

INVESTIGATING THE BENEFITS OF ART EDUCATION AS A CORE SUBJECT AT A SCHOOL IN THE KHOMAS REGION IN NAMIBIA

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues for the importance of incorporating the arts as a core subject in public schools in Namibia. Arts education is key to improving learners' learning experiences, but the Namibian government does not currently recognise the value of arts subjects in its public schools. It is evident that the arts have been overlooked and deemed less important when compared to other subjects at schools in Namibia.

A qualitative and interpretive research approach and a case study research design were used to investigate and explore the benefits of the arts within learning environments. The study was conducted at a school in the Khomas region in Namibia. A questionnaire and interviews were used as the data collection methods. Three Grade 8 teachers and three Grade 9 teachers from four departments (Language, Science, Commerce, and Social Science) were given a questionnaire to complete. A total of 45 students from different Fashion and Fabrics classes were interviewed and observed. Inductive qualitative content analysis was used to guide the analysis in this research.

The theoretical perspectives of experiential learning and constructivism were used as a framework for the research. The benefits of art education for improving general performance in schools both locally and internationally were also explored. The role of indigenous knowledge and art education was investigated to assess the influence of colonialism and Western practices on current art curricula at the school, and ways in which indigenous art practices can be used to enhance academic performance were explored.

The result of the study showed that the arts have the potential to help learners to develop reasoning skills, and to promote self-motivation and imagination. Art could also assist learners in task perseverance, confidence building, and adhering to instructions given. The arts also created space for learners to understand things differently and come to new insights through their experiences. Learners could then potentially become progressive thinkers and independent decision makers and improve their overall performance in school.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie tesis bepleit die belangrikaheid van die insluiting van kuns as kernvak in staatskole in Namibië. Kunsopvoeding is van kernbelang vir die verbetering van leerders se leerervaring, maar die Namibiese regering erken tans die waarde van kunsvakke in sy staatskole nie. Dit is duidelik dat die kunste in Namibië misken word in vergelyking met ander vakke, en dat dit as minder belangrik geag word.

‘n Kwalitatiewe en verklarende navorsingsbenadering is saam met ‘n gevallestudie - navorsingsontwerp gebruik om die voordele wat die kunste inhou vir leeromgewings te ondersoek en daarop uit te brei. Die studie is by ‘n skool in die Khomasstreek gedoen, waar ‘n vraelys en analise van kunswerke gebruik is om data in te vorder. Aan drie Graad 8- en drie Graad 9 onderwysers van vier departemente (Taal, Wetenskap, Handelstudies, en Sosiale Wetenskap) is ‘n vraelys gegee om in te vul. Kunswerk van 45 leerders van verskeie Mode-en-Materiaal klasse is geanaliseer, en 45 klasse is ook waargeneem. ‘n Induktiewe kwalitatiewe inhoudsanalise is gebruik om die studie te rig en te lei.

Die teoretiese perspektiewe van ervaringsleer en konstruktivisme is gebruik as studieraamwerk vir die navorsing. Daar word uitgebrei op die voordele wat kunsopvoeding inhou vir die verbetering van algehele prestasie in skole op beide ‘n plaaslike en internasionale vlak. Die rol van inheemse kennis is saam met dié van kunsopvoeding ondersoek om die invloed van kolonialisme en die Westerse praktyk op huidige kunsleerplanne te evalueer. Daar word verder ook uitgebrei op hoe inheemse kunspraktyke gebruik kan word om akademiese prestasie te verbeter.

Die resultaat van die studie toon dat die kunste die potensiaal het om leerders te help om redeneringsvaardighede te ontwikkel, en daarby selfmotivering en verbeelding te bevorder. Kuns kan leerders ook help met taakvolharding, die opbou van selfvertroue en die volg van gegewe instruksies. Die kunste het verder ruimte vir leerders geskep om dinge anders te kan verstaan en om deur hul ervaring tot nuwe insigte te kan kom. Leerders kan so moontlik progressiewe denkers en onafhanklike besluitmakers word, asook hul algehele prestasie op skool verbeter.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis argues for the importance of incorporating the arts as a core subject in public schools in Namibia. The need for arts education is key to improving learners' learning experiences, but the Namibian government does not currently recognise the value of arts subjects in its public schools. It is evident that the arts have been overlooked and deemed less important when compared to other subjects. This is largely because of the social and cultural understanding of Namibian educators. Access to arts education is largely unequal, as private schools offer the arts as a compulsory subject, while in public schools arts is a non-promotional compulsory subject. It is therefore a subject of less importance and educators do not promote it as a key subject.

I have been a high school (Grade 8-12) teacher in the Khomas region for seven years and have been teaching the subject of Fashion and Fabrics for seven years. I teach at the school that offers a pre-vocational Fashion and Fabrics subject as an option to girls in two class groups – Grades 8 (A, B class) and 9 (A, B class). The school also offers a Visual Arts subject as an optional pre-vocational subject to one class group in both Grade 8 (E) and 9 (E), but this option is offered to some learners only. As a person with experience in the arts, I wish to see arts become a core subject in Grades 8 and 9 (junior secondary phase) in public schools, and therefore investigated the value of art education and the possibilities of incorporating it as a core subject at the school where I teach.

Education has been explained by Elliot W. Eisner (2002) as a method of learning to improve a person, whereas art is both a method of learning and the result of the method. Art is defined by Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson (2004) as the expression or application of creative skills and imagination through a visual medium. The arts use visual media that is organised in certain ways to express feelings associated with certain concepts. A concept refers to the perception of an individual regarding issues occurring in everyday life. Soanes and Stevenson (2004) further explain that arts as a subject of study mainly involves

human culture. Concepts are defined as “distilled images in any sensory form or combination of forms that are used to represent the particulars of experience” (Zimmerman 2009: 386). Conceptual thinking indicates two unique qualities of human beings: imagination can create the possibility of things that people have not encountered, and people can use the imagination in perception to create different opportunities.

Creativity is an expansion method that is used by people to improve thinking skills during the developing processes of a subject matter. This makes the arts different to scientific or technical subjects. Arts tend to deal with people’s individual and social beliefs, values, and morals. “Arts is a way of creating our lives by expanding our consciousness, shaping our characters, satisfying our search for meaning, establishing interaction with others, and sharing culture” (Eisner 2002: 3).

There are four disciplines of arts in education. These are: “Dance, Drama, Music, and the Visual Arts, which allow students to investigate, express, and interpret their personal passions and strengths” (Yassir Mahgoub: 2015:100). Arts education intends to inspire learners’ imaginations, innovation, and creativity, thereby helping their education and careers. In addition, Mahgoub (2015) emphasises that learners learn to value creativity, imagination, and resolute play through the arts. The Oregon Community Foundation (2007) has categorised arts education into three approaches: sequential arts instruction, arts integration, and arts exposure. Sequential arts education involves arts education as a stand-alone subject, while arts integration education is used to show an understanding of learning in other subjects through arts. Arts exposure refers to a one-time arts experience, such as an assemblage or a field trip to see a performance or visit an exhibition.

Through the arts, learners acquire various ways to express their feelings. As a result, they learn that there are various answers to life’s situations and that they have the ability to choose the manner in which they wish to live their lives (Mahgoub: 2015). A Visual Arts curriculum is generally designed to develop visual literacy and encourage different types of visual communication messages. Learners that are involved in visual arts focus on a wide range of concepts and use different mediums to explore various

ideas, feelings, and experiences (Mahgoub: 2015). They also evaluate the value of their efforts in relation to how these extend to other disciplines in school and in life. Visual Arts education makes use of a multidimensional creative process that includes the development of perceptual awareness and the ability to use materials expressively. Through participation in visual arts, learners have the opportunity to recognise and celebrate their creativity and their personal knowledge as informed by and acquired through their unique backgrounds (Mahgoub 2015).

The “arts thus have an important role to play in refining learners' sensory systems and cultivating their imaginative abilities” (Eisner 2002:5). Imagination is “a form of thinking that creates images of the possible, but it also has a critically important cognitive function to perform aside from the creation of possible worlds” Eisner (2002:11). Imagination also helps one to think things without overtly expressing them and to see things in different senses of bad concern. Eisner (2002:11) shares John Dewey’s view of cognitive function in relation to the arts: for Dewey, art is a mode of human experience that plays out when we interact with the world. A cognitive function that the arts perform is to “help us learn to notice the world” (Eisner 2002:11). Another cognitive function of the arts is that in “the process of creation they stabilize what would otherwise be evanescent” (Eisner 2002:11).

The arts also offer a means to explore our own interior landscape. According to Robert J Sternberg and Li-fang Zhang (2000), arts-related experiences correlate with the experiential learning theories of David Kolb, called the Learning Style Inventory (LSI). Kolb, as referenced by Sternberg and Zhang (2000), identifies four statistically prevalent learning styles: Diverging, Assimilating, Converging, and Accommodating. Karl Aubrey and Alison Riley (2016) refer to Jemome Seymour Bruner’s constructivist theory, which suggests that children develop their learning through converting experiences into knowledge through action, imagery, and symbols. Tara J. Fenwick (2001) also refers to Jean Piaget’s constructivist theory, which explains assimilation and accommodation as the transformation process in the construction of knowledge. In addition, learning occurs through personal interaction with objects in the space which creates and improves the construction knowledge in the mind.

Visual arts is the embodiment of creativity and is the place where creativity should be located in public schools. The teacher's role in a Visual Arts education is to "provide motivation, support, resources, and supplies, but not to interfere directly in students' art making activities" (Zimmerman 2009: 384). Transmission of learning through the arts allows one to determine if cognitive skills such as higher order thinking are developed through the arts, as per Dewey's constructivist theory as referenced by Eisner (2002).

The new and revised curriculum of junior secondary education in Namibia offers Art as a non-promotional subject which comprises drama, visual arts, performing arts, dance, and music, and Visual Arts and Performing Arts as promotional subjects. It is clearly stated in the Art syllabus that the subject is compulsory and non-examinable; however, continuous assessment marks from class activities should be used to provide marks for learners' reports. However, not all public schools in Namibia offer Art as a subject and it does not appear in learners' reports, as school principals and Namibia's Inspectors of Education do not enforce its implementation. This subject can be taught at a low cost as learners can use recycled materials, so the cost of teaching the subject is not a challenge. The challenge is to employ teachers with an arts qualification, as this would be an additional cost to the government. Visual Arts and Performing Arts thus remain optional pre-vocational subjects and are only offered in few public schools in the country. Hanna Peräkylä (2003) argues that, in Namibia, visual art and otherwise handmade products are not viewed as being of great importance in the country's contemporary cultural setup. The general public therefore does not have an opportunity to be exposed to indigenous knowledge related to handicraft skills that may otherwise be a part of everyday life. One must therefore ask the question: how can these arts-related skills and knowledge be used and appreciated in Namibian schools?

1.2 BACKGROUND

As a high school teacher in the Khomas region, I have been teaching the course Fashion and Fabrics at a multi-cultural school for seven years. This school is a public school which offers seven pre-vocational subjects for Grade 8 and Grade 9, namely: Home Economics, Fashion and Fabrics, Design and

Technology, Entrepreneurship, Accounting, Computer Studies, and Visual Arts. Grade 8 and Grade 9 learners are required to have nine subjects, including two language subjects and a selection of five compulsory subjects from the following: Mathematics, History, Geography, Life Science, and Physical Science. Learners (in conjunction with their parents/legal guardian) have the chance to choose the eighth and ninth subjects from the pre-vocational subject stream.

As a tradition, our school organises talent shows to welcome new learners and raise funds, or for celebrations including Valentine's Day, Independence Day, and African Child Day. I was impressed by the dancing, acting, costumes worn by the performers, poetry, presentations, and decoration of the hall – all done by the learners during these events. Such events attract all learners, and (in contrast to test sessions) hardly any learner will be absent from such events. As an artist, I appreciate and support that all learners at our school be given a platform where they can express their feelings and show their talents. It is through the arts that learners can gain appreciation for the school and use the school environment to express themselves in various forms. In 2018 the management of our school did not consider Art as a compulsory non-promotional subject, and so it was not included in either the school timetable or in the report card as per the school's curriculum directive. This year (2019), the compulsory and non-promotional Art subject was allocated to any teachers with a 'free' or 'open' teaching period. This inclusion of Art as a subject was merely a formality, as no marks were to be produced at the end of the first term. As this subject is taught once per seven-day cycle, the two qualified Art teachers in the school have instead been given other examinable and more appreciated subjects (such as Entrepreneurship and Geography) to teach. The school management has failed to investigate why our school is not performing well, why learners do not like school, and what could (and should) be done to improve learner experience and educational engagement at our school.

With this background information in mind, I aim to investigate the benefits of the Art subject to learners' learning experience and how the arts, more generally, could assist in improving the academic performance of learners and assist them in dealing with personal and social issues. This research was conducted at the school where I work, which offers Visual Arts and Fashion and Fabrics as elective, pre-vocational subjects. The school is situated in the Khomas region of Namibia, is academically orientated,

and is attended by people from different ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds, as Windhoek is a multi-cultural city. The case study for this research focused on investigating the benefits of the arts to learners' learning experiences, in order to improve academic performance.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND FOCUS

The key learning area of the National Curriculum for Basic Education (2015:17) states that “art education contributes to the foundation of a knowledge-based society particularly through its emphasis on developing creativity, communication skills and the ability to be innovative”. It further states that arts are important in societies to help people understand “visual communication, aesthetic design, and the use of media incorporating visual, musical and dramatic” structures (National Curriculum for Basic Education 2015:17). The arts could significantly contribute to personal development, social interpretation of identity, and the cultural welfare of a society.

The Namibian National Curriculum offers Art as a compulsory, non-promotional subject, which is taught by any teacher who does not have a full timetable. This is because it is not compulsory for the subject to be assessed, and most teachers would otherwise use this time to catch up on their promotional subjects. It is evident that teachers who are given the Art subject to teach are not provided with any training (for example a workshop) on how to teach the arts. On the other hand, the National Curriculum does not offer Visual Art or Performing Arts as core subjects, but rather offers these as optional subjects. It is important to investigate the benefits and challenges of offering Arts as a promotional and core subject to learners in public schools, yet only a few public schools are offering Art as a choice subject.

The aim of this study was to address the overlooked nature of the arts discipline in the Namibian school curricula. In Namibian public junior secondary schools, arts subjects are not offered as promotional subjects, but rather as compulsory non-promotional or compulsory support subjects, and only a few public schools offer arts subjects as choice subject or a promotional elective subject. 'Core subject' refers to subjects that are compulsory in the school curricula and are thus required to be taught to every child.

The aim of this study leads to the main research question: What are the potential benefits of teaching Arts as a core subject for learners in Grade 8 and Grade 9 at a school in the Khomas Region in Namibia?

Sub-questions:

1. What learning skills develop when learners participate in an arts curriculum?
2. To what extent can art education contribute to the improvement of academic performance?
3. How can art education contribute to the holistic development of learners?
4. To what extent can art education encourage socio-emotional and socio-cultural development in learners?

These questions are linked to the following objectives:

1. To identify the learning skills that are initiated through the arts curriculum
2. To find out how art education can contribute to the improvement of learners' academic performance
3. To investigate the contribution of art education towards learners' holistic development
4. To understand how art education could encourage socio-emotional and socio-cultural development.

The reason for involving learners and teachers in this study was to create an awareness of the benefits of the inclusion of Arts as a core subject in the public school curricula. The inclusion of teachers in this study aimed to help teachers to understand how the arts could assist in the learning processes of learners. Furthermore, it sought to assist education and curriculum developers to understand how they may serve to improve learners' academic performance. As the benefit of the Arts has been mostly overlooked, the challenge of the study was to emphasise the social implications of arts and arts-knowledge.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study, a qualitative and interpretive research approach and a case study (Dawson R. Hancock & Bob Algozzine: 2006) research design were used to investigate and explore the benefits of the arts to learners' learning experience. An interpretive approach means that data interpretation that was done by the researcher explains the person, situation and data were analysed according to themes and "draw[s] conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically" (John W. Creswell 2003:182). A case study research design, as mentioned by Creswell (2003), is used for a study of the empirical part. A case study is used to obtain a detailed understanding of a certain phenomenon and to obtain in-depth experiences of complexity and various contexts of realities (Creswell 2003). A questionnaire and interviews were the data collection methods used to answer the research questions of this study. In addition, observations were made to note learners' art processes when interpreting themes to create artworks. Class groups of learners were both observed and interviewed. Six teachers were given questionnaires concerning the importance of the arts in their curricula and their day-to-day lives. Written notes and electronic voice recorders were used to capture data. Inductive qualitative content analysis was employed to guide the analysis in this research (Creswell 2005).

1.5 BOUNDARIES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the benefits of the arts have been mostly overlooked, it was a challenge for some of the participants to interpret the questionnaire correctly. They were further hindered by the fact that most of them do not have an arts background but specialise in other subjects.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Orientations to the study (Chapter 1) introduces the study and outlines the important aspects to be studied. The background of the study, the aims and objectives, and the structure of the thesis are summarised in this chapter.

The theoretical perspective (Chapter 2) consists of a literature review that forms the theoretical framework for the study. This chapter reviews theoretical understandings of art education, current influences of arts subjects in core curricula, the benefits of arts for learners in Junior Secondary school, and the contribution of the arts to learning in the global and in the Namibian context. Experiential learning theories and constructivism theory were reviewed to understand learning and indigenous knowledge in their learning.

Research methodology (Chapter 3) discusses the research methodology used in this study. An interpretive research approach and a case study design were used to analyse the study. Observations were made to make sense of learners' art processes when interpreting themes and creating artworks.

Findings and discussion (Chapter 4) analyses the data and identifies themes. The data collected is arranged within themes that develop from the study. The findings of each theme are discussed according to data collected.

Conclusions and implications (Chapter 5) comprises the final part of the thesis that concludes on the benefits of arts education in schools.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This investigation focused on the benefits of art education when it is offered as a compulsory subject in schools. The primary stance taken was that the arts fundamentally contribute to the basis of people's cultures as they promote communication skills, creativity, and imaginative competencies. In reviewing the literature, it is evident that while some public schools have seen the arts incorporated as part of the core curriculum subjects, others only start to adopt arts subjects when school performance declines.

Arts education allows schools to provide learners with knowledge of ethics, understanding of social realities, and an understanding of their rights and responsibilities (Jovita F. Punzalan 2018). The arts teach that a single question can have various answers and different solutions, but they also teach that one can assist learners in finding solutions to problems in a manner that ensures true understanding of the outcome (Mahgoub 2015).

Within the African context, arts curricula have (as a general rule) been adopted from cultural contexts that differ from the locations where they are implemented. In Namibia, arts-related knowledge systems have been strongly guided by colonial influences, yet the arts also offer a means to decolonise the knowledge produced in both a global and local context.

In this chapter, two learning theories are reviewed to establish the role of arts in learning: Experiential learning and Constructivism. Experiential learning is associated with experiential education, which enables the development of “knowledge creation, sense-making and knowledge transfer in teaching, training and development” (Farooq Mughal & Aneesa Zafar, 2011: 28). The term ‘constructivism’ is explained by Sithara Fernando and Faiz Marikar (2017) as the idea that learners learn from within (the self) as well as from the social structure.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING ART EDUCATION

Art is often employed as a way to express reality by using aesthetic value, which can convey the social and political issues of the society. Art helps members of society to perform their everyday activities and show their individual and social identity to the outside world. Art education is the basis of learning as it provides the opportunity to discover the value of the society through day-to-day activities. Furthermore, Mary Schmidt Campbell and Randy Martin (2006:2) view art as that which is used by people to "present their idea and feeling, reflecting certain occasions. Art is used to identify a person; gender, race, religion, class and even citizenship". Art is used as a therapy for healing, as a religious symbol, and as a means for society to define itself. It may also be used to promote business or a series of products – for instance, in the way that a shop may be arranged and the unique characteristics that a product might have.

In comparison to Campbell and Martin's (2006) understanding of the arts, Yassir Mahgoub and Shraa Aldbesi (2016) define arts education in relation to the disciplines of music, dance, theatre, and visual arts. Arts education is important to the people that build up social identity both locally and in the global arena. In agreement with this notion, arts education has been described in the Namibian National Curriculum for Basic Education (2015:17) as "essential to a knowledge-based society where visual communication, aesthetic design, and the use of media (incorporating visual, musical and dramatic forms) are increasingly important and central to the development of personal and social identity" and culture.

In existing literature on the topic, art education has largely been categorised into three approaches: sequential arts instruction, arts integration, and arts exposure. It has further been divided into its disciplines, including visual, music, dance, drama, and media arts (The Oregon Community Foundation, 2017). Sequential arts education involves arts subjects standing isolated from other subjects, of learning. Music, drama, dance, visual arts, and media arts have been identified as good instances of sequential arts education. Arts integration, on the other hand, is an approach in which learners show understanding of other disciplines through art forms where creative methods relate an art form to another subject area (The Oregon Community Foundation: 2017). 'Arts exposure' refers to a single exposure to art, such as an

assembly or a field trip to see a performance or an exhibition. The arts offer various benefits to learners, as stated by The Oregon Community Foundation (2017) – they assist in social, emotional, and academic development beyond traditional learning. Jovita F. Punzalan (2018:121) further states that arts education can “improve one’s own learning and performance, problem finding and solving, working with others, standards of literacy, communication and using the new technologies for variation of purpose”. Each art-related discipline could have a positive effect on learners’ physical and emotional wellbeing, intellectual development, and academic performance (Peri Mesquida & Kellin Cristian Melchior Inocêncio, 2016). Thus, each discipline needs to be taught and understood uniquely and separately, so that learners are aware of their differences within the greater discipline of 'the arts'.

The arts play an important role in education, as they contribute to the development of the key skills mentioned above. Art education is an important part of the school curriculum and one of the most crucial components in every learner’s educational setup. Mahgoub and Aldbesi (2016) suggest that the arts provide learners with a clearer understanding of themselves, of the people around them, and of the past and present (and even future) of the world. Additionally, the arts present various means through which to express feelings and ideas (Mahgoub & Aldbesi, 2016).

2.3. ARTS EDUCATION STRUCTURE IN NAMIBIAN CURRICULUM

The main role of arts learning in basic education in Namibia, according to the National Curriculum for Basic Education (2016), is that the arts contribute to the basis of societal knowledge, as they increase creativity, aesthetic interaction, and the ability to be inventive. The arts are also essential to social knowledge where visual interaction, symbolic design, and new media are combined with visual, musical, and dramatic art forms. The discipline of the arts is described as a basis of human development and identification of a person's culture in the global environment.

Basic education in Namibia is divided into four 'phases': "Junior Primary (Pre-primary and Grades 1-3), Senior Primary (Grades 4-7), Junior Secondary (Grades 8-9), and Senior Secondary (Grades 10-12)"

(National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2015:3). For the above phases of education, the arts learning areas consist of Arts (compulsory, non-promotional, and non-examined subject) for Pre-primary and Grades 1-12, and Integrated Performing Arts for Grades 8-9 and Art and Design for Grades 10-12 as examinable choice subjects

For each phase, the arts offer a unique contribution to the learners' education. For Grade 1 to Grade 3, the arts begin to enrich learners' modes of interaction beyond reading and writing, as it encourages visual, dramatic, and musical modes of expression (The Namibian National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2015). Learners are expected to show their ideas, feelings of self, and their environment symbolically. From Grade 4 to Grade 7, art subjects are offered as supporting subjects, where learners work with a broad range of art forms to express different themes and show conceptual understanding. In junior secondary phase (Grades 8-9), arts subjects are intended to help learners make decisions of their own discovery and research their own ideas using mind mapping. Students also learn to discuss the development process of their artwork, explain their outcomes, receive critique, and defend their work. Lastly, in the senior secondary phase (Grades 10-12), art subjects become essential to learners, as they mobilise creativity, investigatory skills, and the exploration of ideas in an ordered manner. Learners are also expected to freely express their feelings via two- and three-dimensional art methods, and show an understanding of their environment, culture, and overall competence. Learners are required to explore, experiment, transform, and analyse their works, as well as accept critique.

2.4 CURRENT INFLUENCE OF ARTS IN CORE CURRICULUMS

Educational experts from various parts of the world understand the arts to be a valuable subject that benefits both teachers and learners in the classroom. Existing literature indicates that the arts have sometimes been offered as core curriculum subjects in public schools, while some schools only start to adopt arts subjects when school performance declines. Anne Bamford and Michael Wimmer (2012) argue that in most public, academic-orientated European schools the arts have been established as core curriculum. Yet, in senior primary schools in Namibia, it has also been noted that the involvement of parents in choosing the learners' subjects results in a devaluing of the arts. In high school, on the other

hand, parents are less involved in the learners' subject choices, and the arts attract learners because it improve learners' level of well-being and it motivate learners to be confidence.

In the United States of America (USA), the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 was introduced to reform the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that was adopted in 1965, according to Sandra S. Ruppert (2006). The purpose of introducing NCLB was to equalise learners' academic achievement, irrespective of nationality, ethnic group, gender, or income proficiency (Ruppert 2006). NCLB reforms have seen the arts framed as a compulsory education subject that every school needs to teach on the same level as the usually proposed core subjects, including "English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, history and geography" (Ruppert, 2006:6).

It is suggested that the arts be acknowledged as essential, as its subjects assist in improving learners' academic performance, much as other core subjects do. In comparison to this emphasis on the arts in the USA, Mahgoub (2005) argues that, in Africa, arts-education programmes have been absent from schools, and that some learners seem to be unfairly disadvantaged by this absence.

In Namibia, Art is a non-promotional core subject in the primary and junior secondary school curricula, with the majority of schools in the public stream overlooking it. In both the rural and urban areas, only a limited number of public schools offer Art as a subject with a qualified art teacher. Most Namibian schools focus only on developing "skills in reading, writing and scientific subjects, and the benefits of learning through the arts are not acknowledged" (Peräkylä 2013: 26).

In the past, Art as a subject was not examinable, and only Visual and Performing arts were examined. In a recently-reviewed curriculum Art is examinable, yet remains a non-promotional subject (making it less important than other subjects). It is argued that Namibia has a rich cultural background which necessitates that public schools include tradition in the curriculum, in light of the diversity in the learners. A lack of teaching material has been noted as the biggest challenge, as schools claim to not have proper art

materials to host art lessons, even when the school has a qualified art teacher or a teacher with an arts-related qualification.

In 2017, Grade 9 and Grade 8 textbooks were provided for Visual Art and Performing Art subjects, which had not been available before the implementation of the newly-revised curriculum at Junior Secondary School level. Yet teachers without arts experience or an arts-related qualification have claimed that the syllabus for the arts, developed by the Ministry of Education, is challenging to interpret. Schools also feel that the Department of Curriculum Development in the Ministry of Basic Education needs to organise workshops for teachers to enhance their arts knowledge. The request from the teachers shows that they “are willing to get the proper training needed for them to carryout arts lessons that they might have not got through their teachers training years” (Peräkylä 2013: 26).

The Namibia Vision 2030 is defined by Olivia Amupala (2014:44) as a series “of national developmental plans and strategies based on a vision of what the government is confident its country could be by the year 2030”. According to Amupala (2014:44), the government of the Republic of Namibia has a plan for art education through Vision 2030 under The Ministry of Education and UNAM teachers training policy. The government is aiming to have a minimum of five arts education lectures at the University of Namibia (UNAM), which are aimed at facilitating arts learning and development among students. Within UNAM's teacher training curriculum, arts education and art and craft should be compulsory and thus included in primary school teacher courses. By then, it is imperative that every senior secondary school has a qualified Art and Craft teacher to teach the arts. It is suggested that every school should have an accurately planned classroom for arts education, and that arts textbooks are published by those with art-related expertise for all grades, so that these may be given to all schools to assist with the implementation of the arts syllabus. The government emphasises that arts education in all regions will be included in the budget allocation to promote its implementation. It is a good idea for the authorities to enforce the use of recycled materials within schools to develop creativity, arts-knowledge, and cultural understanding within the communities of Namibia. The government has considered the possible implications of promoting the arts and making it popular in the eyes of the nation by introducing National Arts Day to

enlighten the public and foster support for the arts in future. It is necessary to uplift art teachers and bring them together for information-sharing sessions by organising workshops and in-service training.

With this background of Namibia's Vision 2030, it is clear that arts education is a means to assist Namibian schools and the country to attain broader education and social goals of developing arts equal to those of the rest of the world. The Ministry of Education needs to prioritise the government's vision to improve art education and implement it as it is before the year 2030. This is challenging as the vision objectives are not yet achieved and there is not much progress on the ground. This is because there is no enforcement from the Ministry on a regional level for the implementation of the arts at public schools.

2.5 THE BENEFITS OF ARTS IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

Arts education helps learners to develop knowledge of moral value, to be exposed to societal truths, and to acknowledge their own political rights and citizen responsibility (Punzalan 2018). Such knowledge could be provided through creativity and expression of ideas. Ruppert (2006) argues that a powerful characteristic in arts education is when arts has the ability to foster creativity. Through arts education, learners learn to communicate, to incorporate diversity, and to develop and express their feelings, as well as to know the values of the world (Punzalan 2018).

Art has a vital role to play in helping learners to develop their problem-solving skills in everyday life. It also widens learners' perceptions and improves their creativity, as it offers many learning methods and made one understand the world. Although the benefits of arts education are observed as significant in helping overall learning ability, in Namibia's schools they are mostly forgotten. In addition, local schools have failed to protect and sustain tradition. Art learners use actual life experiences and concepts and techniques from their own real-world encounters to solve problems.

For art education to be successful in shaping learners' thinking skills and changing learners social lives and the need to identify personal creativity. Punzalan (2018) states that through the arts learners are able to notice and analyse things in more complex, textured, and multi-layered ways. The arts easily motivate a variety of approaches to learning, and an engagement with forms of knowledge that are often lost in other academic disciplines, and which engage learners' minds, bodies, and souls.

It has been observed that learners who study the arts have improved their learning experiences and their academic achievements in other areas of learning and that their overall life development increases, as they tend to evaluate real-life events and circumstances with understanding (Punzalan 2018). The arts also help to increase study skills, school attendance, and critical thinking, as learners find arts-related activities enjoyable.

Ruppert (2006:11) discusses the benefits of the arts as they improve the learners' "academic learning experiences", which influences academic skills development that involves reading, language, and mathematics. On the other hand, "basic Arts learning experiences" which influence different thinking, social and motivational skills development, which is meant to be crucial for success in school, work, and life. In addition, "comprehensive learning" creates learning environment which is conducive to both learners and teachers by promoting teacher innovation, a positive professional culture, and community engagement, increased school attendance of learners, effective lesson practices, and improved school image.

Mahgoub (2015) further states that when learners are involved in a creative process they are often motivated to develop problem-solving skills and thinking skills which allow them to live in a transforming world. The arts help learners to associate with history, heritage, and culture, and allow them to acknowledge their diverse values and perceptions of global societies. Arts education inspires learners' imaginations, innovation, and creativity, while developing abilities that are useful not only to their education, but also to their careers. They learn that there are various possible reactions to real-life situations, and the arts give them the ability to make sound choices in their lives (Mahgoub 2015:100).

He further adds that in the recent “context of globalization, arts education based on cultural heritage and contemporary artistic” (Mahgoub 2015:100) notions can help to develop diverse cultural production values by associating original creativity in the local cultural environment.

There are two main paradigms identified by Mahgoub (2015) on the benefits of arts learning and arts participation. The approaches argue for the recognition of the benefits of arts education compared to “non-arts outcomes” (Mahgoub 2015:100). This is the 'instrumentalist' approach dealing with aspects of the arts practices and art learning outcomes that assist in achieving educational objectives and ascribing fundamental values to certain arts subjects. Several studies on the benefits of art learning have confirmed that learners with greater levels of art backgrounds demonstrate greater educational achievement throughout a variety of non-arts subjects (Mahgoub 2015:100).

The Performing and Visual Art subjects help learners use logical skills (both concrete and abstract) to reach actual conclusions and express new ideas. The arts stimulate creativity and imagination by exploring the creative process, from the concept development stage to the sketching process and, finally, to the outcome. Criticism of arts education suggests that these subjects provide uncertain preparation for career paths other than those associated with the arts. David E. Gullatt (2007:212) responds to such critique by illustrating that the arts are beneficial to “children’s development and that they should be available to all learners, not just those who are economically privileged”. This is because the arts provide learners with an extensive education and promote vital skills such as “creativity, self-expression, and individualism” (Gullatt 2007: 212). Furthermore, the arts encourage learners to become practicing (rather than inactive or even uninterested) learners, as they are allowed to create their own meaning in the learning process (Gullatt 2007).

In addition, the arts promote creative behaviours in learners through imaginative thinking during the development of concepts, which requires them to develop detailed plans in the mind mapping process. This behaviour ensures that the work is original, as every individual has a unique understanding of a concept which is inspired by each learner's life experiences and environment of images. In some cases,

learners take risks by expressing negative or challenging life experiences but, through the arts, determination is built on healing and improving learning.

In addition to creative behaviours, the arts promote “critical thinking and self-awareness” (Gullatt 2007:212) which allows learners to become performing and dynamic in nature, cooperative workers in life, and risk-takers when it comes to learning challenges. This is because arts education promotes creative behaviours, critical thinking, and self-awareness, all of which are essential as they help learners to develop reasoning skills which promote imagination, task perseverance, uniqueness, and confidence among other learners.

2.6 CONTRIBUTION OF ARTS TO LEARNING

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the arts allow learners to devise multiple answers and various solutions to a single problem. In so doing, the arts inspire learners to relate various problems to various products. The aim of teaching in general is to transfer knowledge equally to learners and to simultaneously develop the Namibian culture. Eisner (2002) points out that the arts can teach the field of education that the method used to form something is significant and the arts may inform educators that how something is said (or taught) is crucial to how content is interpreted and thus learnt. Furthermore, Eisner (2002) suggests that the education field can learn from arts, the aims of teaching imagination. Another lesson that might be learnt is the relational attribute of the arts, the feelings that created during learner’s working process, finishing off the artworks and the teaching methods used to teach arts. In agreement, Maxine Greene (1995) added that the different types of arts help individuals to explore the experience, to perceive unheard incidences, and to conduct habitual consciousness. “The focus of arts is on process and practice, the skill in making is embodied in the object made” (Green 1995:382). Arts can stimulate individual growth, allowing individuals to influence one another as they look for reasons for experiences they have noticed in the world.

Eisner (2002) argues that the arts can contribute to education regarding the forms of representation associated with languages, and makes distinctive contributions to what we notice at our surrounding. Crucial to this understanding is how learners are allowed to take their time and enjoy and enrich the learning experience. It is this enrichment that encapsulates what art is really about (Eisner 2002). As Peri Mesquida and Kellin Cristina Melchior Inocência (2016) argue, the art teacher can inspire learners' creativity and thereby change their self-perception by creating a place for self-expression and thus for personal development. This is because the actions of any art teacher will require that their learners be innovative with both form and content: they must either produce new forms of the same content or ensure that the content presents itself in a different way.

The visual arts in particular have been shown to improve children's social skills, as they are required to present and talk about their artworks in class (National Art Education Association, 1994). Visual arts differ from other arts-related subjects in that they allow learners to develop self-confidence and expressive skills, and improve their learning and communication abilities. It also develops self-expression by encouraging learners to make their own choices, as they are given the chance to use imagination and to express their feelings (Saroja Dhanapal, Ravi Kanapathy & Jamilah Mastan 2014). Greene (1995:379) explained imagination as the "existence of undiscovered vistas and perspectives requires reflectiveness". Greene (1995) stressed that episodes that create aesthetic experiences are events that happen within oneself and in the broader environment. In agreement with this, Nussbaum (2002:300) mentioned that "Arts cultivate imagination, and many standard and familiar works thus prepare learners to understand the situation of people different from themselves". When learners adopt these expressive skills their language skills develop, as they are encouraged to explain their artwork and express their feelings or participate in a discussion. Furthermore, the visual arts teach learners to use images to interact with people and convey their message.

Teaching outdated forms of knowledge with outdated pedagogies makes learning not only harder but irrelevant for learners. For learning to be accessible, various contexts need to be considered, as tradition and experience should be taken into account. Learning can then be conducted from a new perceptive and communication can be expanded (Raewy Connell Sydney 2016:5). In this way, the art teacher "provides

a means for the learner to enhance their perception, coordinate that perception with their environment, and express formally (through the senses of touch, sight, hearing, and smell) in a manner that affects the emotions in relation to their environment" (Mesquida & Inocência 2016:1215).

The arts thus play an important role in academics, as they encourage learners to strongly engage in learning (Gullatt 2007:213). Learners are helped to develop their creativity, as well as their commitment to and stimulating of the culture within the school. The arts also assist learners with self-motivation when they are coordinated with and organised into the curriculum. The arts can help a learning community to build on broader cultural contexts and to be integrated into other institutions. Learning environments can be improved by inclusion of the arts, as arts-related subjects have a tendency to make schools more attractive to and enjoyable for learners.

Gullatt (2007:213) further suggests two ways of using the arts to promote academic success. The first focuses on learners being introduced to various arts programs such as “music or art”, and providing them with skills that encourage them to become confident in that specific art form. The second applies to the sort of learning that takes place – when the arts are combined with other subject ranges, teaching is improved. It is clear that through the arts learners have the opportunity to broaden their understanding of art-related subject matter in their academic stream.

2.7 INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ART EDUCATION

Knowledge systems in the Namibian curriculum have been strongly guided by foreign colonial influences, as most of the concepts used and taught are often not Namibian. Decolonisation, according to Achille Mbembe (2016), is about 're-centering', so that our immediate context in Africa is considered and forms the core of our knowledge production. The arts can decolonise the knowledge produced within the African context because they promote different forms of intelligence and could alter the learner-teacher relationship. The interaction between teachers and learners in the classroom, created by the arts, would encourage a learner-centred approach instead of the teacher-centred approach that is still practiced

in schools in Namibia. “Art education is thus challenged to find locally relevant art practices, which would increase the appreciation of the rich Namibian culture as a whole” (Peräkylä 2013: 28).

Colonialism has often undermined the pragmatism and relevance of education in African society, replacing it with a system that sustains the project of colonialism. David A. Greenwood (2009:1) defines colonisation as: “a) the historical practice from the colonial era through the present of dominating other people’s territory and other people’s bodies and minds for the production of privilege maintained by military, political, and economic power, and; b) other assimilative cultural patterns (e.g., schooling or consumerism) that over-determine or restrict possibilities for people and places”. The European colonisers took over the learning structure in Africa by implementing European programmes and using European languages as a way of communication. The result was that indigenous education and teaching was devalued and remained largely unpractised. Ali A. Abdi, Korbla P. Puplampu and George J. Sefa Dei (2006:18) argue that ongoing “programs of mental and material development saw the stage set for using education as a tool to establish and sustain the project of colonialism”. After the political liberation of Africa in the 1960s and 1980s, the educational culture was to assume an indispensable role in the lives of African citizens. As Abdi et al. (2006) argue, the political liberation of African countries and the attention paid to their (colonised) education systems indicates a recognition that the continued teaching of curricula and content based on the European Enlightenment and its principles of modernity continue to inflict cultural and psychological damage (Abdi et al. 2006).

The postcolonial development of the education systems of Africa could represent a perceivable or tangible measure of improvement that can positively affect the lives of indigenous people. Similarly, education is a tool which can be used to achieve development that can contribute to socio-cultural and community-based advancements for both individuals and for society at large. The development of African education systems has reformed perceptions around learning and teaching, as well as colonial-based pragmatics, by adopting indigenous philosophies of education. As Abdi (2006:18) argue, education can be re-cultural through the introduction of African learning systems that allow for critical reflection on learning experiences, as well as on the desires, needs, and aspirations of local people. In addition, the curriculum must be willing to combine the best from diverse human experiences that are not hegemonic.

As a culture, education should be bound with local cultures and be able to voluntarily borrow from other experiences and geographically-detached life management systems.

Historically, educational policies in postcolonial Africa were moulded by Western systems of teaching, learning, and schooling, whose status has been considerably reinforced through the current globalisation process. However, the marketisation of education is also reinforced through ongoing educational reforms in many African countries under the auspices and dictates of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Abdi et al. 2006:57). African school curricula, however, need to meet local needs rather than those of other communities, although this can be influenced by global schooling systems. Although there are complexities to achieving a synthesis of European and indigenous knowledge in the academic world (particularly given the asymmetrical relations of power among different knowledge economies and the tendency for historically dominant cultures to grow their knowledge), appropriating lesser-known knowledge forms allows for the integration of indigenous knowing and knowledge practices. Rather than forcing the model of Western scientism onto an African curriculum, teaching indigenous knowledge should rely on local experiences so that this knowledge becomes relevant to the needs of learners.

Learners also tend to use their indigenous knowledge to create artworks. Achille Mbembe (2016) thus argues for turning human beings into craftsmen and craftswomen who use local materials and do not need to look at pre-existing models of art-making, but are unique in their design practices. Indigenous knowledge represents the “life and history of a people, that is, the conditions for and of change” Mbembe (2016:[np.]). John Brigg (2005) emphasises that changes which are enforced by local communities should ensure that members of a society can confidently organise indigenous knowledge, and also help to ensure the economic and social wellness of local people. When indigenous knowledge is incorporated into the curriculum, schooling subjects become accessible and understandable to both the teachers and the learners. The Namibian Art syllabus promotes cultural values and meanings, the richness of Namibian cultural diversity, and other cultural experiences. Learners and members of the community become the main sources of knowledge for both art teachers and learners. In the Art syllabus of Grades 8 and 9 it is stated that culture forms the basis of expectations, influences, and personalities, to ensure that indigenous history is upheld and that respect for the history and identities of others is maintained (Art Syllabus

2015). A general arts education that emphasises how the teachings should not be elitist and exclusive, but rather seen as accessible to all learners in the country's schools, is necessary in Namibia . The arts curriculum should therefore be structured to provide cultural and artistic development opportunities for all Junior Secondary learners, in a way that encourages an awareness of the inter-relationship of arts and culture, as well as an appreciation for the validity of each individual art form (Art Syllabus 2015:6). In this way, the arts can help learners to connect or translate global knowledge into local knowledge that local people can associate with.

2.8 LEARNING THEORIES IN THE ARTS

2.8.1 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

“Experiential learning plays a supporting role in experiential education which facilitates the process of knowledge creation, sense-making and knowledge transfer in teaching, training and development” (Mughal & Zafar, 2011: 28). In arguing this, Mughal and Zafar (2011:28) essentially describe experiential learning as the “making of meaning from direct experience”. Experiential learning theory offers separate views on the learning process, namely ‘behavioural theory’ created for an ‘empirical epistemology’, or (traditional education methods) (David Kolb 1984: 20). Kolb (1984) states that this theory has been defined as 'experiential' learning because of the importance of experience in the learning process.

The first aspect of experiential learning theory focuses on persuading learners to develop and apply knowledge and skills, as well as to express feelings in an instant and related setting (Mughal & Zafar 2011). The second feature sees learning happen as a direct result of life lessons (Mughal & Zafar 2011). There are four perspectives on experiential learning, according to Fenwick (2001). These are: (i) the Psychoanalytic (interference) perspective, which (in my opinion) refers to learning that happens in a person based on his or her social life and the natural knowledge that comes from within; (ii) the Situative (participation) perspective, that (in my view) refers to the new experiences that a person has through observation and participation; (iii) the Critical cultural (resistance) perspective, which refers to how learning can change a person's characteristics and teach him or her how to approach others in a decent

and respectful manner; and (iv) the Enactivist (co-emergence) perspective, which refers to gaining knowledge that is integrated with existing knowledge that a person has from previous experiences.

Arts experience relates to the experiential learning theories of Kolb that, according to Sternberg and Zhang (2000), were developed into the Learning Style Inventory (LSI). Karl Aubrey and Alison Riley (2016) emphasise that Kolb's theory establishes that the best way for people to learn is through instant experiences that show the feelings and perspectives that occur during the experience. In Aubrey and Riley (2016:159), Kolb identifies "four statistically prevalent learning styles: Diverging, Assimilating, Converging, and Accommodating". These learning styles are based on a combination of four learning cycles that follow "concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation" (Aubrey & Riley 2016:158). In other words, each learning style is made up of two learning cycles that result in a learner being a diverger (where a learner integrates concrete experience and reflective observation), an assimilator (a learner who assimilates abstract conceptualisations with active experimentation), a converger (one able to incorporate abstract concepts together with active experimentation), or an accommodator (a learner combining concrete experience and active experimentation) (Aubrey & Riley 2016).

The four basic learning styles have been established in accordance with research outcomes and 'clinical observation' (Sternberg & Zhang 2000: 5).¹ These authors argue that learners who make use of a *diverging* learning style observe concrete situations from various directions, as they are best at initiating and understanding ideas from different perspectives. It appears that learners who fall under this learning style are interested in cultural affairs and art; they usually use imagination and emotional affection.

1 The *assimilating* learning style relates to an Introverted Intuitive personality type. The practice of assimilating sees learners use various materials to extract information and use logic to arrange information. An *accommodating* learning style is associated with the Extraverted Sensing type of personality. Learners with this learning style use other people's ideas to solve problems and use other people's information to analyse the problem. The accommodating learning style is suitable for people with action-orientated careers. The *converging* learning style is for Extraverted Thinking type individuals. Persons with a converging learning style are more orientated towards technical tasks and are receptive to a variety of learning skills. (Sternberg & Zhang 2000: 5)

Divergent learners are associated with an Introverted Feeling type personality. According to Sternberg and Zhang (2000:9), past studies show that social service (for example psychology, nursing, social work, and public policy) and arts and communications professions (such as theatre, literature, design, journalism, and media) involve people who are mainly diverging in their learning style.

Kolb's experiential learning cycle is more appreciated as one of the essential theoretical models in administrating education where experiential learning is explained in detail. In order to learn, learners need to be introduced to a complex set of circumstances or popular situations to gain what is called 'concrete experience'. Learners can also learn using 'abstract conceptualisation' by splitting concepts into important parts. The learning process can be transformed through recall of the content learnt and knowledge gained by an individual through 'reflective observation' and 'active experimentation', which encourages learners to relate to the environment and thereby gain experience (Mughal & Zafar, 2011:30).

To apply Kolb's learning cycle in the classroom, a teacher needs to know the group of learners and understand their learning preferences. The teacher must also identify less preferable ways of learning and try to strengthen weakness in those areas. Aubrey and Riley (2016) suggest that the teacher should use a teaching style that promotes the classroom-appropriate learning style in all stages of the learning cycle. The authors view the use of the experiential learning cycle not as a change in learning and teaching methods, but rather as a technique that encourages learners to try new activities while providing an opportunity for educators to reflect on and acknowledge their own experience (Aubrey & Riley, 2016:163). In the arts the learning cycle may be used in a sequence, where the first stage, known as 'concrete experience' (when the new topic or method is introduced), allows the teacher to demonstrate related examples to learners in order to turn the concept at hand into a real-life experience. The second stage ('reflective observation') sees the teacher give a task to learners which prompts them to experiment or develop ideas with the help and guidance of the teacher. The goal of this stage is to help turn learners into reflective practitioners who will have the confidence to learn and continue to learn from their experience. The third stage ('abstract conceptualisation') sees the learners create the final work, wherein all the aspects of the creative process are presented as whole. According to Aubrey and Riley (2016), this stage offers the learners a chance to test their ever-increasing skills, knowledge, and feelings with others.

The last stage ('active experimentation') gives the learners an opportunity to present their work to the class and teacher. The work is discussed and the learner receives feedback from the teacher. Learners need to make sense of the process and ask themselves how they will improve further (Aubrey & Riley, 2016).

Although the experiential learning theory has been criticised, Aubrey and Riley (2016:163) emphasise that this model provides a good means to plan “teaching and learning activities and that it can be employed as a guide for understanding learning difficulties, vocational counselling, and academic advising”.

2.8.2 CONSTRUCTIVISM THEORY

The term ‘constructivism’ is explained by Sithara YJN Fernando and Faiz MMT Marikar (2017) as the notion of learning that sees an individual learner develop an understanding of a concept in his or her own way. There are core ideas that govern the constructivist approach to learning, as a learner is considered to be a participant in developing knowledge and the teacher is considered to be a guide to learners in this process. Learning becomes a form of problem solving, rather than force introduction of information. As Fernando and Marikar (2017) suggest, unlike more traditional modes of education that see learners acquire knowledge through other people's experiences imposed on them, the essential values of this form of learning emphasise that learners think of learning as knowledge and not as the lesson learned.

Fernando and Marikar (2017) thus emphasise that if learning requires that the teacher impose knowledge of life experiences, he or she needs to give real-life knowledge or lessons to the learners to analyse the experiences themselves. This means that learners are given practical learning activities to understand concepts and change an object's meaning with the aim of providing clear structure to learners' understanding of knowledge (Fernando & Marikar, 2017). A learner's understanding of the world is thus contributed to, but they are not asked to construct their own world.

Fernando and Marikar (2017) identify the principles of learning, which I compare to learning in the arts, in accordance with a constructivist learning view. Learning is an effective process when learners use sensory experiences to extract meaning from the learning process. Learning happens not only in the mind, but also through physical action and practical experience, as these offer a method for gaining complete understanding. In addition, learning becomes a social activity as it connects personal experiences to learned knowledge. Knowledge is thus learned in association with the past experiences, beliefs, preferences, and fears that, together, create abstract feelings towards and understandings of content. It is vital to associate new knowledge with previous knowledge in order to be able to build on a learning structure. Learning takes time, as there is a need to revise ideas, try them out, play with them, and use them. Learners need to be motivated during the learning process in order to understand the knowledge transmitted.

There are several teaching methods identified by Fernando and Marikar (2017:112) that can be used for learning to take place:

1. The lecture: The lecture is a way to transfer knowledge through the medium of speech.
2. Question and answer: In using this method, the teacher must be careful not to discourage learners who give weak answers. In this case, the teacher must give positive feedback, even to weak answers, so as to persuade the learner to continue his/her participation in the learning process. The teacher should ask broad questions to encourage learners to express their views. The question and answer method can help teachers to assess the learners' knowledge and how successful a lecture has been in conveying knowledge to them.
3. Discussion: The evaluation of ideas and relating the various ideas to one another must be done after all ideas are recorded.
4. Brainstorming: Brainstorming needs to be done in small groups so that the better learners can be allowed to take the lead. Brainstorming is effective for the following reasons; it encourages learners who are quiet and uncertain to enter into discussions, and generates a large number of ideas in the shortest possible time.
5. Role play: The use of the role play method can give the learners an opportunity to use their creativity in the process of learning. Role play can be employed using groups of learners with drama knowledge and who know the basic principles of drama. Each group of students can act out a real-life situation relating to the subject or topic being taught with other learners and the teacher watching.

6. Case study: The case study method involves an in-depth explanation and analysis of a specific event or event relevant to the subject. The case study method can be implemented through group performance. One of the advantages of the case study method is that it develops analytical, problem solving, and decision making skills.
7. Field visits/educational visits: Educational visits are outings aimed at reinforcing what is learnt in the classroom. The difference between the field visit and the educational visit is that in the field visit the teacher has to prepare activities to be done at the field site , whereas in the educational visit the teacher does not have to coordinate the activity at the visited site.

Fernando and Marikar 2017:112

In agreement with Fernando and Marikar (2017), Bick Har Lam (2013:1) describes the constructivist learning and teaching perspective as “involving a shift from viewing learners as responding to external stimuli to seeing learners as active in constructing their own knowledge”. From a constructivist perspective, social connections are regarded as an important aspect in knowledge transmission, as learners directly change knowledge by feeling and reflecting on their experiences. Learners can actively use a cognitive learning process and build on their knowledge and understanding of concepts from their own experiences (Lam, 2013). The constructivist model specifies that teaching helps learners to build knowledge from realities, from other people's experiences, or through social interaction with other people.

In this case, the arts are part of constructivist theory as arts learners are given activities that help them to gain an understanding of a certain phenomenon. Learners are agents in the classroom as they become expert at continuous learning. With the help of arts experience learners become hardworking during the available study time, as they learn to manage their time without any directive from the teacher, but solely with their own willingness to engage in learning activities. Jnanabrata Bhattacharyya (2005) further indicates that, when learners constantly replicate their experiences, they become serious and powerful in thinking and develop stronger skills to combine new knowledge. The teacher’s primary purpose thus becomes that of inspiring both a learning and a replication process. “Teaching has become a process that should proceed from simple to the complex, from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract and from empirical to rational” (Murriss 2016:186).

In addition, Aubrey and Riley (2016) refer to Jerome Seymour Bruner's constructivist theory by suggesting that learners develop both their educational and real-life experiences by converting these into knowledge through action, imagery, and symbols. Tara Fenwick (2000) also refers to Jean Paul Piaget's constructivism that describes the construction process as changing between assimilation and accommodation. Thus, learning according to these two models happens when persons relate to objects in their environment in order to construct and improve knowledge in their mind.

According to Bhattacharyya (2015:66), "Piaget's model of personal constructivism" assists the basics conceptual work includes the changes of teaching and learning abilities that assist learners in the process of understanding concepts in a new way or via a new approach. He proposes that an individual can build new knowledge from past experiences through methods of 'accommodation and assimilation'. Assimilation helps the person to associate new knowledge with existing knowledge without changing any information given. According to Bhattacharyya (2015), accommodation is defined as the "process of reframing one's mental representation of the external world to fit new experiences". Accommodation can therefore be understood as a tool to use to change our past experience into new experiences, as well as change our expectations of new learning.

Piaget suggests "four stages in human development: the sensor motor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage, and the formal operational stage" (in Bhattacharyya, 2015:67). For Piaget, changes of human understanding continue through "adaptation and organization". Adaptation is explained in Bhattacharyya (2015:67) "as a process of assimilation and accommodation, where external events are assimilated into existing understanding; but different events (that don't fit with existing knowledge) are accommodated into the mind" and thereby establish change.

Bhattacharyya (2015) argues that a person thinks through real-world problem solving in order to challenge suggested objects. Bhattacharyya (2005) (drawing on Piaget) further sees the aims of

constructivist teaching as allowing people to gain knowledge from their experiences from childhood to adulthood. At the same time, Dewey's idea of influential education suggests that education needs to involve wide experience, thinking skills, and reflection which can be related to the responsibilities of an educator (Bhattacharyya, 2005). In the arts classroom, the teacher should thus give little or only basic information to learners so that they must use their experience to develop their learning. The idea of problem-solving experiences therefore happens in a social setting, where learners learn together using the same material and observe the result together in this environment.

2.9 SYNTHESIS

Arts education could help to improve learners' holistic development and improve academic performance. The arts promote hard work, critical thinking, and learning skills that encourage learners to critically analyse knowledge. The aim of including arts in core curricula is to change learners' understanding of new experiences and to associate real-world experiences with adopted academic ones. Learners' cultural knowledge needs to be strengthened so that they can value their culture and integrate it into the global world. Learning takes place in education settings through observation and practical action. In the next chapter, the methodology used to investigate the benefits of art education is discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this study was to uncover the potential benefits of having the arts as a compulsory subject for learners in Grade 8 and Grade 9 at a school in the Khomas Region in Namibia. The investigation of the benefits of the arts as a core subject (a subject taught to every child) was done using a case study research design and qualitative data collection method. Inductive content analysis was used to analyse the data collected and to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the study. The research approach and design, sampling, data collection methods, data capturing data, and techniques for data analysis are discussed in the sections that follow.

3.2 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.2.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

For this study, a qualitative and interpretive research approach was used. The main purpose of qualitative research is to know the issue under study from the partakers' perspectives rather than from the investigator's perspective. This approach is called the "emic, or insider's, perspective", as opposed to the "etic, or outsider's, perspective" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:8). An interpretive approach in research refers to how the investigator interprets the data that defines the participants and their setting, as well as the themes that emerge during data evaluation – thereby “drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically” (Creswell, 2003:182).

3.2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used in this study was employed to investigate and explore the benefits of the arts to learners seeking to improve their academic performance. A case study research design was the main

strategy selected to address various components of the study, and to thereby investigate the research problem effectively (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

The case study research design was used for the empirical section of the study with the aim of achieving a detailed understanding of the investigation, as well as an awareness of the inclusion of various realities of the setting in question (Creswell, 2003). Specifically, the case study was used to investigate the effects of Art as a core subject and to categorise the changes in learning experience achieved when incorporating the arts into a learner's education.

For case study research, the researcher is meant to be situated in the environment studied (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). For this project, ethnographic case study during day-to-day activities was used to increase interaction with the group of participants. The outcome of an ethnographic case study is a "holistic report of the group that incorporates both the ideas of learners and researcher's perceptions and interpretations of the activities results" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:31). This case study therefore included the gathering and analysing of information from interviews, in-person observation, and relevant literature.

3.3 SAMPLE SELECTION AND DATA COLLECTION

The research made use of purposive or judgemental sampling. The chosen sampling design is a non-probability design, meaning that the conclusions and findings that result from this study are not generalised or applied to the wider population. The case study was conducted at the school where I work, which offers Visual Arts and Fashion and Fabrics as examined subjects. The school is situated in the Khomas region of Namibia and is an academically-orientated school that is attended by learners from various cultural backgrounds.

The questionnaires were given to teachers who are trained to teach non-arts subjects but who are teaching learners taking Visual Arts and Fashion and Fabrics. Three Grade 8 teachers and three Grade 9 teachers from four departments (Language, Science, Commerce, and Social Science) were given the questionnaire to fill in. A total of 45 individuals from four groups of students in different Fashion and Fabrics classes were interviewed and observed. Two of these groups were in a single Grade 8 class; the other two groups were in a single Grade 9 class. The data collection took one month, beginning on the 20th of May and ending on the 21st of June 2019.

Participants are coded depending on associated department (Language [LG], Science [S], Commerce [C], and Social Science [SS]), the role of the participant (either teacher [T] or learner [L]), the education level of the learner (Grade 8 or Grade 9 [G]), and the Researcher [R]. The table below shows a detailed breakdown of participant coding.

Participant	Grade 8	Grade 9	Total
Teachers	8TLG=1	9T LG=1	2
	8TS=1	9TS= 1	2
	8TSS=1		1
		9TC=1	1
Learners	L=26	L=19	45
Researcher	1		1
Total participants adult			7
Total participants learners			45

The table shows the number of sample participants, where there were two teachers from the Language Department, two teachers from the Science Department, one teacher from the Social Science Department, and one teacher from the Commerce Department. 26 learners from Grade 8 and 19 learners from Grade 9 participated.

3.4 CAPTURING DATA

A questionnaire, coupled with interviews, was used as the empirical data collection method to respond to the study's research question. In addition, observation was used as a means to collect data about the learning experience of learners who take Visual Arts as a subject. This observation focused on the learners' art processes, particularly the interpretation of themes in the making of artworks.

Six teachers from various departments were given the questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire focused on the teacher's impression of the importance of the arts in the school curriculum as it pertains to learners' academic experience and performance. The questionnaire contains both structured and semi-structured questions to allow respondents to give expressive answers (see Appendix B, page 76). The participating teachers were given the questionnaire to fill in during their free time, as I trust that they are professional and responsible. Observation was used to verify data from the interviews and the questionnaire by taking field notes for future reference.

Barbara Kawulich (2015: 3) emphasises that observation is used as a tool to collect data using two methods: "participant observation" (meaning that the observer and participants are in the same setting) and "covert observation" (meaning that the participants are uninformed about the observation). In my view, covert observation is appropriate for this research as the participants are less likely to change their actions while under observation if they do not know that they are being observed.

The observation of the learners took place during Fashion and Fabrics classes. This subject is made up of 45 minute lessons and five periods in a 7-day cycle timetable. The observation of both Grade 8 and Grade 9 learners began with the first lesson, during which the topic is introduced. The observation ended with the presentation of the learners' completed work. The syllabus topic for Grade 8 and 9 is "Selection of clothes" (Fashion and Fabrics syllabus Grades 8-9, 2015:7, 17). During the first lesson the teacher introduced the topic of colour schemes used in clothing to the Grade 9 class. During the next lesson, the teacher explained the assignment to learners by showing examples of a fashion storyboard and fashion illustration. After the lesson, learners were asked to create their own storyboard and draw a fashion illustration. For Grade 8, the teacher introduced a colour wheel to learners and discussed the characteristics of colours in clothing. After the first and second lessons learners were asked to create a storyboard and draw a fashion illustration.

During the creation process, each class and group of learners was interviewed. The interview questions posed by me were semi-structured questions designed to investigate issues of interest to interviewees (see Appendix B and Appendix C). In this case, semi-structured interviews allowed interviewees to express their ideas independently, and provided the learners' opinions from their perspective, rather than from the perspective of the researcher (Hancock & Algozzine, 2005).

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical liability has been achieved through the University of Stellenbosch research ethics policy. I have permission from the Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture in Namibia to conduct this study at the school. The school principal granted permission for me to use the school community to do this research. Ethical clearance was granted by the Research Ethics Committee Human Research (Humaniora) of Stellenbosch University.

I did not use force or coerce respondents to participate in the study. A consent form was prepared for the respondents and assures anonymity by not requiring respondents to write their name on the questionnaire.

The respondents' confidentiality is also guaranteed in cases where I know their identity. I namely assure that I will not link the identity of any known respondent to his or her answers.

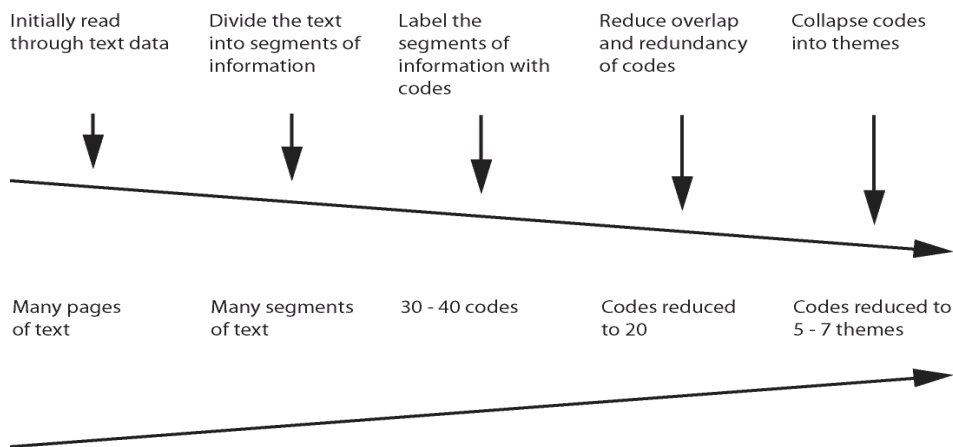
During observation I did not assist the learners' creative processes or their needlework production, in order to ensure that they are free to explore their own feelings and use their creativity independently. Furthermore, I have not and will not negatively criticise learners' work.

In classroom, during the art classes, I avoided asking personal questions that might offend learners or teachers. The informal interviews were recorded and field notes taken for future reference. Teachers completed a consent form (see Appendix C, page 79). The written information and electronic voice recorders were used to capture data that emerged during interviews and observation. The recorded information was transcribed via computer, and any data-laden content was kept in the locked drawer in my classroom. Any learner or teacher can ask to look at the written information or listen to voice recordings that hold information sourced by the researcher. The information is to be deleted five years after the submission date of this study. The interviews took place in the school, either in my classroom or in an alternative suitable place for the learners and teachers. Observations of the learners took place while they were in class. All teachers and learners involved were informed about the study and were free to leave the classroom during those times, without any negative consequences. The names of participants are not revealed in order to protect their identities.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Inductive qualitative content analysis was used to direct the interpretation of data in this research (Creswell, 2005). The importance of inductive content analysis is to analyse the data qualitatively. It is used for organising data into themes by conducting a careful evaluation of the data and categorising the different concepts, topics, and themes (Creswell, 2005) (see Table 4.2 overleaf).

Table 4.2: The coding process in qualitative research (from Creswell, 2005:238)



The data was analysed by comparing responses across answers to discover the relationship and difference between the information provided. The responses were analysed to find a possible solution to the research problem. The ultimate goal was to share findings with the academic and general public to understand the beneficial contributions that the arts could offer when made part of the school curriculum.

3.7 RELIABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Reliability and validity were ensured by administering two pilot copies of the questionnaire to two willing respondents before actual data collection. This was done to assess how understandable the questions presented in the questionnaire were with the aim to minimise misinterpretation, as it would affect the quality of responses and eventually the quality and relevance of the collected research data. Validity and reliability of research data was also ensured by giving the questionnaire to targeted respondents in person and to give them the choice to ask for clarity before answering the questionnaire. The observation was

done with the Grade 10 class group of Fashion and Fabrics so that the researcher knew what to pay special attention to when observing the Grade 8 and Grade 9 participants. In addition, working with the Grade 10 learners offered an opportunity to test whether the interview questions were understandable. I produced the data to this study's supervisor to assess reliability and validity before the data was analysed. The answered questionnaires were kept for future reference. The field notes, interviews, and answer sheets are also being kept for the record. The participants have been asked to verify their answers in the research paper to ensure these were appropriately interpreted.

3.8 SYNTHESIS

The case study research method was used to structure the research activities of this investigation. Qualitative data was used and a questionnaire and interviews were used as the data collection method. Three Grade 8 teachers and three Grade 9 teachers were given a questionnaire to fill in and a total of 45 students were interviewed and observed. Inductive qualitative content analysis was used to guide the analysis in this research.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the potential benefits of arts education as a core subject for learners in Grades 8 and 9 at school (junior secondary education phase). The study was done at a school in the Khomas Region which offers Visual Art as a choice subject from Grade 8-12. For this study, observation data collection was used as the primary instrument to gather data from learners, and was supplemented by interviews with learners. The observation aspect of the study was done with Grade 8 and 9 learners in the Fashion and Fabrics class. A questionnaire was used as a data collection method to gather information from teachers that teach Visual Art classes (Grades 8E and 9E). For the purpose of observation and interviews, learners were given structured projects with the general concept of colours in fashion. The concept was taught during lessons (as required by the Fashion and Fabric syllabus) to aid learners' clear understanding thereof.

The answered questionnaires were filed and kept in my office for future reference. A copy of the consent forms was made and given to the respondents, and the originals were filed in the same file as the questionnaires. The observation and interview notes were also kept in this same file. The artworks created during observation were photographed and the researcher kept the photographs on a USB drive for future use. The learners' artwork were given back to them and they could use them for their own purposes. I am referring to myself as the researcher for the purpose of differentiating myself from the other teachers who teach other subjects to Visual Art learners.

Project given to the Grade 8 learners:

Question 1:

Mixing of colours.

Draw a colour wheel with primary, secondary, and tertiary colours.

Paint primary colours on the reserved space, followed by secondary and tertiary colours (which need to be mixed).

Question 2:

Choose the colours that suit you or any colours of your choice from the colour wheel.

Find pictures of garments in the colours that you chose in magazines or newspapers to show your colour scheme.

Paste these pictures on a piece of A4-size paper using the following characteristic of colour found in fashion to create your colour scheme: harmony and complementary colours. Remember to use unity and balance to arrange the composition.

Project given to the Grade 9 learners:

Question 1:

Come up with your own concept or theme to express your current feelings on a topic of their choice.

Create a brainstorm or mind-map on the theme.

On an A4-size paper create an inspirational mood board collage with pictures from magazines, newspapers, or printouts which define the theme.

Question 2:

Choose the colour scheme that would be used for the garment to be created.

In addition, choose the types of fabric that would be used to create the garment and, lastly, choose the design of garment of your choice.

Collect pictures of garments or objects with the desired colour, fabric, and design that will be included in the creation of garment.

Create a mood board collage by pasting the pictures on A4-size paper. Arrange the pictures in a composition using unity and balance.

Question 3.

Draw a fashion illustration of the garment that you want to design.

4.2 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.2.1 LEARNING SKILLS

Through observation of the two class groups (Grade 8 A, B and Grade 9 A, B) taking Fashion and Fabrics as a subject, learners' learning experiences were investigated. The focus was the learners' development in the process of creating final artworks, interpretation of the theme, and skills in expression. Ruppert (2006) pointed out the importance of knowledge gained through studying the arts, as it improves learners' basic arts skills which influences the development of various skills deemed crucial to achieving goals in school, work, and life. For this study, these skills included intellectual skills (as learners interpreted their themes in a new way), socialisation skills (as learners shared the medium or materials used in the creation process, as well as their ideas), and inspiration skills (as learners developed an understanding of the taught subject matter). Below, the processes and project will be discussed. Grade 9s' projects will be discussed first, as this was the first project that was done.

4.2.1.1 LEARNERS' DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE THEME

After a briefing of the project guidelines by the researcher, Grade 9 learners were asked to brainstorm the inspirational themes of feelings that they wanted to express. The feelings could be positive or negative, but needed to be meaningful and valuable to the learners' social, economic, cultural, and personal lives. It was a challenge to the learners, as they are not usually required to work with their own theme but rather with given themes from the subject syllabus, where all the information is in the textbook. Encouraging learners to identify their own social, economic, cultural, and personal issues can teach them

to be more self-driven. Freire (1975:144) refers to learners not as empty vessels to fill with knowledge, but as independent thinkers that should be encouraged to become conscious ('conscientisation and actively participate in relevant issues of their everyday lives. During the brainstorming session, learners created an open dialogue with the teacher and fellow students, asking guiding questions such as:

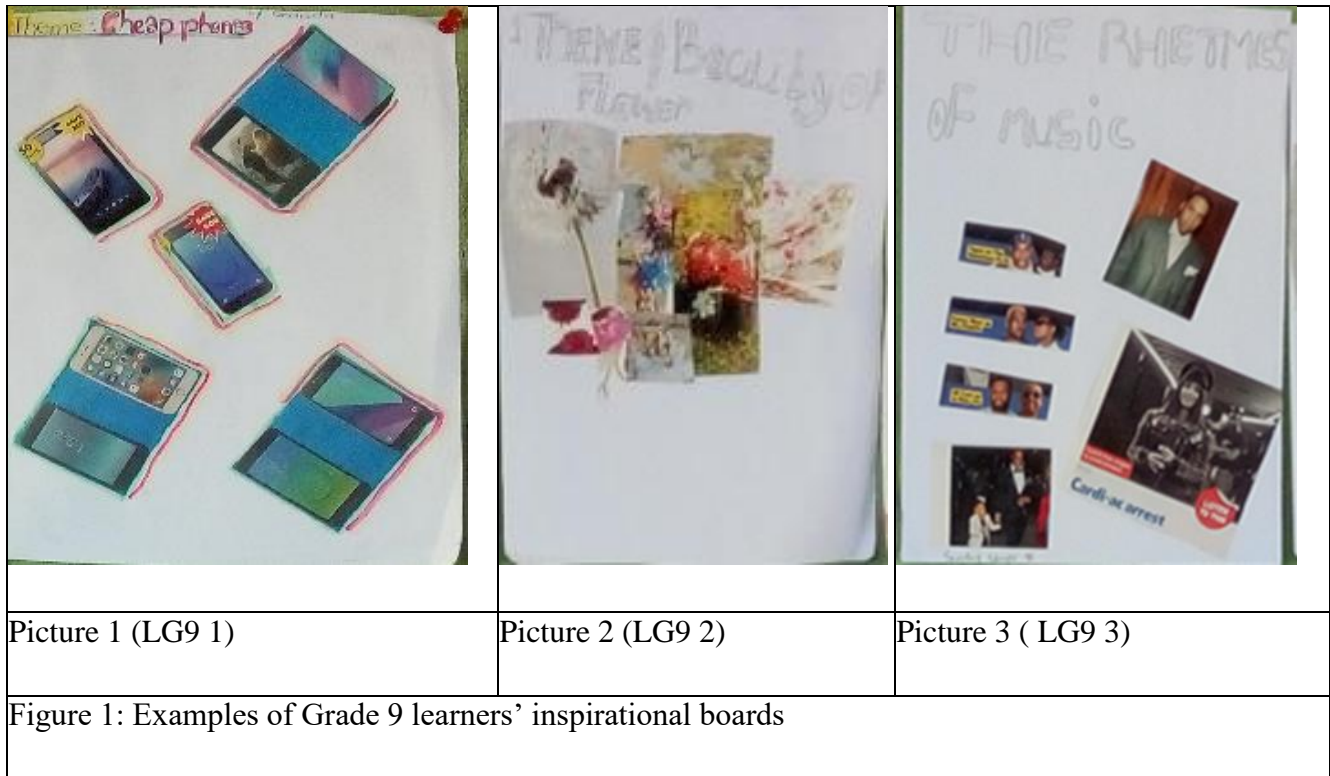
LG9: I am interested in cars. Should my theme be cars?

R: What types of cars interest you?

LG9: Luxury cars, because they look comfortable and they are respected and look clean.

R: You got it!

The researcher realised that the learners were struggling to identify a theme, and therefore did not have a choice but to brief the whole class by giving examples on how to come up with a theme, with the purpose of avoiding further individual questions. This approach worked well. As Mesquida and Inocência (2016) recommend, the art teacher can inspire a learner's creativity and thereby change their self-perception and create a place for self-expression and personal development. The briefing inspired the learners to come up with interesting themes or concepts which showed expression of individual feelings and led to self-guidance throughout the project. Most of the learners then understood the principle of theme brainstorming and came up with thoughtful themes and meaningful ideas from their everyday lives to work with for the project (see figure 1). As a researcher, I had to remind myself that the themes that the learners chose were relevant to their age group and that one could not expect a deeper consciousness at that stage, even though the process followed has the potential to develop deeper understandings.



In LG9's board (picture 1) the theme was 'cheap phones'. In the work, different brands of smart phone were presented. The presented phones were mostly black, with one being white in colour. The learner stated that, "cheap phones have good applications, flat surfaces, and neutral colours which are liked by everyone [unisex]. The phones have a long lifespan because they can be fixed anywhere by anyone: they are flexible".

In the board shown in picture 2 the learner developed a theme called 'beauty of flower', where she used pictures of flowers and plants as an event décor and motif. The learner combined various functions of flowers in life. She (LG9 2) stated that "flowers make good design and colour on clothes, beautify decorated spaces, and smell good".

In picture 3, LG9 3 came up with the theme 'The Rhythms of Music', where pictures of the artists of her choice were presented, some with names and some without. The learner expressed her love of music, as it keeps her focused when working and relaxes her. The musicians inspired her when she learned about their life stories.

Through the creation of the inspirational boards, learners developed socialising skills by sharing ideas with their peers and the researcher, as there was a lot of interaction in the class. Through interaction learning became fun and everyone was eager to get to the final work. During the creation process of the above storyboards (figure 1), learners were able to show their capability to become performing and active learners, whereby they brainstorm the themes and are able to present their ideas in visual forms. Learners also showed their cooperative working capacity by sharing the class space and sharing their personal stationery without disagreement. Lave and Wenger (1998) recommend a social theory of learning that highlights the way learners grow towards better participation in a ‘community of practice’, instead of only learning from the educators’ viewpoints. Since it was the first time they were creating collages and there was not constant guidance in the creation process, learners took risks in this learning challenge and showed commitment in searching for resources. It was their first time incorporating visual art composition in the creation of work, as they usually use the textbook information.

4.2.1.2 LEARNERS’ INTERPRETATION OF THE THEME INTO ARTWORKS

After the brainstorming session, the Grade 9 learners had a clear vision of what was expected from them, which created a flow of ideas in the next session. For the second and third sessions, learners came prepared with their resources (magazines, newspapers, and print outs) to create their inspirational boards. Learners cut out their desired pictures and pasted them on A4-sized paper to create their inspirational board. For the learners, it was a challenge to arrange the pictures on paper to create an effective composition. The learners asked for a brief on how to create a good composition and a class briefing was given by the researcher regarding the principles of design, and specifically the main elements of composition which are balance and unity. Learners were told to balance their picture in terms of colour, shape, size, and direction and an example was shown to them to allow for better understanding. The majority of learners understood the process of composition and created their inspiration boards with balance, unity, and harmony (See figure 1).

Learners also interpreted their inspirational ideas and translated them into a storyboard. A storyboard, as used in this project, is a presentation of concepts that symbolically explain the ideas of a design in terms

of colour, style, and the fabrics that a person wants to use. Various details were shown in the storyboards: colour scheme, style of the garment or design, and the types of fabrics to be used for a garment. The abovementioned details were taken from the inspirational ideas which showed learners' personal creativity and shaped their thinking skills. For instance, a LG9 used supplementary medication in the inspirational board to present the concept of 'healthy lifestyle'. The supplementary medication was transformed into a jersey and flannel fabric garment with a white colour scheme in the storyboard (see figure 2). One can see that the learners transform their feelings into workable ideas.



Figure 2: Example of inspirational board and storyboard (LG9)

During the project, Grade 8 learners were taught about primary, secondary, tertiary, or intermediate colour groups. The researcher discussed the colour groups with learners (which colours can be found in each group), how to create each colour, and how to create harmony and complementary characteristics. Harmony, according to C.M.Nel (1989:32), are “colours next to each other on a colour wheel” while complementary colours are “colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel”. After the

discussion with the researcher the project was given to learners and discussion about the project took place among the peers. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, learners were asked to draw a colour wheel and paint all colour groups in a systematic way and according to their understanding. The researcher gave them only the three primary colours. They then had to mix the secondary and tertiary colours themselves. 18 out of 21 learners got the right colour by mixing equal portions of colours, while 3 out of 21 learners failed to use the formula for mixing colour (where a teaspoon was used to measure the paint to get the perfect colour) (see figure 3).

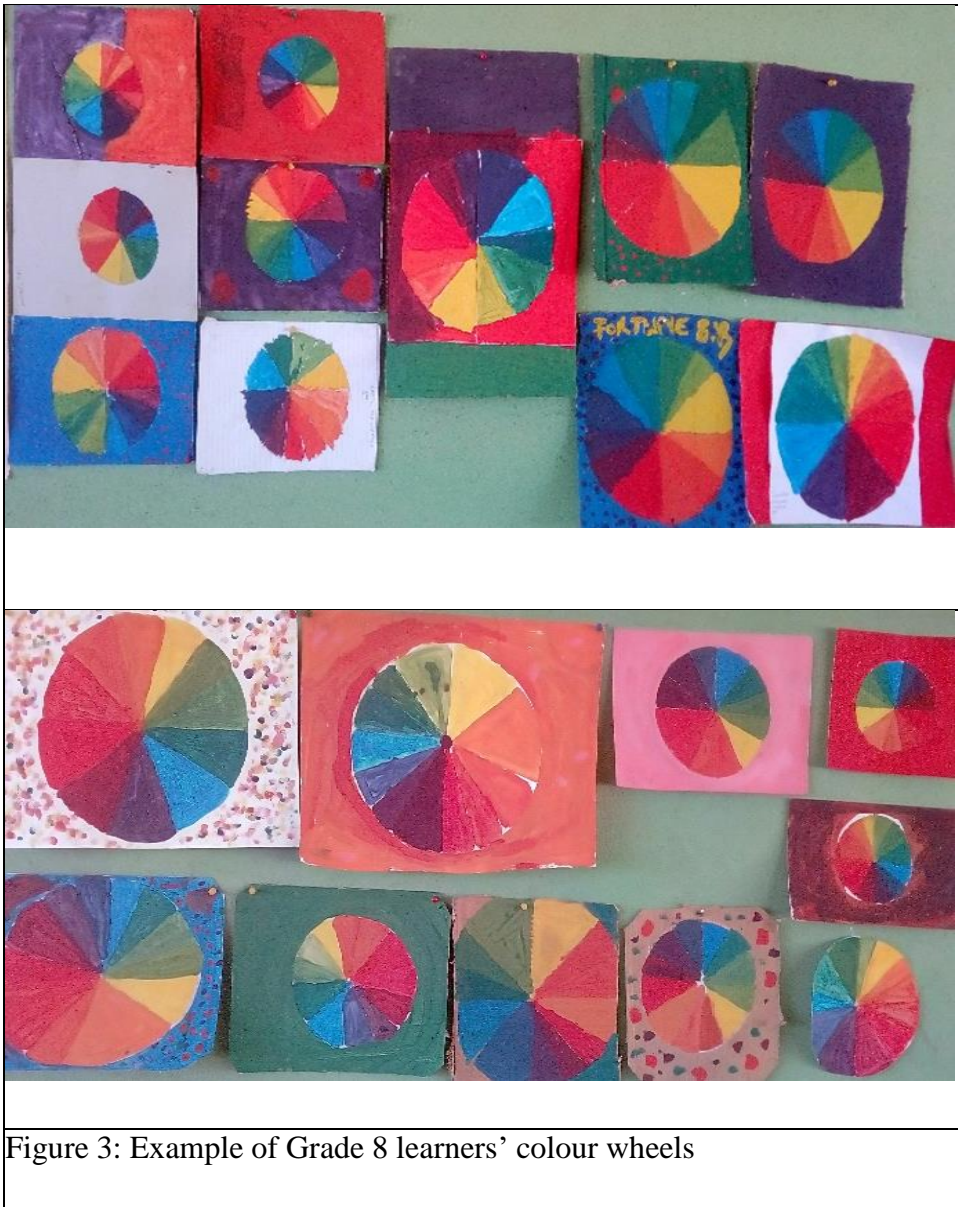


Figure 3: Example of Grade 8 learners' colour wheels

After the creation of a colour wheel, learners were required to create the colour scheme collage using pictures of garments with the incorporation of other items. Learners were required to choose at least two to four favourite colours from the colour wheel. The colours were chosen according to the two characteristics of harmony and complementary colours. 3 out of 23 learners chose a harmonious colour scheme, 15 out of 23 learners chose complementary colour schemes, and 5 out of 23 learners used both harmonious and complementary colour schemes (see figure 4). It was clear that learners understood the content learnt during the lesson, and they were able to transfer the learned subject matter into visual forms.

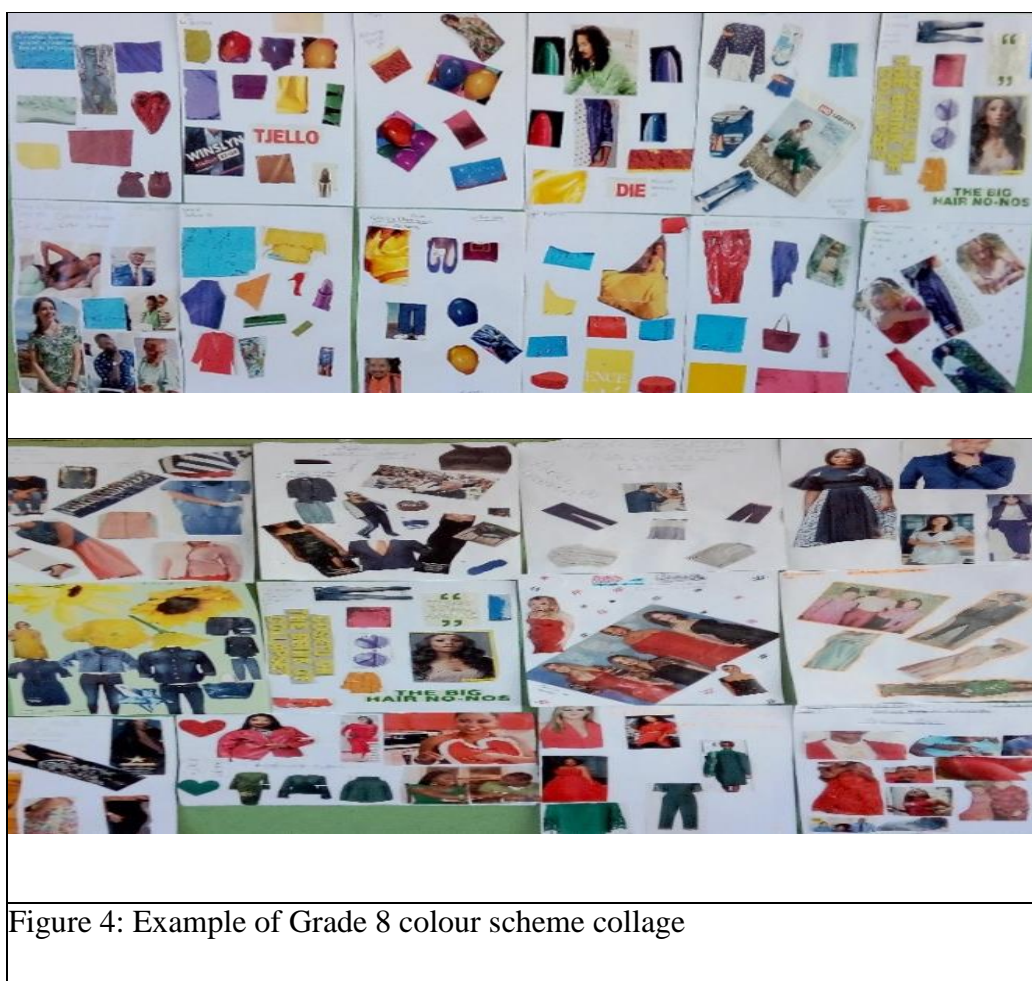
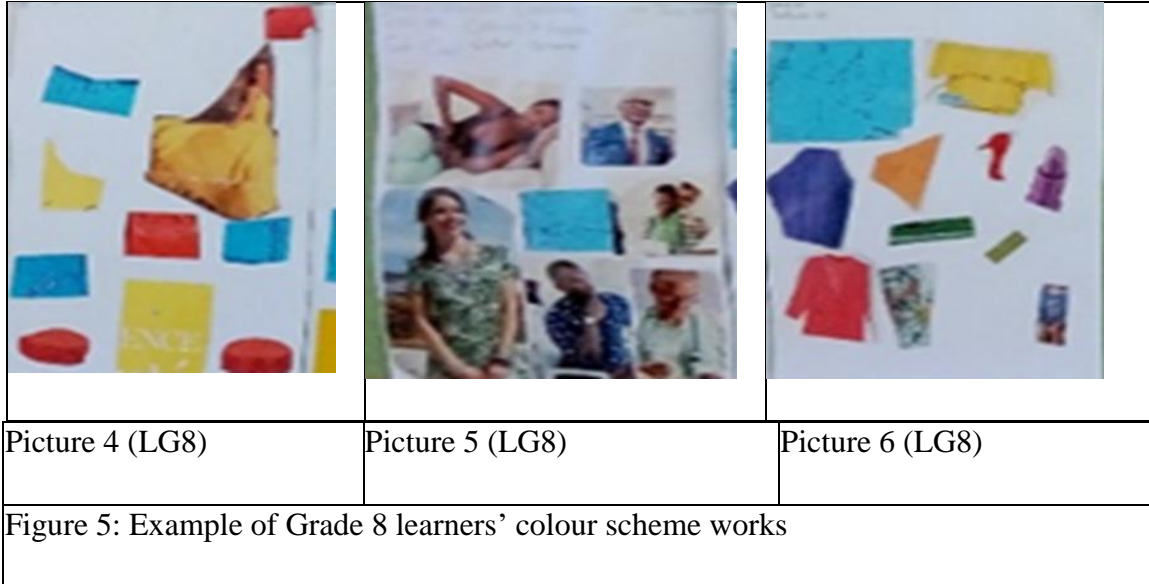


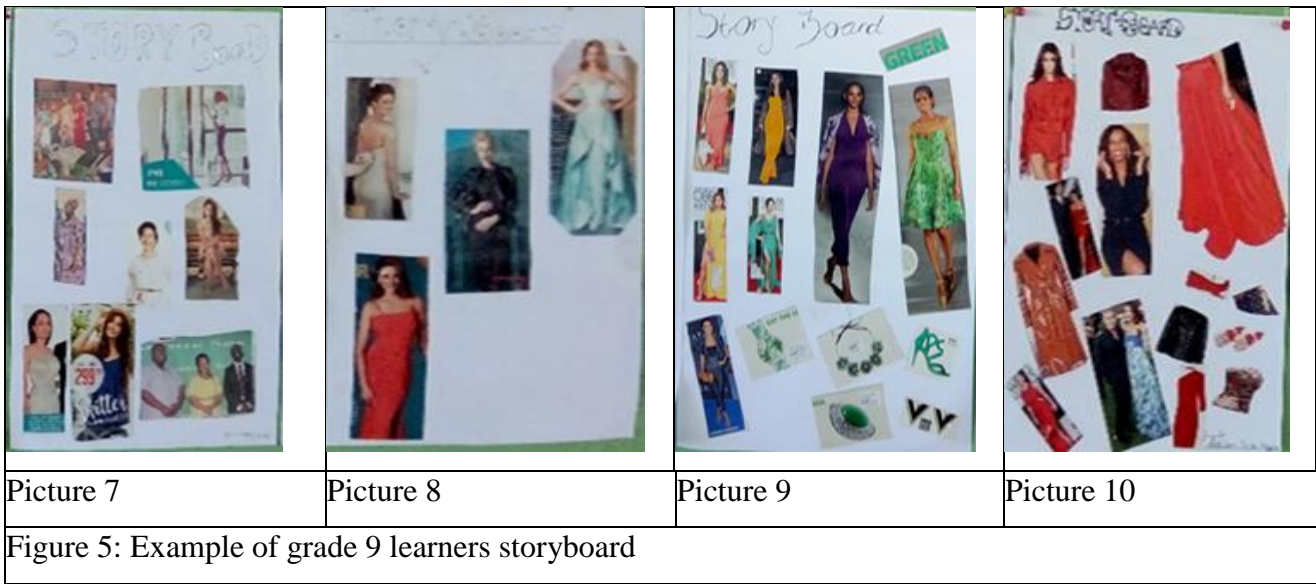
Figure 4: Example of Grade 8 colour scheme collage



In picture 4 (LG8's colour scheme) the learner used complementary colours. Red and a type of yellow colour were used. The yellow and blue colour used are opposite each other on the colour wheel, as are the red mixture and blue mixture colour used are complementary colours. In picture 5 (LG8's colour scheme) the learner used harmonious colours. The green colour mixture and blue colour mixture are next to each other on the colour wheel which are harmonious colours. In picture 6 (LG8's colour scheme) the learner used both complementary and harmonious colours. Light blue and green mixture and violet and red mixture colours are next to each other on the colour wheel (harmony) respectably, while yellow mixture and violet mixture are opposite each other on the colour wheel (complementary), as are red mixture and the light blue colour.

There were no dominant colours showing the colour scheme to be used in Pictures 7 and 8. Neither the style nor the fabric to be used was clear, as learners used different garment styles. Both Picture 9 and Picture 10's storyboards show dominant colours representing the colour scheme to be used, as well as a garment style (Picture 9 red and Picture 10 green). Picture 9 and Picture 10 both provide an idea of the style to be used – for instance, a slit and long sleeve. The fabric to be used was shown and one could deduce the sorts of fabric the learners had in mind. This exercise helped learners to communicate their ideas visually instead of through the usual written descriptions. This extended their ability to express

themselves in more diverse ways and, in so doing, opened up a space for accommodating diverse ways



of communicating.

4.2.1.3 LEARNERS' EXPRESSIVE SKILLS

Both Grade 8 and 9 learners' expressive feelings were assessed using unstructured and written notes, as not all learners involved were comfortable with being formally interviewed by me; rather, they chose to write down their inspirational feelings. However, I also considered the unstructured interview which happened during the observation time. During the creation process of the artworks, there was much discussion among learners, which created an active and enjoyable environment. Personal opinions were shared, creating an inclusive environment in which discussion and socialisation occurred not only among friends, but between all learners. Learners also used the opportunity to socialise with me without any fear, and without being shy to ask questions and give suggestions regarding their work. Student-centred teaching and learning started to develop in this process – hierarchies between the teacher and learners became less pronounced and teachers could also learn from learners (Freire 1996).

In the notes written by Grade 9s, learners expressed their personal feelings, social feelings, and economic feelings. The following are extracts taken from learners' written notes.

Extract:

1. LG9: "My inspiration comes from confidence and happiness. I love it when someone is happy and it makes me believe they have all the confidence to believe in themselves" (Emotional expression).
2. LG9: "The way I love this spiders is because they are tiny and when they bite is painful, which means do not trust anyone" (Emotional expression).
3. LG9: "The people that moves us are the people that we watch on TV, they are the one who woke up to [*watch*] and that we are excited to watch the next day. They bring out our emotions every day. When we are bored we always go watch them. They inspire us to do better in life and to be the best we can be. We just want to be like them. Many people look up to actors and singers, because to us they are icons". (Social expression).
4. "Since I was a child, I have been inspired by all automotive things and the people who created them, I enjoy people and cars. I find a way of combining the two [*compare the appearance of a person with his or her car*] and provide others with inspiration. So , I decide that cars should be inspiration in my life , this are one of reason why I do not give up on life because I tell myself, one day by god grace I will drive that car of my dream. Most parts (she focus on) is the different colours, names and shapes of cars". (Economic expression).

In comparison to Grade 9 learners, the Grade 8 learners had less socialisation with both their peers and myself as the project questions were taught in the previous lesson and their task was to put the content into practice only. The differences between the Grade 9 and 8 projects gave me an opportunity to compare different ways of facilitating learning. While the grade 8 learners were doing their colour scheme works (see figure 3, page 47), I held unstructured interviews. According to the interview conducted with the grade 8 learners, 23 of the 26 learners used their favourite colours to create colour schemes, while 3 out of 26 learners used colours according to the requirements given. By looking at the expression presented,

one can see that learners were innovative with the forms and content: they either produced new forms of the same content or ensured that the content presented itself in a different way. Learners also expanded their vocabularies during this project, which will improve their language and interaction skills.

4.2.2 HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEARNERS

Art processes have the potential to develop learners holistically and enrich their learning experience. As Peri Mesquida and Kellin Cristina Melchior Inocêncio (2016) argue, art can inspire learners' imaginations and thereby change their self-perception in relation to new challenges. Art can also create a place for learners to express their identities, which leads to personal development. Developing the imagination through art keeps the mind active and stimulates innovative thinking. This helps with keeping the learners motivated. An active imagination also encourages self-reflection and enables learners to imagine themselves in the shoes of fellow learners (Nussbaum 2002).

During the observation, learners acquired knowledge through the exploration of new mediums and techniques, as well as through the creation of collaged compositions and experimentation with mediums in the process of searching for information. The arts help learners to identify themselves; "to help children transform what they know into modes of representation that allow for a full range of human experience" (Roberta Mckay and Maureen Kendrick 2004: 109). Art creates self-awareness when learners choose the themes and look at themselves before considering their surroundings or society they live in. Learners learn through different learning styles based on personality, knowledge gained, and life experiences, and not necessarily from the quantity of information and assessments given. Hence, learners need to be given a chance to achieve their desired goals through self-driven learning, team spirit, and the attainment of problem-solving skills.

4.2.2.1 LEARNERS' INCORPORATION OF DIVERSITY SKILLS

After creating the inspirational board Grade 9 learners had to create a storyboard which was stimulated

by the pictures in the inspirational board. During the creation of a storyboard, learners were required to include some of these art elements: colour, fabric texture, and style (for example lines and shape). A storyboard aims to inspire the natural characters and life experiences of learners – these are expressed using primary, secondary and tertiary or intermediate colours. Learners created the collage using their preferred pictures, arranging them using the art composition knowledge mentioned earlier. During this stage learners did their work without asking for help from me. Instead, I asked the following questions of learners to assist their understanding and for clarification:



R: What colour will your garment be?

LG9: It is red.

R: Why are you saying it is red?

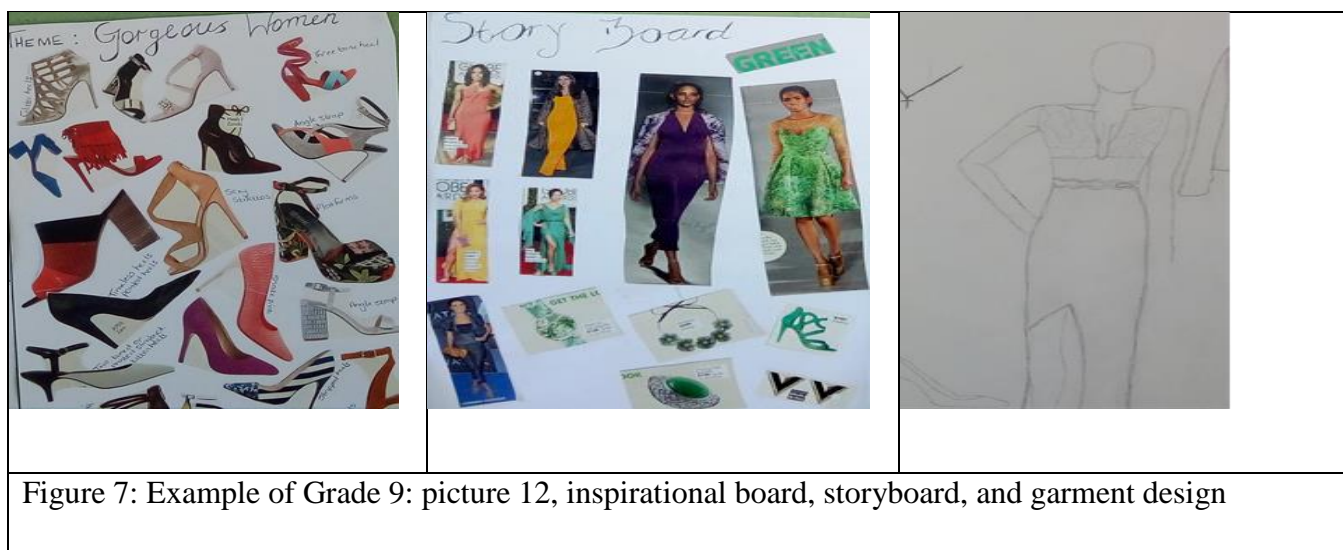
LG9: Because the red colour is dominating, which means it is the main colour.

R: What types of fabric will you use?

LG9: Plastic leather fabric and chiffon, as you see I pasted pictures of plastic leather and chiffon items.

R: What will your garment look like?

LG9: It will be sleeveless with a fishtail shape, almost like the garment with flower prints.



R: What colour will your garment be?

LG9: It is green-blue. I even put the name of the colour in the storyboard.

R: What types of fabric will you use?

LG9: I will use lace and chiffon.

R: Why did you use soft and delicate fabrics?

LG9: It looks nice on the body when is worn, and it fits everyone's figure.

R: What will your garment look like?

LG9: It will be sleeveless with a V-neck and slit at the front.

The process of themes development (also called mind mapping) requires holistic thinking; to look at different aspects of life before deciding on a specific theme. Learners unified the inspirational works with a storyboard and design illustration (see figures 4 and 5, page 49). The works made by learners answered the project's questions, which shows that learners had well-organised and thoughtful plans and holistic thinking skills. Therefore, the evenly-displayed details in the works show how learners could be progressive thinkers and decisions makers and how they can be committed towards learning new skills. In their projects, both Grade 8 and Grade 9 learners broadened their thinking skills to become progressive thinkers. They answered the project's questions and added their preferred elements, which made each work unique. For example, in figure 3, page 47 learners added background to the colour wheels without any instruction from the researcher.

The Grade 8 learners, 8 out of 21 learners painted the background of the colour wheel, which changed the whole composition. 2 out of 21 learners did not add any background and 1 out of 23 cut out the colour wheel. They followed the instructions given but went further to create experimental work. By adding a background to the work, each colour wheel had a unique value, texture, lines, shapes, forms, colours, and space, which added contrast and unity and allowed the work to become a finished artwork. Each work became different and conveyed a unique message, rather than just remaining an experimental work. The inclusion of art elements by learners showed their capacity to be independent thinkers and their ability to integrate prior knowledge to create new knowledge without reinforcement from the educator.

4.2.2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF IMAGINATION AND CREATION OF CONFIDENCE AMONG LEARNERS.

Art helps learners to practice reasoning skills by seeking to understand the creation process, to come up with the final artwork, and to express new ideas. It also helps to support creative skills and imagination. For both the Grade 8 and 9 assignment, learners needed to use their imaginations regarding the choice of picture they needed to use and to express their thoughts in a clear and understandable manner. The

learners learnt to reflect on their ideas imaginatively during the creation process of their artworks.

During the process, learners used their free period to work on their project and a joyful atmosphere evolved. The project created confidence in learners, as well as a desire to share their experience with others. The brainstorming works, practical process, and finished product often give motivation to learners to explore any kind of knowledge they come across further, for both personal satisfaction and assessment purposes. Practical processes can enhance learners' motivation, widen their understanding of the subject matter, and extend their ideas (Said Ziad:2014). Eisner (2002) claims that using materials as a medium for exploring and creating new meaning could be valuable. When learners are motivated, they acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, rather than just a given process, because they are able to recall both positive and negative comments. During the observation, one could see the confidence that was portrayed in the work, the way the colours were arranged in the work, the presentation of ideas, and the unique concepts chosen by individuals in both Grades 8 and 9.



Figure 7: Grade 8 learners' colour scheme works



Figure 8: Grade 9 learners' storyboards

4.2.3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF ART EDUCATION TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

For this theme, questionnaires were given to the teachers who taught Grade 8 and 9E classes for three years or more as they have worked with the Visual Arts learners for some years. As mentioned earlier in this paper, Gullatt (2007:213) notes that the arts could play an important role in academic performance as it can “foster the development of [learners] who are actively engaged in learning”. Eisner (2002) argues that educational practices in general could learn from the arts and the art-making processes in terms of how to enrich learning, especially when used over extended periods of time. These projects were short interventions from which some insights emerged, but for the art process to have an effect on learning it should be incorporated into the curricula purposefully.

4.2.3.1 VISUAL ARTS LEARNERS' RESULTS AT THE END OF JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

Learners' capabilities are often measured by the end of the year results which determine if the learner is to be promoted to the next grade or not. All teachers (9TSS, 8TSS, 8TC, 9TC, 8TS, and 9TS) mentioned that only a few learners from Grade 10E passed the junior secondary certificate examination. In

agreement with the teachers, the 2018 junior secondary examination results (according to school results evaluation) show that only 4 learners of the 29 in 10E passed, which is a pass rate of 13.79%. Comparatively, it seems that the 10E class did not do badly as the school, as a whole, had a total of 52 out of its 179 learners 29.05% pass. In addition, I conducted my own investigation to see why the results of the E class group were poor and discovered that in the Grade 8E class of 2019 only 6 learners out of 33 passed Grade 7, and 27 learners were transferred from Grade 7. Most learners with poor academic performance were allocated by their parents to the E class group, with the understanding that art would help them to improve their academic competences. According to the school's Life Skills teacher, parents were advised by the school admission committee to place poorly-performing learners in a visual art class as Visual Art as a subject does not have a theory examination but rather a practical one (the creation of artworks with a given theme for assessment). This means that there is an acknowledgement from the school's governing body that arts could assist with learning; however, it was merely used for learners performing poorly. How art classes are presented and how they are integrated with other subjects is crucial. A research project done at Modderdam High School in Cape Town is an example of art specifically being used to support learning in other subjects. This requires collaboration from all teachers involved in the school, and is not only focused on poor performing learners but rather on improving learning for all learners.

4.2.3.2 IMPROVEMENT OF LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN TEST AND CLASS ACTIVITY

According to teachers 9TSS, 8TSS, and 8TC, only a few learners in the Visual Art classes improve their academic performance. Moreover, most of the learners remain at the same level or even drop out as the teacher disregards them because they have low levels of interest and commitment towards their school work. The teacher of 9TS stated that the performance of learners depends on the topic being assessed, with some topics being more successful than others. 8TS and 9TC stated that Visual Art students do not improve at all; rather, they get worse due to a lack of commitment towards their school work.

In addition, teachers (9TSS, 8TSS, 8TC, 9TC, 8TS, and 9TS) agree that when Grade 8 and 9E learners are given activities, tests, tasks, and projects, they exhibit a lack of interpretation skills. Teachers mentioned that they do not take time to read and understand the questions – but rather give the answers to get the assessment over with so that they can hand the work in. However, these class teachers (9TSS, 8TSS, 8TC, 8TS, and 9TS) agreed that, unlike in previous projects, the learners showed creative skills in the project given and presented their work neatly and attractively. The teachers also mentioned that the learners often used decorative elements on the cover page of their works. If the assessment work was about drawing, their drawings were always attractive or accurate, even if the answers were not correct. This could indicate that they enjoy doing art instead of other academic work. There are different opinions in educational research regarding the sort of knowledge that teachers need to develop in learners and how learners should be assessed. Artistic expression and communication are also forms of knowledge creation, even though their importance is often overlooked. Recent research in the educational field, for example that done by Karin Murriss (2016), emphasises the importance of the arts in learning processes.

4.2.3.3 HOW ART HELPED LEARNERS WITH THEIR COMMITMENT AND ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL WORK

Commitment, in this case, refers to learners taking responsibility for their schoolwork in terms of doing homework, giving their tasks in on time, and participating in group work. According to the teachers (8TC, 9TC, 8TS), learners in Grades 8E and 9E (learners doing Visual Art) are not committed to their other subjects' work. The reason for this opinion is that they need to be forced to give in the projects and some even get zeros for projects. However, individuals 9TSS, 8TSS, and 9TS disagree that these class groups are not committed to their work, as they enjoy doing projects, hand them in on time, come up with good projects or tasks, and obtain good marks compared to those of other class groups. The different answers given by the teachers regarding the commitment of learners towards their teaching subjects are dependent on the nature of the subject – the subject matter in which learners have prior knowledge is preferred. The responses also depend on how the teacher reinforces the importance of doing specific projects.

Generally, teachers give learners group work to build relationships and enable them to develop conflict resolution skills. According to 9TSS, 8TSS, 8TC, 9TC, 8TS, and 9TS, when given group work, the learners in Grades 9E and 8E do not successfully work as a team, which normally results in individual work, instead of collaborative work, being done. In my view, these learners are supposed to learn at home how to work together in order to achieve a mutual goal. That being said, one could argue that Windhoek is a city with many cultures and that people are busy with their jobs and have no time to teach children to learn social skills such as collaboration. There is not much socialising or community gathering – which can teach the children how to deal with conflict resolution and development of mutual goals – happening in the city. In my view it is important for teachers to reinforce group work, as it assists learners in being committed to and prioritising tasks. Jovita F. Punzalan (2018:121), as stated earlier in this paper, remarks that arts education can improve personal learning and performance, encourage the finding and solving of problems, emphasise the principles of learning, and help develop collaboration, interaction, and innovation skills. The Grade 8 and 9 learners that I observed interacted meaningfully with their peers by asking for ideas and sharing art materials. Additionally, they took the initiative and organised themselves during their free period to come to class to continue with their artwork. How the project is presented and how it is facilitated could influence its success and make a difference in how the students experience their learning.

4.2.3.4 LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCHOOLING

Generally, schooling in society is respected and has become an accepted practice in our society ever since colonisation. Thus, every child is expected to be in school until she/he is mature enough to be employed. This is a cultural practice which is still continuing. However, children are raised by parents who come from various school backgrounds themselves: some prioritise schooling and others do so to a lesser degree. Hence, learners' attitudes towards schooling were difficult for the teachers to explain in the questionnaire. However, all of the teachers (9TSS, 8TSS, 8TC, 9TC, 8TS, and 9TS) viewed learners' attitudes toward schooling as mostly unenthusiastic and negative. The teachers emphasised that learners do not show an interest in school as they are not taking full responsibility for their studies and lack self (internal) and parental (external) motivation. Motivation can improve by constantly reinforcing the teaching approach. Dale Schunk (2012:23) argues that learners “display motivated behaviour because

they previously were reinforced for it and because effective reinforcers are present”. In my understanding, the above simply means that schools and parents should motivate learners to develop an interest in schooling. Teacher 8TS stressed that learners are mainly fond of music, videos, or technology. As mentioned earlier in this paper, Mahgoub and Aldbesi (2016) stated that the arts provide learners with a clearer understanding of themselves, of the people around them, and of the past and present (and even future) of the world. The learners need art education to strengthen and broaden their knowledge and to understand their everyday lives, as mentioned by 8TS. In my view, music, videos, and movies have become deeply integral parts of the culture of our society because, everywhere you move, music and visual arts are used to promote political, social, economic, and cultural events to attract crowds. The arts could then, in a similar manner, be used in educational practices in schools.

4.2.4 LEARNERS’ SOCIO-EMOTIONAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ART EDUCATION

For this theme, the researcher used both observations and questionnaires to answer the questions posed. During observation, five Grade 9 and one Grade 8 learner integrated the cultural ideas of their society and drew inspiration from it for their artworks. The learners integrated cultural ideas when they used lions, spiders, sunflowers, flowers, and pictures of dogs for inspiration (Grade 9). In the questionnaire, I asked the teachers for their observations on how the society inspired learners’ manners, commitment toward school work, and relationship with others. The Grade 8 learners used found material in their context and recycled materials (such as boxes, hardboard, and cardboard) as the basis to paint on the colour wheel. In addition, Aubrey and Riley (2016) refer to Jerome Seymour Bruner’s constructivist theory, suggesting that learners develop both educational and real-life skills by converting experiences into knowledge through action, imagery, and symbols. For both the Grade 8 and 9 learners’ projects a lecture on the topic of colour in fashion was first delivered, and they were later given a project which required them to paste images and paint or draw symbols to transform the taught subject matter into artworks.

Achille Mbembe (2015) argues that learners could be encouraged to become craftsmen and craftswomen who use local materials and develop their own contextual ideas without copying existing Western works. Namibia is known for its exceptional local arts and crafts, and the use of local arts as inspiration for learners could be explored instead of using mainly images from magazines that are mostly Western inspired. The realisation that local arts are not often used in projects emerged in this research: this should be explored more in future projects with learners.

4.3 SYNTHESIS

The chapter discussed the data collected in this research. The data was collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The observation was done with the Grade 8 and 9 learners in the Fashion and Fabrics classes, during which they were introduced to the topic of 'colours in fashion'. Learners incorporated the things they learned into the given project and created the inspirational board, mood board (for Grade 9), colour wheels (Grade 8), and preferable colour scheme. As the researcher, I observed learning skills gained by learners during the artwork development process and interpretation of the theme into artworks, and was exposed to learners' expressive skills. The holistic development of learners was also observed by looking at how learners incorporated a diversity of skills, developed their imaginative skills, and gained confidence during the art-creation process. The questionnaire was answered by the teachers teaching the classes taking the Visual Arts subject (Grades 8E and 9E). The teachers' answers to the questionnaire questions were used for the discussions on how art education can contribute to the improvement of learners' academic performance. The questionnaire, interviews, and observations also looked at how art education is used to develop learners' socio-emotional and socio-cultural skills. This research showed ways in which art could feasibly contribute to learners' commitment to learning and help change their attitude toward school work.

During observation learners used their imaginations to express their feelings through artworks. It is evident that the project, which was developed from the taught content, was transformed through imagination and the use of symbols in the collages made. It also encouraged learners to identify their themes and analyse them in a complex way, textured, and multidimensional ways, from the mixing of

colour to the development of a colour scheme. It shows that art helps learners to develop reasoning skills (where learners were able to explain their artworks to the researcher) and promotes imagination (in planning the work from one piece to the other artwork). Art could assist learners in task perseverance and in coming up with unique ideas, build confidence among learners, and help them to adhere to instructions given. These skills were learnt through the projects given to learners in this research. Learners showed that an art background can create progressive thinkers, as they came up with their theme, guided themselves in using the art elements, and created compositions. Art helped learners with making decisions when choosing the pictures to use in their collage, and learners were able to learn new skills as the observed learners did not have experience in collaging work they usually draw the design to decorate their needlework articles. If arts subjects were compulsory and learners understood them like they do other core subjects, appreciation and an understanding of the subject could be created.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The arts as a discipline and subject are often disregarded in the Namibian school curricula. The visual and performing arts as choice subjects have been mostly overlooked by public schools, with only a few schools in Namibia offering them as such. The public junior secondary school curricula do not offer Art subjects as promotional subjects, but rather as compulsory non-promotional or compulsory support subjects. Only a few public schools teach art subjects as per curricular directive.

The aim of the case study was to explore the benefit of arts education to learners' learning, how arts can assist learners to improve their academic performance, and how it helps with the holistic development of learners. The study was done with Grades 8A, 8B, 9A, and 9B Fashion and Fabrics learners and with teachers that teach Visual Art classes (Grades 8E and 9E). Learners from the abovementioned class groups were given structured projects with the topic of 'colours in fashion', while the teachers were given questionnaires to complete about the academic performance of learners who take Visual Art as a subject. Inductive content analysis was used to analyse the data collected in the study.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS THEREOF

The data collected and discussed was categorised according to the learning skills gained, holistic development of learners, contribution of art education to the improvement of learners' academic performance, and learners' socio-emotional and socio-cultural development through art. In terms of learning skills, learners gained knowledge on how to independently develop a theme, interpret the theme, and change that into artworks or symbolic representations of the theme. Learners also gained visual communication and expression skills through their artworks. Learners developed their imaginations through the selection and arrangement of images they used to create the collages. The self-driven and

learners-centred process instilled more confidence in learners during their creation process and presentation of the finished artworks. The combination of these abovementioned skills means that learners developed in a more holistic way when they incorporated their prior and newly-gained knowledge into their artworks.

The benefits of the arts to learners in this case study include development in the following areas: self-directed learning, problem solving, interpretation skills, and imagination. Learners directed their own learning by choosing their own theme, as opposed to other subjects in which themes are given to them. After the project briefing, art compositions and elements to be incorporated in the artworks produced were discussed. Several aspects of the projects were completed without the assistance of the researcher. Learners created their compositions, chose their own colour schemes, brainstormed the themes to use in drawing the design of a garment, and created the compositions of their storyboards with the three-art element (colour, design, and fabric texture). Learners used the knowledge that they gained on the topic of ‘colour in fashion’ and then executed their artworks independently. Learners were also self-directed as they answered or followed the project questions and added their own elements, which made each work unique. The inclusion of art elements by learners shows the capability to be self-directed as they have the ability to integrate prior knowledge with new knowledge without reinforcement from the researcher.

Arts education promotes problem-solving skills among learners. Learners had to make decisions on how to use the tools and media in creation of the artworks. Learners understood the content learnt during the lessons and were able to transfer the learned subject matter into visual forms. Personal opinions were shared among learners, which created an environment and platform to share ideas and opinions with each other and to socialise with their peers. During the observation, learners acquired problem-solving knowledge through the exploration of new mediums and techniques, through the creation of collages and through the process of choosing themes.

Learners used their imaginations when it came to the pictures they chose to use to express their thoughts in a symbolic way, as well as during the creation process of their artworks. Learners actively took part

in the activities because their imaginations were triggered, which even motivated them to take their artworks further than what was expected of them.

5.3 CONCEPTUAL CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Art education needs to be improved (beginning at lower grades and continuing through) for the learners to develop holistically and to enable them to apply the knowledge learned from arts to other subjects. According to the teachers' responses, there is a need for perceptions to change when it comes to the importance of education in society. According to them, current perceptions contribute to academic non-performance in learners, as there is a lack of self-motivation among them and lack of parental involvement in terms of enforcing commitment to school work. During observation and the data collection process of this research, learners exhibited the opposite of this: they showed commitment by interacting a lot with their peers and the researcher, shared ideas about the project, and even organised themselves during their free period to work on their artwork. As a result, they were able to complete the works on time. This research therefore shows that the art as a discipline has the potential to promote self-motivation in learners. It is therefore recommended that art should become a core and compulsory subject at the school, as this will lead to it being taken more seriously.

Teachers mentioned in their responses that learners do not take time to read and understand the questions, but rather give answers for the sole purpose of completing the tasks so that they can hand them in. It will take time for the learners to be able to incorporate knowledge acquired in the arts into other subjects. The constructivist's theory emphasises that learners need to use their prior experience to understand content and integrate past knowledge with new knowledge. It is therefore important that learners start to work with local art materials and find their inspiration from the local context, as this will allow for the gap between their everyday experiences and what they are learning to become smaller.

The value of art processes and how they could influence learners' performance in general would be difficult to prove qualitatively but, as is shown in this research, there are some indicators that art could enhance participation and motivation and lead to better academic performance. The arts create a space to understand things differently and come to new insights through experience. In this research, the learners that participated in the projects experienced new ways of engaging with materials and each other through the art processes. These interactions with materials, self, and each other seemed to enhance their motivation to further explore and learn.

5.4 FURTHER RESEARCH AND CRITIQUE OF THE RESEARCH

This research topic can be broadened for further investigation to include other schools which teach Visual and Performing Arts as choice subjects, and the arts as a core, non-promotional subject from upper primary to junior secondary phases. The investigation can include schools from various social classes and learners from different backgrounds to broaden the variety of responses from a diverse group of learners.

The data collected for the investigation was from a relatively small sample at a specific school in Windhoek, and a specific education sector in the Namibian educational system. The findings would not necessarily correspond with, and cannot be directly applied to, other schools, due to different contexts, ages, educational needs, and availability of resources.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND CONTRIBUTION OF THIS RESEARCH

The study investigated Grade 8 and 9 learners at a school in Windhoek in terms of how the arts can benefit learners when implemented as a core subject. The research process involved art projects and interviews with teachers on how arts could help to improve the academic performance of learners. The research aimed to investigate the holistic development and learning skills gained from arts that were

presented both visually and verbally. The study revealed how the arts can be used to strengthen learning abilities such as self-directing study and problem-solving skills, and how they can improve motivation.

The importance of art as a supportive medium has been researched at various learning institutions, such as in the work of Maxine Greene (1995). This research was necessary at this school to practically demonstrate the benefits of the arts, and to convince the educators and decision makers at the school to reconsider the value of art as a compulsory subject. This research has achieved its aim to create awareness to such an extent that it was discussed in staff meetings, and the headmaster has been convinced to investigate the possibilities of including art as a core subject further.

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APPENDIX A: OBSERVATION GUIDE

Observation: Group			
Date			
Purpose of research			
To explore the benefit of art education to learning and to establish how the arts can help learners to improve their academic performance and promote their holistic development.			
Purpose of this observation			
To establish how the arts assist learners with critical thinking skills and holistic development when interpreting themes to create artworks.			
Anonymity and confidentiality			
All of the participants in the research will be fully briefed and their participation will be voluntary. I will not use the names of the participants and will, in this way, protect their identities. The information from the learners will be kept confidential and personal confessions in the interviews that could harm anyone's reputation will not be shared with others.			
Observation content			
What is the goal of this observation?			

To establish how learners gain critical thinking skills through art practices.			
Observation takes place in my classroom or in the art class.			
Learners' interpretation skills are evaluated.			
The development process of artworks is observed.			
Rough sketches and final sketches are evaluated.			
Outcomes of final work are evaluated.			
Duration of observation?			
Presentation of the work to the class. Symbolic meaning of the works.			
Expression skills.			
What is the emotion/feeling while recording?			
Further comments/observations.			

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Information about the research

NAME of researcher: Helena Shikongo

University of Stellenbosch, Tel.: 0812952511 Email: naambo25@yahoo.co.uk

RESEARCH: Investigating the benefits of art education to learners as a core subject in junior secondary curricula at a school in the Khomas region of Namibia.

Purpose of research
To explore the benefit of art education on learners' academic experience, investigate how the arts can help learners to improve their academic performance, and determine how the arts can help with the holistic development of learners.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To identify the learning skills that are initiated through the arts. 2. To find out how the arts can contribute to the improvement of learners' academic performance. 3. To investigate the contribution of the arts towards learners' holistic development. 4. To understand how the arts could encourage socio-emotional and socio-cultural development. 5. To investigate how people with an arts background can contribute to the economy of the country. 6. To understand how art education can strengthen and modernise the culture and traditions in the country.
Anonymity and confidentiality

Participation in the research is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not you participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status at the school.

Interview: INDIVIDUAL OR FOCUS GROUP

Person/s interviewed

Date

Place

Duration

INTERVIEW content

1. Introduction
2. To identify the learning skills that are initiated through the arts.
3. To find out how the arts can contribute to the improvement of learners' academic performance.
4. To investigate the contribution of the arts towards learners' holistic development.
5. To investigate the benefits of the arts to learners' academic experience, and to assess how the arts could assist in improving academic performance and dealing with social issues in everyday life.
6. The interview will take about 10-15 minutes.
7. List of topics regarding the Visual Arts project.
8. Learning skills (advantages and disadvantages of taking Visual Arts).
9. Improvement of thinking skills.
10. Contribution to academic performance.
11. Social and economic contribution.
12. Overall impression.

<p>13. Closing.</p> <p>14. Summarise the main issues discussed.</p> <p>15. Discuss the next course of action to be taken, such as possible follow-up interviews.</p> <p>16. Invite participants to reflect on what they have said and encourage them to contact the researcher if they want to add to or adjust any of their comments made during the interview.</p> <p>17. Thank the participant for his or her time.</p>

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE

Information about the research

NAME of researcher: Helena Shikongo

University of Stellenbosch; Tel.: 0812952511; Email: naambo25@yahoo.co.uk

RESEARCH: Investigating the benefits of art education as a core subject for learners in junior secondary curricula at a school in the Khomas region of Namibia.

Purpose of research
To explore the benefit of art education on learners' academic experience, investigate how the arts can help learners to improve their academic performance, and determine how the arts can help with the holistic development of learners.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To identify the learning skills that are initiated through the arts. 2. To find out how the arts can contribute to the improvement of learners' academic performance. 3. To investigate the contribution of the arts towards learners' holistic development. 4. To understand how the arts could encourage socio-emotional and socio-cultural development. 5. To investigate how people with an arts background can contribute to the economy of the country. 6. To understand how art education can strengthen and modernise the culture and tradition in the country.

ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All the participants in the research will be fully briefed and their participation will be voluntary. I will not use the names of the participants and will, in this way, protect their identities. The information from the participants will be kept confidential and personal confessions in the interviews that could harm anyone's reputation will not be shared with others

Questions

I would appreciate it if you could assist me by completing this questionnaire. It will take 20-30 minutes of your time.

1. How long have you been teaching at Cosmos High School?
-

2. Which subject/s do you teach?
-

3. Compared to Grade 10 results released in all the years you have been here, has there been improvement in the results of the 10E class?
-
-

4. When teaching Grade 8E / 9 E, how do the learners participate in class? Compare to other classes.
-
-
-

5. What is the general behaviour of Grade 8E/9E learners in class?

6. What are learners' attitudes towards schooling?

7. Do you think learners change their behaviours towards schooling? What makes learners in Grades 8A, B E/9A, B, E change their behaviour?

8. Do these learners demonstrate confidence when they participate in class?

9. What is the strongest component / theme in your subject and why?

10. What types of learning styles do you think learners use when studying your subject?

11. When marking Grade 8/9A, B, E class activities / tests / projects, how do learners interpret questions? Compare to other classes.

12. Does these classes improve their performance every time they write a test or complete an activity? Elaborate your answer.

-
-
13. When you give this class a project to do, how dedicated are learners towards the project?
Compare to other classes.

14. When you give this class group work, how do they handle it and what are the challenges?

15. When you give an assignment / task to this class group, which creative skills do they show in their work?

16. When presenting your lesson with visual teaching aids to this class group, how do they respond to the lesson?

Thank you for your time!



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APPENDIX D: CONSENT

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: Investigating the benefits of art education to learners as a core subject in junior secondary curricula at a school in the Khomas region of Namibia.

REFERENCE NUMBER: N/A

CONTACT NUMBER: +264 812952511

RESEARCHER: Mrs Helena N. Shikongo

Dear Educator,

My name is Helena N. Shikongo and I am a Master's student in Art Education at Stellenbosch University. I am conducting research on the topic: **What are the potential benefits of making the arts a core subject for learners in Grade 8 and Grade 9 at a school?** I hereby invite you to participate in this research project.

I invite you to consider taking part in this research. To do so I ask that you take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Please feel free to contact me if you require further explanation of or clarification on any aspect of the study. All information collected will be treated in strictest confidence and neither the school nor an individual teacher will be identifiable

in any resulting written reports. Your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to refuse to participate. If you refuse to participate, it will not affect you negatively in any way. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

This study is approved by the **Humanities Research Ethics Committee (HREC)** at Stellenbosch University **and will be conducted according to accepted and applicable national and international ethical guidelines and principles.**

The aim of this study is to investigate the benefit of art education to learners' academic experience, explore how the arts can help learners to improve their academic performance, and determine how the arts can help with the holistic development of learners at our school. As the learners' subject teachers, you are invited to participate by filling in the questionnaire to share your opinion and experiences within the art classes.

Your responses will help me, as a researcher, to understand how the arts are assisting learners to improve their academic performance and to assess how the arts can help with learners' holistic development. It is hoped that this research may lead to improved art education practices in the future. If you agree to participate, the answers will be kept in a locked drawer and only I will have access to them. I will not reveal the names of the teachers or learners in order to protect the identities of participants. Names will not be published in the thesis or any resulting academic articles.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me or supervisor:

Researcher: Mrs Helena Shikongo – naambo25@yahoo.co.uk

Supervisor: Prof. Elmarie Constandius – elmarie@sun.ac.za

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS: You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue your participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact Ms Maléne Fouché (mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University. You have the right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent form.

If you are willing to participate in this study please sign the Declaration of Consent below and send it to my class. I will make a copy and send it back to you.

Yours sincerely

Helena Shikongo

Principal Investigator

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study entitled **Investigating the benefits of art education to learners as a core subject in junior secondary curricula at a school**, conducted by Helena Shikongo.

I declare that:

18. I have read the attached information leaflet and that it is written in a language in which I am fluent and comfortable.
19. I have had a chance to ask questions in person / via email and all my questions have been adequately answered.
20. I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressured into giving consent.
21. I may choose to withdraw from the study at any time without fear of being penalised or prejudiced in any way.
22. I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished if the researcher feels it is in my best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan as agreed.
23. All issues related to privacy, confidentiality, and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signed at (*place*) On (*date*) 2019.

Signature of participant

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ via this letter. He/she was encouraged and given sufficient time to ask me any questions in person / via email. This communication was conducted in English and no translator was used.

Signature of Investigator

Date