

TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW FOR Ms. Karamata (Teacher H8: TH8)

INTERVIEWER

Good morning, ma'am. How is the morning?

TEACHER H8

Very fine. Thank you.

INTERVIEWER

All right. As I have introduced myself in the focus group discussion, my name is Hilma Amakutuwa, I am thankful that you have agreed to be part of this study. I am a student at Rhodes University doing my master's in education, majoring in English language teaching. The purpose of my study is to explore CPD needs of English second language teachers, with the focus on self-directed whether the individual teacher is the source of their own CPD. In other words, what we are talking about, we are discussing the nature of CPD in your teaching profession and whether it is self-directed or is directed by the supervisor or the ministry, and whether your contextual experience that you have gained over the years is determining your CPD that you require. The first question that I want to pose to you is how long have you been teaching English as a second language and what motivated you to be an English teacher?

TEACHER H8

OK. I have been teaching English as a second language **for over 13 years now**, and what motivated me to choose English as one of my majors, it's just the fact that initially I didn't really have a passion in English at all, because first of all in my Grade 12, I didn't do well in English, I had a G symbol for that matter and I always use that to motivate my learners. So, after that I got very good points enough for university, but because of the English I couldn't get admission that year and I decided to improve English, which I did on high level for that matter. So actually, the owner of the centre, it was a kind of a private centre and open learning, so he was a lecturer that time at NUST, Polytechnic by then so he was doubting **how could**, why do you want to do English on high level, when you have G on ordinary level. So, I persuaded him and eventually I embarked on that and at the end he was our tutor, kind of my tutor then and then at the end I got a 2 on high level,

INTERVIEWER

Wow. Wow.

TEACHER H8

so he is the one actually encouraged me to say, I think you are very good in English, you need to, because I said I want to be a teacher so, English can be one of your majors, so that's how I picked up English and I become an English teacher and I love it.

INTERVIEWER

OK. Yeah. All right. That's a good story. Tell me about your experience over the 13 years that you have been an English teacher, what has been your significant experience? Whether it's with the learners, whether it's with yourself. Tell me about it.

TEACHER H8

Yeah, first of all, I will begin with learners, especially class management, because the environment I started teaching is not similar with the kind of high school environment I went to. So, I realized that there's a lot I needed to learn to know how to manage my class and that experience I didn't really, although I got theories at University, so when you come to practical it's a complete different story.

INTERVIEWER

Different yes scenario, OK. That's class management...

TEACHER H8

And also, you even the content itself, the way of passing information across to the learners, you improve with time also, it's something that you learn as you go on with your life. OK maybe if I introduce that topic this way, it would be more interesting, and the learners will understand it better. So, with time, even the subject content itself, there are some things I realized that I learned as I'm on job.

INTERVIEWER

Yeah, in-service.

TEACHER H8

Yeah, in service, so not only class management, but also subject content.

INTERVIEWER

OK. Tell me about the challenges that you have experienced. Over the years that you have been a teacher.

INTERVIEWER

OK, initially the challenge was about finding appropriate materials to support the learning process, because number 1, the textbooks are not so enough for each child, and also when you go to online

Google searching for me it's like you are so overwhelmed by a lot of, you know, information so you have to be careful to know which one to pick so that you also don't overwhelm the learners with a lot of information.

INTERVIEWER

Exactly. OK. What other challenge have you experienced with the learners? Have the learners been at the level where they're supposed to be in terms of English and what challenges do they experience that make you feel that you need to maybe assist them?

TEACHER H8

There are quite a number of them, and then the major one and still a concern is that some learners who come up to grade 9 and they can't really read or write properly. And some of the learners you feel like perhaps they were not supposed to be in the mainstream. And they sometimes even we call in parents to explain the situation, to say this child, look at how the child is writing, think maybe the child has a little bit of a challenge. Is it not possible to take the child to a special school, for example? But the parents will refuse...

INTERVIEWER

They don't want.

TEACHER H8

They will even take it as a kind of an offence, so that's a very big challenge up to now. So, you have learners that will be transferred from grade 9, go to grade 10, you are not allowed to repeat twice, then there will be until grade 11, and that's why in grade 11 in some of our schools have a very high rate of failure because not because of anything really, its just because the child has been failing all along,

INTERVIEWER

Yes, and nothing was done.

TEACHER H8

Yeah, and nothing really has been done, so that is a very big challenge, the reading and writing, if I give you some of the essays the learners wrote, even these past exams, how did the child end up being...

INTERVIEWER

Make it until Grade 9?

TEACHER H8

And then also it's a challenge to me as a teacher because I don't have so much experience how to teach the basic like a grade 1 and grade 2, sound the words and you also don't have time for that,

INTERVIEWER

Yeah, exactly.

TEACHER H8

You don't have, you don't have time for that, so it's a really big challenge. I don't know how...

INTERVIEWER

How it can be addressed, so in that case, what do you try to do as a teacher when you find yourself with a learner who cannot read or struggling to read, and they are already supposed to be even writing five essays by the time they're in grade 9 and they are already struggling to even put together sentences. What do you do as a teacher?

TEACHER H8

If I give you one example, there was this boy, I decided to or I started making copies of some of my daughter's grade four reading, you know. So because those are basic words, so you give a boy to read and then you will gain a little bit of confidence, because when you give them the materials for grade nine, they are challenging words there and they already they know they can't, but if you give them a kind of easier piece, they will develop a kind of confidence, a little bit, so I realized that it helped and there was also another boy that the handwriting is just terrible, couldn't write, so I went to the Internet and printed out this free download and handwriting those grade 2.

INTERVIEWER

Hmm Hmm the cursive and the way to write..

TEACHER H8

Yes, and how to write and to form the "m" and how, but the surprisingly, the boy was so excited saying "I improved"

INTERVIEWER

My handwriting

TEACHER H8

My handwriting is better, so sometimes it's very challenging because you don't know what to do, you are also just trying and also you are not going to give that child that material in front of others,

INTERVIEWER

Ooh so that you don't make them feel...

TEACHER H8

Yeah, yeah, and they will not also take it well, because they will feel embarrassed, but if its just the two of you.

INTERVIEWER

Yes, then it's better. Any other challenge?

TEACHER H8

Just mostly that and then maybe just behavioral problem because behavioral problem, because emm..

INTERVIEWER

Umm, tell me about behavioral problems.

TEACHER H8

You know uhmm, it's a bit challenging because I realized that my own upbringing, it's not the same with these child where I'm teaching, so you find that even the way to talk to an elderly person, it's completely, the way they'll answer you, yeah so sometimes you just have to hold yourself and learn well, sometimes you correct, "so we don't talk to adults like that", yeah but, and also I think maybe the if you ask some of these kids, their backgrounds, some of them are passing through abusive kind of childhood, a lot of things are happening. So when you come to school, you are not only a teacher, you are also a mother, you are also a counsellor, a first aid because we have cases like this year we had, I think 3 cases of children that can just faint even in class, epilepsy and the problem is that some parents they don't inform us in advance.

INTERVIEWER

Yes,

TEACHER H8

Yeah, the child would just faint in class and then you don't know what to do, so those are some of the challenges ...

INTERVIEWER

OK, so let me go back to the first challenge of materials and teaching and learning support. Does the school provide you with any continuous professional development support in terms of coming up with interactive materials, how to find materials, is the Internet connection for you to be able to download those? Yeah.

TEACHER H8

OK. Continuous development is mostly, according to my observation, personally I will take it as a personal individual you know, effort that you have to make, of course there is Internet at school, there's a printer there, you can go search your things, you can make copies, those facilities are available. And we are grateful because there are some schools that don't have such facilities. And then the school also with the regional office, maybe the regional office organizes a workshop once in a while, that's also one of them,

INTERVIEWER

OK.

TEACHER H8

But mostly as an individual, you do self-reading, just to develop yourself.

INTERVIEWER

Umm, OK, now judging from your experience, your context where you teach, or your classrooms, then the experiences you have gained, what type of? CPD, do you think you need?

TEACHER H8

OK, we need actually CPD that especially in the era of technology, we need a CPD that will help us to know how to continue with our teaching even outside the classroom...

INTERVIEWER

OK, what do you mean you? Hmm.

TEACHER H8

Maybe online classes created, you know WhatsApp or how do they call this classroom..

INTERVIEWER

Online classroom?

TEACHER H8

Yes, maybe just to say for example, if your weekend or it's a midterm break, it's a long-term break, you want to give activities or you just want to...

INTERVIEWER

Those Google classrooms? Oh.

TEACHER H8

Exactly, yeah those kind of things. So because sometimes that also makes the learning process interesting because these kids are more on, you know, this gadget, just the fact that you are doing it online, on the phone. It's just, yeah.

INTERVIEWER

Interesting for them.

TEACHER H8

Even if it is the same content, it's the same lesson, they will just feel like..

INTERVIEWER

OK, I get it.

TEACHER H8

And also about, you know when you, even if it is English, you need a contemporary themes, when you teach the theme there are a lot of these artificial intelligence. We need exposure too. We need exposure because some of us we stuck in that old age, we are still there just in the textbook and some of textbooks information are outdated, so you can't just say it's a textbook I'm using it.

INTERVIEWER

The textbook that we have developed, even two or three years ago, does not have artificial intelligence, and that is what we are currently busy with.

TEACHER H8

Yes, so a lot of current information, especially, I even checked this AS level exam, its more on Technology and which made me just think of those some of the children in the villages there, because if you are not exposed, even if you are a smart child, how do you express yourself?

INTERVIEWER

Yeah, the terminologies, you're not aware of them.

TEACHER H8

Yes, so as teachers we need development also to be encouraged to expose the learners...

INTERVIEWER

Yes, OK the learners that can't read or write, you said you sometimes try to go back to lower level type of lesson so that they can catch up and behavioral problems, what did you say you do?

TEACHER H8

Behavioral problems, we counsel them, we send or refer to life skill teachers. We have a life skill teacher at school and most importantly we call in parents to just alert them, because sometimes

you'll be surprised that the child at home is just an angel but the child comes to school because of influence, and so yeah mostly counselling and call in parents.

INTERVIEWER

Towards the end I would like to ask you about, how you co-construct knowledge with other teachers, as you are at school, you have other different English teachers, how do you collaborate with them to make your lessons or to grow professionally? Do you even consult each other, or everyone is just working in isolation?

TEACHER H8

Yes, we do have **departmental meetings**, where we, you know, especially at the beginning of the year, **just encourage one another**, and sometimes if one has a either materials or find a way of how to pass across information for certain topic, we do that sometimes, or especially if you are sharing a grade, maybe two of you are teaching grade 11, **you can share your mark schemes**, and you can **share the ideas**. And I think one thing that is also **lacking is we need mentors in schools**, because we have a lot of new teachers, just graduate and it's like there's not really proper guidance what to do.

INTERVIEWER

So when they come from university, they just get thrown in there, “start teaching”.

TEACHER H8

Exactly, exactly like this year at our school, we have a lot of new teachers because a number of teachers either resign, retire in the middle of the year, so now you just bring in whoever temporarily, new teacher, so they need a lot of guidance.

INTERVIEWER

Yeah, you can see that they are just doing their things on their own, OK, alright and finally, going back to your lessons, how do you reflect to see that here, I need to actually improve what type of activities do you do that you that you show that you are reflecting on your lessons for you to know that you need something.

TEACHER H8

OK, when I gave an activity after I listen and then I realized that, maybe half of the class, they didn't get that or they are not passing the activity, so it's an indication that not necessarily that these kids are not OK, it means the lesson was not clear, then you can **do a revision**, and also in the lesson plan, there is a **reflection part** so which I which I can write.

INTERVIEWER

OK.

TEACHER H8

Instead of proceeding to the next lesson, I will have to make a kind of revise.

INTERVIEWER

On the same lessons?

TEACHER H8

Yes, maybe differently not exactly the same, but the same topic. If it is maybe for example you are talking about parts of speech, you just realize, OK, I'll do it again and of revision, but maybe in another way.

INTERVIEWER

Yes Okay, thank you so much, ma'am. This was very insightful, and I've learned a lot. I just want to appreciate you for making time for me to come and interview you, thank you so much.

TEACHER H8

Thank you. You're welcome. All the best.

INTERVIEWER

OK, thank you.