be honest with you, eh, learners, progressed learners are not performing well because if you check their performance, for example, if a learner is failing in Maths, you find that, that learner has been struggling with Maths maybe from Grade 8. So, what happens is that those learners are not performing well. If we can go back a little bit, we find that the policy of progression, when it was implemented, came along with modularization, where learners are not to write all the subjects. During the time when MEO was no longer there where learners were to write all the subjects, learners were not performing well. More especially in schools where there were a lot of progressed learners.*

Circuit Manager 3 also said:

*Schools with progressed learners are really not performing well. Due to the progression policy, schools which were known to be the best performing schools have dropped. The results of Grade 12 are really bad, especially in our Province, Limpopo. Something has to be done.*

In a nutshell, the results of the interviews with practically all of the participants revealed that the performance of progressed learners was appalling. They even said that poor performance was to blame for the decline in outcomes in Grade 12.

According to Mogale and Modipano (2021:1), the performance of progressed learners led to the fall in national Grade 12 results in 2015 and 2016. The measures used during the implementation of the policy on learning progression have had an impact on the performance of progressed learners and the overall results for Grade 12. Since the implementation of the progression policy in 2013, results for 2015 have declined. Leepo (2015:166) notes that the poor performance of progressed learners led to the high National Senior Certificate failing rate for Grade 12.

## **Theme 4: The Perceptions of Participants Regarding the Intervention Strategies used to improve the Performance of Progressed Learners**

All School Management Teams and curriculum advisors expressed their views regarding the intervention measures used in schools to improve the performance of progressed learners. The following themes were identified: development of intervention strategies, availability of intervention strategies, the implementation of the strategies, types of strategies used in schools and challenges regarding the implementation of strategies.

### **Sub-theme 4.1: Development of Intervention Strategies**

All SMT members shared different views about the development of intervention strategies. Some mentioned that they develop strategies as SMT members and give them to educators to implement. Some indicated that they tell educators to develop strategies that they will use in their subject, and thereafter they monitor as SMT.

SMT 1 has this to say.

*We make sure that we plan for necessary intervention strategies to improve the performance of progressed learners.*

SMT 2 Said:

*We give copies of schedules to educators so that they identify their progressed learners and write down their names specifically to their subjects so that they can come up with strategies to improve the performance and submit to the SMT and thereafter we monitor the implementation.*

On the other hand, curriculum advisors who were interviewed also expressed their views regarding the intervention strategies used in schools to enhance the achievement of progressed learners. They explained that they suggested strategies to schools and also develop strategies and send them to schools.

One of the curriculum advisors said:

*Teachers have to draw individual plans they will follow based on the suggestions discussed for supporting such learners. I also develop activities for supporting progressed learners and send them to schools for teachers to administer them.*

According to DBE (2012:39), all schools with progressed learners were supposed to develop their own intervention strategies to enable all schools, districts and circuits to develop and implement additional learning opportunities. In support of this, George (2019:73) states that the School Management Teams were expected to take the responsibility of developing their own intervention strategies for supporting progressed learners that they have in their own schools. However, each school came up with its own way of developing such strategies.

#### **Sub-theme 4.2: Availability of Intervention Strategies**

All curriculum advisors expressed different views regarding the availability of intervention strategies to improve the performance of progressed learners in schools. Some mention that schools don't have. Some mentioned that they were there.

Curriculum advisor 1 has this to say:

*"No, many schools don't have intervention strategies for progressed learners".*

Curriculum advisor 2 said:

*Yes, all schools have intervention strategies because it is a requirement for them to develop strategies to help progressed learners. Schools are expected to submit a list of progressed learners together with the strategies to the circuit at the end of the year. i.e., during promotion and progression period.*

Curriculum advisor 3

*“No, few schools have intervention strategies to support, i.e., progressed learners”.*

According to Leepo (2015:59), many schools lack programs designed to assist students who have been progressed without satisfying promotion standards. This adds to the poor performance of progressed learners.

### **Sub-theme 4.3: The Implementation of Intervention Strategies**

All Curriculum advisors expressed the same view regarding the implementation of intervention strategies in schools. They all mentioned that schools fail to implement intervention strategies.

Curriculum advisor 1 has this to say:

*They don't implement because they don't have these intervention strategies.*

Curriculum advisor 2 said:

*Implementation is a challenge. Teachers have to implement intervention strategies by following the programmes drawn either by the school or the circuit. Most teachers put the strategies in their planning files for compliance.*

Curriculum advisor 3 confirmed:

*As I have indicated before, educators do not have time to implement the strategies. What they were supposed to do is to profile all learners and the subjects that are affected are identified. They give learners a baseline informal assessment of affected subjects to identify the content gap. Item analysis is done after marking and administration of the informal assessment. The educator will be able to pick up challenging topics and develop a recovery plan to cover them. Learners are given more informal*

*activities in the form of classwork, homework and assignments to foster them to reach the level of the rest of the learners that are normally promoted. Extra lessons, e.g., morning, afternoon and Saturday lessons were supposed to be used.*

According to Munje and Maarman (2016:195), the policy on learner progression does not specify the implementation chain in terms of roles, monitoring, and assessment of the policy's effectiveness in specific schools. Prisloo (2003:189) notes that the Department of Basic Education did not offer uniform implementation tactics, monitoring, or assessment mechanisms.

#### **Sub-theme 4.4: Strategies used in Schools**

SMT members expressed their views regarding the intervention strategies that they use in schools. They all mention different strategies that they use such as extra lessons, winter and spring classes, parent involvement and motivation. However, they indicated that they do these to all learners who are in Grade 12.

SMT 1 has this to say:

*The intervention strategies that we use are morning studies, afternoon studies, Saturday classes and winter classes. It means that Grade 12 obviously do not have school holidays. All these intervention strategies are not only for progressed learners. We include all Grade 12 learners in our school. We also encourage learners to group themselves with those who are the best achievers. In our school, we do not have individual strategies for progressed learners only. We don't have time for individual attention because we are in a hurry to finish the syllabus.*

SMT 2 said:

*The intervention strategies that we are told to use are differentiation teaching, and parent involvement in assisting their children with their schoolwork. Due to time constraints, we are not using*

*differentiation teaching. We teach these learners, progressed learners in a normal teaching classroom. What we usually do for progressed learners in our school is that we encourage educators to give them more written work, but mostly you find that many of them do not have written homework. We also do not have constant motivation, but we don't always motivate them alone. The motivational speakers always address all our Grade 12 learners.*

SMT 3 confirmed:

*We involve their parents through meetings at the beginning of the year so that we ensure that their children were not promoted but progressed. We also explain to them that it means that they also give their children support while they are at home. We give copies of schedules so that they identify their progressed learners and write their names specifically to their subjects so that they can come up with the strategies to improve their performance and submit them to the SMT to monitor their implementation.*

To summarize, practically all of those who were interviewed admitted during the course of the conversation that they were not applying the differentiated approach as required by the policy. Some of them claimed that the only reason they were unable to concentrate on progressed learners was because of time constraints.

According to DBE (2012:38), differentiated support as part of the intervention strategy should be done only to learners who have been identified as low achievers and learners who are at risk. However, schools were not focusing only on progressed learners due to a number of challenges. DBE (2012:40) emphasizes that progressed learners need differentiated support to enable them to improve their performance in their current grade.

#### **Sub-theme 4.5: Challenges Encountered during the Implementation of Intervention Strategies**

All SMT members expressed their views regarding the challenges they encountered during the implementation of intervention strategies. They all mentioned different challenges such as lack of time, absenteeism of progressed learners and shortage of classrooms.

SMT 1 has this to say:

*The intervention strategies that we were told to use are differentiation teaching, and parents' involvement in assisting their children. Due to time constraints, we are not using differentiation teaching. We teach these learners, progressed learners in a normal teaching classroom. We also do constant motivation, but we don't always motivate them alone. The motivational speakers always address all our Grade 12 learners together.*

SMT 2 said:

*We have a challenge of absenteeism. They absent themselves without a valid reason. Most of the progressed learners seem not to be ready to be assisted. We also do not have enough resources to assist progressed learners.*

SMT 3 also said:

*They do not even attend extra classes such as spring classes. They do not come. They really do not attend.*

Some of the curriculum advisors mentioned that the challenge with the implementation of strategies is that most educators fail to use suitable methods for different learners. And that they have a heavy workload. In this regard, they are tempted to treat all learners in the same way.

One of the curriculum advisors said:

*Implementation is a challenge. Most teachers do not differentiate their teaching strategies to different learners but one blanket to cover all learners.*

Another curriculum advisor said:

*Schools that have intervention strategies fail to implement them because educators do not cope with the load of work they are having. They don't have time to develop progressed learners' activities and also engage them. These results in progressed learners treated the same way as learners who were normally promoted.*

In conclusion, almost all of the participants interviewed for this study did not adequately implement the intervention strategies intended for progressed learners. Some of them indicated that the strategies they created were written only for compliance and not used to support progressed learners.

Schools face challenges when implementing intervention strategies to assist progressed learners progressed learners. Some of the schools have a large number of progressed learners in the classroom, which makes it difficult to assist them individually (Brahambahatt, 2020:54). Many of the progressed learners absent themselves from school without a valid reason, hence the school expected them to be at school and show their efforts at all times.

### **Theme 5: Perceptions of Participants Regarding the Support Provided to Progressed Learners**

All curriculum advisors and circuit managers expressed their views regarding the support provided to progressed learners in schools. The following sub-themes were identified: Departmental support to progressed learners, support by School Management Teams and parental support.

### **Sub-theme 5.1: Departmental Support to Progressed Learners**

Circuit managers who were interviewed expressed their views regarding the support they offer to progress learners. They all mentioned that the kind of support that they give to progressed learners was inadequate. Some also mentioned that they did not focus on progressed learners only.

Circuit Manager1 has this to say:

*I already mentioned the issue of galvanizing support from parents. Eh, calling them together at a central venue, and then what I do during Term 1, I will get into DDD and then extract the learner chart. Learner chart indicating learner by learner, the subject that the learner has passed and those that they have failed. Eh, eh, we will be saying you see this group of learners, these are those learners who fail three subjects, these are learners who failed two subjects and they are progressed. So, we want you to understand the position of your child so that you give us support. When we say we want them to come during the weekend, you have to push your child to come for such kinds of a lesson. We also galvanize support from stakeholders, 'misanda'. Eh, we had another meeting at one of our secondary schools where it was not only focusing on progressed learners, because even those we may think they have passed, they passed our internal examination. It is not a standard that we can stand up and say indeed these papers were standardized. So, we were like taking all of them as progressed learners so what we will be doing is checking all of them. Checking how many are failing, how many subjects and then we target on those that we are realizing maybe after term 1 test, then we will be calling progressed learners who did make it in term 1 and then we support them.*

Circuit Manager 2 said:

*Eh, what we do, we encourage the schools to profile those learners so that they must be able to identify them in their subjects together with their performance. We also support progressed learners in a support session. In a support session, as a circuit, we group them together in one place, where we encourage them. Sometimes we find a motivational speaker and learners are motivated to pass. We prefer young people who can inspire them to pass the subjects, but eh, generally, the progressed learners are given minimal support. I can say we are giving them insufficient support as a department or as a circuit.*

Circuit Manager 3 also said:

*let me say as a circuit we are trying to support progressed learners but let me say we are not doing enough. We sometimes call them together with their parents to discuss their performance. We have the plan to meet them every quarter but due to time constraints, we find that we happen to meet them only once a year. One other thing is that we do not address them alone as I said earlier. Truly speaking, as I can put it that way, the support that we give them is not enough.*

According to DBE (2012:40), the Department of Basic Education has to make sure that they offer full support to progressed learners in different schools, through monitoring the implementation of intervention strategies and ensuring that all schools across the province comply with the policy on learner progression.

### **Sub-theme 5.2: Support by School Management Teams**

Curriculum advisors expressed their views regarding the support provided in different schools to progressed learners. They mentioned that schools were not supporting progressed learners.

Curriculum advisor 1 had this to say:

*“There is no support at all”.*

Curriculum advisor 2 said:

*Support for progressed learners is not adequate regardless of the support by the subject advisor, circuit and district. Most teachers do not differentiate their teaching strategies for different learners. One blanket covers all learners.*

Curriculum advisor 3 also said:

*The support is not satisfactory. In most schools’ learners are not given sufficient support. They are taught and engaged in the teaching and learning process the same way as the normally promoted learners. Progressed learners are often not profiled, and the results are that they are not even known by educators. This contributes to underperformance in schools within the circuits.*

George (2019:44) asserts that progressed learners lack attention and academic assistance in schools. They are not targeted for intervention strategies to try and address the problem areas that led to a repetition of the previous grade.

### **Sub-theme 5.3: Parental Support**

All educators expressed their views regarding parental support. They all mentioned that parents do not give support to their children who passed without meeting promotion requirements.

Educator 1 has this to say:

*They do not support them very well, but the challenge is how they can support them if they cannot take the work back home to their parents? Some of them do not bother themselves taking the work to their parents because of the same reason that they care less.*

*So how can parents support them as they will not know that they have an assignment or a project?*

Teacher 2 said:

*Very few parents are able to support through checking and signing their children's homework books. Most progressed learners do not even show or tell their parents that they have a task to do. Parents also do not ask their parents whether they have a task to write. During parents meetings, many of progressed learners' parents do not even attend meetings. As teachers, we always invite parents to come and see how their children are doing. Only parents of learners without problems often come. They do not even come and collect their children's report cards which are issued on a quarterly basis. They only wait for the final results as teachers, we need parents to come to school and check the work of their children so that they can help them. I remember consulting another parent about the progress of the learners, the mother was shifting the blame to the father, and some learners' parents do not even take school matters very seriously. At the end of the year, the same parents will be blaming the school for not teaching their learners or for failing their learners. When we check the attendance registers for parents' meetings they are not there. They don't attend parents' meetings or even send someone to come and attend.*

Educator 3 has this to say:

*Eh, most of them do not support them as such. I don't know whether they do not know the content, eh, or maybe there are some reasons behind I don't know for now. What I have seen is that most progressed learners are not getting the support they should get from their parents. Eh, I still remember in our school we will be having the meeting with those learners who are progressed, when we try to ask them whether they woke up their children to*

*read, they don't. You find that they watch TV with their kids without telling them that they should stop watching TV and go and study. They do not do that follow-up. The follow-up is done by us at school, where maybe we may be telling them they must wake up at this time and study until such time, but as for their parents, they don't at all. Most of them do not get the support that they should be getting.*

Educator 4 said:

*It is obvious that when we give them work to do at their home, we expect that they are staying alone. They are staying with their parents. There are two categories of parents. There are parents who do not do anything about their children's schoolwork, and those who do something. I want you to understand that there are learners in my situation who are not staying with their parents. They stay with their brothers and sisters. So that situation is challenging because you will find that those learners are not getting support in any way.*

Educator 5 explained:

*Most of them end up not writing the task at home due to a lack of support from their parents. When then force them to write their homework in class, as they lack assistance from their parents. When parents are called to the meetings, most of them delegate someone to come. Some of them do not even attend meetings. Many of them come only to collect the final examination report cards.*

Educator 6 confirmed:

*Many of the progressed learners' parents do not support their children with schoolwork. Many of them are illiterate. They know nothing about school matters. Those who know are ignorant.*

According to Brophy (2006:24), schools should form partnerships with the parents of learners who have learning barriers. The relationship should be maintained through communication, inviting them to visit the classrooms and providing their children with instructional materials to use in support of their children at home. On the other hand, Brahambhatt (2020:65) argues that progressed learners lack parental support, which leads them to think that no one is ready to help them.

## **Theme 6: Perception of Participants Regarding Learner Progression Policy**

All educators, SMT members, principals, curriculum advisors and circuit managers, expressed their views on the policy on learner progression. The following sub-themes were identified: Educators' attitude towards learner progression, parents' understanding of the policy on learner progression, principals' feelings about learner progression policy, progressed learners' morale and the views of SMT members about learner progression.

### **Sub-theme 6.1: Educators' Attitude Towards Learner Progression**

Educators expressed different views towards the policy on learner progression. Almost all educators were negative towards the policy while very few were positive towards it. Those who were against the policy mentioned the following reasons: It promotes laziness on the part of learners, it increases dropouts in Grade 12, it demoralizes learners, it promotes poor quality results in Grade 12 final examinations, and it also increases the numbers of underperforming secondary schools. Those who were positive mentioned that it helps learners to find themselves in Grade 12, which can motivate them to work hard.

Educator 1 had this to say:

*I condemn this policy because at the end of the year these learners are going to be a problem. More progressed learners in Grade 12*

*mean more failure rate or many learners who will get certificates or diplomas.*

Educator 2 had this to say:

*This policy is very painful to the grade because during the final examination there is no progression in Grade 12. I myself am fortunate because I mark Grade 12 examinations. During marking, we don't mark the answer sheets for progressed learners separately. This policy seems to be working for learners up to Grade 11 only. It is very painful to Grade 12 subject educators because when your subject underperformed, the blame is shifted to educators. Educators are now perceived as being lazy even if we are working very hard, even during the weekends.*

Educator 3 said:

*It is a very good thing to me. I realized very late that it is a good thing to give some learners who could never get the chance of being in the next grade. Previously we had learners who failed Grade 11 two times, three times, four times and five times. They ended up dropping out, but this time we find that there is a chance of going to Grade 12, even though many of them are not performing very well. There are two, or three learners who are performing well. I remember we had a learner who was progressed in Grade 11 but got a bachelor pass in Grade 12. It was a very good bachelor more than those who passed by themselves. I think it is a good policy for learners, even though to educators as we are always results orientated, we will say this policy must be scrapped because learners are not passing.*

Educator 4 has this to say:

*Hey, when the policy was passed, not knowing the details of it and the purpose, I thought eh, this policy had come to help us, but ... eish! I don't know. I would use very strong words and demoralize some learners for them to understand. No matter when it came there were delighted that they were going to the other grade, but when it comes to acquiring learning, it is killing our system because learners do not fit in the grades they are put into. This policy definitely is to entice the young ones to be delighted to go to school. If they knew, no matter what they do at school, they would have been allowed to repeat the grade. I wish we could go back to a system wherein it's a pass and if you fail you fail. This policy condones laziness because learners no longer do what they are supposed to do. Much work is left to the teacher. Really is chaotic and that is how I feel. I don't feel good about this policy.*

Educator 5 said:

*Ah, it goes without saying that learners who are to be progressed are to be thrown on the streets. It is like the Department of Basic Education is scrapping these learners out of the system. If a learner is to be pushed until Grade 12 and end up not passing, it means learners progression is drawing us back to the apartheid era.*

Educator 6 has this to say:

*The policy is good on the learner's side, but only when they are not to repeat a grade. At the end of the year, learners will then realize that it was not as they thought. My feeling is that this policy must be revised.*

Learner progression policy is an insidious practice that creates problems for teachers who must face students who know that teachers do not have the authority to demand hard work (American Federation of Teachers, 1997:5). According to Leepo

(2015:186), the policy of progressing students who have failed is not working for both learners and teachers. It should be totally scrapped.

### **Sub-theme 6.2: Parents' Understanding of the Policy on Learner Progression**

The principal who was interviewed expressed their views regarding the understanding of parents towards learner progression policy. They all mentioned parents differ. There are those with partial understanding who do not understand it at all, and who only want to see their children moving to the next grade.

Principal 1 had this to say:

*Parents are engaged by way of attending meetings where results are, and reports given to them. They are made to be engaged in supporting their children.*

Principal 2 said:

*From where I come from, the parents have very minimal understanding of this policy. To them, they only see their children who must just move from one grade to another. You see this when they even demand that their children be progressed even though they do not meet the requirements. Despite the fact that as principals, we call parents' meetings wherein we try to explain all these. The parents remain resilient in wanting their children to just move from grade to grade without meeting those requirements.*

Principal 3 also said:

*In reality, there are some parents who understand what they should do and those who do not understand. To an extent one may say yes, one may say no in the sense that some are doing it that way and some are not. So, we are partly saying they understand, though not all of them.*

George (2019:51) states that many parents fail to offer the support that is required by schools because they are uneducated. They know nothing about schoolwork. However, they rely on school educators to provide the requisite support to progressed learners. On the other hand, the Department of Basic Education assigned parents of progressed learners with the responsibility of controlling and monitoring learners' tasks and formal readiness for formal tasks, attending meetings, arranging extra tuition in subjects where possible, and ensuring that their children complete all assigned School Based Tasks and visiting the school to obtain information on the progress of their children (DBE, 2012:50).

### **Theme 6.3: Principals' Feelings about Learner Progression Policy**

All circuit managers expressed their views regarding the attitude of principals towards the policy on learner progression. They all mentioned that principals have a negative attitude towards learner progression. They are afraid that progressed learners will ruin Grade 12 results and lead them to underperforming schools.

Circuit Manager 1 has this to say:

*They feel bad about it, though they are the ones who progressed those learners. They normally tend to blame the department that they have this policy of learner progression and now our learners are passing without getting enough marks, but they are their learners. If there is something that we can say is a cause for progressed learners, the school, the system but with the school is the one that is eh, breeding progressed learners.*

Circuit Manager 2 said:

*Honestly speaking, principals have got a negative attitude towards this policy because to them is just a burden, it will give them extra work and it will also pull down their final results in Grade 12. As you know, these learners are just progressing to Grade 12 without passing, and then one other thing is that these learners are very*

*slow. We can classify them as slow learners. They are also over-aged. So, principals are really afraid to progress them to Grade 12 knowing that the performance of their schools will decline.*

Circuit Manager 3 also said:

*Principals don't like this policy at all. They are afraid that their schools will underperform at the end of the year. They don't want to face the consequences of an underperforming school.*

According to Leepo (2015:187), principals oppose the policy of progressing learners who do not match promotion standards since many progressed learners do not attend additional courses and do not work with educators. Principals anticipated the Department of Basic Education to provide them with the skills necessary to cope with progressed learners, but this was never the case.

#### **Sub-theme 6.4: Progressed Learners' Morale**

All educators expressed their views regarding the morale of progressed learners. They all mentioned that progressed learners' morale is very low.

Educator 1 said:

*Their morale is very low because even some learners laugh at them when they know they were not supposed to be in the same grade especially when they give wrong answers.*

Educator 2 has this to say:

*Their morale is very low. During the year they don't care about anything. They only become serious at the end of the year when they are about to write the final examination, which is too late to cover. They usually absent themselves from school. When you ask them what you have taught them, they know nothing, and they do not do corrections.*

Educator 3 said:

*Their morale is very low seriously. They always look down upon themselves. Some of them cannot even answer any question in the class.*

Educator 4 explained:

*Ja, a learner who is lagging behind definitely has low morale. You also find that there is no motivation, and there is no role model for them. Eh, ja, the morale is very low. So...so in general, this is what makes them not delight in what they do at school.*

Educator 5 had this to say:

*When progressed learners go to the next class, they feel very happy, but when you look at what they are doing, it really does not match with the standard of the next class. They don't write the schoolwork, knowing that next year they are automatically going to be progressed to another grade.*

Educator 6 confirmed:

*Honestly speaking their morale is very low. They have low self-esteem. They feel embarrassed after writing the tasks.*

Brahmbahatt (2020:64) asserts that progressed learners lose interest in schoolwork; they are demotivated to learn because they do not understand what they are learning. Leepo (2015:61) adds that progressed learners lose focus, and they therefore display disciplinary behavior which impacts negatively on their performance.

### **Sub-theme 6.5: The Views of SMT Members**

All curriculum advisors expressed different views regarding the policy on learner progression. Some mention that learner progression is bad. Others mention that it is not good on the side of the teacher, but it is good on the learners' side because they will be moving to the next grade with their age cohort.

SMT1 has this to say:

*This policy has failed. It is an F for fail. It does not help learners. I do not support it, seeing the way in which progressed learners are lazy. It's like they think they will pass even if they do not put effort. I do not support it at all. Learners have to pass when they meet the requirements so that they can be responsible in the next grade.*

SMT 2 said:

*According to me, the policy of learner progression is not good teachers because it increases teachers' workload. To learners, it is good on the way that they will be moving to another grade though they are not available when we want to assist them.*

SMT 3 also said:

*It is good and bad on the other side. It is good because it assists where the learners may end up as dropouts. It is bad because some learners pass without enough knowledge. Some of them relax without studying knowing that they will progress yet no progression in Grade 12.*

In conclusion, the majority of the people polled in this study disliked the learner progression policy. Only a small percentage of respondents said that they fully grasped the policy's intent and believed that it would be successful if implemented as intended.

The American Federation of Teachers (1997:5) indicates that the policy of learner progression should be revised because it demoralizes and overload teachers it also creates problems for the learners who are deluded into thinking that achievement doesn't count, who are increasing the number of uneducated citizens unprepared to contribute to the economic and civic life of the nation.

### **5.3 PRESENTATION OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH DOCUMENTS ANALYSIS**

Documents were analysed in one of the schools in one of the circuits in Vhembe East District. The school had a high enrolment of progressed learners in the circuit. Documents such as learner attendance registers, School Management Team minutes, school policies, departmental policies and circulars and quarterly schedules were studied. All the documents provided information on the way in which schools were supporting progressed learners. However, no details of the school were included in the biographical data as it is possible that it could be identified, and the principle of confidentiality was broken.

The findings indicated that schools are faced with various challenges such as lack of resources, absenteeism of progressed learners, inadequate training and lack of parental support when they assist progressed learners. In support of this, Leepo (2015:187) indicates that the Department of Basic Education provided schools with policies, circulars and guidelines that need to be followed when progressing learners to the next grade. According to DBE (2017:2), the Department of Basic Education developed guidelines to assist schools in the implementation of the policy on the learner, to ensure that schools implement the policy appropriately. On the contrary, findings also indicated that progressed learners pose different challenges to teachers and School Management teams. Some of the challenges identified when analyzing documents were absenteeism, poor performance, improper strategies for assisting progressed learners and poor management of progressed learners by School Management Teams.

These findings were supported by the departmental policies and circulars that were found in the school. The attendance registers proved that many of the learners who absent themselves from school without a valid reason were progressed learners.

According to the Community Agency for Social Enquiry and Joint Education Trust (2007:10), it was clear that the districts together with the provinces play a limited role in monitoring learner attendance and absenteeism while reports are forwarded to them. Generally, the reports are forwarded to the Provincial Department of Education with little or no analysis of the information being undertaken at district level.

The school policy and the minutes of the School Management Teams demonstrated that there is no strategy to manage and assist advanced learners. There are no effective intervention measures in place to boost the academic performance of progressed learners in their schools. All schools with progressed learners in the FET band are required by DBE (2012:38) to design intervention methods to help progressed learners in order to improve their performance.

The 12th grade quarterly schedules confirmed that the performance of progressed learners is inadequate. This shows that they contributed to the low performance of schools as measured by the Grade 12 final results. Leepo (2015:166) suggests that progressed learners in the Further and Education Training (FET) band are the latest occurrence that has had the most influence on the results of the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate.

#### **5.4 INTEGRATION**

This section integrates qualitative and documents analysis results. Both qualitative and documents analysis were collected together to determine if there is coherence, contrast or some combination. Cresswell (2009:213) refers to this contrast as corroboration, contradiction, or cross-validation. Qualitative data was collected through individual interviews with circuit managers, curriculum advisors, School Management Team members, principals and educators. Document analysis data was collected through analysis of departmental policies and circulars regarding

progressed learners' attendance registers, School Management Team minutes, quarterly schedules and school teaching and learning policy.

#### **5.4.1 Corroboration**

Both educators and School Management Team members interviewed in this study mentioned that the rate of absenteeism in progressed learners was very high. They also indicated that progressed learners absent themselves from school without valid reasons. This idea is corroborated in the attendance registers that were analyzed in the school. Learners who were found to be always absent from school in the attendance registers were those who were progressed from Grade 11 to Grade 12. Some principals and educators indicated that progressed learners' performance in Grade 12 had a negative impact on the National Senior Certificates results. This idea was corroborated in the literature reviewed. Principals also complain that the massive number of progressed learners in their schools ruined their Grade 12 final results. Quarterly schedules that were analyzed proved that many of the learners who were failing were progressed learners.

Both SMT members and educators who were interviewed in this study complained that progressed learners were giving them challenges in their schools. They indicated that they were not committed to schoolwork. This idea is corroborated in the literature review.

Principals, SMT members and educators were complaining about the lack of parent involvement in the support of progressed learners. They indicated that parents did not attend meetings when they were invited to schools to discuss the performance of their children.

Both curriculum advisors and School Management Teams indicated that educators were the ones to develop intervention strategies that they will use when they teach progressed learners. This idea is corroborated in the minutes of the SMT members. The minutes proved that the SMT members discussed intervention strategies which were developed by subject teachers for Grade 12.

### **5.4.2 Confirmation**

The results that progressed learners were neglected by the Department of Basic Education and schools were confirmed by the response given by the circuit managers, curriculum advisors, and SMT members and educators proved that schools were not implementing the intervention strategies that they developed to support progressed learners. Circuit managers mentioned that the district and the circuits were giving progressed learners minimal or insufficient support. They also indicated that they were not particularly focusing on progressed learners alone. SMT members also indicated that their focus was not on progressed learners alone due to lack of resources. They also indicated that they had inadequate time to focus on progressed learners only.

Educators indicated that they were not teaching progressed learners alone because they were never trained to teach a class with progressed learners together with those learners who have straight passes.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher described the characteristics of the participants and their responses. The characteristics of the school wherein documents have been analysed are not included. Report findings were presented in different themes. The discussion of themes is also presented. However, results from circuit managers and curriculum advisors revealed that progressed learners were not getting support in schools. They indicated that schools were not giving progressed learners individual or differentiated support.

All principals indicated that progressed learners were giving them problems in different schools. However, they indicated the need to manage them for the betterment of the results. All SMT members mentioned that they were faced with different challenges when they were assisting progressed learners in their institutions. They also indicated that curriculum advisors need to help them to address the challenges they face when assisting progressed learners.

Educators expressed the need to be trained so that they can teach progressed learners effectively in class. They also indicated that they did not have enough time to focus on progressed learners.

## CHAPTER 6

### SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examined the intervention measures that can be employed to assist progressed learners in order to improve their performance in Grade 12. In order to do this, there was a comprehensive debate of the support provided to progressed learners during the implementation of the policy on learner progression in various schools in the Vhembe East District. After the debate, the research methodology, data presentation, analysis, and interpretation were presented. This chapter summarizes the research under the subheadings of summary, limits, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

#### 6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTIGATION

The way in which the achievement of progressed learners in Grade 12 should be strengthened is an important issue which involves many steps to be followed by all the relevant stakeholders. However, the success of this relies on the responsibility which must be done by the principal and the School Management Teams in monitoring the support of progressed learners in schools.

##### 6.2.1 The Policy on Learner Progression in South African Schools

The policy on learner progression was implemented in all schools throughout the provinces of South Africa (cf.3.), with the aim of minimizing the high rate of dropout and maximizing school retention. However, the experiences of international countries such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Japan where learner progression has been implemented were discussed (cf.3.2). The purpose of the policy on learner progression in international countries was similar to that of South Africa. The difference lies in the implementation process. The requirements for promotion, including the subjects offered in Grade 12, were also dealt with (cf.3.3).

## **6.2.2 How the Study Responded to Research Questions**

### **Research Question 1: What is the meaning of progressed learners in terms of Acts and Policies in the South African context?**

Interviewed participants expressed their knowledge of policies pertaining to progressed learners. They indicated that progressed learners are learners who progressed from grade to grade without meeting the promotion requirements. However, grade to grade in this study refers to Grade 11 to Grade 12. The literature reviewed confirmed that when learners qualify for progression from Grade 11 to Grade 12 in the Further Education and Training (FET) band, they should have met certain requirements (cf.3.3).

### **Research Question 2: How are progressed learners performing in Grade 12?**

Almost all principals, School Management Team (SMT) members and educators indicated that progressed learners were not performing well in Grade 12. However, some principals indicated that it depends on the way progressed learners are managed in a particular school. This means that if they are well-managed, they can perform better. The literature reviewed confirmed that the performance of progressed learners ruined the 2014 National Senior Certificate results throughout South African Schools (cf.3.4).

### **Research Question 3: What are the challenges encountered in schools in assisting progressed learners in Grade 12?**

Principals, School Management Teams and educators indicated that they encountered many challenges when they were supporting progressed learners in their schools. Challenges such as lack of commitment of progressed learners in their schoolwork, lack of parental participation in their kids' schoolwork and educators' lack of knowledge of teaching progressed learners in a normal class were common in all schools. The literature reviewed confirmed that there were many problems experienced along the way in supporting progressed learners (cf.3.5).

#### **Research Question 4: Which strategies may be used to ameliorate the low performance of progressed learners?**

Curriculum advisors and School Management Teams indicated that intervention strategies such as differentiated teaching, extra classes, motivation and parent involvement are the best measures that can be used to ameliorate the achievement of progressed learners. However, SMT members also indicated that they could not implement them due to the challenges they were faced with. The literature reviewed confirmed that there are different strategies that can be used to strengthen the achievement of progressed learners in Grade 12 (cf.3.6).

#### **6.2.3 Summary of the Literature Review**

In order to explore the measures to enhance the achievement of progressed learners in Grade 12, a literature study was undertaken. The emphasis throughout the study was on the way in which progressed learners can be assisted in order to strengthen their performance (cf.3.6).

The literature research revealed that promotion prerequisites for progression must be met. Not all students who did not match the promotion criteria were to be progressed. However, learners must achieve progression criteria such as passing at least three courses, including Life Orientation, regularly attending school, and completing all School Based Tasks (SBA), which includes the failed subjects (cf. 3.3.2).

The literature review showed that the Department of Basic Education stipulated that all schools should identify all learners who should be progressed and then develop intervention strategies to support them (cf.3.5). Different strategies that can be used to enhance the performance of progressed learners include ongoing assessment, flexible grouping, early identification of learner needs close monitoring strategies and remedial teaching strategy proved to be the best strategies used to assist learners (cf.3.6).

The procedures to be followed in the identification of learners to be progressed were explored. However, the identification process should be done in consultation with the subject educators and the parents or guardians of the learners concerned (cf.3.3.3).

The literature review indicated that progressed learners should be given curriculum support at the district, circuit, the school and by parents at home(cf.3.3.4). Moreover, the district had to assist schools in crafting the intervention strategies and the improvement plans for specific subjects. The district should thereafter offer ongoing training to schools and educators on teaching social behavioral factors to progressed learners.

The literature reviewed also revealed that there were challenges that were encountered in schools when assisting progressed learners. Educators were failing to provide individual or specialized support due to limited time and the amount of work they had in Grade 12. However, many teachers were not qualified to teach progressed learners as they are learners with learning barriers (cf.3.5).

The school should ensure that they identify learners' performance and the action taken to improve learner performance and offer training to parents on how they should support their children at home. Parents were also expected to arrange for additional tuition in identified subjects based on the way in which their children are performing.

### **6.3 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The themes discovered through qualitative research are synthesized in this section and combined with prior research and the theory review in chapters three and five. The findings relate to strengthening the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 in Vhembe East District.

#### **6.3.1 Attitude towards Learner Progression**

Both School Management Teams and educators seem to have a negative attitude towards the learner progression policy (cf. 5.7). They seem not to understand or

accept the purpose of the learner progression policy. Their perceptions of the policy of learner progression are that the policy frustrates learners and overburdens educators (cf.5.7). This indicates that the learner progression policy was not discussed with the educators before it was implemented in schools. The success of the implementation of the learner progression policy could depend on the positive attitude of stakeholders such as principals and educators which could be triggered through the involvement in the formulation of policies (Mogale & Modipane, 2021:7).

- **Recommendations**

It is recommended that before the implementation of any educational policy, the Department of Basic Education should discuss it with both principals and educators. The views of principals and educators should be considered. According to Mogale and Modipane (2021:8), teachers should be involved in the formulation of policies rather than being expected to simply implement them. Furthermore, Mogale and Modipane (2021:7) add that lack of understanding of stakeholders lead to a negative attitude towards the effectiveness of the learner progression policy.

### **6.3.2 Parent Involvement**

The outcomes of this survey indicated that there was a dearth of parental support for progressed learners at various institutions (cf.5.4.1). Participants in this survey lamented that parents do not assist their children in the learning process. Leepo (2015:166) provides evidence that parents do not urge their children to attend school. The reason for the lack of assistance is that parents do not grasp what is expected of them in terms of academic support for their children. Participants responded that many of them are illiterate. Other variables, such as child-headed households, inadequate meeting attendance, and neglect, contributed to parental involvement's ineffectiveness (cf.5.4.1). This research found that parental supervision was lacking.

- **Recommendations**

It is recommended that parents or guardians as stakeholders should be prepared thoroughly before the implementation of policies which affect them. They should be taken through training on the roles and responsibilities they have to play towards particular policies. If they are capacitated, challenges encountered during the implementation of educational policies will be minimized. Moreover, schools should maximize partnerships with parents that have mutual respect and trust. Durisic and Bunijavac (2017:10) indicate that schools need to create a welcoming climate where parents feel that they are accommodated in order to overcome the barriers preventing parent involvement.

### **6.3.3 Assisting and Monitoring Progressed Learners**

The findings of this study revealed that both the Department of Basic Education and schools did not provide sufficient support and monitoring to progressed learners. School Management Teams and educators articulated that they were unable to monitor and support progressed learners due to heavy workload, learner behavior, limited resources and inappropriate time (cf.5.6). In this regard, they regarded the policy on learner progression as an addition to problems they are already facing in schools. Contrary to this, Weiner (2006:12) states that teachers and principals fail to monitor and support progressed learners due to a lack of commitment and resistance to change. However, lack of adequate support and monitoring led to mediocre performance in Grade 12 in many schools.

- **Recommendations**

The Department of Basic Education should enforce support of progressed learners at the district level, circuit level and the school level. According to DBE (2012:41), progressed learners should be given differentiated support. Measures should be taken for all schools that fail to adhere to the policy on learner progression. Furthermore, the Department of Basic Education has to address all the challenges that impair the monitoring and support of progressed learners in schools. Weiner

(2009:14) states that adequate support and communication among stakeholders are some of the requirements for the effective implementation of the progression policy.

#### **6.3.4 Pre-training and In-service Training**

The outcomes of this study showed that educators were not trained to teach progressed learners. All interviewed educators expressed the necessity to be trained on how to teach in a class with both progressed learners and learners who have met the requirements of the promotion. They also indicated that the only training they know was done to principals and some SMT members, which is done once a year towards the final examination based on the identification of progressed learners. However, the lack of adequate training led to flaws that occurred during the identification process (cf.5.3).

- **Recommendations**

The Department of Basic Education should conduct proper training for all the stakeholders before the implementation of educational policies, to minimize mistakes that occur during policy implementation. Training for policies such as the learner progression policy should be done continuously, mostly on a quarterly basis to equip stakeholders with more knowledge of what they need to do, especially in policies such as the learner progression policy which determine the pass and fail of a learner, which may have a negative impact on the learner's future. In support of this, Bayat et al. (2014:42) indicate that some learners' futures are doomed because of this progression policy (cf.5.3).

#### **6.3.5 Content Gaps**

The outcomes of this study proved that progressed learners experience a content gap in the new grade which is Grade 12. All educators expressed that progressed learners struggle with the content of Grade 12 since they failed to meet the requirements of promotion to Grade 11. Educators also complained about the difficulties they experience when they teach progressed learners. They also indicated that progressed learners do not understand the content in Grade 12. They

were progressed to the following grade without mastering the content of the grade, and it becomes difficult for Grade 12 teachers to make them to the same standard as the others. There is a gap between the content for Grade 11 and Grade 12 which needs to be filled. Leepo (2015:166) indicates that the curriculum is results orientated; teachers have to work hard to finish the syllabus in time.

- **Recommendations**

It is desirable that the Department of Basic Education should employ remedial teachers who are trained to teach learners with learning barriers, who are capable of spotting the needs of progressed learners and manage to bridge the content gap that exists in progressed learners. Remedial teachers will be able to work one on one or in small groups. Educators without remedial teaching are unable to bridge the content gap.

### **6.3.6 Progressed Learners' Morale**

The findings of this study indicate that progressed learners' morale is very low. They have a negative attitude and a very low satisfaction level towards schoolwork. Educators indicated that they lack confidence in their schoolwork due to their inability to acquire the promotion requirements of the last grade (cf.5.7). In this regard, they are less eager to give their best, which leads to poor performance, failure to write the school tasks and high absenteeism (cf.5.7).

- **Recommendations**

It is recommended that every Provincial Education Department design uniform intervention strategy that should be adopted by all schools in their respective provinces to assist in improving the performance of progressed learners, with the goal of enhancing their achievements in Grade 12. In addition to this, the Department of Basic Education in each nation should devise procedures to ensure that the implementation is followed thereafter. Varma (2018:1) offers an argument in support of this position, stating that the authority to enforce the laws and the

regulations is vested in the Minister of Basic Education. This view is supported by the previous statement.

#### **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to investigate the intervention strategies that can be utilized to improve the performance of Grade 12 progressed learners. However, there are certain limitations of this study that must be taken into account.

The modest number of participants was the first constraint. Only three circuit managers, three curriculum advisors, three School Management Teams, three principals, and six educators were selected via purposeful sampling. The selection of these individuals was based on their willingness to share their experiences; hence, different findings may be achieved from various participants in the same district.

A second drawback is that the research was restricted to a single district, Vhembe East. The study's generalizability can only be extended to populations that are comparable to the sample population.

A third constraint is that progressing learners vary from school to school and according to the support they receive at a certain school. In one school, progressed learners may be supported in a manner distinct from that of another. Much of the performance of progressed learners hinges on how they are managed in school.

The fourth constraint is that the researcher collected data solely through individual interviews and document analysis. Other data collection approaches could have been utilized in the investigation of the issue. Nonetheless, the acquired data provided information that could be utilised for future research.

Some of the intended participants' reluctance and resistance is the fifth constraint. This necessitated a participant change for the researcher. Participants may have submitted different information than that which was obtained.

The sixth constraint is that only one school in the Vhembe East District was included in the document analysis. The school was chosen on the grounds that it had a large number of progressed learners in Grade 12. Other schools in various districts may have different results in this regard.

However, this limited concept of study broadens the comprehension of progressed learners who can be strengthened in 12th grade.

## **6.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The researcher proposes the following research priorities related to improving the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 in the Vhembe East District.

There is a need for additional study on interventions that can improve the performance of progressed learners. The influence of progressed learners on teaching and learning in schools would be an additional relevant area of study. The concept of differentiated instruction should be taught to all educators during in-service training. Principals questioned for this study underlined the necessity for all SMT members to have skills and methods for the management of progressed learners. Participants also responded that all educators instructing progressed learners should be qualified in Remedial Education.

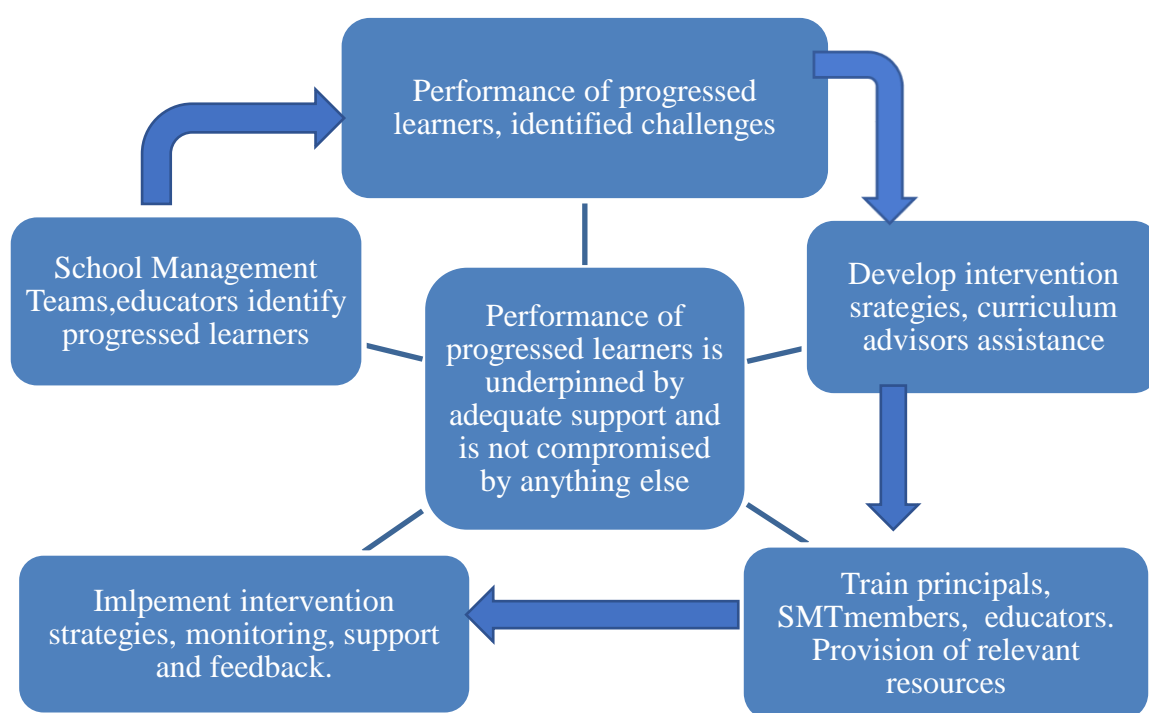
Concerning the significance of the policy to learner progression, additional research is required.

## **6.6 CONCLUSIONS**

The performance of progressed learners can be strengthened if progressed learners are effectively and adequately supported by all the relevant stakeholders such as the Department of Basic Education at the district level, circuits, schools and by the parents or guardians of the learners. Both the principals and educators need continuous in-service training on teaching and managing progressed learners in their schools. The subject advisors need to support all educators on lesson presentation and the development of intervention strategies to assist progressed learners. There

is a need for enough classrooms wherein progressed learners can be taught separately. More educators with remedial teaching qualifications should be deployed in all schools to assist with teaching progressed learners. Principals, SMT members and educators felt that progressed learners were burdening them, and they felt the Department is overloading them. The suggested model is intended to assist principals, SMT members and educators to effectively monitor and teach progressed learners in their schools. One educator mentioned that the learner progression policy is scrapping the learners out of the education system. He further said that the progression of learners is drawing or moving us back to the apartheid era.

## 6.7 PROPOSED MODEL FOR PROGRESSED LEARNERS AND PROCEDURES



**Figure 6.1: Proposed Model for Progressed Learners and the Plan of Action**

### 6.7.1 Progressed Learners' Procedures

The following proposed model describes a series of inputs that can have a relationship with the improvement of the performance of progressed learners, which

can take place inside and outside the classroom within the context of the school. However, this is flexible and needs schools to adjust them depending on the kind of progressed learners they have.

### **6.7.2 Compliance and Support**

All schools must apply the policy of learner progression, which must be approved and understood by all stakeholders, including principals, SMT members, educators, and the parents or guardians of learners, since they will be affected by it. To obtain aid and compliance, it is essential, however, to garner support from all of these stakeholders from the start.

The first stage is for the school to adopt a favorable attitude toward the learner progression policy and to hold a meeting to identify progressed learners in cooperation with the learners' parents (DBE, 2012:40).

They must discuss all of the progression requirements so that all stakeholders understand them before the identifying process begins. They must follow all progression processes; the principal then submits the schedules to the circuit; and the school maintains a record of all progressed learners. The school must determine their needs in specific subjects that caused them to fail to fulfill the promotion requirements.

### **6.7.3 Outside the School Support**

Curriculum advisors and circuit managers are overseers of the schools under their jurisdiction. They should verify all schedules to see if identification was correctly done. Subject advisors work closely with the educators at the school. They should assist educators in developing common intervention strategies that must be used by all schools and assist by monitoring the implementation of the strategies. Frequent visits to schools by curriculum advisors will encourage educators to implement the strategies they have developed. The school should also establish partnerships with the communities such as families, businesses and churches to support progressed learners. The community can assist in addressing the behavioral challenges of

progressed learners. The community can also help the school by supplying the relevant resources that the school needs.

Additionally, the school may coordinate with subject matter experts (retirees teaching recognized difficult topics) to provide assistance. Everyone benefits when schools and community groups collaborate to boost learning. The partnership may assist to enhance, support, and even change individual partners, resulting in greater program quality, more effective resource use, and better alignment with objectives and curriculum (Harvard Family Research Project, 2010:18).

#### **6.7.4 Develop Interventions for Progressed Learners**

The Principal and the SMT assist educators to develop intervention strategies. The developed intervention strategies will assist the SMT and the educators to know how they will support progressed learners. This will be done to all learners who are identified as progressed learners. The SMT should thereafter monitor the implementation of all the strategies using the monitoring tool. Educators need to be lenient sometimes and spend extra time with progressed learners after class. They can create a makeup test or arrange a time when they can write a missed or failed test. Educators need to do whatever they can to let progressed learners know that they are to work towards overcoming learning barriers together with them. Continuous feedback makes a will to develop lifelong learning skills.

Interventions can be done in different ways in order to improve the probability that progressed learners will be positively influenced. Interventions should be aimed at developing SMT, educators and progressed learners.

#### **6.7.5 Implement Strategies, Train and Provide Support to Both Educators and Progressed Learners**

Informal and formal meetings amongst SMT members and educators to discuss progressed learners should be held. However, there are important aspects which can bring the success of intervention strategies which are: Pre-training sessions for

both SMT and educators and feedback sessions after the training session (Chipman, Roy & Naylor, 2001:9).

Some of the meetings should involve progressed learners and their parents, talking about the progress of learners and the challenges encountered. During such meetings, parents should be asked to suggest solutions to problems. Educators should have support activities they plan on a daily basis. Progressed learners should be grouped according to identified needs. However, one-on-one sessions with progressed learners need to be conducted to discuss individual problems. For the success of the intervention strategies, all conducted activities should be reported on a monthly basis.

#### **6.7.6 Common Challenges during Interventions and some Suggestions**

- Poor attendance in meetings- clear communications and procedures upfront. Addressing issues right away in real-time. Always praise good attendance and acknowledge improvement.
- Lack of parental support- training sessions for parents need to be conducted. Set expectations and create a website or WhatsApp group for parents. Make constant contact with the parents by sharing progress.
- Inappropriate feedback- make feedback continuously. Tie feedback to day-to-day tasks and make feedback a two-way street.
- Lack of commitment in progressed learners- progressed learners need to be motivated before the intervention sessions start.
- No proper planning- School Management Teams need to develop action plans with dates and activities.
- Lack of patience on the educators' side- educators need to always practice empathy, and SMT should motivate and praise educators who do extra work.

- Overloaded educators- additional staff members should be employed to assist with progressed learners.

## 6.8 FINAL THOUGHT

Improving the performance of progressed learners requires adequate support for progressed learners. You may encounter the following challenges and questions when using intervention strategies to support progressed learners: There are no correct or incorrect replies. However, there are suitable correct answers that can be applied when assisting progressed learners.

- Which strategy improves the performance of progressed learners the most effectively?
- How frequently should progressed learners be supported? Daily, weekly, or monthly?
- Should there be a separate class for progressed learners?
- What will the percentage of performance enhancement be?
- When will the assistance for advanced learners end?
- How should advanced students be evaluated?
- Should increased performance be recognized with certificates, medals, or recognition?

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS- INTERVIEWS FOR EDUCATORS

All educators answered the following questions based on the interview schedule. The interview was an individual interview. Five were recorded and one was a written interview.

#### TEACHING PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN CLASS

- **How do you teach progressed learners in your class; do you teach them separately?**

##### Teacher 1

I put more focus on them in a way of engaging them in extramural activities in class, giving them responsibilities such as class prefect.

##### Teacher 2

It is not as easy as one can think. My expectations as a teacher are that I want those learners to perform like other learners and that in 12 I expect to get 100% in my subject, in other words, all learners should pass. It means that after teaching, I always give them a task to write. They must start writing in my presence. I am lucky because I teach Tshivenda Paper 3 in Grade 12. I make sure that I correct their mistakes so that they must not fail even their Home Language.

What is painful is that we teach them together. If you teach ask learners whether they understand what you are teaching, those who do not have a problem are the ones that will answer yes. Progressed learners will never say that they do not understand. Those without problems will tell you as a teacher that they did not understand. Progressed learners fail to understand between understanding and not understanding. We teach them together. If I am not patient, I will just continue and

teach, focusing only on those who understand. Progressed learners will remain as they are.

### **Teacher 3**

Eh, in my class there is no...in fact when they are there, I do not teach them separately, I just teach, eh, each lesson when we have combined them. There is no specific say specific attention that I give at first when I give them. I just teach them together. And then I see if maybe after an assessment whether they understood the concept or not. The reason being that we are pressed with time. You cannot pay too much attention to the progressed learners as their understanding is very slow, eh because if you do that you won't finish the prescribed syllabus in time.

### **Teacher 4**

Ja, first of all, I, eh, in my situation I do not recognize that there are progressed learners because they are not specified or grouped in one class or rather put I where I will be able to notify them. They are just grouped together with those who have passed normally. Eh, my teaching goes like this. I will have a thorough preparation of my lesson plan and make sure that everything that is needed is there with me. What I do because I would definitely obviously notice that in every class, eh, if pupils do not understand in the same way, I will categorize those who would understand me after a while or after a lesson. I will make sure that in every lesson I do explanations and elaborations in different ways. So, those who are intelligent in the class will receive that at my first explanation, but as I am going on with other elaborations of the very same aspect, definitely some who had not understood the first one will get or catch up as I am doing further elaborations. I will give different examples. I make sure that all learners in the class are concentrating. Whosoever is lacking behind, I will concertize making sure that they all are concentrating.

### **Teacher 5**

Eh, progressed learners we teach them together with other learners, those who have met a pass, following the pacesetter as it is planned.

## **Teacher 6**

Teaching progressed learners is not simple at all. In our school, we just teach them together with other learners. There is no time to concentrate on them.

## **CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED WHEN TEACHING PROGRESSED LEARNERS**

- **What challenges do you encounter when you teach progressed learners?**

## **Teacher 1**

Most of them do not put more effort into schoolwork as they have that mentality that they will be progressed at the end of the year, because of that attitude they are careless about schoolwork, e.g., they don't care about homework and other activities given to them.

## **Teacher 2**

The challenge is that when you teach progressed learners if you do not check when they are writing, they will copy the answers from others. They encounter a challenge when they write examinations.

## **Teacher 3**

When you teach progressed learners, eh, most of them when teaching them there is a lack of concentration. Eh, I don't know why, what I find is that when you are teaching them concentration is here and there, which makes them not understand. Most of the progressed learners are always absent from school. Coming to school, if maybe we can talk of the percentage, most of the learners who are not coming to school are progressed learners. If you give them a task that they are supposed to do at home, it may be in the form of homework or assignments; they end up copying from other learners that they know they do better in the class.

#### **Teacher 4**

Eh, like a said I don't notice that there are progressed learners in my class, I only notice that there are learners who do not follow, they do at their own pace. So, the challenge would be, if I am giving one example, like when I am teaching when asking questions, I will realize that there are learners who are not answering questions. The challenge is that if I do not give more to them, definitely they will lack behind. When I give them homework, they do not write most of them. But in the class when I give them classwork, I will notice that some learners take time to write. Another challenge is that if I give them work to do at home, laziness and ignorance occur.

#### **Teacher 5**

They don't write the school tasks, and some of them do not understand how the questions are asked. Most of them end up saying the work is too difficult for them. They seem to have been pushed into a place where they are not coping with the demands of Grade 12 tasks. Due to the problem of failure to understand what is being taught, they always make noise in class. Ah, they are uncontrollable.

#### **Teacher 6**

We really experience a lot of challenges. They disrupt the class. They also have a negative influence towards other learners. The most serious challenge is that they bunk classes.

## **COPING WITH THE CONTENT OF THE NEXT GRADE (GRADE 12)**

- **How do progressed learners cope with the content of the next grade?**

### **Teacher 1**

I always see them behind the syllabus because they are not active participants in the class, which is very true because how can they cope well when they couldn't make it with the previous grade?

### **Teacher 2**

Progressed learners do not have a link between Grade 11 content and Grade 12 content because they were progressed to Grade 12 without mastering Grade 11 content. Grade 12 is the continuation of the content taught in Grade 11. As for progressed learners, Grades 11 and 12 are the same. They still experience the same difficulty which they have experienced in Grade 11.

### **Teacher 3**

It is very difficult, it is very difficult for them to cope with the content of the new grade, the reason being, most especially this time of the...of the pandemic, the COVID thing. Eh, most of the content they did not master in Grade 11. It becomes very difficult for them because they lack the background information of what is taught in Grade 12. So, this makes us spend a lot of time teaching them the work that they should have been taught in the previous grade. It is very much difficult for them to understand the challenging topics that are there in the new syllabus.

### **Teacher 4**

Ja, it is very difficult, very much difficult. I will again say lacking behind. It is very much difficult for them to cope because all these grades are covering a syllabus. The syllabus of a previous grade forms a foundation that some of the basics will apply to the following grade. MAs a teacher, it is very much difficult for me to find out

learners who do not know the previous subject matter. Definitely, there is a challenge. For them to be well acquitted with the syllabus of the previous grade, requires the teacher to dig dip down, eh, from the previous work and then try to combine the two together.

### **Teacher 5**

They have got the same knowledge which they did not accomplish in the previous grade. They do not catch up further in the next grade.

### **Teacher 6**

Progressed learners do not cope at all with the content of Grade 12. It is difficult for them to understand what they are taught. That is why many of them fail from term one up to term 4.

## **PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S SCHOOLWORK**

- **How do parents of progressed learners support their children with the school tasks such as projects, assignments and homework?**

### **Teacher 1**

They do not support them very well, but the challenge is how they can support them if they cannot take the work back home to their parents. Some of them do not bother themselves taking the work to their parents because of the same reason that they care less.

So, how can parents support them as they will not know that they have an assignment or a project?

## Teacher 2

Very few parents are able to support through checking and signing their children's homework books. Most progressed learners do not even show or tell their parents that they have a task to do. Parents also do not ask their parents whether they have a task to write. During parents' meetings, many of progressed learners' parents do not even attend meetings. As teachers, we always invite parents to come and see how their children are doing. Only parents of learners without problems often come. They do not even come and collect their children's report cards which are issued on a quarterly basis. They only wait for the final results. As teachers, we need parents to come to school and check the work of their children so that they can help them. I remember consulting another parent about the progress of the learners, the mother was shifting the blame to the father, and some learners parents do not even take school matters very seriously. At the end of the year, the same parents will be blaming the school for not teaching their learners or for failing their learners. When we check the attendance registers for parents' meetings they are not there. They don't attend parents' meetings or even send someone to come and attend.

## Teacher 3

Eh, most of them do not support them as such. I don't know whether they do not know the content, eh, or maybe there are some reasons behind I don't know for now. What I have seen is that most progressed learners are not getting the support they should get from their parents. Eh, I still remember in our school we will be having the meeting with those learners who are progressed, when we try to ask them whether they woke up their children to read, they don't. You find that they watch TV with their kids without telling them that they should stop watching TV and go and study. They do not do that follow-up. The follow-up is done by us at school, where maybe we may be telling them they must wake up at this time and study until such time, but as for their parents, they don't at all. Most of them do not get the support that they should be getting.

#### **Teacher 4**

It is obvious that when we give them work to do at their home, we expect that they are staying alone. They are staying with their parents. There are two categories of parents. There are parents who do not do anything about their children's schoolwork, and those who do something. I want you to understand that there are learners in my situation who are not staying with their parents. They stay with their brothers and sisters. So that situation is challenging because you will find that those learners are not getting support in any way.

#### **Teacher 5**

Most of them end up not writing the task at home due to a lack of support from their parents. When then force them to write their homework in class, as they lack assistance from their parents. When parents are called to the meetings, most of them delegate someone to come. Some of them do not even attend meetings. Many of them come only to collect the final examination report cards.

#### **Teacher 6**

Many of the progressed learners' parents do not support their children with schoolwork. Many of them are illiterate. They know nothing about school matters. Those who know are ignorant.

### **IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR TEACHERS**

- **How were you trained in teaching progressed learners in a normal class?**

#### **Teacher 1**

I was trained to engage them in every period in a way of asking those questions during the lesson, or when I ask questions to the whole class, even if they do not raise their hands, I have to point at them to try answering those questions.

## **Teacher 2**

We do attend workshops where we are told what we need to do. We have not received training, but we are encouraged to assist them by being patient with them. Assisting progressed learners needs patience. We used to train ourselves. I usually call learners with problems to come to my office after school so that I can assist them. Progressed learners do not come to me for assistance. Only learners without a problem do come.

## **Teacher 3**

Ah, there was no specific training that I can say I got, eh, that I should teach like this to those progressed learners. Like I said, we don't teach progressed learners separately. This means that when I am teaching, I just teach them both as they are all learners who are in Grade 12. There is no specific training that I received. In some of the workshops that we attended, what they tell us is that we need to have individual teaching of progressed learners, not in the form of training, just as advice that this is what you can do to learners who are progressed learners. We definitely do not do individual teaching because a normal lesson has only 30 minutes. You cannot do this because if you start doing it you are going to waste time.

## **Teacher 4**

Jah, I never received any formal training concerning that. It is the awareness that I develop when teaching learners and find that some are lagging behind whom I group in the category of progressed learners. I will suspect that these are progressed learners if I see that they are not at the same pace as others. So, there was no training, but with me, I train different groups of learners in my class. I come up with a way of handling them and come with a mechanism to make sure that they also understand what other learners understand as I am teaching.

### **Teacher 5**

The training that we received is only one week a year. During those trainings, don't focus only on progressed learners. What we were told is that we have to divide the learners and give them work according to their capabilities. Some are supposed to be given low-level questions. Those who are intelligent are supposed to be given challenging questions.

### **Teacher 6**

One cannot call it training, our school principals attend meetings wherein they are told to tell us that we have to come up with ways of assisting progressed learners.

## **PROGRESSED LEARNERS MORALE**

- **How is the morale of progressed learners?**

### **Teacher 1**

Their morale is very low because even some learners laugh at them when they know they were not supposed to be in the same grade especially when they give wrong answers.

### **Teacher 2**

Their morale is very low. During the year they don't care about anything. They only become serious at the end of the year when they are about to write the final examination, which is too late to cover. They usually absent themselves from school. When you ask them what you have taught them, they know nothing, and they do not do corrections.

### **Teacher 3**

Their morale is very low seriously. They always look down upon themselves. Some of them cannot even answer any questions in class.

### **Teacher 4**

Ja, a learner who is lagging behind definitely has low morale. You also find that there is no motivation. Eh, there is no role model for them. Eh, ja, the morale is very low. So... in general, this is what makes them not delight in what they do at school.

### **Teacher 5**

When progressed learners go to the next class, they feel very happy, but when you look at what they are doing, it really does not match the standard of the next class. They don't write the schoolwork, knowing that next year they are automatically going to be progressed to another grade.

### **Teacher 6**

Honestly speaking their morale is very low. They have low self-esteem. They feel embarrassed after writing the tasks.

## **FEELINGS ABOUT THE POLICY ON LEARNER PROGRESSION**

- **What does the policy of learner progression mean to you?**

### **Teacher 1**

I condemn this policy because at the end of the year these learners are going to be a problem. More progressed learners in Grade 12 means more failure rate or many learners who will get certificates or diplomas.

## Teacher 2

This policy is very painful to the grade because during the final examination there is no progression in Grade 12. I myself am fortunate because I mark Grade 12 examinations. During marking, we don't mark the answer sheets for progressed learners separately. This policy seems to be working for learners up to Grade 11 only. It is very much painful for Grade 12 subject educators because when your subject underperformed, the blame is shifted to educators. Educators are now perceived as being lazy even if we are working very hard, even during the weekends.

## Teacher 3

It is a very good thing for me. I realized very late that it is a good thing that is giving some learners who could never get the chance of being in the next grade. Previously we had learners who were failing Grade 11 two times, three times, four times and five times. They ended up dropping out, but this time we find that there is a chance of going to Grade 12, even though many of them are not performing very well. There are two, learners who are performing well. I remember we had a learner who was progressed in grade ii but got a bachelor pass in Grade 12. It was a very good bachelor more than those who passed by themselves. I think it is a good policy for learners, and not for educators as we are always results orientated, we will say this policy must be scrapped because learners are not passing.

## Teacher 4

Hey, when the policy was passed, not knowing the details of it and the purpose, I thought eh, this policy had come to help us, but .... eish! I don't know. I would use very strong words and demoralize some learners for them to understand. No matter when it came there were delighted that they were going to the other grade, but when it comes to acquiring learning, it is killing our system because learners do not fit in the grades they are put into. This policy definitely is to entice the young ones to be delighted to go to school. If they knew, no matter what they do at school, they would have been allowed repeating the grade. I wish we could go back to a system

wherein its pass and if you fail you fail. This policy condones laziness because learners no longer do what they are supposed to do. Much work is left to the teacher. Really is chaotic and that is how I feel. I don't feel good about this policy.

### **Teacher 5**

Ah, it goes without saying that learners who are to be progressed are to be thrown on the streets. It is like the Department of Basic Education is scrapping these learners out of the system. If a learner is to be pushed until Grade 12 and ends up not passing. It means learners' progression is drawing us back to the apartheid era.

### **Teacher 6**

The policy is good on the learner's side, but only when they are not to repeat a grade. At the end of the year, learners will then realize that it was not as they thought. My feeling is that this policy must be revised.

## **APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT - INTERVIEWS FOR SMTs**

All three School Management Team Members answered the following interview questions based on the interview schedule. Two of them were written and one was recorded.

### **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM ROLES DURING THE PROGRESSION OF LEARNERS**

- **What is your role during the implementation of learner progression in your school?**

#### **SMT 1**

Ah, my role is to check whether learners are meeting the requirements of progression even if they have not met the promotion requirements. We also check the number of years in a phase. We check whether learners qualify for the conditions laid down by the policy itself.

#### **SMT 2**

My role is to plan for the progression of learners to enable educators to select learning opportunities in the short term. We also supervise educators when they progress learners making sure we plan for the necessary intervention strategies to improve the performance of progressed learners.

#### **SMT 3**

Firstly, we identify learners who are repeating the grade or phase. After that we check if those learners are meeting the progression requirements, i.e., passing at least four subjects. These learners are the learners who must progress according to the policy. Then we make an indication of progressed learners on the hard copy and make a submission to the SASAMS officials who will then ensure that these learners progress to the next grade.

## **INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT PROGRESSED LEARNERS**

- **What are the intervention strategies you use in your school to improve the performance of progressed learners?**

### **SMT 1**

The intervention strategies that we use are morning studies, afternoon studies, Saturday classes and winter classes. It means that Grade 12 obviously do not have school holidays. All these intervention strategies are not only for progressed learners. We include all Grade 12 learners in our school. We also encourage learners to group themselves with those who are the best achievers. In our school, we do not have individual strategies for progressed learners only. We don't have time for individual attention because we are in a hurry to finish the syllabus.

### **SMT 2**

The intervention strategies that we are told to use are differentiation teaching, and parent involvement in assisting their children with their schoolwork. Due to time constraints, we are not using differentiation teaching. We teach these learners, progressed learners in a normal teaching classroom. What we usually do for progressed learners in our school is that we encourage educators to give them more written work, but mostly you find that many of them do not have written homework. We also do not have constant motivation, but we don't always motivate them alone. The motivational speakers always address all our Grade 12 learners.

### **SMT 3**

We involve their parents through meetings at the beginning of the year so that we ensure that their children were not promoted but progressed. We also explain to them what it means so that they also give their children support while they are at home. We give copies of schedules so that they identify their progressed learners and write their names specifically to their subjects so that they can come up with

strategies to improve their performance and submit to the SMT to monitor their implementation.

## **SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETINGS ABOUT PROGRESSED LEARNERS**

- **How often do you hold meetings on how to assist progressed learners?**

### **SMT 1**

Eh, end of term after analysis of the results, which means that it is four times a year. Thereafter we go to have meetings with all educators to analyze the results.

### **SMT 2**

In our school, we have meetings to talk about progressed learners twice a year. That is, the beginning of the year when we identify them and at the end of the year when they are about to write the final examination.

### **SMT 3.**

Quarterly.

## **AGENDAS IN MEETINGS ABOUT PROGRESSED LEARNERS**

- **How do you often talk about in meetings of that nature?**

### **SMT 1**

Mostly we talk about the way in which we can improve the performance of progressed learners. Like in Physical Science subject, we talk about the way in which we can train them to learn to define terms

## **SMT 2**

We usually talk about their progress. We also talk about the involvement of individual learners in their schoolwork. We discuss the feedback on their progress and make a plan for their next term.

## **SMT 3**

We address the progressed learners' performance of a particular term, checking whether the strategies employed are assisting them to improve. We also come up with other strategies to improve progressed learners' performance. We come up with dates to report quarterly performance to their parents. We also identify motivational speakers to talk to them.

## **IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR SMT MEMBERS**

- **What training was offered to you before you start progressing learners from Grade 11 to Grade12?**

## **SMT 1**

The circuit managers call us every year before we release the schedules. They call us as School Management Teams to talk about the way in which we should progress learners. Another thing is that after the submission of schedules to the circuit, there are some changes that are reflected in the schedules if we have retained a learner who was supposed to be progressed. The training that we receive is that of being told the requirements and the conditions to follow when we implement the policy. This is done once every year.

## **SMT 2**

We attend workshops wherein they will be telling us how to progress learners. Once more we are also trained on how we should support progressed learners.

### **SMT 3**

We attend workshops on the requirements for promotion and progression.

### **CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED**

- **What challenges do you encounter when you support progressed learners?**

### **SMT 1**

Progressed learners do not attend school. For example, after trial examinations, they no longer come to school, they do not even attend extra classes such as spring classes, they do not come, and progressed learners believe that they are in Grade 12 miraculously. They can't even see that they have been given an opportunity to work hard. They do not participate in class. They don't write want to write. They are like visitors in the class. They just look at educators like they are watching a television drama. These learners make me tired. Another challenge is the lack of parental involvement. Learners do not give their parents letters of invitation to parents' meetings at school. We don't even get enough support from curriculum advisors. They often come to us once a year. They do not even address the problems of progressed learners.

### **SMT 2**

We have a challenge of absenteeism. Progressed learners always absent themselves from school without a valid reason. Most progressed learners seemed not to be ready to be assisted. Many of them do not write their schoolwork. We also do not have enough resources to assist progressed learners such as classrooms where we can teach them individually.

### **SMT 3**

Progressed learners are learners who absent themselves from school. When you give them invitation letters to their parents to discuss their performance so that they support them at home, they don't give them those letters.

### **FEELINGS ABOUT LEARNER PROGRESSION POLICY**

- **How do you feel about this policy on learner progression?**

#### **SMT1**

This policy has failed. It is an 'F' for fail. It does not help learners. I do not support it, seeing the way in which progressed learners are lazy. It's like they think they will pass even if they do not put effort. I do not support it at all. Learners have to pass when they meet the requirements so that they can be responsible in the next grade.

#### **SMT 2**

According to me the policy of learner progression is not good for teachers because it increases teachers' workload. To learners, it is good on the way that they will be moving to another grade though they are not available when we want to assist them.

#### **SMT 3**

It is good and bad on the other side. It is good because it assists where the learners may end up as dropouts. It is bad that some learners pass without enough knowledge. Some of them relax without studying knowing that they will be progressed yet no progression in Grade 12.

## APPENDIX C: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS- INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Three principals answered the following questions as per the interview schedule. Two of them were recorded and one was written

### PRINCIPALS' KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNER PROGRESSION POLICY

- **What is your understanding of the policy on learner progression?**

#### Principal 1

It is a policy that directs how progression should be managed, i.e., how those learners are to be supported as well.

#### Principal 2

The policy on learner progression is the policy promulgated by the department to subtract the movement of learners through phases, and which means if a learner has already overstayed in a phase that learner automatically necessarily qualifies for this policy. For the GET band, it has to do with learners moving with their age cohort, but for the FET band, it deals with learners moving in terms of meeting the requirements. When a learner is progressed, then that particular learner must have a number, must have already failed a grade, and is failing again for the second time. That learner must pass English and three other subjects. That learner will then progress to the other grade.

#### Principal 3

Eh, according to my understanding of this policy is that a learner is not supposed to repeat a grade twice. If a learner happens to repeat a phase twice it means such a learner needs to be progressed. That is my understanding of this policy.

## **SUPPORT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

- **How does the Department of Basic Education support you in the implementation of the policy on learner progression?**

### **Principal 1**

The Department of Education gives us support as to know how we can have programmes and strategies to support learners who progressed.

### **Principal 2**

Firstly, they issue summarized instructions on how the learners would be progressed. The departmental programme of SASAMS assists us in terms of eh, finding those learners who have repeated the grade but when schedules are verified, the department deploys curriculum advisors to circuits who advises us on, on whether the learner is meeting the requirements.

### **Principal 3**

What they usually do, is circulars are sent to us as to how we are supposed to implement this policy. There are times when we also have to go and attend workshops. At the end of each year, by the time where we are supposed to release results, when we submit the schedules to the circuit office, they make sure we attend the workshops before we implement it on learners so that we must not actually make a mistake on this policy.

## **PARENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR ROLE**

- **How do parents understand their role in the implementation of learner progression policy?**

### **Principal 1**

Parents are engaged by way of attending meetings where results are, and reports given to them. They are made to be engaged in supporting their children.

### **Principal 2**

From where I come from, the parents have a very minimal understanding of this policy. To them, they only see their children who must just move from one grade to another. You see this when they even demand that their children be progressed even though they do not meet the requirements. Despite the fact that as principals, we call parents' meetings wherein we try to explain all these. The parents remain resilient in wanting their children to just move from grade to grade without meeting those requirements.

### **Principal 3**

These learners are supposed to be supported, and when we say they should be supported, you will remember that education is now a societal issue, which means that parents as one of the stakeholders are supposed to play their role, so in this regard what they should do they need to support these learners. If they need to go to an extent of getting a private tutor, they need to do so. All in all, they should understand that this policy is to assist their children so that they must not actually decide to leave school, because when the department decides on this policy, it was a matter of trying to curb learners who may decide to leave school because each time they will be repeating a grade. So, parents should all times support their children. They must actually try to work together with educators and principals. In reality, there are some parents who understand what they should do and those who do not understand. To an extent one may say yes, one may say no in the sense that some

are doing it that way and some are not. So, we can partly say they understand, though not all of them.

## **PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12**

- **How do learners that you progressed in Grade 11 perform in Grade 12?**

### **Principal 1**

They are performing very badly in our school.

### **Principal 2**

From my observation, their performance is different. There are learners who had a chronic underperformance trend before they were progressed, but when they were progressed their performance changed. I have seen learners who were progressed from Grade 11 to Grade 12 even obtaining bachelor passes. I have seen some of them not even posing challenges. If they are managed, and are well supported they end up passing well.

### **Principal 3**

Eh, mostly one may say we also have learners who are progressed, depending on how serious they are. You find a learner getting a diploma or a bachelor. One may say those who are serious, they happen to pass at the end of the year. Those who are not serious, remain behind, they fail. All in all, if we are to check the level of commitment of these learners who have been progressed, as compared to straight passes. You will see that they are the ones that are lagging behind. Very few of them are serious about the work.

## COMMUNICATION ABOUT LEARNER PROGRESSION POLICY

- **How was the learner progression communicated to you?**

### Principal 1

The Department of Education sent us circulars as principals on many policy issues, including the policy on learner progression. Meetings are held to share more light on learner progression policy.

### Principal 2

Ah, I only saw it through circulars, and eh, then there was a meeting on the mediation of that...circular. Then our understanding grew as we were implementing it on an annual basis.

### Principal 3

It was communicated to us through circulars and mostly they further explain it to us through meetings and workshops.

## THE IMPACT OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS TO GRADE 12 RESULTS

- **How does the performance of progressed learners affect Grade 12 final results in your school?**

### Principal 1

It affects our Grade 12 results very badly as most of them cannot cope with the demands of the higher grade.

## **Principal 2**

Eh, we are unable to pass all the learners, and when we check, we generally find that, eh, of those learners who fail, almost 50% of them come from the same group, the group of the progressed learners. I will say that our efforts are spent on these kids, on these learners, in such a way that at times one would have thought if we had learners who passed Grade 11 on their own, we have been performing better.

## **Principal 3**

No, we are just fortunate because last year, eh, they all happen to pass. We obtained 100%. If we were to go back to all the years, eh like I said in the beginning it depends on the commitment of learners. If I take into account, the learners who were in Grade 12 last year were very committed which is why they passed. So, they affected our results positively, but going back learners who were actually failing are the progressed ones, but at the same time, some of them getting diplomas and bachelors. That is why I said it depends on the level of commitment.

## **CHALLENGES IN SCHOOLS WHEN SUPPORTING PROGRESSED LEARNERS**

- **What challenges do you encounter in your school when you support progressed learners?**

## **Principal 1**

Usually, they do not attend support programmes, organized for them. Very few would respond to improvement programmes.

## **Principal 2**

Firstly, in the background of those learners, the majority of them you find that they come from child-headed homes. Either because they are orphans, either because their parents are working far away from home, or the children are left on their own. When you want to support them there is nobody to help you on the side of the

parents. Another challenge that we phase is that when we call them to come and attend differentiation support classes, they do not come. Some of the progressed learners do not have a purpose.

### **Principal 3**

Ah, the challenges are that of commitment. For instance, if you say you want to teach them in the afternoon, you may see only half of them are coming. An example in place, before they write a trial examination, the circuit manager decided that on a Saturday, all learners who were progressed were supposed to be taught at a certain school in our circuit. Of the 37 learners who were supposed to go there, only 27 happen to go there as we are trying to help thank some of them are reluctant.

## **APPENDIX D: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS - INTERVIEWS WITH CURRICULUM ADVISORS**

Three curriculum advisors answered the following questions as per the interview schedule. All of them were written interviews.

### **CURRICULUM ADVISORS' ROLE IN LEARNER PROGRESSION POLICY**

- **What is your role during the implementation of the policy on learner progression?**

#### **Curriculum Advisor 1**

Our role is to train principals on steps to follow when progressing learners. We also verify promotion mark schedules to see whether progression was implemented correctly. If there are mistakes, schools are requested to correct the mistakes and resubmit the schedules.

#### **Curriculum Advisor 2**

My role is to monitor and support teachers in the implementation of the curriculum. I do this by providing or sourcing relevant teaching and learning materials for the subject. With progressed learners, it is my duty to know the number of progressed learners in the district, circuit and individual schools. I enforce the compilation of learner profiles and lists of progressed learners in each school under my jurisdiction. Upon the analysis of results, I am able to detect where challenges are in the subject. Together with the teachers, I suggest strategies for supporting progressed learners. Teachers have to draw individual plans they will follow, based on the suggestions discussed to support those learners.

#### **Curriculum Advisor 3**

To assist the circuit manager to verify school promotion schedules to check if correct progression procedures were implemented. I also assist educators in the

development of intervention strategies focused on supporting progressed learners. To monitor and support educators to make progress in the implementation of intervention strategies. To advise educators on how to address content that is challenging to progressed learners. To assist educators in the development of informal assessment that will enable progressed learners to achieve a minimum pass of 30%.

## **SUPPORT PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS**

- **How do you support schools in the implementation of this policy?**

### **Curriculum Advisor 1**

Like I said in the question above, we train or workshop school principals on steps to follow when they progress learners. We then verify all school promotion mark schedules to see if they have implemented progression correctly. If there are some mistakes, then we request schools to correct the mistakes and resubmit the schedules.

### **Curriculum Advisor 2**

I develop activities for supporting progressed learners and send them to schools to administer them. I encourage teachers to use the differentiation approach for progressed learners. This is important because learners' learning strengths differ even though the learning goal is the same.

### **Curriculum Advisor 3**

By explaining to principals of schools and educators how the policy works so that they can have a goal understanding of the policy before they implement it. We also conduct workshops and training based on the policy. We advise schools to share the information on policy with the SGB and the parents during parents' meetings.

## CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED WHEN SUPPORTING TEACHERS

- **What challenges do you encounter when you support educators who teach progressed learners?**

### **Curriculum Advisor 1**

When we visit schools, we find that educators don't have intervention strategies to teach progressed learners. They just teach them like learners who passed normally.

### **Curriculum Advisor 2**

The major problem is poor or lack of planning by most teachers. Lack of digital skills by most teachers. Additional resources given electronically do not assist most teachers. Some of them do not even have laptops, emails or tablets. They rely on school offices. Those with gadgets struggle with electronic gadgets and complain about data. Poor distribution channel also hinders support. Support materials distributed to schools are delayed in principals' offices.

### **Curriculum Advisor 3**

Educators complain that progress learners are ill-disciplined. Educators are concerned that they do not have support from parents. Educators do not have time to focus on progressed learners because they may fail to cover the content as per ATP. Educators complain that they were not consulted in the development of the policy hence, the policy is complicating their work, by creating difficult working conditions for passing underperforming learners.

## FEELING ABOUT THE POLICY

- **How do educators feel about the policy on learner progression?**

### **Curriculum Advisor 1**

The majority of educators don't support the policy; they feel the department of education just wants to promote learners who do not deserve to go to the next grade.

### **Curriculum Advisor 2**

Educators really do not like it because they feel it gives them extra work. Some of them feel that the policy has to be phased out.

### **Curriculum Advisor 3**

Educators are not happy about the policy because they know that progressed learners did not master the content of the previous grade. They will be having a content gap that will affect them when new content is introduced. Educators will have a heavy workload because they should develop a recovery plan and strategies to close the gap in the content which progressed learners did not master. Progressed learners usually do not have basic skills such as reading and writing skills and as a result educators' efforts end in vain. Educators do not get the expected support from the parents when dealing with the assistance that should be given to progressed learners. Progressed learners often have behavioral problems that often disrupt effective teaching and learning in the classroom which also frustrates educators.

## AVAILABILITY OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS

- **Do all schools have intervention strategies to support progressed learners?**

### **Curriculum Advisor 1**

No, many schools don't have intervention strategies for progressed learners.

### **Curriculum Advisor 2**

Yes, all schools have intervention strategies because it is a requirement for them to develop strategies to help progressed learners. Schools are expected to submit a list of progressed learners together with the strategies to the circuit at the end of the year, i.e., during the promotion and progression period.

### **Curriculum Advisor 3**

No, few schools have intervention strategies to support progressed learners. Schools that have intervention strategies fail to implement them because educators do not cope with the load of work they are having. They don't have time to develop progressed learners' activities and also engage them. This results in progressed learners being treated the same way as learners who were normally promoted.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES

- **How do they implement those strategies?**

### **Curriculum Advisor 1**

They don't implement because they don't have these intervention strategies.

## **Curriculum Advisor 2**

Implementation is a challenge. Teachers have to implement intervention strategies by following the programmes drawn either by the school or the circuit. Most teachers put the strategies in their planning files for compliance.

## **Curriculum Advisor 3**

As I have indicated before, educators do not have time to implement the strategies. What they were supposed to do is to profile all learners and the subjects that are affected are identified. They give learners a baseline informal assessment of affected subjects to identify the content gap. Item analysis is done after marking and administration of the informal assessment. The educator will be able to pick up challenging topics and develop a recovery plan to cover them. Learners are given more informal activities in the form of classwork, homework and assignments to foster them to reach the level of the rest of the learners that are normally promoted. Extra lessons, e.g., morning, afternoon and Saturday lessons were supposed to be used.

## **SUPPORT GIVEN TO PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN SCHOOLS**

- **How do you feel about the support that the school provides to progressed learners?**

## **Curriculum Advisor 1**

There is no support at all.

## **Curriculum Advisor 2**

Support for progressed learners is not adequate regardless of the support by the subject advisor, circuit and district. Most teachers do not differentiate their teaching strategies for different learners. One blanket covers all learners.

### **Curriculum Advisor 3**

The support is not satisfactory. In most schools' learners are not given sufficient support. They are taught and engaged in the teaching and learning process the same way as the normally promoted learners. Progressed learners are often not profiled, and the results are that they are not even known by educators. This contributes to underperformance in schools within the circuits.

## **APPENDIX E: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS- INTERVIEWS WITH THE CIRCUIT MANAGERS**

Three circuit managers answered the following questions based on the interview schedule. Two were recorded and one was written.

### **ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO SCHOOLS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE POLICY ON LEARNER PROGRESSION**

- **How do you assist schools in managing the implementation of the policy on learner progression?**

#### **Circuit Manager 1**

Eh, I ensure that they profile their learners determining the level of achievement of these progressed learners and also checking the subjects which are troubling the learners because normally the way we take it I tell them that the term progressed is in the principal's office. So, with educators, I will be looking at your learners and checking those who are performing at level one and level two. The danger that there is when the principal tells himself or herself that he or she is managing progressed learners whereas he is not teaching them. If it is left by the educators, I want to make sure that this learner is moving from level one to level two or maybe. From level two to level three then that way that can assist in managing progressed learners.

#### **Circuit Manager 2**

Eh, what we usually do, is we workshop the schools on the implementation of the policy before they write the examination the main aim is that they must back to their schools to orientate the staff members, together with the parents, and then one other thing is that they must also go and tell them about the pass requirements, including progression requirements. One other thing that we do, is we tell them the policies that are necessary when they do the progression of learners, and then these policies must be well kept in a file so that they must be used for reference.

### **Circuit Manager 3**

We usually tell them that they have to manage the progression policy in line with the departmental policy. We also make sure that all schools have relevant documents about the policy itself.

### **PRINCIPALS' FEELINGS ABOUT LEARNER PROGRESSION**

- **How do the principals feel about the policy of learner progression?**

### **Circuit Manager 1**

They feel bad about it, though they are the ones who progressed those learners. They normally tend to blame the department they have this policy of learner progression and now our learners are passing without getting enough marks, but they are their learners. If there is something that we can say is a cause for progressed learners, the school, the system but the school is the one that is eh, breeding progressed learners.

### **Circuit Manager 2**

To be honest with you principals have got a negative attitude towards this policy because to them is just a burden, it will give them extra work and it will also pull down their final results in Grade 12. As you know that these learners are just progressing to Grade 12 without passing, and then one other thing is that these learners are very slow.

We can classify them as slow learners. They are also averaged. So, principals are really afraid to progress them to grade12 knowing that the performance of their schools will decline.

### **Circuit Manager 3**

Principals don't like this policy at all. They are afraid that their schools will underperform at the end of the year. They don't want to face the consequences of an underperforming school.

### **PROBLEMS PHASED IN SCHOOLS WHEN MONITORING THE PROCESS OF PROGRESSION**

- **What problems do you encounter in schools when you monitor the implementation of learner progression?**

### **Circuit Manager 1**

There are principals, who would like to deny learners to be progressed. Eh, because they would be checking, eish, they are going to spoil, to ruin my Grade 12 results. This one is slow, and this one is not up to scratch, so they would like to make sure that they are holding them back, but because when eh, we do verification, the curriculum advisors will be checking learner per learner. If a learner must pass, must be progressed and then must be given support. So, the challenge that is there is progression goes along with support. They only do the first part and then neglect the supporting part, and even learners themselves and their parents; will be worried if the learner is not progressed. The issue of supporting them, ensuring that these learners are attending even extra hours, we really need to have them even beyond normal times.

### **Circuit Manager 2**

The challenge that we get from our schools is that they don't support them. They don't give them differentiated support. They teach them just like ordinary learners. They teach just like an ordinary classroom. Eh, and then one other thing is that they even don't know them. You may even find that a teacher, maybe a Maths teacher does not even know the learners who failed Maths when they come to their classrooms. They always do normal teaching. One other thing is that there is no

individualization, where maybe after writing a test they check just to profile or do item analysis, to check where their learners are not doing well. So, what teachers do is teach them normally like other learners.

### **Circuit Manager 3**

There is a variety of challenges in different schools. Principals, teachers and progressed learners themselves have challenges. Progressed learners feel that they are rejected by teachers and other learners. While on the other hand principals and teachers neglect all the learners, they are progressed to Grade 12.

### **ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO PRINCIPALS DURING THE PROGRESSION PROCESS**

- **What assistance did Principals get in determining learners who should be progressed?**

### **Circuit Manager 1**

They are trained on the policy of progression so that they understand what the things to be, to be considered are. After being trained, they are also given support in terms of identifying them. Sometimes we can even go to them to say these are your progressed learners, having got that information from triple D. We just say to them Ok, you verify with what you are having. These are your progressed learners, we want to know the plans that you are having, to support those learners. They are also called to camps. What we do to support schools is that we mobilize the support of parents. We call parents together, parents of those learners who are not performing well to say this is the position of your learner, and this is what we are expecting from you, and this is what we are expecting from your side. In that manner, we are giving the principal support.

### **Circuit Manager 2**

Eh, according to the policy, it means those learners must satisfy the promotion requirements. Eh, no one, it means those learners must have passed at least four

subjects, and then they must also have attended the school regularly. They must not be absent for more than 20 days. They must have compiled the SBA for all subjects, including the subjects they have failed. One other thing is that they must have also consulted the parents, together with the teacher, so that that teacher may be able to assist that learner the following year.

### **Circuit manager 3**

We called them to meetings to explain to them all the requirements of progression. The meetings also included one SMT member. They were told to go and disseminate the information to all the relevant stakeholders such as parents and teachers. We also told them to seek assistance from us if they come across problems.

## **COMMUNICATION TO SCHOOLS**

- **How was the policy of learner progression communicated to schools?**

### **Circuit Manager 1**

They were work-shopped. Initially, it will be a policy that will come to them and as they are surprised, then the district will be calling them for workshops. It will be a microwave kind of workshopping because the time that it was introduced was when people are asking themselves what this is, and Oh! Is progression it should be done in this way, and then you should consider also the issue of absenteeism. If the learner was not attending school well, this one will not qualify, and then, and checking the principals sometimes will not be having records, a proper record of attendance where even those that might not qualify to be progressed, will be progressed because they do not have the records.

### **Circuit Manager 2**

The policy was communicated to schools through the *WhatsApp platform*, what we mean is that for all those documents that are necessary for progression, we send

them to schools through email, through *WhatsApp* and then sometimes we communicated with schools by doing workshops and also through meetings.

### **Circuit Manager 3**

The way in which progression policy was communicated to schools was through the departmental policy that was sent to schools electronically so that each school downloads their hardcopy for filing purposes. Thereafter, we also send circulars and documents about progression to schools annually.

### **PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS WITH PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12**

- **How are schools with progressed learners performing in Grade 12 final results?**

### **Circuit Manager 1**

It depends on the kind of support they have given to their learners. There are schools that will be having very strong programmes for supporting progressed learners. Those schools will end up making it. So, my observation has been that they are not giving them support. If you are to check, you will find that there might not be two days, or three days wherein the school will be focusing only on progressed learners. or even the educators saying maybe from seven o'clock we will be having morning studies where we will be specifically for progressed learners. It will be just business as usual. They don't find it within themselves to say we must find out exactly what the challenges are with these learners, and then they attack those challenges to make sure they are supported.

### **Circuit Manager 2**

Ah, to be honest with you, eh, learners, progressed learners are not performing well because if you check their performance, for example, if a learner is failing in Maths, you find that, that learner has been struggling with Maths maybe from Grade 8. So, what happens is that those learners are not performing well. If we can go back a

little bit, we find that the policy of progression, when it was implemented, it came along with modularization, where learners are not to write all the subjects. During the time when MEO was no longer there when learners were to write all the subjects, learners were not performing well, especially in schools where there were a lot of progressed learners.

### **Circuit Manager 3**

Schools with progressed learners are really not performing well. Due to the progression policy, schools which were known to be the best performing schools have drooped. The results of Grade 12 are really bad, especially in our Province, Limpopo. Something has to be done.

### **SUPPORT FOR PROGRESSED LEARNERS BY CIRCUITS**

- **How do you support progressed learners in Grade 12 in different schools?**

### **Circuit Manager 1**

I already mentioned the issue of galvanizing support from parents. Eh, calling them together at a central venue, and then, and then what I do during Term 1. I will get into DDD and then extract the learner chart. Learner chart indicating learner by learner, the subject that the learner has passed and those that they have failed. Eh, eh, we will be saying you see this group of learners, these are those learners who fail three subjects, these are learners who failed two subjects and they are progressed. So, we want you to understand the position of your child so that you give us support. When we say we want them to come during the weekend, you have to push your child to come for such kinds of lessons. We also galvanize support from stakeholders, '*misanda*'. Eh, we had another meeting at one of our secondary schools where it was not only focusing on progressed learners, because even those we may think have passed, they passed our internal examination. It is not a standard that we can stand up and say indeed these papers were standardized. So, we were like taking all of them as progressed learners so what we will be doing is checking all

of them. Checking how many are failing, and how many subjects and then we target those that we realize maybe after the Term 1 test, then we will be calling progressed learners who did make it in Term 1 and then we support them.

### **Circuit Manager 2**

Eh, what we do, is we encourage the schools to profile those learners so that they must be able to identify them in their subjects together with their performance. We also support progressed learners in a support session. In a support session, as a circuit, we group them together in one place, where we encourage them. Sometimes we find motivational speakers where learners are motivated to pass. We prefer young people who can inspire them to pass the subjects, but eh, generally, the progressed learners are given minimal support. I can say we are giving them insufficient support as a department or as a circuit.

### **Circuit Manager 3**

As a circuit, we are trying to support progressed learners but let me say we are not doing enough. We sometimes call them together with their parents to discuss their performance. We have the plan to meet them every quarter but due to time constraints we find that we happen to meet them only once a year. One other thing is that we do not address them alone as I said earlier. Truly speaking as I can put it that way, the support that we give them is not enough.

## APPENDIX F: REQUEST LETTERS FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

### A LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

P.O. BOX 1352  
THOHOYANDOU  
0950

24/01/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

#### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

I respectfully want permission to interview you for research purposes.

Currently, I am enrolled in the University of Venda's Doctor of Education (DED) program. To fulfill the criteria for this degree, I must do a research interview and present a dissertation on this topic.

My topic is “***Strengthening the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District***”. Thus, this research requires that I interview you as a school principal within my study area. You will decide the date and suitable time. I also request that the interview be conducted electronically through common platform due to Covid-19 limitations. I assure you of complete anonymity and confidentiality of every response you make.

Should you need further information in the process of considering the request, please contact my supervisor, DR. AT Nesengani (Contact No: 0826831305).

I hope that my request will be taken into consideration

Yours faithfully

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MRS N NEMUTANDANI

Student no: 16023556

Email: Lufunomutandani@gmail.com

## A LETTER TO CIRCUIT MANAGERS

P.O. BOX 1352  
THOHOYANDOU  
0950

24/09/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

I respectfully want permission to interview you for research purposes.

Currently, I am enrolled in the University of Venda's Doctor of Education (DED) program. To fulfill the criteria for this degree, I must do a research interview and present a dissertation on this topic.

My topic is ***“Strengthening Performance of Progressed Learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District”***. Thus, this research requires that I interview you as a circuit manager within my study area. You will decide the date and suitable time. I also request that the interview be conducted electronically through a common platform due to Covid-19 limitations. I assure you of complete anonymity and confidentiality of every response you make.

Should you need further information in the process of considering the request, please contact my supervisor, DR. AT Nesengani (Contact No: 0826831305).

I hope that my request will be taken into consideration.

Yours faithfully

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MRS N NEMUTANDANI

Student no: 16023556

Email: [Lufunomutandani@gmail.com](mailto:Lufunomutandani@gmail.com)

## A LETTER TO SMT MEMBERS

P.O. BOX 1352  
THOHOYANDOU  
0950

24/09/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

I respectfully want permission to interview you for research purposes.

Currently, I am enrolled in the University of Venda's Doctor of Education (DED) program. To fulfill the criteria for this degree, I must do a research interview and present a dissertation on this topic.

My topic is “**Strengthening Performance of Progressed Learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District**”. Thus, this research requires that I interview you as an SMT member within my study area. You will decide the date and suitable time. I also request that the interview be conducted electronically through a common platform due to Covid-19 limitations. I assure you of complete anonymity and confidentiality of every response you make.

Should you need further information in the process of considering the request, please contact my supervisor, DR. AT Nesengani (Contact No: 0826831305).

I hope that my request will be taken into consideration

Yours faithfully

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MRS N NEMUTANDANI

Student no: 16023556

Email: [Lufunomutandani@gmail.com](mailto:Lufunomutandani@gmail.com)

## A LETTER TO CURRICULUM ADVISORS

P.O. BOX 1352  
THOHOYANDOU  
0950

24/09/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

I respectfully want permission to interview you for research purposes.

Currently, I am enrolled in the University of Venda's Doctor of Education (DED) program. To fulfill the criteria for this degree, I must do a research interview and present a dissertation on this topic.

My topic is "***Strengthening Performance of Progressed Learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District***". Thus, this research requires that I interview you as a curriculum advisor within my study area. You will decide the date and suitable time. I also request that the interview be conducted electronically through a common platform due to Covid-19 limitations. I assure you of complete anonymity and confidentiality of every response you make.

Should you need further information in the process of considering the request, please contact my supervisor, DR. AT Nesengani (Contact No: 0826831305).

I hope that my request will be taken into consideration

Yours faithfully

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MRS N NEMUTANDANI

Student no: 16023556

Email: [Lufunomutandani@gmail.com](mailto:Lufunomutandani@gmail.com)

## A LETTER TO EDUCATORS

P.O. BOX 1352  
THOHOYANDOU  
0950

24/09/2021

Dear Sir/Madam

### REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW

I respectfully want permission to interview you for research purposes.

Currently, I am enrolled in the University of Venda's Doctor of Education (DED) program. To fulfill the criteria for this degree, I must do a research interview and present a dissertation on this topic.

My topic is **“Strengthening Performance of Progressed Learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District”**. Thus, this research requires that I interview you as an educator within my study area. You will decide the date and suitable time. I also request that the interview be conducted electronically through the common platform due to Covid-19 limitations. I assure you of complete anonymity and confidentiality of every response you make.

Should you need further information in the process of considering the request, please contact my supervisor, DR. AT Nesengani (Contact No: 0826831305).

I hope that my request will be taken into consideration

Yours faithfully

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MRS N NEMUTANDANI

Student no: 16023556

Email: [Lufunomutandani@gmail.com](mailto:Lufunomutandani@gmail.com)

## APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORMS

### 1. PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR PRINCIPALS

#### RESEARCH PROJECT ON STRENGTHENING THE PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12

#### **Introduction**

Nemutandani Ntsandeni is a doctoral student in education at the University of Venda. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project on strengthening the performance of Grade 12 progressed learners. I desire to learn more about tactics that may be used to enhance the performance of progressed learners.

#### **Purpose of this Study**

The main aim of this study is to explore and investigate the intervention strategies that can be used to improve the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District. In this study, the main aim will be realized through the following objectives:

- To explore the requirements of progressed learners in terms of Acts and Policies in the South African context.
- To analyze the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.
- To examine challenges encountered in schools assisting progressed learners at Grade 12.

To find strategies that may ameliorate the low performance of progressed learners.

It is anticipated that the research study will result in improving the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.

#### **Participant's Rights**

Participation in the study is voluntary. There are no monetary benefits to you. The decision to take part in the study is yours and yours alone. You do not have to take

part if you do not want to. Everyone is free to refuse to take part in the research study if they have doubts or think that their participation could leave them physically, emotionally or psychologically disturbed. If you agree to take part but change your mind later, you can stop at any time during the interview without giving reasons.

### **Risks to Participants**

I do not think that taking part in the study will cause any physical or emotional discomfort or risk. This is due to the fact that participants shall only be answering interview questions on the subject under study. If there will be some questions the participants do not want to answer during the interview, they will have the right not to answer them.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality of Participants**

The participants are advised that the research study is seeking their views and experiences about strengthening the performance of progressed learners in grade 12. All records from this study will be regarded as confidential. I will not record any name anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. The gathered information will only be used for this research and will not be disclosed to any unauthorized people. Results can be published or presented in such a fashion that participants remain unidentifiable.

### **Interview Process**

If you agree to take part in this research study, I humbly request your permission to audio record the interview. This will solely help me to listen to the interview again at a later stage, and if I need the assistance of a second person in a form of a transcriber, then that person can also listen to the recorded interview. The transcriber is not allowed to share the information he/she listened to, with anyone. The audio recordings and the transcript will be kept in a safe place. The final shall be available to the participants before the public and be accessed through the University of Venda.

### **Ethics Approval**

For this research, an ethical clearance letter from the University of Venda will be obtained in written form. Permission to conduct the research will be granted from the

Education District Director, the Circuit Manager and the Principals of the selected schools. Having said this, it does not mean that participants are forced to take part, remember participation is voluntary.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:**

Researcher: Nmutandani Ntsandeni

Cell No: 082 425 4752

Email: [lufunomutandani@gmail.com](mailto:lufunomutandani@gmail.com)

Supervisor: Dr. A.T Nesengani

Cell No: 082 683 1305

Email: [Thomas.nesengani@univen.ac.za](mailto:Thomas.nesengani@univen.ac.za)

o-supervisor: Professor T.S. Mashau

Cell No: 060 674 8860

Kind regards

N Nmutandani

## INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION (PRINCIPALS)

In terms of the ethical requirements of the Research Ethics of the University of Venda, I now invite you to complete this declaration form as an indication of your permission to voluntarily participate in this research project.

### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I now certify that the researcher (Ntsandeni Nemutandani) has informed me of the nature, methodology, benefits, and hazards of this study aforementioned research material (Participant Letter of Information).
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- I accept that important new discoveries produced during this study that may pertain to my participation will be shared with me.

I, therefore, hereby give freely my consent to voluntarily take part in the project as outlined.

Tic

I, therefore, hereby do not give freely my consent to voluntarily take part in the project as outlined.

Tic

Full Name of Participant .....  
Date ..... Time ..... Signature .....

I, ..... (Name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

## **PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR TEACHERS**

### **RESEARCH PROJECT ON STRENGTHENING THE PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12**

#### **Introduction**

Nemutandani Ntsandeni is a doctoral student in education at the University of Venda. I would like to invite you to participate in my research project on strengthening the performance of Grade 12 progressed learners. I desire to learn more about tactics that may be used to enhance the performance of progressed learners.

#### **Purpose of this Study**

The main aim of this study is to explore and investigate the intervention strategies that can be used to improve the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District. In this study, the main aim will be realized through the following objectives:

- To explore the requirements of progressed learners in terms of Acts and Policies in the South African context.
- To analyze the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.
- To examine challenges encountered in schools assisting progressed learners at Grade 12.
- To find strategies that may ameliorate the low performance of progressed learners.

It is anticipated that the research study will result in improving the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.

#### **Participant's Rights**

Participation in the study is voluntary. There are no monetary benefits to you. The decision to take part in the study is yours and yours alone. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. Everyone is free to refuse to take part in the research

study if they have doubts or think that their participation could leave them physically, emotionally or psychologically disturbed. If you agree to take part but change your mind later, you can stop at any time during the interview without giving reasons.

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### **Interview Process**

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Co-supervisor: Professor T.S. Mashau

Cell No: 060 674 8860

Kind regards

N Nmutandani

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- I accept that important new discoveries produced during this study that may pertain to my participation will be shared with me.

I, therefore, hereby give freely my consent to voluntarily take part in the project as outlined. Tick

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Full Name of Participant .....  
Date ..... Time ..... Signature .....

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## **PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR SMT MEMBERS**

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- To analyze the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.
- To examine challenges encountered in schools assisting progressed learners at Grade 12.
- To find strategies that may ameliorate the low performance of progressed learners.

It is anticipated that the study will result in improving the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12.

### **Participant's Rights**

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### **Risks to Participants**

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### **Privacy and Confidentiality of Participants**

The participants are advised that the research study is seeking their views and experiences about the impact of migration on learning in township schools. All records from this study will be regarded as confidential. I will not record any name anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. The gathered information will only be used for this research and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised people. Results can be published or presented in such a fashion that participants remain unidentifiable.

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Kind regards

N Nmutandani

Co-supervisor: Professor T.S. Mashau

Cell No: 060 674 8860

## INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION (SMT MEMBERS)

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- I accept that important new discoveries produced during this study that may pertain to my participation will be shared with me.

I, therefore, hereby give freely my consent to voluntarily take part in the project as outlined. Tick

I, therefore, hereby do not give freely my consent to voluntarily take part in the project as outlined.

Full Name of Participant

.....

Date ..... Time ..... Signature .....

Full Name of Legal Guardian: .....

Date ..... Time ..... Signature .....

I, ..... (Name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

## **PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR CIRCUIT MANAGERS**

### **RESEARCH PROJECT ON STRENGTHENING THE PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12**

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Kind regards

N Nemutandani

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Date ..... Time ..... Signature .....

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## **PARTICIPANT'S INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT FOR CURRICULUM ADVISORS**

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Co-supervisor: Professor T.S. Mashau

Cell No: 060 674 8860

Kind regards

N Nemutandani

## INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION (CURRICULUM ADVISORS)

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I, therefore, hereby do not give freely my consent to voluntarily take part in the project as outlined

Full Name of Participant .....

Date ..... Time ..... Signature .....

I, ..... (Name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

## APPENDIX H: APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT



University of Venda

Year:	2020
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R.1

### APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF A RESEARCH PROJECT

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- The application must be typed
- The following documents must be attached:
  - Brief abstract of the Proposed Project: Yes/No
  - Recommendations (All signatures):

#### 1. PERSONAL DETAILS

1.1	Title: <b>Mrs.</b> Staff/Student Number: 16023556
1.2	Name of Applicant (Nemutandani Ntsandeni):
1.3	Academic Qualifications: <b>DED</b>
1.4	Department: of Education School: <b>Educational Management</b>
1.5	Position: <b>Student</b>
1.6	Email: lufunomutandani2gmail.com <span style="float: right;">Contact</span>
	Number:0824254752

#### 2. PROJECT LEADER(S) AND CO-WORKERS

Initials	Surname	Qualification	Mark Appropriate Block				
			L*	C	P	S	O
N	Nemutandani	DED	✓				


**\*L= Leader; C= Co-workers; P= Staff member; S= Students; O= Outside person**

2. **Title of Project:** Strengthening the performance of progressed learners in grade 12 at Vhembe East District

**Key words:** Academic performance, progressed learners, Grade progression

3. **Field of Study:** see attached abstract of the proposed research.

## ABSTRACT

A progressed learner is a learner who has failed Grade 11 for the second time, and who cannot be retained in this grade but must be allowed to progress to Grade 12. Such a learner at the end of the Grade 12 year must satisfy all the requirements of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) in order to be awarded the matric certificate. The purpose of this study is to explore and investigate the intervention strategies that can be used to improve the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 in Vhembe East District. The research methods that were used to collect data are recorded interviews coupled with field notes and an analysis of documents such as circulars about progressed learners, minutes of SMT meetings, Schedules and quarterly statistics of the results. The population in this study consists of secondary school principals, members of SMT, Grade 12 educators teaching progressed learners, circuit managers and curriculum advisors. The researcher used purposeful sampling to choose 3 secondary school principals with a high enrolment of progressed learners, 3 SMT members, i.e., each from three different circuits in Vhembe East District, 3 curriculum advisors from different circuits, six educators from different circuits and three circuit managers were sampled. The outcomes of this study will assist school principals, School Management Teams, circuit managers, curriculum advisers and educators to develop and implement and monitor the intervention strategies that can be used to improve the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12 in South African schools and the entire world.

5. Starting Date: 2020 .12 .14 - End Date: 2021\_01.31

6. FUNDING

INSTITUTION	AMOUNT (R)	
	Applied for	Available
N/A		

**Project Leader**

Nemutandani N

14.12.2020

**Surname and Initials**

**Signature**

**Date**

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

7.1 HOD:

Comments: Recommended\_\_\_\_\_

**Surname and Initials**

**Signature**

**Date**

7.2 Dean:

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Surname and Initials**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**8. CHECK LIST: (Research Office)**

8.1 All signatures: Yes/No

8.2 Brief abstract of the Proposed Project: Yes/No

**9. Director of Research: Forwarded to RPC/Returned to the applicant**

**Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_

Surname and Initials	Signature	Date
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9.1 Research and Publications Committee resolution:

Chairperson, Research & Pub Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The following questions focusing on participants' feelings, experience, knowledge and perceptions were posed during the interviews.

#### Circuit Managers

- How do you assist schools in managing the implementation of the policy on learner progression?
- How do Principals feel about the policy of learner progression?
- What problems do you encounter in schools when you monitor the implementation of learner progression?
- What assistance did Principals get in determining learners who should be progressed?
- How was the policy on learner progression communicated to schools?
- How are schools with progressed learners performing in Grade 12 final results?
- How do you support progressed learners in Grade 12 in different schools?

#### Curriculum Advisors

- What is your role during the implementation of the policy on learner progression?
- How do you support schools in the implementation of this policy?
- What problems do you encounter when supporting educators who teach progressed learners?
- How do educators feel about the policy on learner progression?
- Do all schools with progressed learners have intervention strategies to support learners?
- How do they implement those intervention strategies?
- How do you feel about the support provided to progressed learners in different schools in your circuit?

### **School Principals**

- What is your understanding of the policy on learner progression?
- How does the Department of Education support you in the implementation of the policy on learner progression?
- How do parents understand their role in the implementation of the policy of learner progression?
- How do learners that you progressed from Grade 11 perform in Grade 12?
- How was the policy on learner progression communicated to you?
- How does the performance of progressed learners affect Grade 12 final results in your school?
- What challenges do you encounter in your school when you support progressed learners?

### **SMT Members**

- What is your role during the implementation of policy on learner progression in your school?
- What are the intervention strategies you use in your school to improve the performance of progressed learners in Grade 12?
- How often do you hold meetings on how to assist progressed learners?
- What do you mostly talk about in meetings of that nature?
- What training was offered to you before you started progressing learners from Grade 11 to Grade 12?
- What challenges do you encounter when you support progressed learners in your school?
- How do you feel about the policy of learner progression?

### **Secondary School Educators**

- How do you teach progressed learners in your class?
- What challenges do you encounter when you teach progressed learners?
- How do progressed learners cope with the content of the next grade?
- How do parents of progressed learners support their children with school tasks (homework and assignments)?
- Where did you train on how you teach progressed learners in your class?

- What is the morale of Grade 12 learners who are progressed?
- What does the policy of progressing learners who do not meet the pass requirements mean to you?

## APPENDIX J: APPROVAL FROM THE PROVINCE

CONFIDENTIAL



TO: DR MC MAKOLA

FROM: DR T MABILA

CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (LPREC)

ONLINE REVIEW DATE: 04-13 OCTOBER 2021

SUBJECT: STRENGTHENING PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN  
GRADE 12 AT VHEMBE EAST DISTRICT

RESEARCHER: NEMUTANDANI N

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC). The ethics committee has is satisfied with the ethical soundness of the proposed study.

**Decision: The revised research proposal is granted full approval**

Regards

Chairperson: Dr T Mabila



Secretariat: Ms J Mokobi



Date: 18/10/2021

CONFIDENTIAL



---

**LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

Online Review Date: 04-13 October 2021

Project Number: LPREC/78/2021: PG

Subject: Strengthening Performance of Progressed Learners in Grade12 at Vhembe East District

Researcher: Nmutandani N

Dr Thembinkosi Mabila



Chairperson: Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee

The Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) is registered with National Health Research Council (NHREC) Registration Number REC-111513-036.

**Note:**

- I. This study is categorized as a Low Risk Level in accordance with risk level descriptors as enshrined in LPREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- II. Should there be any amendment to the approved research proposal; the researcher(s) must re-submit the proposal to the ethics committee for review prior data collection.
- III. The researcher(s) must provide annual reporting to the committee as well as the relevant department and also provide the department with the final report/thesis.
- IV. The ethical clearance certificate is valid for 12 months. Should the need to extend the period for data collection arise then the researcher should renew the certificate through LPREC secretariat. PLEASE QUOTE THE PROJECT NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/22    Enq: Makola MC    Tel No: 015 290 9448    E-mail: [MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za](mailto:MakolaMC@edu.limpopo.gov.za)

**Nemutandani NS**  
P O Box 5050  
Thohoyandou  
0950

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: "STRENGTHENING THE PERFORMANCE OF PROGRESSED LEARNERS IN GRADE 12 AT VHEMBE EAST DISTRICT"
3. The following conditions should be considered:
  - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
  - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.
  - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
  - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
  - 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: NEMUTANDANI NS

Cnr. 113 Bleccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700  
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

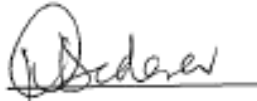
*The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!*

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



Dederen KO  
Head of Department

26/10/2021  
Date

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: NEMUTANDANI NS

## APPENDIX K: UNIVERSITY ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:  
**Mrs N Nemutandani**

STUDENT NO:  
16023566

PROJECT TITLE: **Strengthening the performance of progressed learners in grade 12 at Vhembe east District.**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: SEDU/21/CS EM/07/2405

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr AT Neseqani	University of Venda	Promoter
Prof TS Mashau	University of Venda	Co - Promoter
Mrs N Nemutandani	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

Type: Doctoral Research

Risk: Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment (Category 2)

Approval Period: May 2021 – May 2024

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

**General Conditions**

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report to the prescribed format to the RESC:
  - Annually (or as otherwise required) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
  - Withdraw advice in case of any adverse event (or any matter that warrants sound ethical principles) during the course of the project
  - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Should any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the RESC. If all of them be declined from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the final date that the project may be started. Should the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the RESC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the RESC retains the right to:
  - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
  - To ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
  - Withdraw or postpone approval if:
  - Any unethical practices or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
  - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the RESC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
  - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
  - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

ISSUED BY:  
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE  
Date Considered: April 2021

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Dr M. Manjoro-Mwale



Signature: .....

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION 2021-05-27 Private Bag 35050 Tlokoeng 0950
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## APPENDIX L: EDITOR'S LETTER

### Editing and Proof Reading Report

October 2022

This letter serves to confirm that I, Trenance Khoza, have proofread and edited a Thesis for a Doctor of Education Degree titled: **Strengthening the Performance of Progressed learners in Grade 12 at Vhembe East District by Nmutandani Ntsandeni.**

I carefully read through the proposal, focusing on proofreading and editorial issues. The recommended suggestions are clearly highlighted in red ink and can either be accepted or rejected using the Microsoft Word Track Changes System.

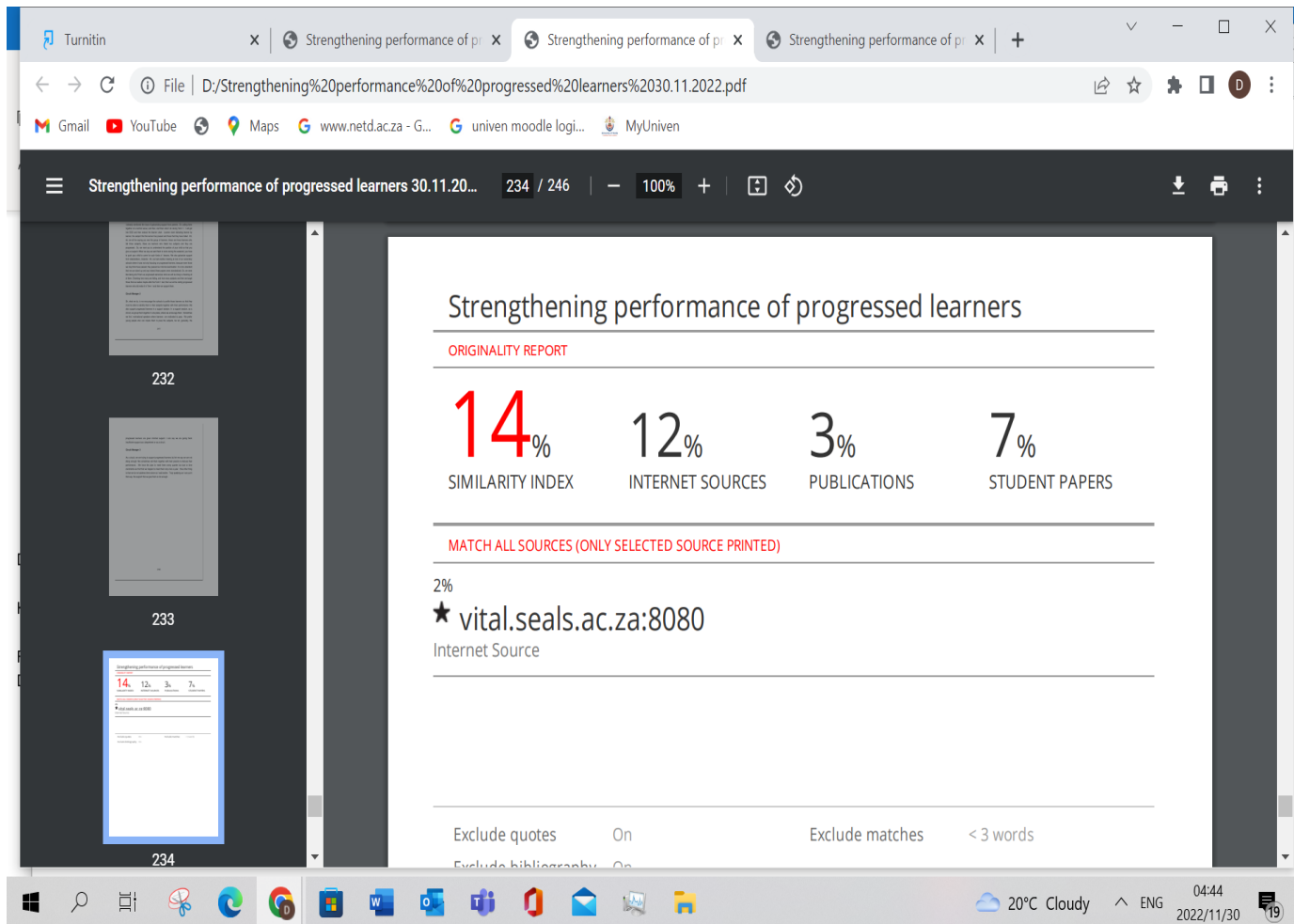
**Yours Sincerely**



Trenance Khoza (PhD Eng)

E-mail: ndlovutrenance2012@gmail.com  
Editor and Language Research Fellow  
MSU National Language Institute  
Midlands State University  
Graduate School of Business Leadership  
Private Bag 9055  
Gweru  
Zimbabwe  
Cell- 0772389974

Email- khozat@staff.msu.ac.zw



The screenshot shows a Turnitin report for a document titled "Strengthening performance of progressed learners 30.11.20...". The report is displayed in a web browser window with the URL "D:/Strengthening%20performance%20of%20progressed%20learners%2030.11.2022.pdf". The report includes a sidebar with document thumbnails (232, 233, 234) and a main content area with the following data:

ORIGINALITY REPORT			
14%	12%	3%	7%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

MATCH ALL SOURCES (ONLY SELECTED SOURCE PRINTED)

2%  
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Internet Source

Exclude quotes On Exclude matches < 3 words  
Exclude bibliography On