

## FOCUS GROUP MEETING RECORDING.MP4 (19 SEPT 2023)

### Transcript

#### **00:00:02 INTERVIEWER HM**

My name is Hilma Amakutuwa, I'm a student at Rhodes University doing my master's in education, majoring in English language teaching and as part of my study, I need to conduct a focus group discussion with English language teacher on my topic, which is Exploring the self-directed CPD needs for English as a second language in service teachers in Namibian secondary school. So let me assure you of confidentiality that whatever we are going to discuss here is for research purposes. It will not be used against you or your school and therefore please feel free to give your ideas and to answer questions freely. Let me first define the keywords in my topic. *(I'm just quickly allowing somebody to join)* Continuous professional development is my topic, and to define continuous professional development, it is activities that teacher participate in to upgrade and upskill their knowledge in English language. And self-directed needs visa and needs based on the teachers themselves, not only prescribed by the head office or prescribed by the region, but these are needs that the teachers have, that addresses their professional needs when they are teaching English second language.

#### **00:02:18 INTERVIEWER HM**

So let us start with the first question. But before that, I would like you guys to introduce yourselves and which grades you teach at your specific schools? Let me start with the colleagues that are here in person.

#### **00:02:39 INTERVIEWER HM**

Miss Albrecht.

#### **00:02:42 TD4**

Colleagues and good day Ms. Amakutuwa, my name is Marika Albrecht, I teach at Jan Mohr secondary school. I'm currently I'm teaching the great 10s Also in the past I used to teach grade elevens. I also used to teach AS level but this year, like I said, I'm currently teaching the grade tens at Jan Mohr.

#### **00:03:11 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK.

#### **00:03:12 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you, Miss Albrecht. Ms. Shigwedha?

**00:03:15 TF6**

Yes, good afternoon, good afternoon, colleagues here is Ms. Johanna Shigwedha, teaching grade 8 and 10 but in the previous year I have been teaching grade 11 to 12 but now I only have 8 and 10.

**00:03:39 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you, Ms. Shigwedha, colleagues online, can you hear us? Are we clear?

**00:03:50 TB2**

Yes, we can hear.

**00:03:59 INTERVIEWER HM**

You thank you very much.

**00:04:03 INTERVIEWER HM**

I'm now giving the floor to Mr. Absalom to introduce himself. Mr. Absalom, your floor.

**00:04:10 TA1**

Afternoon, colleagues, Absalom Shihepo is my name, I am a teacher at Dawid Bezuidenhout and teach grade elevens.

**00:04:19 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you very much, Mr. Shigwedha

**00:04:23 INTERVIEWER HM**

I mean, Mr. Absalom. Sorry. Alright. Over to the colleagues online. Anyone can start.

**00:04:34 TB2**

OK, I can start, I am Ms. Amupolo, teaching Grade 9 at Augustenium secondary school.

**00:04:44 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you, Ms. Amupolo

**00:04:57 TC3**

Good afternoon, folks. I am Ms. Panduleni Mpinge, I teach English to the grade, 10s and 12s at Concordia College.

**00:05:08 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you, miss Mpinge. Next person online.

**00:05:27 TG7**

Good afternoon, afternoon, colleagues. My name is Miss Malukolo Matilda, I am teaching at David Bezuidenhout High School, and I currently teach Grade 8 as well as grade 10. Thank you.

**00:05:45 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you, miss Malukolo

**00:05:51 TH8**

I'm Mrs. Karamata and I teach at Eldorado Secondary School, grades 12 and grade 9s. I hope you can hear me clearly.

**00:06:03 INTERVIEWER HM**

We can hear you and you are also sounding very sick. Shame, I was also wondering who Tupavali is, but now I know. OK.

**00:06:14 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK, Miss Katrina. There's no response from Miss Katrina, so we can just go ahead.

**00:06:40 INTERVIEWER HM**

Let me redefine the topic that we are going to discuss today, continuous professional development, I'm sure you are all aware of what CPD is, but I would still want to hear how you understand it individually, because the concept of CPD has been a current debate in teaching due to the changing times and the changing world and the changing environments that we work in as teachers and therefore over time, we need to continue upgrading our knowledge, upgrading our methodologies in order to change our performance of our learners. So CPD is defined as a natural learning experience with consciously planned activities intended to be of different or indifferent benefit to the individual or to a group or to a school which subsequently contribute to the quality of education in the classroom. So, the first idea that we are going to discuss about is, how have you experienced CPD at your school or in your classroom?

**00:08:13 INTERVIEWER HM**

But first, before you answer the question, briefly define how you understand it and then how you have experienced it at your current school. Anyone can start whether online, you just have to unmute and start talking. It's not a problem or we can start with the colleagues that are in the in their room. Mr. Absalom, let me start with you. How do you understand CPD and how have you experienced CPD at your school?

**00:08:54 TA1**

Continuous professional development, yoh, very tough question but let me try.

**00:08:59 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK.

**00:09:01 TA1**

Continuous professional development. I believe, as you said earlier, we need to constantly keep developing our profession is accommodate this changing times and so I believe it's a very important aspect, that we need to constantly keep up with, and I do know that we need to keep

developing so that we can accommodate these times, let's say we have experienced COVID-19 and things like that, and I think it's important that we continuously keep developing the profession to accommodate the times like COVID-19 and so forth. And let's say, I would like to take a very, very common practice, probably in all schools, in terms of behavioral change in learners. For instance, if you compare the attitude towards learning of the learners now, and if you compare it to the past, you will see that there's been a slight change. Back in the days when we had learners let's say our times for example, we were well behaved, for example, we had an attitude and atmosphere in which we are willing to learn and stuff like that, but I don't know now as to what is in the atmosphere right now with these kids of ours in terms of their attitude towards learning. It's more like we as educators and facilitators have to force them to do what they are really supposed to do, yeah, they're actually supposed to be willing to learn and things like that, but now with the generation we have now, it's more like the facilitator has to force them to do what they came to school to do.

**00:11:13 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah

**00:11:14 TA1**

So, I think we constantly need to keep developing the profession so that we can accommodate the learners with such attitudes and behavior, I believe that's very important. That's my take on it.

**00:11:29 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you so much.

**00:11:32 INTERVIEWER HM**

Miss Shigwedha (TF6) or miss Albrecht (TD4)?

**00:11:36 TF6**

For me, continuous professional development, I think I understand it's just a way that the knowledge we as educators, so we need to upgrade our knowledge and skills on how to deal with current learners, especially, I don't want to repeat, what my colleague said, for me, especially in terms of the situation whereby unemployment, for example, rate is very high and they don't have courage and motivation, at least to keep up with learning and in most cases they will tell you that no, why we should come to school, why we should come to school if we have siblings or sisters and brothers at home who have degrees and they are well educated and up to now they are unemployed, therefore, I think it's as educators we need to find ways or we have to get knowledge on how to keep up with this situation, how to encourage them and to explain to them that still, education is the key to success.

**00:12:54 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah, that's a really good point. It's very discouraging sometimes when children see people with degrees in the streets, and they are still in school needing to graduate OK.

**00:13:11 INTERVIEWER HM**

Miss Albrecht (TD4) anything that you want to add on?

**00:13:13 TD4**

Yes, I would just like to say the way in which I understand it is that it's like learning opportunities that's personally available to me in my professional field as a teacher. So what learning opportunities are there that I can learn from to improve myself as a teacher in the field that I'm specializing in, for example my subject field, which is English, which learning opportunities can I use to upgrade not only myself but also like my colleague said here to upgrade according to the standards, prevailing at the moment around the world global, global standards, how can we kind of, I'm not saying everything should be standardized, but how can we kind of learn from one another to improve our ways of teaching? And what is available for us to follow world trends, and to be on par with what the rest of the world is doing in order to motivate learners better and to teach better.

**00:14:34 INTERVIEWER HM**

That's really true, and as you know, our education system is always being reformed, benchmarked against international standards and it's something that we need to explore how as a professional, we can also be up to that standard of teaching.

**00:14:51 TA1**

I believe just to add to what the colleague said, you know people want something to believe in also and I believe there's also a lack of inspiration.

**00:15:05 INTERVIEWER HM**

For teacher?

**00:15:06 TA1**

Yeah, but now how do I motivate someone so exposed if they are already coming to school with the BENZ and I'm just a teacher, driving my Toyota? You understand?

**00:15:19 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah.

**00:15:21 TA1**

So I believe if you know, people need something to believe in, and if they don't see inspiration, it's very difficult for you as a facilitator to say, this is what is going down, yeah.

No, it's true. Anyone online who would like to add?

**00:15:49 TE5**

Hilma...

**00:15:36 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yes.

**00:15:49 TE5**

I'm. I'm sorry. I just joined in now fully focused, and I seem a bit lost.

**00:15:57 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK, I can update you briefly. We were just tackling the first question, where I explained a little bit about CPD, on how if teachers, we ought to upgrade our knowledge and skills and methodologies of how we deliver English as second language in order to be on par either with to match our learners, whether it's attitudes, whether it's their needs and also to be at a standard where the world is, to enable our learners to perform at the level that they want, so they were just going into round saying how do they understand CPD and what is their experience in terms of CPD either at school level or just from observation?

**00:16:49 TE5**

OK.

**00:16:50 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah. So now it's over to you guys online, how do you understand CPD and how have you experienced it as an experienced teacher, English teacher over the years?

**00:17:03 TC3**

Right. Can I speak Hilma?

**00:17:04 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yes.

**00:17:06 TC3**

Alright, how I understand CPD is that, CPD refers to one constantly engaging in self-reflection, on one's academic mastery, professional development, administrative leadership and research, CPD is actually a process of ongoing training and development as it allows individuals, once one has become qualified to become, because we all get training from different institutions, and then once you're now qualified to become a teacher, you now need to engage in constant development and ongoing training, because there's always something new, so these individuals, when you become teachers, you need to adapt now to your professional environment. You need to also carry on with your learning and improve either your mastery in your subject, your subject knowledge,

or just development as a person in general so that you grow in that profession. So, all these are relevant to the role which benefits both the short-term objectives and the long-term career objectives that you face, and it will be able to help both you and your learners. Like recently we've had the upgrade from the old curriculum to the new curriculum and there has been quite the shift, so one really needed better insight as to what this or what the differences are between these two systems, especially the AS level because the AS level is another thing. It's not only challenging for our learners, it's equally challenging for some of the teachers, so if one does not engage in some CPD, then you are likely not to really go anywhere in your profession at this particular juncture.

**00:19:12 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah. Thank you so much, Ms. Basimike.

**00:19:20 TE5**

Are we the only ones online? Ha-ha

**00:19:22 INTERVIEWER HM**

You are you are 5 online.

**00:19:27 TE5**

OK. I feel like everybody, I feel like my colleagues have said most of the things that need to be said, Uhm... CPD is continued professional development, so just like they said it's the teachers continually engaging in learning, learning, that is geared towards improving the trade, the craft be it be in the subject that they teach, or the pedagogy, how to deliver it and also I guess the aspect of the learner, I don't know how to bring in the learner but perhaps keeping up with the latest trends like right now, there is a trend that is, I don't know if it's just emerging, but for me a trend of learners that are that are coming to high school that do not know how to read, that cannot focus, so it brings in some form of special aspect and so as a normal teacher who's just come from university who's not trained in the area of special education or not well versed in educational psychology, it would then entail . So just for an example, it would then entail such a teacher engaging in research like the colleague said earlier, can figure out how to cope in such an environment, and also how those kinds of learners can benefit from their teaching. So, adaptation for instance.

**00:22:10 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, you are right. I can imagine how much pressure the teachers sometimes are especially with the contexts that are changing in terms of learners like Mr. Absalom mentioned, learner's attitude towards learning, sometimes learners' special needs require the teachers also to be on top of their games in terms of how to address those issues.

**00:22:39 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK, let's move on to the next question. You have mentioned a few challenges already, and I just want for you guys to briefly tell me the challenges that you experienced in terms of teaching English as a second language, you mentioned one it's already reading, they come to high school and they don't know how to read, and how these challenges? How do you reflect on these challenges and how do they change the way you think in terms of developing yourself professionally?

**00:23:18 INTERVIEWER HM**

Miss Karamata, Miss Matilda. Miss Helena. You can start, Miss Mpinge, the challenges that you experience in your everyday life, what are they and how when you reflect on them, how do they change the way you think you need to develop yourself?

**00:23:41 TB2**

OK, maybe I can start.

**00:23:45 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you

**00:23:51 TH8**

For me with the type of learners that I have, I have to take a good look at my syllabus, I feel like it does not really cater for the type of learners that I have, because at times it will require me to go a few grades lower to start somewhere, for instance right now I have grade nines, and I would find myself having to go back to primary school syllabus to explain some things from that level and only then will I be able now to explain based on what is required now at their level. So that is something that is quite challenging for me and also there are some learners, honestly, who are just not familiar with certain things, and having multilingual learners in one class especially in Windhoek, it can be challenging, so you try to explain, but the child does not understand. Sometimes I try to use Google sometimes to try maybe to just draw a picture and just show that this is what we are talking about and also the use of vernacular languages in a class whereby, let me say the child speaks KKG (Khoekhoegowab) now as a teacher whom I cannot speak that language, sometimes I have to tell the other kids who understands better to explain in their own vernacular to that particular child, so I think those are some of the few challenges I experienced.

**00:25:42 INTERVIEWER HM**

Ok, thank you so much, Miss Helena, anyone else who wants to share?

**00:25:49 TG7**



OK, Hilma, what was the question again? The challenges and how we are dealing with those challenges and how it makes us reflect on what? on improving ourselves professionally, right?

**00:26:00 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah, you are correct. Like I mean when you teaching, obviously you come across different challenges in terms of how you deliver your lessons, so how to do those challenges make you reflect when you reflect on them, what comes out? What do you think about in terms of developing yourself?

**00:26:24 TG7**

OK. I think the challenges are not unique to one person. We are practically or we are all essentially dealing with the same challenges. I mean you are working with kids who are not even fit for mainstream school, and it looks like we don't have special schools in Namibia or special needs schools in Namibia, so all of these kids are literally packed in the mainstream and sometimes there's little you can really do to try and help these kids, but most of the things that we do is really just going beyond and doing your research, watching YouTube videos on how to help these kind of learners. Sometimes even going beyond to say let me maybe study further and understand how to teach and do your masters. For example, there are a lot of English teachers who are mastering now, those are the things that we are really just doing and that's the reflection to say, let me Google, watch YouTube, maybe even master on how to deliver English as a second language and all that, but really there's nothing beyond that from my side.

**00:27:49 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you.

**00:27:50 TG7**

All right.

**00:27:54 INTERVIEWER HM**

Anyone else?

**00:27:58 TE5**

Hilma, Yeah, like she rightfully said, the challenges are not unique to one person. We all have those challenges, that she mentioned. I also just want to add, I personally sometimes feel like we are left on our own, you know, as teachers in this country. It's as if we don't work under anyone like, we really need a lot of assistance that we don't get. For me, the whole thing of formality like we should just we should be done by, you hear that the talk is, be done with your CASS marks by \*\* time, but why are we so focused on assessing? Like, what are we assessing, really? Because we don't have enough time to teach, of course there will never be enough time to teach, but I just feel like

our curriculum or syllabus are really packed with, oftentimes irrelevant things to the grade that you are teaching, maybe that is stemming from a structure that is nonexistent, I feel like if with a bit of structure, really, we may get somewhere. But if you look at the English syllabi from grade 5 already or maybe even 4, you will see that a child is expected already to know 5 essays in grades in grade 5, Why? Why? Why do we do that? Because it's now 5 essays from grade 5 up to whatever grade, why don't we structure it a little bit and say OK, by the time they leave grade four, they should have mastered at least a narrative essay or a descriptive essay, then they master that, and then we add on. Not to have a packed syllabus already in grade 5, so that's what leaves, I remember one of the complaints from the minister earlier in the year was that “teachers are now resorting to selecting what to teach”, Teachers have to cope, it's a coping mechanism because some of the things are really unreasonable and impractical. And when it is like that, it leaves low standards, it leaves teachers resorting to coping mechanisms that eat away at the standard. So, and then back to the schools again, my biggest challenge working under somebody that cannot assist me. I don't know how we found ourselves, where we are as a country really. The issue of incompetence at the highest levels of leadership, somebody has nothing to offer teachers, yet this person is apparently the head of these teachers and often times, it becomes very frustrating because when you try to explain certain things to them, you're not at the same page, you're not on the same level of understanding and the work environment just becomes toxic and, there is no progress there, the child does not benefit, the child is caught up in the middle because somebody wants to flex their muscles. This this thing is not working we have to come up with strategies that can really benefit these students. Maybe even deviating from the set curriculum to a curriculum that is suitable for this child, for them to benefit, let them walk away at least with literacy, they cannot read, they cannot write, now you expect me to teach them 5 essays? come on.

**00:32:40 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, I understand. Yeah, you know.

**00:32:43 TE5**

So that is one of my greatest frustrations at this point.

**00:32:49 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you for sharing, It looks like from what you guys have mentioned, you actually really do a lot of reflection and somehow also try to find your own ways to develop yourself. So, my next question would come to, are you allowed any platform at your school level or as a country to develop or to drive your own CPD? How is CPD determined, the CPD that you get at school level, who determines that? May I know?

**00:33:28 TD4**

Like for me, I've been **teaching now for 18 years and** what I've seen **most of the time** is that it's **determined by the management of the school**, mostly management like your Higher departments, your English language department, HOD etcetera, etcetera and they are basically the ones running and determining the professional development of teachers in the field and they are running that system, the developmental part of the teachers. **And in the 18 years that I've been teaching, I've had very little say in** how I can professionally develop myself. **I feel like I don't have a voice like my colleague just said here we are just you know, there's other people flexing their muscle,** but we are working with the children 24/7, we are actually the ones knowing what they need and what I need to give them to improve their situation. It's like you don't have a voice, when there is challenges, when challenges need to be made, **you don't have a voice in that, your opinion is not being considered** and with the professional development the only thing that I've seen so far or that I've experienced, is like workshops. That's the only concrete example that I can think of, that I know of at this moment that I've experienced over the 18 years that I've been teaching, when there's a workshop and I can develop myself professionally through a workshop.

**00:35:28 INTERVIEWER HM**

And most of the time, things like workshops are known as what we call traditional CPD's, where teachers are brought together, and somebody externally comes and tells them what they need to know. While it should be able to be a different type of CPD, where teachers are the one who says this is, what we need, and this is what I need as an individual and therefore you have a say in what you are getting as professional development.

Any other experience in terms of how you as teachers contribute to CPD, the CPD that you receive, how involved are you? Maybe at a different school, you have a different experience because through the documents that I have read, there is something that is called CPD framework in Namibia, it was started back in the days in 2011 or something where every school is supposed to have a CPD committee that on a yearly basis get the teachers together and then they tell them what are their CPD needs and then the school finds a way to address those CPD needs at school level, and then the school is the one that feeds into the regional CPD's for the region to do a regional CPD, based on the school's needs. How is your experience in terms of that CPD framework? That is supposed to be happening in Namibia, but I'm not sure if it's really happening at school level, do you guys have CPD committees?

**00:37:13 TH8**

OK, Hilma, let me, I hope you can hear me. I let me just say something.

**00:37:17 INTERVIEWER HM**

We can hear you very well.

**00:37:20 TH8**

OK, somehow, OK for example, at my school we have a committee, but the challenges, for example you suggest to the regional office the programs you would like to have, but they have the final say to decide whether you can carry it out or not, and many occasions they reject those, they will say there's not enough money and things like that and also the school budget is limited. So, you find that at the end of the day, although there's that document, it's not really practical, it's not practical, so that is the one of the challenges. And I also want to mention, I think I'm taking you back, I am sorry I didn't mention this earlier.

**00:38:14 INTERVIEWER HM**

It's fine.

**00:38:16 TH8**

Then one of the challenges, you asked the previous question is that teachers, we also need mentors just as my colleague said earlier, mentors, you know at other schools, I attended one online seminar about education, they talk about senior teachers that are just there to assist every teacher, you have your mentor that will help you, but sometimes you find when we start teaching English as a second language, you know don't really have, apart from the HOD and the ceremonial subject heads, they don't really assist you practically. They are there of course, but in the practical sense, you don't really get help. And you find that a teacher will struggle a bit with all the many challenges and they were are not trained, you can't believe that even now in grade 12 (AS) Level, I have a student that struggle to write the word "their", you know, just to spell that word "their" instead of where to put the 'i ' where to put the 'e', he just mix it up. You try right and there's some of those things you trace them back, it's not just that the child is, you know, can't do it, it could be psychological, and you have so many cases like that in the mainstream, but you can't do anything, you just have to accommodate them. You were not really trained to know how to help them, you can just see clearly see that this child has a problem, for example but you just try the best you can to help and hoping that the child eventually, I mean that is just a in fact a very a small case where child can write "their" or whatever, but you find that a lot of children in the mainstream, they suppose not really to be there, just like one of us already mentioned.

**00:40:37 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK, so it's only Ms. Karamata school that has CPD committee at school level, any other school?

**00:40:53 TE5**

Hilma, at our school, we don't have that, I heard of it being mentioned at some point, but it was not implemented. I don't know if school managers are also maybe overwhelmed with their own load, but these things are not taken up. I know beginning of the year actually sometime last year, a few of us from school embarked on something that we call Learning maximized, but that was targeted towards learners, like what can we do for our learners, for our situation specifically, perhaps to have an internal curriculum, maybe that supplements the main one, because it is really necessary, the children are not going to benefit from the main curriculum. That's a fact. And of course, these children have to walk with tails between their legs, embarrassed, shy because they are labeled out there as non- performing learners, they don't know anything, they are dumb, but there is something that they know, there is something they can excel in, but the education system is not set up to accommodate them. I was surprised to hear from an Inspector of Education answering me that these children will never have a special world out there, so we cannot create a special curriculum for them. It's very sad to hear such from a leader. You know, there is a special place for everyone in the world, that's why some are doctors, some are nurses, some are athletes, others are artists. There is a special place for everyone in the world, but because somebody is narrow minded like that and this this is how we will end up with the streets full of criminals because what will they resort to? when they are done with school and they have nothing to do, they will grab our bags, they'll kill us. That's what they will resort to because it's easier.

**00:43:22 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, it's true. Thank you, Ms. Basimike for sharing.

**00:43:28 TE5**

So uhmm, I'm sorry I did not finish my point Hilma, I digressed. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I digressed. So it did not, let me just tell you we had that one meeting, like one meeting where we invited somebody to talk to us about how to deal with children who have executive dysfunction, children who are hyperactive, who are, I don't want to get into it. You can look it up yourself, executive dysfunction, that's what it's called. So that's where it ended, because there is also no time to, because it's supposed to be a research group, carry out research, consult maybe with universities and with the ministry like a collaborative effort, it has not yet yielded anything because there is no time. We have our own load to carry and of course there are these things that are nice that we can do, but we cannot do them, unfortunately.

**00:44:45 INTERVIEWER HM**

I understand.

**00:44:47 TE5**

Yeah, from a school level, nothing, but then the teachers tried to come up with something like that, but it did not materialise.

**00:44:58 INTERVIEWER HM**

The good thing about this discussion is that the study really, as I mentioned earlier, your points that you're going to raise here will not be used against you, and the study is for academic purposes, however, not entirely, because the points, although will remain anonymous, will contribute actually because as part of my job, I'm responsible for professional development, and this is insightful for me advice and see what we can do in terms of teacher professional development. Because the documents are there as you, they all say Namibia is good with documents, they are there but to implement is a problem because I cannot believe we have the framework in place for CPD that stipulates everything. Even in this framework, it says every teacher when they start school, they're supposed to get a mentor automatically, and they're supposed to be under mentorship for two years, and then that's when they become professional teachers, but this is even in the national standards booklet for teachers and on paper it looks like we are doing these things, but it's good that these types of studies are needed for us to really explore and lay the real picture on the ground.

So, we have about 10 minutes, I would just want to briefly for you guys to share what kind of CPD do you need to enhance the teaching of ESL. We have spoken about traditional CPD, where it's almost in every school or the whole country where we just do training, training, workshop, workshop. As an individual teacher and from experience, what do you think should the CPD be? Ms. Shigwedha?

**00:46:50 TF6**

OK. Thank you, colleagues. For individual as a teacher, I think we need, as a teacher, I need to identify my own challenges, and especially today, we are dealing with kids that know better than us in terms of technology. For example, if I know that I don't know how to teach using different devices, I should just talk to my HOD, and then maybe or we have a meeting and then we identify our needs, but the first thing that we are going, even a dictionary, you cannot even have financial resources, I don't think if whether this is what it has been or maybe because of COVID, but today its worse, we don't have resources every time you say I need ABC, they say no, the school doesn't have money, the budget *concentrate* is a lot. We don't have money and therefore as an individual we end up even using our own money to buy maybe posters and simple thing like posters.

**00:48:15 TF6**

OK. And second, I think if in the case where we are not given school support, what if we as teachers then, I have to identify saying: Let me go for training, for even for two months, or for wherever I

can go so that when I come back, at least I will be resourceful, I can able to handle the current situation.

**00:48:44 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah, OK, anyone else, what type of CPD do you need at your school as an individual? Apart from the training and the workshops that you get. Is there any other CPD that you need based on the experience and your context? I just want to have an idea to see, within your community, within your school, because as you know, the topic of this study is self-directed CPD, it's a CPD that should have a voice of the teacher at the center. The teacher should be the one to direct their own CPD because they are the ones that know their needs based on their context, where they are teaching. What is your take on that?

**00:49:43 TE5**

Personally, I also agree with the colleague I really want training in learning disabilities and learning, just how to teach a child with learning disabilities, it is disabilities or difficulties if you like. Yeah and then the other thing I'm surprised that you mentioned that teachers are supposed to have mentors, that is very surprising because this year, at the beginning I was bombarded with, is it 3? Three student teachers in my class from university and I don't know, these kids, some of them were fourth years coming to join the trade and it was just a pity to observe that they will unfortunately be thrown in the waters, and they have to find their way out. In fact, I've had also calls, people calling, teachers: "No, I was asked to now start teaching English, I've never done it, can you please assist me, how where do I start, what do I do? How, what, you know?

**00:51:14 TE5**

Yeah, that was the beginning, carrying this teacher helping them. I know in other nations, people have to shadow a teacher for a whole year. Shadowing, you don't teach, you are just shadowing an experienced, qualified teacher, so those could be things that our country could explore, to say that student teachers do not start teaching before they have done a full year of just shadowing an experienced teacher. The challenge with it will be, experienced teacher from where? because it has become a vicious cycle. The same teacher who is now being labeled as experienced, they may have the number of experiences they have, but experienced in what? Because they are every day just doing trial and error.

**00:52:23 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK.

**00:52:27 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you, Ms. Albrecht, you look like you want to say something.

**00:52:32 TD4**

I do Miss, thank you so much for affording me the opportunity. I really if I could choose something I would really love to have CPD in technology and technological advancement, because for me, if I define CPD as something to upgrade myself in order to upgrade or in order to improve my teaching skills, then technology is something that will improve my teaching skills, but not only that in CPD is something that will also improve the lives of the learners in front of me, which that is the other goal, that's how I understand it's something to improve myself, but also something to improve the learners that I have to work with every day. So, if we look at the Namibian child, they are so interested in technological advancement, and we are doing them such a disservice at this moment by being so behind, you know, because we don't have the resources, we don't feed that, times have changed, that's what they are interested in, they want to do or you know, they're interested in technology, they are interested in learning visually through, you know, the internet, through seeing etcetera. I see even with AS, the more technologically you are prepared, the better your learner's actually will do because it opens up a world to them, that global exposure to them, and like for me, I don't even have Wi-Fi in my class, I don't even have Internet.

**00:54:21 INTERVIEWER HM**

So, you cannot just while you are teaching quickly, think of something and go to the Internet and show it?

**00:54:27 TD4**

Exactly I can't.

**00:54:30 INTERVIEWER HM**

There is a limitation already.

**00:54:31 TD4**

That's exactly, you just hit the nail. You just hit it. that's exactly what it is.

**00:54:41 INTERVIEWER HM**

Because now in the 21st century they are talking about transformative, we have to move from traditional CPD moving towards transformative CPD, and transformative CPD is the one where teachers have to even sometimes carry out research themselves of their surrounding of their context, which then determines what they need, like you're mentioning, even just COVID the recent COVID like Mr. Absalom mentioned at the beginning, how did that go in terms of having Google classes? It was only private schools that were coping, what were we able to do it, when even teachers themselves did not know how to use teams, how to use zoom, how you know, there's no Internet connection?



**00:55:24 TD4**

Exactly.

**00:55:28 INTERVIEWER HM**

So, any other reflective thinking in terms of the CPD that we need, let's talk about community of practice is there, do you have any platform where you collaborate with other schools in your surrounding area to develop yourself professionally? Do you get other teachers to come to your school to maybe teach a certain lesson, or even teach at your own school? How do you use that platform of community of practice to upgrade your knowledge and skills in CPD, I mean in English as a second language.

**00:56:14 TG7**

Hilma, can you hear?

**00:56:15 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yes, I can hear you, Miss Matilda.

**00:56:19 TG7**

OK. I think most of these things we think about, and I remember like at my school, there was a time where we were asked to identify all the kids that can't read and write in Grade 8 and I think across all the grades and there was a thing of there was someone, I don't know whose project it was, but there was someone who was going to come and teach the kids phonetics or something like that. Somebody who specializes in that, and that never materialized or maybe the person is still coming, I don't know, but that is one thing that we did at Dawid and I remember there was someone who's supposed to come and train us on what was it? the language department? I forgot but I think it counts as CPD, but they were supposed to come and train us, is it exam setting or something? But I think the person is from DNEA and they are responsible for something, something, I can't remember., but yeah, we really do try in some avenues or in some areas to collaborate with other teachers apart from just coming together and setting up question papers on cluster level or whatsoever but it's not so common in our schools.

**00:57:48 INTERVIEWER HM**

So, you guys really, really work in isolation?

**00:57:49 TG7**

It would be a very good initiative to say, why is this school performing well in this area, what are they doing? Can they come and share with us what they are doing?

**00:58:03 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah, or you go and observe, even with private schools that are in our surrounding areas, you can go to them and just think, I know there are a lot of sectors like the number of learners in the class, the resources, which also really have a big contribution to how we perform, but it's something that we can look at in terms of using what is in our social surrounding to see what we can do.

**00:58:25 TG7**

Yeah, there's always something you can learn, even not as an individual, but even as a school, let's say discipline for example, equipping ourselves to manage learner's behaviour or whatever, it also counts as you know, CPD and...

**00:58:41 INTERVIEWER HM**

It is professional development.

**00:58:43 TG7**

Yeah, just to go and observe. How are you guys maintaining discipline? Because I always hear in meetings like, yeah A. Shipena SS is doing better than us in terms of managing learners, but you never stood to say, let's go to A. Shipena and see what they are doing. So, I think it's all those things.

**00:59:03 INTERVIEWER HM**

Thank you.

**00:59:04 TE5**

Hilma, I wanted to ask you a question.

**00:59:05 TH8**

Yes.

**00:59:11 TE5**

Do you guys have a database for teachers?

**00:59:15 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yes, we somehow have a database, but it's not on a yearly basis, upgraded or updated, but we get like, we tried to request regions to send the teachers in their regions, which grades they are teaching, what qualifications they have to also help us to when we are doing CPD programs, like now we are collaborating with UNAM to give some sort of CPD to AS teachers. So we use some of that data, or sometimes we ask the region to tell us what are their best performing schools and lowest performing schools so that we can see maybe we can do that, positive deviance like s Malukolo is saying where we look at what they are doing and then we can maybe duplicate it at other school, given the other things like into consideration like the resources and number of learners and so on. But yes, we do have.

**01:00:10 TE5**

Hmmm because sometimes we could be, we could be looking elsewhere, when we have the people we need in our schools already.

**01:00:18 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, they are really, they're actually there, it's a matter of just doing the research and saying which school is doing what and in which area and then which teachers are at those schools and what are they good in, then they can train other teachers because most of the time the knowledge is with us, the problem is the isolation. We are most of the time working in isolation. Because our teachers are really good, they are really, really good. We have good teachers in the system that can really contribute and help other schools as well. It's just a matter of coordination, which is part of my work as well, but yeah. We are working on that.

**01:00:58 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yes, there is hand Ms. PM.

**01:01:02 TC3**

Hilma, I wanted to share my experience of CPD. I have a slightly different experience from maybe many people because I was one of the fortunate people to have landed in the hands of a man who I regard as the biggest blessing in my career because he has literally taught me most of the things that I know about teaching English.

**01:01:32 INTERVIEWER HM**

OK.

**01:01:34 TC3**

For me management at my school, most management members, they don't really care what is happening in those classrooms. Why do I say so? Because they wouldn't even know how your learners have performed at, for example, a national level, because at my previous schools we would gather, analyze these results, and say no, this is your performance, this is how good you have done or how bad you have done it. From there we now derive mechanisms on how do we deal with it, if it was bad or what things do we do in order to keep it up. But of lately, it hasn't really been happening, but luckily as I said, my head of department is one of those very, very few people that would not miss a chance to teach you something, you would walk into his office to just ask him very simple question, that question will turn into a lecture. He has taught me most of the things because for him, he believes in constant teaching and he's not that selfish to keep the things that he knows to himself. And if any chance comes up for you to learn something, he will make sure

that you must take that chance, and in most cases, in most schools, people are even refused to go to workshops.

**01:03:03 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah. Yes.

**01:03:03 TC3**

The minute a chance comes up, he will tell you that you cannot go for that workshop. You can go. Right. And like lately I've seen like with the AS level one really needed to understand from you know, from the experts, but then we were not granted that opportunity to go learn in more schools, but then luckily because specific mentor and I see him as my mentor because he has so much experience that with or without the training from the AS level we've been doing, we've been teaching AS level for the past three years now, but we have never really attended a single workshop on AS. And because of that mentorship of his, I have somehow gained confidence in dealing with all the challenges that come, you know, towards me because he has equipped me with such, you know, to deal with everything that I encounter. And so, we really need mentors, we need support because we do not have support. As teachers, they won't have support and then I was supposed to speak when it was time of the challenges, the attitude towards the English subject, both with the learners and the teachers. Recently a colleague of mine, a management member actually said no, English is easy and it's not that important.

**01:04:33 INTERVIEWER HM**

They always say that.

**01:04:35 TC3**

It's easy and it's not that important. The kids will always pass. I kept quiet because I had so much to say, but I didn't feel the need of saying anything because they wouldn't understand either way. So, we constantly need mentors in order, because in this ever-changing world, one has to keep up, and if one does not get the exposure then you will not really get to navigate your way around it.

**01:05:00 INTERVIEWER HM**

It's true. Thank you for sharing, Ms. Mpinge, yeah, the power of community of practice is really surreal and if we have people like your HOD, imagine if we have somebody like that in every school where even teachers come together and they share ideas or even sometimes say: "this topic I don't understand, can another teacher come to my class and teach it:, this way you learn from each other and it's important because we have the solution ourselves, they don't have to come from somewhere else. OK. Thank you so much. Anyone else who wants to add in our final minutes?

**01:05:46 TA1**

OK, I think I should add there by the challenges, because I think the challenges over weighs everything else, because now we need to try and identify the challenges we have so that we can come up with solutions. I think it is important that we look at the certain aspects of acquiring, let's say, English as a second language. Certain things should be defined to us, you see, because now let's say most of us have acquired English as a second language, right? So there will be a big difference between someone who is first language speaker and someone like me, who acquired English as a second language. So now the reason I said earlier that certain things should be defined, or certain aspects should be defined in acquiring English as a second language, is because now I would like to actually know if you know, my definition of being able to do good at English as a second language, is it based now on fluency or what? What is it based on? Because now? I want to give you a narrative where learners have this thing of you see our mother tongues, you see influence our position of second language. Yeah. So now I would like to know also maybe I can learn from you colleagues and to say that that's why I'm categorizing this as a challenge. Because now we have learners of different ethnic groups, and like I said, their mother tongue influence will always rub off. Let's say we have a Damara speaking learner in class and she says "I **just** want to ask you something". You, see? it's an accent, right? now the kids think that when we mimic the accent of the Westerners, that is being good at English. I sort of need something to be defined here because now if this one can say "must I **jump** over the wall?", the other ones will laugh, and this one is Herero, for example, and then they will say "I started from the bottom" you see sometimes it just comes out.

**01:08:15 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah

**01:08:17 TA1**

I think we need to make it clear to the kids that there's nothing wrong with that, because now I've acquired English as a second language, I can't be speaking or expressing myself in the Queen's language as someone who is in England, for example. I think we should define that very clearly, and also make the kids comfortable in the sense that they understand that their mother tongue influence is always going to rub off on the acquisition of the 2<sup>nd</sup> language. It's a challenge though.

**01:08:49 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, it is a challenge, because there was a national assessment that was done, and the report was in English, and second language and the report was written in 2019. It's one of the things that came out properly that we don't actually have a clear definition of what is ESL, and somehow it looks like how we assess learners, we assess them on first language, the way they assess it, it's like it

should be first language, like yeah, it's like a native language. And we are so hard on the children, especially with assessment, and that report actually came out against DNEA (Directorate of National Examination and Assessment) because the way they assess, especially at the national level, was too harsh because some of the things you can see you, you understand what the learner is trying to say is because of the influence from their mother tongue, but it's seen as they are not good. So yeah, it's something that has to come out clearly in the language policy, because it's not well defined nationally. It's a good point, yeah.

**01:09:50 TA1**

It's a problem because this one is Oshiwambo speaking and sometimes you know when I speak, the Oshiwambo in me will come out because I'm not a native speaker of English, it's not my language, I use it for communication purposes, I teach English, as an English teacher, but I learned English as a second Language.

**01:10:14 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah, or sometimes even as a third language.

**01:10:16 TA1**

You see, so I think you should be able to accommodate me somewhere, that's what I feel, because now I'm not a native speaker of English and then my accent, now kids think that when you have an American accent, then you can speak English. When you have this accent, "I'm from Britain", they think that's English, but if I understand the content then I don't really need to have an accent. I can just, if I'm Zimbabwean, I'll say "against" and I need people to understand that it's OK, that's why I'm categorizing it as a challenge.

**01:10:55 INTERVIEWER HM**

No, it's true, it's a good point. Colleagues, I know the debate is really interesting, and I'm also enjoying it. It's now quarter past four, and we're supposed to end at 4:00. This was really insightful, it was valuable and I'm so grateful that I got to meet people that are passionate about English like I am, and I hope that will continue to work in the future past the study, past the research that I'm doing that we can continue to work together and contribute positively to addressing the challenges that we have in terms of teaching English as a second language. So I just want to thank you once more again for availing yourself to come in person, to be online, I know we struggled, some of us since April, I was looking at the group today where it started and I was like "Oh my gosh, we started in April" now, May, June, July, August, September. Yeah, so I'm really grateful, thank you so much for your assistance and I hope not to end here, but I want to, with you guys to also contribute to English as second language in our schools and in our country.

**01:12:15 INTERVIEWER HM**

So furthermore, I just want to inform you that I will come to you personally to continue because I have to do a focus group discussion and also a semi structured interview where I have to come to you at your schools and just continue to go deep into individual CPD needs and the interviews will probably take just 10 to 15 minutes. It will not be as long as this, although I can see it's actually a very interesting topic. So, thank you so much and I appreciate you, all of you.

**01:12:55 Random Speakers**

Thank you, thank you also Ms. Hilma, All right, Hilma, we are very happy for you that you were able to pull this off, it has been a struggle. Really, so yeah.

**01:13:05 INTERVIEWER HM**

Yeah. No, without you, I would not have done this. But thank you so much. Have a nice day and I'll call you individually to come to you.

**01:13:17 TC3**

All right, Hilma.

**01:13:22 INTERVIEWER HM**

You missed the food, those ones that are online, we are eating here my dear. We'll take a picture and send on the group.

**01:13:36 TC3**

OK, alright. Goodbye, colleagues. It was nice chatting.