ENHANCING ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE FOR GRADE 6 LEARNERS: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING STYLES, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY

by

RINDI CARSTENS

submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the subject

CURRICULUM STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF E C DU PLESSIS

NOVEMBER 2023

Open Rubric

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I declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed to the completion of this master's degree.

First and foremost, I am eternally grateful and humbled, and I thank my Heavenly Father for steadfastly standing by me throughout my master's degree journey, guiding and empowering me to overcome challenges and achieve this milestone.

I am immensely acknowledging to my supervisor, Professor E.C. du Plessis, for her guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this journey. Her expertise, valuable feedback, and unwavering belief in my abilities have been instrumental in shaping the outcome of this research.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my husband, Ewalt who supported me unconditionally with his constant support which has been a driving force behind my success; my two beloved kids and my family and friends for their continuous encouragement, understanding, and patience during the challenging phases of this academic pursuit.

Furthermore, I want to express my gratitude to my fellow colleagues for their cooperation and intellectual answers on my questions which have broadened my perspectives and enriched my learning experience, the selected Grade 6 learners who willingly participated in focus group interviews to have deeper meaning of what they experience and my colleague who allowed me to observe his lessons during assessment periods.

Finally, I am appreciative to the school, the principal, Mrs C. Fölscher and staff of Laerskool Rooihuiskraal for providing a promising academic environment and valuable resources that have been vital in the completion of this degree.

This research would not have been possible without the support and contributions of all these individuals and for this I am forever indebted to them.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how teaching styles, resources, and technology affect the assessment performance of Grade 6 English as First Additional Language (EFAL) learners. In education, the failure to achieve proficiency in EFAL presents a significant challenge; assessments at the end of each term determine success; with failure resulting in overall term failure due to EFAL's core subject status. This underscores the need for enhanced proficiency in EFAL reading and writing to prevent academic setbacks.

The theoretical framework of Educational Effectiveness informed a qualitative case study. A primary school in Gauteng was purposefully selected together with six Grade 6 EFAL teachers and 30 Grade 6 EFAL learners. Focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and classroom observations were used to gather data, which were analyzed by thematic analysis. The findings indicate that integrating technology and interactive resources is crucial for Gen-Z learners; technology boosts learner engagement and comprehension; and teacher training for technology integration and Formative Assessment Tasks (FAT) is essential. Bridging the generation gap in teaching styles and using well-structured assessments are important. Grade 6 learners prefer learner-centered approaches; teachers prefer mixed approaches. Based on the findings, guidelines were proposed, and recommendations were made to adapt teaching, use technology effectively, and rethink assessments.

GO OKETŠA TEKOLO LE GO ŠOMA GABOTSE DITHUTONG KA SEISEMANE BJALO KA POLELO YA MATHOMO YA TLALELETŠO GO BAITHUTI BA KREITI YA 6: GO LEKODIŠIŠA SEABE SA MEKGWA YA GO RUTA, DIDIRIŠWA LE THEKNOLOTŠI

SETSOPOLWA

Dinyakišišo tše di nyakišišitše ka fao mekgwa ya go ruta, didirišwa, le theknolotši di amago go šoma fao go lekolwago ga baithuti ba Seisemane bjalo ka Polelo ya Mathomo ya Tlaleletšo (EFAL) ba Kreiti ya 6. Ka thutong, go palelwa ke go fihlelela bokgoni ka go EFAL go tšweletša bothata bjo bogolo; ditekolo mafelelong a karolongwaga ye nngwe le ye nngwe di laola katlego; fao go bago le go palelwa ka kakaretšo ka go karolongwaga ka lebaka la maemo a motheo a thuto ya EFAL. Se se gatelela tlhokego ya gore go be le bokgoni bjo bo oketšegilego ka go baleng le go ngwaleng ga EFAL ka nepo ya go thibela ditšhalelomorago tša thuto.

Motheo wa teori wa Go šoma gabotse go tša Thuto o bakile gore go dirwe dinyakišišo tša seemo tša boleng. Sekolo sa phoraemari ka Gauteng se kgethilwe ka maikemišetšo gotee le barutiši ba tshela ba Kreiti ya 6 ba EFAL le baithuti ba 30 ba Kreiti ya 6 ba EFAL. Dipotsološo go dihlopha tša nepišo, dipotšišonyakišišo tša go nyaka tlhathollo, le ditekodišišo tša ka phapošing di ile tša šomišwa go kgoboketša tshedimošo, ye e sekasekilwego ka tshekatsheko ya merero. Dikutollo di laeditše gore go kopanya theknolotši le didirišwa tša kopanyo go bohlokwa go baithuti ba Gen-Z; theknolotši e thuša go boledišana le baithuti le go kwešiša ga bona; gomme tlhahlo ya barutiši mabapi le go šomiša theknolotši le Mešomo ya Tekolosemmušo (FAT) e bohlokwa. Go fokotša sekgoba magareng ga meloko ya baithuti ka go mekgwa ya go ruta le go šomiša ditekolo tše di beakantšwego gabotse go bohlokwa. Baithuti ba Kreiti ya 6 ba rata mekgwa ye e theilwego go baithuti; barutiši bona ba rata mekgwa ye e kopantšwego. Go ya ka dikutollo, o ile gwa šišinywa ditlhahlo gomme ditšhišinyo di ile tša dirwa go fetoša go ruta, go šomiša theknolotši ka maleba, le go nagana leswa ka ditekolo.

DIE BEVORDERING VAN ASSESSERING- EN AKADEMIESE PRESTASIE IN ENGELS AS ’N EERSTE ADDISIONELE TAAL VIR LEERDERS IN GRAAD 6: VERKENNING VAN DIE IMPAK VAN ONDERRIGSTYLE, -HULPBRONNE EN -TEGNOLOGIE

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie het ondersoek hoe onderrigstyle, -hulpbronne en -tegnologie die assesseringsprestasie van Graad 6-leerders van Engels as Eerste Addisionele Taal (*English as First Additional Language, EFAL*) beïnvloed. In onderwys bied die mislukking om vaardig te raak in EFAL ’n aansienlike uitdaging; assesserings aan die einde van elke kwartaal bepaal sukses; en wanneer daar nie geslaag word nie, lei dit tot ’n algehele mislukking van die kwartaal weens EFAL se kernvakstatus. Dít onderstreep die behoefte vir die bevordering van vaardigheid in EFAL wat betref lees en skryf, om akademiese terugslae te voorkom.

Die teoretiese raamwerk van opvoedkundinge doeltreffendheid was die bron vir ’n kwalitatiewe gevallestudie. ’n Laerskool in Gauteng is doelgerig gekies saam met ses Graad 6-onderwysers en 30 Graad 6-EFAL-leerders. Fokusgroeponderhoude, oop vrae en klaskamerwaarnemings is gebruik om data in te samel, wat ontleed is deur tematiese ontleding. Die bevindings dui aan dat die integrasie van tegnologie en interaktiewe hulpbronne noodsaaklik is vir Generasie Z-leerders; tegnologie bevorder leerderbetrokkenheid en -verstandhouding; en opleiding vir onderwysers vir tegnologie-integrasie en formatiewe assesseringstake is noodsaaklik. Dit is belangrik om die generasiegaping te oorbrug deur gemaak te maak van onderrigstyle en goed gestruktureerde assesserings. Graad 6-leerders verkies leerdergesentreerde benaderings; onderwysers verkies gemengde benaderings. Riglyne is voorgestel en aanbevelings is gemaak wat gebaseer is op die bevindings om onderrig aan te pas, tegnologie doeltreffend te gebruik en nuut te dink oor assesserings.

KEY TERMS

Academic performance

Assessment

English as First Additional Language

Formal Assessment Tasks

Resources

Technology

Teaching styles

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
EFAL	English First Additional Language
FA	Formal Assessment
FAL	First Additional Language
HL	Home Language
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
GDBE	Gauteng Department of Basic Education

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CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In education, assessment plays a crucial role for both learners and teachers. It acts as a guiding tool that not only measures a learner's progress, but also helps shape their educational journey.

Assessment plays a major part of education all over the world and the importance of this lies in how assessment is taking place during class in an education system. If assessment does not take place, no marks can be awarded, and no learner can be promoted to the next grade. What is more, assessment is a process of learning and motivation and at the same time determines whether goals of education are met or not.

Interaction in the language curriculum offers an integration of how the curriculum is practiced and taught (Van Lier, 2014). This is exemplified in both assessment and instruction. In the classroom to achieve certain goals that are set; teachers is an important factor. For that, the goals of this research were to ascertain the importance of teaching styles in accordant with Fernández Rivas and Espada (2021). Teachers are continually interacting and communicating with learners by means of regular assessment to obtain marks for learner performance that determine whether a learner passes or fails. A notable gap according to Karatas and Yalin (2021) was discovered that the learners' performance when comparing the teaching style of teachers with the learning style of learners, therefore when the teaching methods used by teachers were not aligned with how learner's best absorb information, it resulted in variations in the learners' achievements. Dilekli and Tezci (2016) that how you teach is more important than what you teach.

I, as a teacher, assess constantly to determine how learners perform and accomplish certain skills to pass and to move on to another grade. In the specific school where my research is conducted, the LOLT is Afrikaans, thus English is not the HL. EFAL teachers need to focus, more than ever, on how to transfer information so that learners

can perform at their best. Assessment further on can be implemented to make the assessment process easier and effective, to gather relevant information about the progress of the learner's performance and to make judgements about the learning process.

We as teachers must adapt so that learners can benefit from us to perform successfully to reach their full potential. Group work may be successful or unsuccessful as indicated by contrasting findings. Baines, Blatchford and Kutnick (2016) note that group work allows more active participation of learners. Not everyone likes or sees the advantages of working in groups, which could be because they don't have much experience or skills with it yet as Gajderowicz, Jakubowski, Wrona and Alkhadim (2023) state.

What do learners prefer? Although learners are social beings who learn from each other, individual preferences should be noted. Learners engage with each other and find solutions for problems from different perspectives. This may be more successful for extroverts, that is, the learners who like to socialize, but it may differ for introverts. Research has shown that "open-students" usually achieve a better academic record than the learner who prefers a structured learning environment (Yonghou, Rui & Ke, 2016). Although Flanagan and Addy (2019) believe active learning works well, classes are now focusing more on letting learners take the lead and work together, relying a lot on learners talking to each other.

To facilitate the teacher's evaluation process, we should focus on how teachers can make assessment, which is an integral part of education, more successful for not only the learners, but also for teachers. This is pertinent to South Africa, although other countries may benefit from this study as well.

Thematic analysis is a way of finding and describing patterns in data, helping researchers understand key themes or ideas within their research. By conducting thematic analysis according to Castleberry and Nolen (2018), identifying them in your data analysis, your findings will become more valuable, therefor had I developed open-ended questionnaires and focus-group interviews in order to categorize the data that I want to focus on.

The reason I have chosen this research topic, assessment is to support learning, to progress and to transfer quality education, an undeniable part of any education system which leads to the performance of learners, on which I based my thematic analysis on. The purpose of this study is to improve classroom teaching among teachers by providing guidelines for effective assessment. This research may contribute to teachers who find grading difficult, because factors such as teaching styles and technology influence the way they assess. Therefore, assessment in schools should be researched thoroughly to promote a learning environment where assessment is a part of the learning process and where marking, together with promotion to another grade, is effective for teachers as well as learners. Over time, there's been a growing need for schools to prepare learners to adapt to society's changes. To meet this need, it's important to encourage learners to become independent and self-sufficient. This can be done by creating a better learning environment where learners rely less on the teacher and work more together with their classmates (Manzano-Sánchez, and Valero-Valenzuela, 2019).

The focus of the study is how assessment is affected by teaching styles of teachers together with technology. As stated by nowadays, learners are getting used to learning with technology. Many schools and governments are encouraging programs noted by Henrie, Halverson and Graham (2015) where each student has their own tablet or laptop.

Assessment should part of the education system that takes into cognizance components (e.g., teaching styles, resources and technology), so that teaching and learning occur successfully at all times to produce efficient results.

Sun (2014) has shown that learners are currently exposed to social media, therefore where technology is incorporated into their classes; it potentially increases learners' attention. Teachers can improve their teaching on this basis for example, using PowerPoint slides and videos during class time.

The aim of this study was to determine the correct application of assessment in Grade 6 English First Additional Language (EFAL) classes and to identify gaps in learning and what is needed to improve learners' learning.

Ultimately teachers wish to use key components (i.e., teaching styles, resources, and technology) to measure the effectiveness of teaching by linking them to learner performance. Teachers should close gaps in assessment to eliminate poor results and unnecessary stress, so that a school can perform effectively, deliver quality of education and produce acceptable pass rates.

This investigation can contribute to teachers who find grading difficult, and it may make the assessment task easier and less stressful by pointing out the effective use of teaching styles, resources and technology.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Teaching styles, resources and technology are crucial components of an education system worldwide. In China teachers are familiar with internet-based technology and online teaching tools and adjust their teaching plans and way of teaching to improve teacher-learner interaction (Huang, 2020). Al-Kaabi (2016) finds in terms of learning style, learners who had an assimilating learning style performed the best, there wasn't a noticeable difference in the scores of learners' FAT in a blended learning setup based on their learning style, where collaborative learning didn't happen. Academics thus have underestimated the learners' appreciation for interactive learning.

The way learners learn has been transformed in recent times. Learners of today think and learn, as well as behave differently in a class situation. Dong (2018) found that teachers observed young children's access to technology as a positive change, which has broadened their knowledge. Teachers today must understand these changes to enhance learner performance. Unfortunately, schools are evaluated according to pass rates (assessment). To have good pass rates, effective assessment must be in place.

According to Rashid and Asghar (2016), technology has a direct positive relationship with learners: learners become more independent and engagement with technology enhances how they think and learn. Visualizers, such as PowerPoint slides and videos, are part of how learners learn these days. Hamida and Ragam (2013) found that 72.1% of learners prefer multiple ways of learning. Not only should teachers focus

on these media to teach, but they should also recognise that ‘chalk and talk’ is not the only solution to help learners to perform.

The world has shrunk due to communication via social media. People around the world communicate and influence each other, not only socially, but academically as well. Uzun and Kills (2019) found that the intensive use of media and technology has explicitly affected and changed our study habits. Unfavourable study habits include inefficient time management, lack of planning and concentration, poor skills in reading and failure to inform teachers of learners’ difficulties with schoolwork (Mendezabal, 2013).

A teacher in a South African public school faces challenges regarding teaching styles, the resources that are available and technology. Challenges such as curriculum change, language of teaching and learning (LoLT), overcrowded classrooms, poor discipline and a lack of resources (Du Plessis & Letshwene, 2020) are common in South African schools. Many learners in Grade 6 (based on personal observation) are at a time of emotional, physical and social change. They seek new experiences and more independence and face adaptation to peer pressure, homework and new teachers. They frequently experience anxiety when they think that they cannot achieve their academic purposes.

Assessment per se creates anxiety for a Grade 6 learner and can easily turn out negatively if not implemented correctly. As attested by Nawas (2020), learners are more anxious about self-assessment compared with peer-assessment, therefore learners feel more worried when they need to execute a task on their own. Learners feel more secure and relaxed when they are engaged with peer assessment since they do not feel alone. Assessment should be seen as just another component in schooling and learners should feel at ease during an assessment period, emphasising that self-assessment should not invoke fear.

This study is crucial for teachers to improve assessment so that diverse learners can benefit from different teaching styles which accommodate diversity and ensure learner performance. Teachers should keep up to date with how the current generation of learners think and learn. Generation Z has been born and raised with the social web

and are digital-centric (Singh & Dangmei, 2016); thus they are very comfortable with technology and online learning.

Every school consists of older staff and the gap between these teachers and learners should be taken into consideration. As teachers age, they should be willing to transform and adapt continuously so that every learner receives the best teaching and reaches maximum potential. To evaluate this adaption by teachers, assessment is the key.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A framework indicates steps that need to be taken throughout the research and provides a guideline for researchers (Akanbi & Fazeldehkordi, 2015). By using a specific framework, I as the researcher developed a structure and followed specific guidelines to obtain the best results of my study. A framework assists in creating a structure, comprehending the research, and sticking to the research topic. In addition, Lederman and Lederman (2015) state that a theoretical framework assures the validity and/ or reliability of data collection.

The theoretical framework that I have used in this study is Educational Effectiveness. Edward Thorndike (1917), the first modern educational psychologist, developed this approach and posited that educational practices are guided by the cognitive theory held by teachers. Thorndike's theory is still relevant today; he introduced the concept of reinforcement which enables learners to produce the best results. I specifically choose this framework because Scheerners (2015) explains that effectiveness is an integral part of a school and its teaching. When teaching is done effectively, a school will perform academically, which is rated as the effectiveness of a school. The results of learners, how they performed during assessment, are a very good indication of a school's effectiveness. We assess to determine a learner's current state of learning, to monitor the learner's progress, to assign grades, and to regulate how a teacher has transferred knowledge - effectively or ineffectively.

Voss, Wagner, Klusmann, Trautwein and Kunter (2017) argue that positive sentiments entail being more attentive and engaging with intriguing techniques, with the teacher serving as the focal point of the classroom can make or break what is happening in a classroom according to his/her teaching style. Denisenkova and Nisskaya (2016) showed better results in child-directed interactions, such as playing skills, compared with a similar situation in which the children were directed by the teachers. Both the involvement of the teacher together with the learners is necessary.

Assessment is the key factor to investigate any problem(s) associated with poor results. To have a successful education system, effective teaching and learning should occur which produces good results and pass rates.

1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS

The following basic interrelated concepts define the main focus of the study.

1.4.1 Basic concepts

1.4.1.1 Assessment

In agreement with Wiliam and Thompson (2017) improving education is a priority for all countries. Assessment is an indication of how learners understand the teacher and perform in tasks. Teachers present knowledge, explain, and use technology effectively for their learners to perform.

1.4.1.2 Academic performance

According to Theobald (2021), learning protocols, like learning diaries or goal sheets, are believed to help learners monitor and reflect on their learning. These protocols encourage learners to regularly report on things like their study habits, goals, or strategies. They act as reminders to study and are thought to encourage goal setting, monitoring progress, and reflecting on their learning journey. This contributes to academic performance, which is influenced by motivation and self-regulated learning.

Although learners need to study on their own as well, teachers' teaching styles should be appropriate and effective to maintain a school's academic performance.

1.4.1.3 First Additional Language

Pretorius and Stoffelsma (2017) state those Home Language learners' results show almost double the number of vocabularies in comparison with their First Additional Language (FAL) peers. For this reason, teaching FAL is challenging because of learners' limited vocabulary which should be taken into consideration when teaching.

1.4.2 Related concepts

1.4.2.1 Teaching styles

Zheng (2022) reason that teachers play an important role in learners' well-being because of the positive influence of teacher-learner interactions. Good relationships between teachers and learners provide a strong foundation for learners' long-term education. When teachers show care and support towards learners, it's called emotional support.

1.4.2.2 Resources: Technology

Technology is where data in any environment is integrated into communication networks (Godfrey, Hetherington, Shum, Bonato, Lovell & Stuart, 2018). Although textbooks remain a cornerstone for training, learners also identify with internet websites as well as non-online multimedia material. The internet represents an important aid to support learners 'learning needs, but textbooks are still their resource of choice (Guarino, Leopardi, Sorrenti, De Antoni, Catania & Alagaratnam, 2014).

1.4.2.3 Formal Assessment Tasks

Formal Assessment Tasks (FAT) refer to a systematic way of evaluating how well learners are progressing in a grade and in a particular subject. These include projects, oral presentations, tests, and demonstrations (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2021-2023).

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As a teacher, I have observed that EFAL reading and writing require great attention. These skills must be mastered and are assessed at the end of every term. If a learner fails the assessment, he/she fails the term, because this is a main subject. Andrianatos (2019) finds that a particular it's true that the South African school system isn't fully preparing learners for university which is a major gap in our education system. However, academic literacy and support departments can play a crucial role in enhancing learners' academic literacy, with reading being a key component. For this reason, it is extremely important for teachers to focus on reading prior to writing and to assess accordingly.

Assessment which plays an important part in the academic performance of learners is an essential teaching task which is a source of stress for many teachers. Assessment also makes learners anxious. Teachers should focus on motivating learners and presenting knowledge effectively to ensure learner performance.

When keeping the factors teaching styles and technology in mind, the following findings are pertinent to this study. Bidabadi, Isfahani, Rouhollahi and Khalili (2016) found that the best teaching approach is the mixed method (learner-centred combined with teacher-centered). An effective teaching method enables learners to question their own preconceptions and motivates them to learn. In this situation, learners see themselves as the authors of answers. Dash, Patro and Behera’s (2013) study found that 51% learners experience typical or standard subjects that learners attend as part of their regular curriculum interesting, while 77% found normal classes as the most effective method of teaching. Group discussions are preferred by 68%, while 82% prefer black-board teaching. Only 56% preferred practical classes before theory and when technology is included, only 55% agreed that audio-visual aids are useful.

This research aims to explore what will work for South African learners to maximize their marks during assessment. In my experience I have observed that learners prefer interaction with visual aids and not teacher-centered lessons; any technological devices attract their attention and improve academic performance.

The awareness of learners' learning, that is, what they have learned, how well they learned and where they struggle, is critical. Insight on this matter is of cardinal importance and needs attention because it affects decisions made about grades.

1.5.1 Main research question

What is the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology on enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners?

1.5.2 Sub-questions

In the light of the main question, the following sub-questions served as key foci for the research study:

1.5.2.1 How do different teaching styles employed by teachers in Grade 6 EFAL classes affect learners' engagement, comprehension, and overall performance in assessments?

1.5.2.2 To what extent does the integration of the resources improve teachers' teaching methods in order to reach the potential of every learner?

1.5.2.3 How can strategies for enhancing the efficiency of FAT through the effective utilization of technology be identified and evaluated to streamline the assessment process for teachers?

1.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This section discusses the research aim and objectives of the study.

1.6.1 The aim of the study

The aim of the study was to explore the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology on enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners.

1.6.2 Objectives of the study

The study further intends to:

1.6.2.1 Establish if different teaching styles employed by teachers in Grade 6 EFAL classes affect learners ’engagement, comprehension, and overall performance in assessments?

1.6.2.2 Determine the influence of resources on the effectiveness of teachers' teaching methods in order to reach the potential of every learner.

1.6.2.3 To identify and evaluate strategies for enhancing the efficiency of FAT through the effective utilization of technology to streamline the assessment process for teachers.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Taylor, Berkelman, Yadav and Hammond (2013), a methodology entails necessary procedures and controls in order for data to be reliable. According to Jamshed (2014), a research methodology refers to a plan that researchers use to outline their approach to identifying or resolving problems.

As the researcher I have chosen a research methodology to address the research question as well as the research problem in order to find relevant and reliable answers on the topic of enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners: exploring the impact of teaching styles, resources and technology.

The appropriate research design and research methods are discussed next.

1.7.1 Research design

A design is a fundamental guide to the research (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013) and indicates how to engage in practical issues, explore research questions and how to engage with the reality-shaping context to archive the researcher's data in the field.

This study is based on a descriptive design, a type of research that describes learners' characteristics, especially in my research, during assessment. In this study, I observed how learners reacted during a crucial time: assessment, keeping in mind those teachers had already implemented their teaching style and technology. This constitutes a descriptive study.

The overall goal of this design was a comprehensive summary enable gathering detailed information about which can then be compared to reality for evaluation, regarding a particular group. Endsley (2017) reveals that this is a demarcation of how individuals react in certain situations, like this study where the focus point is assessment. In this specific case the EFAL Grade 6 classes are included, thus is the whole school not part of specific events experienced by individuals or groups based on interviews, questionnaires, and observations.

I have considered how teaching styles and technology (with various necessary resources and where reading was first emphasized for optimal performance) were implemented before the assessment period and if these factors influenced the way the learners performed.

1.7.1.1 Interpretivist research paradigm

The term paradigm is used to describe the researcher's worldview (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This worldview is the perspective of the researcher which influences the envisaged research to find solutions for possible problems.

The purpose of this study is to improve classroom teaching among teachers by providing guidelines for effective assessment. Teaching styles, resources and technology affect a school's effectiveness; therefore, is Educational Effectiveness is the theoretical framework that was used for this study. The main research question is how these factors affect assessment. To fulfil the purpose of this study, the theoretical framework: Educational Effectiveness is appropriate, where the reaction of learners is observed when doing assessment. Potrack, Jones and Nelson (2014) testify that the interpretive paradigm believes that people's experiences and perspectives are important. When I as a researcher deal with a problem such as assessment and the academic performance of a Grade 6 learner in a practical, realistic, and logical way, I will reach my goal; individuals' (which include teachers and Grade 6 learners) unique viewpoints and feelings matter. This type of teaching is where detail daily is reflected, and individual differences are kept in mind.

1.7.1.2 Research approach

The approach I choose for this study is qualitative. According to a qualitative approach, I as the researcher focused on quality rather than quantity. This enabled me to obtain insights into how teachers and learners think and experience assessment.

The topic of my study is assessment which is a key concern when grading work necessary for promotion to the next grade. Thus, I have engaged in a process where knowledge and literature enabled me to understand how key components (teaching styles, technology, and evaluation) affect learners during assessment.

Participants (Grade 6 teachers and Grade 6 learners) were selected purposefully, using stratified and convenience sampling methods. Stratified sampling is a tool that helps to find patterns in data by grouping similar things together, helping us to see similarities or differences among the data (Zhao, Liang & Dang, 2019), while convenience sampling is referred to by Taherdoost (2016) as an inexpensive and an easy option.

Open-ended questionnaires were distributed to six Grade 6 teachers. Focus group interviews were conducted with Grade 6 learners and recorded. Observations (to examine the behaviour of learners when doing assessment) were carried out to collect specific data to find out how teaching styles, technology, and the evaluation process of teachers influenced learners during assessment. These techniques form part of a qualitative research approach.

1.7.1.3 Research type

The type of research strategy is a case study. According to Elsawah, Pierce, Hamilton, Van Delden, Haase, Elmahdi and Jakeman (2017), a case study emphasises the investigation of human experiences. By collecting questionnaires and having interviews, communication and knowledge are transferred and participants may communicate using life stories of what they experience.

According to Klingsieck, Grund, Schmid, and Fries (2013), the voices and experiences of the participants hold significant value. Therefore, case studies generate an in-depth understanding of a real-life context.

Through this research study, using a case study as my strategy, I collected information that may show change that occurred over the years regarding how learners learn today. Teaching styles and technology are key factors that are currently pertinent to implement successful teaching that leads to better performance regarding assessment. This strategy was used to explore how teaching styles and technology affect the assessment of learners in Grade 6.

1.7.2 Research methods

A research method is synonymous with a research process that should be followed. These steps include developing of research questions, doing a literature review, collecting data, analyzing the findings, and writing it up (Punch & Oancea, 2014).

A qualitative approach was used to select participants, collect data and analyses findings in relation to assessment and academic performance of Grade 6 EFAL learners.

1.7.2.1 Selection of participants

A specific primary school in Gauteng was purposefully selected for this case study where the focus is only on the Grade 6 EFAL classes. Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan and Huagwood (2013) explain that a selection of participants that is done on purpose focusses on the identification of information-rich cases which are related to the interest of the study. Criterion sampling appears to be used most in research and therefore I have used specific criteria to select participants. The participants consist of 30 Grade 6 learners and six Grade 6 teachers. I only chose Grade 6 learners to ascertain how they performed academically according to their academic results.

These learners were exposed to different teachers with different teaching styles and personalities; therefore, I chose l six Grade 6 teachers who teach differently according to teaching styles to see how the learners experienced these different teaching styles and how performed academically. The teachers shared their opinions, using open-ended questionnaires, on how the learners perform in class as well as how and why they teach. Six Grade 6 teachers completed an open-ended questionnaire with respect to teaching styles and assessment and five focus group interviews (each consisting of six learners) took place.

1.7.2.2 Data collection

The instruments for data collection were focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires utilized in the study that are self-developed, meaning they were created specifically for this research project and did not previously exist, and lastly notes on observations. The emphasis was placed on human communication, experiences, and the voice of the participants (cf. 1.7.1.3).

Observation was done when assessment took place to see if if assessment is an easy or difficult task for learners. I observed how learners reacted during this assessment time through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. When grading these assessments in terms of marks, one would be able to find out if the teaching styles, together with the different resources and technology were appropriate by focusing on learners' academic performance.

i. Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews allow participants to tell their own stories, express their opinions, and even draw pictures without having to adhere to a strict sequence of questions (Adler, Salanterä and Zumstein-Shaha, 2019). Open-ended questions were posed and discussions focussing on assessment were held in five groups of six learners in the Grade 6 EFAL group. These learners were selected on their academic performance: two learners who produced excellent results in assessment; two who produced average results and two who produced poor results. The focus groups were audio recorded in an environment where the participants felt comfortable to share their points of view on assessment. The aim of these discussions was to lead to debates and healthy conflict in order to share ideas.

ii. Open-ended questionnaires

Open-ended questionnaires were completed by six Grade 6 teachers to determine how teaching styles and technology affect teachers when it comes to assessment and how these factors influence their learners' academic performance. According to Emde (2014), these types of questions are powerful tools for collecting more detailed and specific responses.

In the open-ended questionnaires, I investigated what the participants felt, thought and experienced concerning assessment.

iii. Observation

Classroom observation is crucial for enhancing the visibility of teaching and learning. It offers teachers constructive feedback to enhance their classroom management and instructional methods. Observing the interaction between a teacher and learners is essential for teachers as it influences the learning opportunities provided to learners. Moreover, classroom observation promotes collaboration among colleagues to enhance teaching practices and learner learning. Feedback obtained from classroom observations serves as proven by Halim, Wahid and Halim (2018) an effective tool to provide teachers with insights into their classroom behavior, aiding in their ongoing professional development.

1.7.2.3 Data analysis

Data collected during open-ended questionnaires, the focus group interviews, as well as the observation notes on behavior during assessment were analyzed (Züll, 2016). Data were coded and categorized to determine patterns of participants' understanding and experiences on how teaching styles and technology affect assessment of Grade 6 learners in EFAL.

According to Scheerners (2015), educational effectiveness is essential for both schools and their teaching. When teaching is effective, it reflects positively on the academic performance of the school, which is considered as a measure of the school's effectiveness. If a teacher's teaching style and resources do not match the learners' preferences, improve learning and realize the best possible performance of a learner, it will show in learners' marks as well as the data collected.

1.8 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

The goal of trustworthiness in qualitative research is to show that the findings are credible, transferrable, dependable, and confirmable (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

1.8.1 Credibility

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), credibility refers to the qualitative researcher's level of trust in the research findings' accuracy. As mentioned before, open-ended questionnaires were used. To ensure credibility (believability), the following were used: a literature study and an open questionnaire regarding the three factors that may influence assessment whereby participants expressed their own points of view to cover all these aspects of the study. This was used for the interviews as well. The main goal during interviews was that the learners shared their opinions and experiences and I, as the researcher, listened. Observations were written down. I sought to always stay objective.

1.8.2 Transferability

According to Terrel (2016), transferability is demonstrating that a research study's findings may be applied to multiple contexts or scenarios. Findings of questionnaires, interviews and observations were used for my results. These results are transferable in similar studies and may be used for other fields of studies if needed.

1.8.3 Dependability

Data will be dependable. The results may repeat or differ drastically from each other, but I will always stay objective and neutral to find an objective conclusion.

1.8.4 Confirmability

Korstjens and Moser (2018) define that a qualitative research article is mostly narrative. Editors essentially use the criteria: is it new, is it true, and is it relevant? Confirmability is always to stay objective. Results that appear are final. Every participant was handled anonymously and confidentially.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I, the researcher, was knowledgeable about ethical principles before conducting the research. The Gauteng Department of Education was asked permission in writing, and permission was granted to undertake a study at one of their schools. I also obtained permission for the study from the College of Education Ethical Committee at the University of South Africa (UNISA). This included all documentation and procedures. Consent forms for participants are an example of these considerations.

1.10 CHAPTERS DIVISION

Chapter 1 outlines the introduction and brief historical overview of the background for the study. The theoretical framework, key concepts, problem statement, aim and objectives of the study, research methodology and chapter division are also stated.

Chapter 2 places the study in context. An overview on assessment and the theoretical framework of the study are presented, as well as the conceptual framework. The theoretical framework of Educational Effectiveness is used.

Chapter 3, the research design, and methods used in the research process are discussed in detail. The selection of participants, data collection procedure, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations are explained.

Chapter 4 provides data that were collected and analyzed to produce the findings of the research. These are compared to existing literature.

Chapter 5 provides the conclusion to this study. This chapter aims to answer the supporting research questions and the main research question. The implications of the theoretical and empirical research are summarized. Based on the theoretical and

empirical research, solutions to the challenges faced regarding factors influencing academic performance in EFAL among Grade 6 learners are provided. The limitations of the study are stated, recommendations are made and avenues for further research are identified.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter served as an orientation to the whole study. A brief historical overview showed that assessment and its connection with teaching styles and technology as a main resource affect the academic performance of a Grade 6 learner in EFAL. Afterwards an overview of assessment was made. Educational Effectiveness as the theoretical framework was identified to inform the link between academic performance, resources, and technology to good academic performance. Assessment is part of the education system that interacts with the components (i.e., teaching styles and resource aids, referring to technology) to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place to produce good academic results.

The contextual, theoretical, and conceptual framework will be described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 2
KEY FACTORS IN ASSESSMENT LEADING TO THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 6 LEARNERS IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE: CONTEXTUAL, THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is the key in any education system; therefore, the purpose of this study is to improve classroom teaching among teachers by providing guidelines for effective assessment. The improvement of teaching and learning by providing guidelines for improved assessment of learners' academic performance are the result of this study.

Assessment supports learning by promoting quality education to achieve optimal performance. To achieve this purpose, I need to clarify the contextual, theoretical and conceptual frameworks on the topic: how assessment can be made more effective and how this links with learners' academic performance.

In this chapter, the contextual (the existing international and national literature on assessment and academic performance), theoretical (Education Effectiveness) and conceptual (interrelated concepts appropriate for this research) frameworks will be discussed to understand the effect of teaching styles and technology on assessment.

2.2 CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The contextual framework according to this research is an in-depth study to observe in a daily environment (a selected school in Gauteng) how Grade 6 learners understand content in the subject EFAL where teaching styles together with technology are implemented and how assessment tasks result afterwards. This section further puts the study in context and provides a situation analysis.

Previously published research and the current thinking available from existing studies on this topic, assessment, and the effect of factors such as teaching styles and technology on academic performance, show the following:

2.2.1 International overview: Learners' preferences and priorities for teachers

Our generation of learners has changed over the years and the influence of teaching styles and technology on assessment are crucial components in education currently. Corresponding to Balakrishnan and Lay (2016), different teaching styles meet different learning needs and social media is an important part of how learners learn today.

2.2.1.1 Quality teaching: Transforming learners' application of knowledge

Becoming a teacher educator involves more than a job title. One becomes a teacher educator as soon as one does teacher education (Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013).

Proper education can open a world of opportunities, but for this quality teaching, learning tools and a supportive learning environment are necessary. A safe place to learn and play, meaning a healthy environment, is important; the physical environment (as assessed in the Republic of North Macedonia), according to Prosheva, Kjosevska and Stefanovska (2020), is a crucial part of a school for learning to take place. Aixia, Ying and Wijaya (2020) believe that the quality of learners' learning is an important part of teaching evaluation, thus the environment should be encouraging.

Straker (2016) emphasizes the importance of language competence. The ability to speak the language (EFAL for Grade 6 learners in this research) must be achieved successfully to improve knowledge, skills and abilities, which contribute to performance.

The overall assessment of the current state of effective teaching reflects human relations and attention to the learning environment and teaching method. In contrast with these positive outcomes, effective teaching reflected in the evaluation criteria is

constrained by time (Galavandi, Darvishi & Ashrafi, 2019). It is therefore necessary to make plans to reach the desired level of effective and timely evaluation.

Based on findings from Bali and Liu (2018), the result of this study indicate that Taiwanese learners prefer face-to-face learning perception and that it was higher than online learning in term of social presence, social interaction, and satisfaction, thus learners in Taiwan prefer learning where there is physical interaction between the learners and teacher. Quality education can therefore not only be based on technology.

In Australia, learner and teacher performance courses are a necessity to improve quality education (Driham, 2013). According to this literature learners and teachers should have training on how to deliver quality education with good results that reflect the effectiveness of a school's academic performance; for this reason, these courses should focus on the improvement of performance. According to Rogowsky, Calhoun and Tallal (2020), visual learning scored higher than auditory learning which implies that this generation of learners is more focused on what they see rather than what they hear. In the United States, policy discussions of teacher education in relationship to teacher quality have tended to focus more closely on teacher preparation (Hammerness & Klette, 2015).

English is a language that should be taught in such a way that learners (especially English second language learners) can use the language proficiently. To reach this goal, quality teaching should take place. Robinson and Winthrop (2016) emphasize that outside the classroom, talent should be activated which improves learning. Therefore, the inside of the classroom should not be the only 'venue' where learning and teaching takes place. Vincent-Lancrin (2023) confirms that many education systems are updating their curricula to focus on skill-based education, emphasizing holistic development. This means educating learners in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values all at once. Further on do they find that most people believe that schools should teach students to think creatively and independently.

The connection between the inside and outside of the classroom and applying the key factors may have a positive effect on how learners perform at the end of every term.

Quality education is therefore a topic that should be researched and implemented effectively and correctly in the class to improve learning which leads to the academic performance of a school and the broader education system.

2.2.1.2 Learner-centered approach: Shifting activities to learners

In the present era, learning styles refer to the preferences of individuals as to how they prefer to go about the process of learning. This dominant factor (learning style) affects the academic success of learners (Karthigeyan & Nirmala, 2013). The premise 'one teaching style fits all', which is attributed to a teacher-centered instructional approach, does not work for a growing number of diverse learners. New challenges that classroom teachers face are diverse student needs and technological advances.

Although teachers are seen as the most important single element of the education system, countries like Finland, Singapore and the Netherlands focus on teacher support, how to prepare and assess, especially when it comes to new educators to establish quality education from the start (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2013).

In New South Wales overall results indicate a need for learner-centered teaching (Strnadova & Cumming, 2014). A learner-centered teaching style focusses more on the learner and less on the teacher. In my opinion as a teacher currently, learners love attention and involvement and wish to express their opinions. Using this teaching style, the focus is on active learning, solving problems, formulating, and answering questions, discussing, explaining, debating, and brainstorming. In Nantong City, China, education is seen as a social activity (Zhang, Yin & Cai, 2016).

According to Darsih (2018), learner-centered teaching is a teaching approach that is gaining increasing encouragement in education.

In Indonesia, learner-centered teaching is obligatory for teachers since the government introduced a new curriculum; however, it is not always effective since teachers demonstrate a lack of creativity, responsibility, and knowledge. The teachers' efforts and their roles in implementing learner-centered teaching effectively should allow learners to be active recipients of knowledge, give them the responsibility for

what they learn, use highly engaging core content that meets the needs of the learners, give feedback to help them to improve and utilize multiple teaching techniques that are appropriate for learning goals. The several roles of the teacher in learner-centered teaching are guide, facilitator, coach and creator of an environment that fosters learners' learning, accommodates different learning styles, and motivates learners to accept responsibility for learning.

The emphasis in education has shifted from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach. Traditional teaching has too often been based on a passive lecture model, dependent on an expert teacher who funnels knowledge into the somewhat retentive minds of learners. Keiler (2018), the more current learning theory suggests that teachers see various advantages in adopting a learner-centered approach compared to traditional methods. It suggests that as teachers transition to facilitators in learner-centered classrooms, their roles shift from being the primary source of information to guiding and supporting learners in their learning journey. Instead of simply imparting knowledge, facilitators encourage active participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among learners. This shift aligns with the evolving role of teachers as facilitators who empower learners to take ownership of their learning process.

Ultimately teachers should see interaction, lesson preparation and classroom management as key (Momanyi, 2016). All these activities should be designed for learners to benefit from their teachers, with an emphasis on interaction.

2.2.1.3 The use of technological tools and resources

Teachers create structure, provide advice, and monitor progress (Kozma, 2014), although the use of technological tools and resources support learners as they search for information. This way of teaching by implementing technology leads to independent learners; keeping this generation of learners in mind, technology excites them and

prepares them for the future. We all know that technology is an integral part of our daily existence, nationally and internationally.

Cilliers (2017) points out that teachers who teach this generation of learners, known as Gen-Z, speak technological-language. In my opinion and based on what I observe when teaching learners in Grade 6, this 'language' is popular and grabs the attention of learners as it relates to the way this generation of learners communicates, thinks and learns. Malaysian schools experience a lack of creativity when using technology in teaching and learning (Henriksen, Creely, Henderson & Mishra, 2021), while Ghavifeki and Rosdy (2015) maintain that Malaysia's success is technologically based, because of their well-prepared technological tools.

2.2.1.4 Formal Assessment (FA): Grading system based on the monitoring of learner's knowledge

Zhu (2015) found in Hong Kong that teachers encountered difficulties in developing test instruments, assessing learners' performance, and adjusting their teaching strategy accordingly. This led to failures in the design of FA which requires clear instructions on how to implement it, so that learners know exactly what is expected of them (Jian & Luo, 2014). Rubrics where clear and concrete evaluation criteria are available as well as concrete teaching sequence are necessary to find a solution for this concern. Evaluation tools therefore should be precise, because then teachers have certainty that the criteria are fair and valid, judgements are consistent and reliable. Hwang, Sung, Hung and Huang (2013) find that learners make choices by intuition and personal preference. Learners therefore want to understand knowledge without thinking; thus, knowledge must be related to what they experience and what comes to their mind spontaneously. FA should therefore be designed to interest learners and relate to what is familiar to them, bringing their reality to the classroom.

FA has its challenges and, when implemented effectively, it leads to the improvement of learning (Gewertz, 2015). Unfortunately, FA is inadequately researched, poorly understood, and improperly implemented because of the lack of professional training (Jian & Luo, 2014). To solve these problems, as suggested by Jian and Luo (2014),

more financial investments regarding important issues of FA should be supported, the clarification of the concept of FA is a necessity and development for teachers on ready-to-use FA is a must. Although I agree with this research, the word 'assessment' makes me as a teacher anxious, because it is a measurement of what is taught in the classroom. How did I as a teacher convey knowledge to learners in order to perform? We should keep in mind that assessment is not a one-time recurring event. Continuous feedback plays part of this process of assessing.

In the end, teaching and the performance are all about the learner passing to the next grade.

2.2.2 An overview of challenges faced by teachers in South Africa

2.2.2.1 Quality education, the groundwork for society

The quality of education is pivotal for the end production (Letgotlo, 2014). Production is nothing less than the assessment that follows quality education. Quality education is therefore extremely important to keep the focus, the end-goal, in mind that is, sending responsible citizens into the world. Appropriate resources should be available to ensure efficient and effective implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (Maharajh, Nkosi & Mkhize, 2016).

Unfortunately, many challenges South African teachers face in implementing CAPS are attributed to a lack of resources and poorly trained teachers. According to Ramatlapane and Makonye (2012), CAPS often compromises teachers' independence which affects the quality of education.

As a teacher, I can confirm that teachers work at a fast pace, because the syllabus should be completed by specific due dates, which affects quality education. Unnecessary stress is created because of regular curriculum change and adaption due to technology. Murtin (2013) explains that competent leadership in schools is extremely important, so teachers need support from their management team to deliver the maximum quality that is necessary when teaching and learning. Due to lack of resources and constant change in the curriculum South Africa, teachers may become negative, which may result in non-productive teaching.

To resolve the crisis in education in South Africa learners should take the importance of education seriously (Modisaotsile, 2012). Without the realisation of the importance of teaching and learning, we are sending citizens into society who are semi-literate and not proficient in EFAL.

As a conclusion, quality education promotes lifelong learning (Stabback, 2016) and for this reason, when quality education is achieved, learners will be able to apply their learning outside the school environment.

2.2.2.2 Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)

Adamson, Milligan and Desai (2024) confirm their paper a shared frustration over the unfair influence of learning in an unfamiliar language (or even a second language) of teaching and learning, particularly in the context of the selected school for this study where Afrikaans is the LoLT. It reflects ongoing discussions in South Africa and beyond about the challenges faced by learners, highlighting the struggles and suffering caused by language policies. Therefore, English as LoLT has a definite influence on learners whose Home Language is not English, therefore English is the FAL. LoLT is crucial, especially with Grade 6 EFAL learners; these learners learn in an additional language and thus the comprehension of the subject may be affected, unless their Home Language is also judiciously incorporated in learning.

2.2.2.3 Classroom technology

The new reality is that educators train new generations for the future and the influence of technology on learners is stronger than in the traditional method of teaching (Gómez-Galán, 2020).

According to Ferrell and Ferrell (2015), classroom technology (which is a learning tool) is there to enhance the learning experience. Although classroom technology includes technical problems, overall, the many advantages of a technology-enhanced

classroom outweigh the limitations because it generates self-sufficient learners (Kozma, 2014). As a teacher myself, technical issues are a definite problem when technology is used; visualizers, projectors and laptops may create technical issues which cannot be solved immediately.

A balance between traditional methods and the use of technology is required to maximise effectiveness (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2015). Growing and keeping up to date with how this generation of learners think and learn is a topic of ongoing research.

2.2.2.4 Assessment: Ranking the learners' achievement

Assessment supports learning and the transfer of quality education; it is an undeniable part of any education system which measures the performance of learners and includes decisions about grades. Since summative assessment is more holistic than measurements and grades (Irons & Elkington, 2021), therefore this type of assessment should also take place to give feedback to learners on where to improve, which is a continuous process.

Regarding FA, teaching and learning activities are taking place more frequently online, which means teachers must prepare themselves for this rapidly (Motala & Menon, 2020). Online tools for FA eliminate the time spent on marking, because feedback is faster (Baleni, 2015). Keeping this in mind, teacher's still experience stress to prepare them and adapt to the 'new' way of teaching, which means bringing technology in the classroom.

This research study is crucial for the teachers to take their teaching styles, use of technology and practice of assessment to another level, so that their learners can benefit from their teachers who have done their ultimate best, using these key factors to accommodate diverse learners in one class, in order for their learners to perform at their maximum potential. Therefore, this research's purpose is to improve classroom teaching among teachers by providing guidelines for effective assessment. To do so, improve classroom teaching by providing guidelines for the implementation of the mentioned key factors which will eventually conclude in successful assessment.

2.2.3 Overview of literature on learning and teaching preferences in the light of the specified key factors

Reading the literature from sub-sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 regarding teaching styles and technology, assessment in schools is a major part of a school system and how it is implemented needs to be taken into serious consideration. Thus, the following aspects need attention when research on assessment is conducted:

Acknowledging a learner's interests and preferences, such as visual, auditory, logical, verbal, and/or kinesthetic learning styles, is crucial, as different teaching styles can influence various learners' performance. Different learning styles approach learning differently: participatory or independently (Balakrishnan & Gan, 2016).

'Fun' classes, that is, enjoyable classes, lead to positive attitudes towards a subject. Fun in classes together with learning increases creativity and motivation and reduces boredom (Aisah, 2016). Learners should feel that they are challenged, growing, and constantly learning; they must feel involved in their continuous learning process (Marsick & Watkins, 2015). Learners will be less likely to feel bored, effective communication takes place and positive human relations are promoted. To achieve this, teachers are responsible. In the end learners should become knowledgeable citizens and certain skills (which require assessment) should be mastered.

Resources such as laptops and visualizers assist learners think, promote interactive teaching, and teach learners to become more independent. Teachers are not the only source of information (Senthamarai, 2018), although a balance between traditional and technological teaching is necessary. Zargaran, Turki, Bhaskar, Spiers and Zargaran (2020) find that technology reaches a large audience, however traditional teaching remains the learning resource of choice.

Even though these different teaching styles may influence how a learner performs, it is necessary that FA must be designed correctly. The type of assessment practices used in the classroom have a major influence on learners' learning and academic achievement as Broadbent, Panadero and Boud (2018) reveal, teachers should monitor a learner's learning, giving constructive feedback so that learning can

improve. Summative assessment follows this where a learner's learning is evaluated at the end to meet a certain standard or benchmark. Generally, formative assessment is thought to be an effective strategy for learning. It is an integral part of a learning process, and it takes place several times during a course rather than only at the end.

2.2.4 Current situation in the education system: Teacher implementation of teaching styles, resources and technology

2.2.4.1 Teaching styles: Classroom methods

Curriculum change, LoLT, overcrowded classrooms, poor discipline, and a lack of resources are common challenges that teachers face regularly, if not daily (Du Plessis & Letshwene, 2020). Teaching styles (how content is conveyed, and feedback given) and technology (keeping this generation of learners in mind) may play a role in Grade 6 learners' academic performance. Education in future will focus on an interactive approach, meaning technology needs to be effectively integrated into teaching and learning (Ratheeswari, 2018).

At 2.2.1.2. teachers were previously active or engaged, but the roles have shifted and now they are problem-solvers. In the past teachers were seen as the only functioning and valid source of information. Currently teachers need to investigate and find solutions to solve problems in the classroom. The way we teach, learn, and communicate with learners has disrupted traditional education methods and practices that have been in place for years. It's not just about shifting from face-to-face to online instruction, but also about creating a culture that embraces innovative approaches. This requires new skills and competencies (Taylor, Grant, Hamdy, Grant, Marei and Venkatramana 2020) from teachers, learners, mentors, and administrators, all while ensuring the quality of education remains high.

2.2.4.2 LoLT: How learners and teachers communicate

The LoLT may present problems for learners whose Home Language is not English. Therefore, teaching styles and how the content is communicated to accommodate diverse learners in one class should be taken into serious consideration. Learners struggle to learn the subject due to their poor proficiency in English (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015). Frequently vocabulary is misunderstood, the teaching environment is not conducive and the CAPS, which allows teachers merely to complete the expected outcomes, have affected the quality of teaching and time is not used efficiently. Effective teaching leads to successful learning, which requires communication (Ngoc, 2019).

2.2.4.3 The generation of learners (Gen Z) who prioritise technology and electronics

Times have changed and how learners think and learn has transformed drastically with implications for teachers. Older staff must be willing to transform and adapt their teaching styles to the role that technology is playing. Szymkowiak, Melovick, Dabic, Jeganathan and Kundi (2021) agree that technology progress has influenced the way learners acquire knowledge and learn. Learners of today think and learn, as well as behave differently in a class situation; learners become more independent by allowing activities which are enjoyable and where communication skills are a priority.

2.2.4.4 Assessment as an act of judgement

Teachers incur challenges regarding teaching styles and technology which may affect assessment of learners. These may include: a lack of resources (such as laptops and visualizers), lack of training, systemic problems such as load shedding and technical issues including maintenance of technology.

I, as a teacher, assess continuously to determine how learners perform before summative assessment is done, meaningful feedback during formative assessment benefits learners. Learners' satisfaction levels are related to constructive feedback (Lee, 2014).

2.2.5 Gap(s) identification regarding teaching styles, technology, and the effect on assessment

Rigorous research on what is happening in schools with respect to teaching, followed by assessment, is an unsettled case: are different teaching styles applied to accommodate all learners? How is technology (keeping older personnel in mind) linked to teaching styles to optimise learning for this generation of learners? Szymkowiak, Melovick, Dabic, Jeganathan and Kundi (2021) find that technology progress has influenced the way learners acquire knowledge and learn and the achievement of each learner's maximum potential at the end of each grade.

The focus of FA must be to drive the learner's learning. Learners will gain so much more from the study of their subjects when assessment is intentionally planned to attract their personal interests. Content that triggers learners' interests drives learners' learning and learner-centered teaching is required (Strnadova & Cumming, 2014). When FA is implemented correctly (focusing on the learners' interests), using different teaching styles together with technology, summative assessment (especially designed to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning at the end of each term) is a clear outcome to see what has happened in the classroom and if the learners were interested and comprehended the content.

FA, which considers learners' strengths and weaknesses by monitoring learners' improvement and giving feedback, enhances schooling. Learners' satisfaction levels are related to constructive feedback (Lee, 2014). Communication between the teacher and learners should be planned to address interests of Grade 6 learners.

According to Nur and Islam (2018), there is a disconnection between education policy and practice. Every country has a policy in place for rules and procedures to take are established which result into quality learning. Nur and Islam (2018) identify the disconnection between these procedures and what is happening in the schools, such as regular curriculum change, a lack of resources and poorly trained teachers (Maharajh, Nkosi, Mkize, 2016). These grave concerns need to be addressed: the syllabus (what needs to be taught), what assets are available and teachers' access to training.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

A framework must inform the steps that need to be taken throughout the research, thus providing a guideline for researchers (Akanbi & Fazeldehkordi, 2015). It is also an appraisal tool and essential in interpreting empirical research findings. The specified framework that I chose describes the supporting structure based on existing research of a research problem.

The theoretical framework that I use for this study is Educational Effectiveness. This can be defined as an education system (in my case a specific primary school in Gauteng) and its components which achieve desired goals. Effectiveness, in agreement with Reynolds, Sammons, De Fraine, Van Damme, Townsend, Teddilie and Stringfield (2014), is the outcome which is measured from where it began, its original starting point, and focuses on the relationship among factors, such as school, classroom and learner learning (Merki, Emmerich & Holmeier, 2017). Thus, it extremely important for teachers to devote their energy to what is happening in the classroom, concerning the key factors (teaching styles and technology) to reach the end goal, the assessment. Teachers typically measure achievement using classroom performance, graduation rates, and results from standardized tests.

Assessment should take place formatively (where feedback is given to learners to enhance their tasks) and summative (to assess the final effectiveness of learning). Ranking takes place to confirm the outcomes and detects if educational effectiveness was realized.

Kamamia, Ngugi and Thinguri (2014) reveal that the overall effectiveness of the system of education is determined by the quality of its teachers and the necessary abilities and skills lead to confident self-driven educators. The results of learners, basically how they did in their assessment, are a very good indication of a school's education effectiveness. The teacher should design effective FA and present the knowledge beforehand. Therefore, the way a FA is designed and how the learner

performs is a good indication of the effectiveness of learning and the relationship between these two (FA designed by the teacher and acted on by the learner).

We assess to determine a learner's current state of academic performance, to keep track of the learner's progress, to assign grades and to regulate how a teacher has transferred knowledge - effectively or ineffectively.

Schreeners (2015) selects factors which may need further clarification, such as, teacher expectations, structured instruction, feedback, opportunity to learn, classroom climate and effective learning time. These factors correlate with the theory of Educational Effectiveness that I have focused on. These mentioned factors including teaching styles and technology determine the effectiveness of education as culminating in the learner's final marks.

Questions that may arise are: What precisely is expected of teachers, regarding teaching styles, resources and integrating technology? Instructions need to be clear, and learners must know exactly what is expected of them, keeping in mind that most South African learners receive their teaching and learning in EFAL. If constructive and positive feedback before summative assessment (which should be aligned to high standards) is given, does it make a difference in learners' performance? Are the chances to discover, learn, know, and meet the educational outcomes available? What is happening in the classroom regarding its atmosphere? Is there enough time to deliver quality education?

Thus, the purpose of this study is to improve classroom teaching among teachers by providing guidelines for effective assessment is to produce desired results, starting in the classroom where teaching styles, resources and technology integration take place, so that frequent monitoring of teaching and learning can happen. According to Schreeners and Blömeke (2016), how the teacher educates determines the outcome, which reflects the quality of achievement. FA through grading reflects what is happening in the classroom. As stated by Ozgenel and Mert (2019), teacher performance directly contributes to school effectiveness by achieving its educational objectives.

Unfortunately, assessment is often the first step in finding the problem(s) that cause poor results. To have a successful education system, the academic side of the school needs to be in place and presented well by teachers; good results and pass rates keep a school effective.

Currently the main belief is that schools are effective when learners are motivated and the comprehension of knowledge increases, but this is not always the case according to Silm, Gerli, Tiitsaar, Kai, Pedaste, Margus, Zacharia, Zacharias, Papaevripidou, and Marios (2017). Despite engagement and learner-centered teaching in the classroom motivation and comprehension of knowledge does not always occur. Bruder and Prescott (2013) state that teaching is not always consistent nor is assessment always fair and accurate. In accord with Ramnarain and Hlatswayo (2018), teachers may have a positive attitude towards teaching, but the unavailability of resources, such as technology and teaching materials, large classes and the time to complete the curriculum create stress, which may lead to demotivated teachers and a decreased understanding. Job satisfaction suffers which makes teaching difficult and results in ineffective teacher performance in class.

Assessment therefore may be influenced negatively, because teaching styles and resources such as technological devices are not optimised. According to Romero-Ariza, Quesada, Abril, Sorenson and Oliver (2020), teachers express their frustration with the lack of time, lack of teaching resources and classroom management.

A qualitative approach is appropriate for this study because it focusses on social relations (Bernhard, 2018), thus the interaction between two or more individuals occurring in the classroom. Positive attitudes are beneficial to improve schools. Improvement of the school relies on the education that happens in the classroom, integrating key factors to reach the end destiny, assessment. I am a firm believer that a positive attitude creates a positive outcome. Educational Effectiveness, which is the production of a desired result, reflects in the rating at the end of every term; this indicates whether education has taken place effectively. For this reason, Educational Effectiveness is equal with education inputs, the processes and lastly what outcomes are reached.

Figure 2.1 demonstrates how this theoretical framework (Educational Effectiveness) interacts with assessment which is the destination of an education system and where the key factors are the starting point of the measurement of learner's achievement specifically in Grade 6 EFAL, which determines the effectiveness of education.

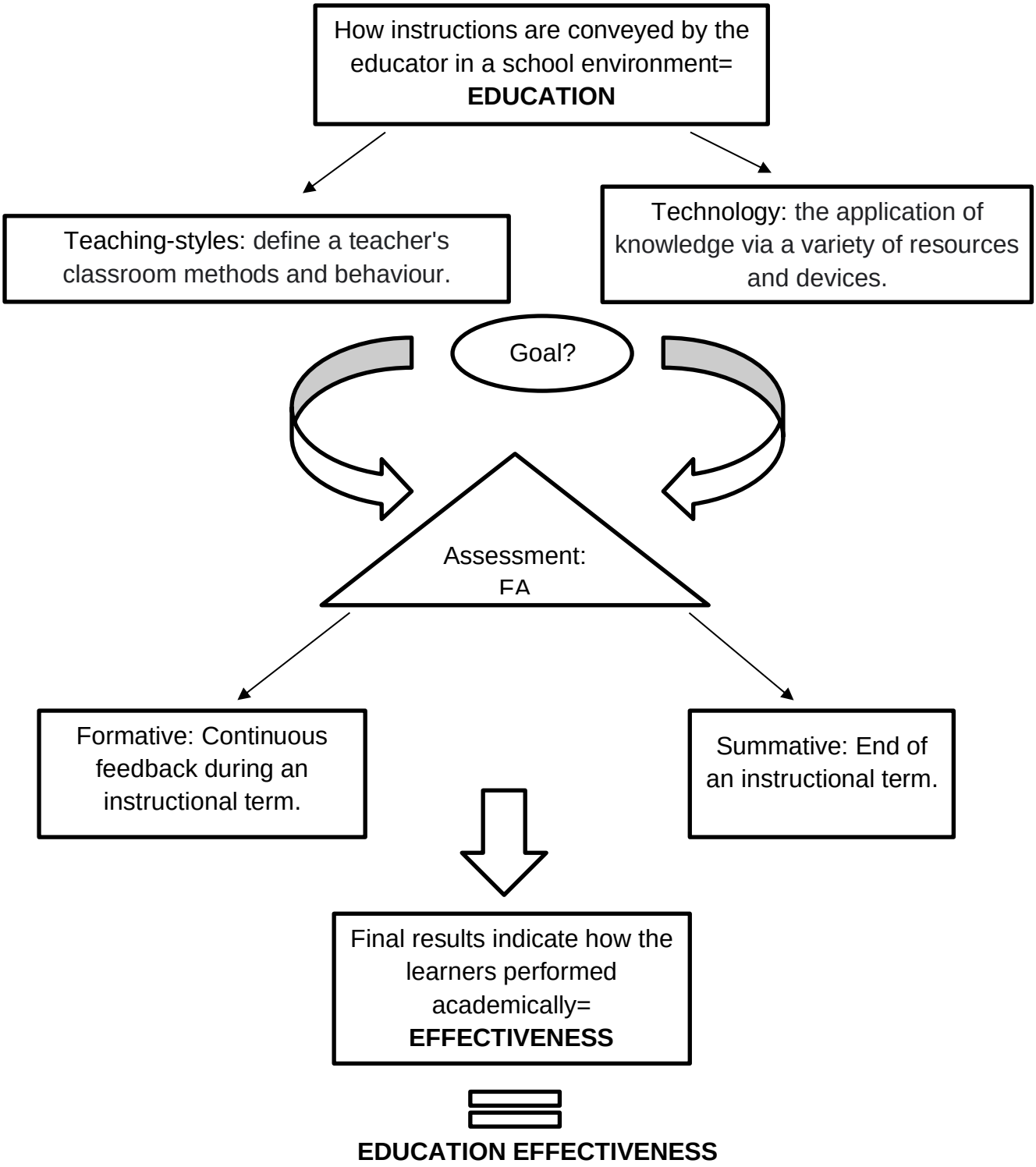

Figure 2.1: A theoretical framework: Educational Effectiveness

In the conceptual framework, the key factors, which are teaching styles and technology, employed by teachers to equip learners with new knowledge to perform during EFAL, are discussed.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK – EVIDENCE THAT IS VALUABLE, ORDERLY AND REALISTIC

A conceptual framework is a structured outline with ideas which guides the researcher to investigate a certain concern, followed by a discovery. First, I as the researcher identified a concept that concerns me (assessment) and connected this topic to literature and how these findings influence my research. The review of the conceptual framework addressed interrelated concepts such as teaching styles, technology, and evaluation.

2.4.1 Teaching styles: Classroom instruction

In compliance with Awla (2014), to comprehend the learners' learning style and preference benefit the teacher and the learner. Learners learn in various ways hence teachers should modify their teaching styles to adapt to diverse learners with different preferences towards learning. How a teacher gives instruction and the way learners receive it should match their learning styles which lead to their academic accomplishment.

In accordance with Cheng, Chan, Li and Yang (2020), didactic teaching is the most common strategy, although new teaching approaches are being employed gradually. Didactic teaching is the focal point when teachers give the lessons and learners listen. We all know that this strategy is not the only way of teaching and on this account; it is our duty as teachers to differentiate between different teaching styles.
Referring to the literature from 2.3, factors such as school, classroom and learner learning (Merki, Emmerich & Holmeier, 2017) determine the effectiveness of education. How instruction is happening (keeping the cognitive levels of Grade 6 learners in mind) in the classroom shapes the learners' outcomes.

Although different learning styles approach learning differently (participatory or independently), according to Balakrishnan and Gan (2016), teachers should keep divergent individuals in the classroom in mind. Vary teaching styles to meet most learners' learning preferences. In New South Wales overall results indicate a need for learner-centered teaching (Strnadova & Cumming, 2014).

2.4.2 Application of knowledge via technology

Technology is part of how learners learn and how teachers convey knowledge in order for their learners to grasp concepts. The application of these key factors by teachers controls the way learners demonstrate what they comprehend, which is a result of how they perform academically. How is technology joined to teaching styles to get the most out of learning by adapting to this generation of learners?

Szymkowiak, Melovick, Dabic, Jeganathan and Kundi (2021) find that technology progress has influenced the way learners acquire knowledge and learn with regard to reaching each learner's maximum potential at the end of each grade. Learners are technologically aware, and the internet is easily available.

The COVID-19 pandemic modified the modes of how learning takes place (Dube, 2020). Teachers are no more the only source of information (Senthamarai, 2018) and therefore teachers should partly break away from the old way of teaching where learners listen and wait for their turn to answer. Online teaching during COVID-19, kept schools operating (König, Jäger-Biela & Glutsch, 2020).

Although a balance between traditional and technological teaching is still necessary, Zargaran, Turki, Bhaskar, Spiers and Zargaran (2020) state that technology reaches a large audience; however traditional teaching remains the learning resource of choice. The many advantages of a technology-enhanced classroom outweigh the limitations because it generates self-sufficient learners (Kozma, 2014). Technology plays part of our daily lives, whether you are a learner or teacher, but traditional teaching still has its place. No learner can go without a teacher who is there to guide the learning process. Technology is therefore an extremely important part of how teachers teach.

2.4.3 Appraise, evaluate and measure outcomes through assessment

The evaluation of learner performance has been a long-lasting concern to teachers, learners and parents (Natriello, 2013) and the pressure is high on learners who need to perform academically. A school's academic achievement and success, as stated by Ozgenel and Mert (2019) in chapter 2, teacher performance directly contributes to school effectiveness by achieving its educational objectives which shapes the effectiveness of a school's education.

FA (a resource tool) touches on learners' strengths and weaknesses by monitoring learners' improvement and giving feedback. Learners' satisfaction levels are related to constructive feedback (Lee, 2014) so that schooling is enhanced by this communication between the teacher and learners. For this reason, FA should be planned to address interests of Grade 6 learners.

Challenges in implementation of FA should be addressed correctly to make sure that learning improves (Gewertz, 2015). FA is primarily a part of an ongoing, instructional process. Burner (2016) maintains that a mutual understanding of FA by the teacher and learner is necessary to make the assessment useful and meaningful.

Figure 2.2 concludes this section by indicating how key factors affect appraisal with the view to determining if these factors influence the success of instruction in primary schools, specifically with regard to the academic performance of Grade 6 learners.

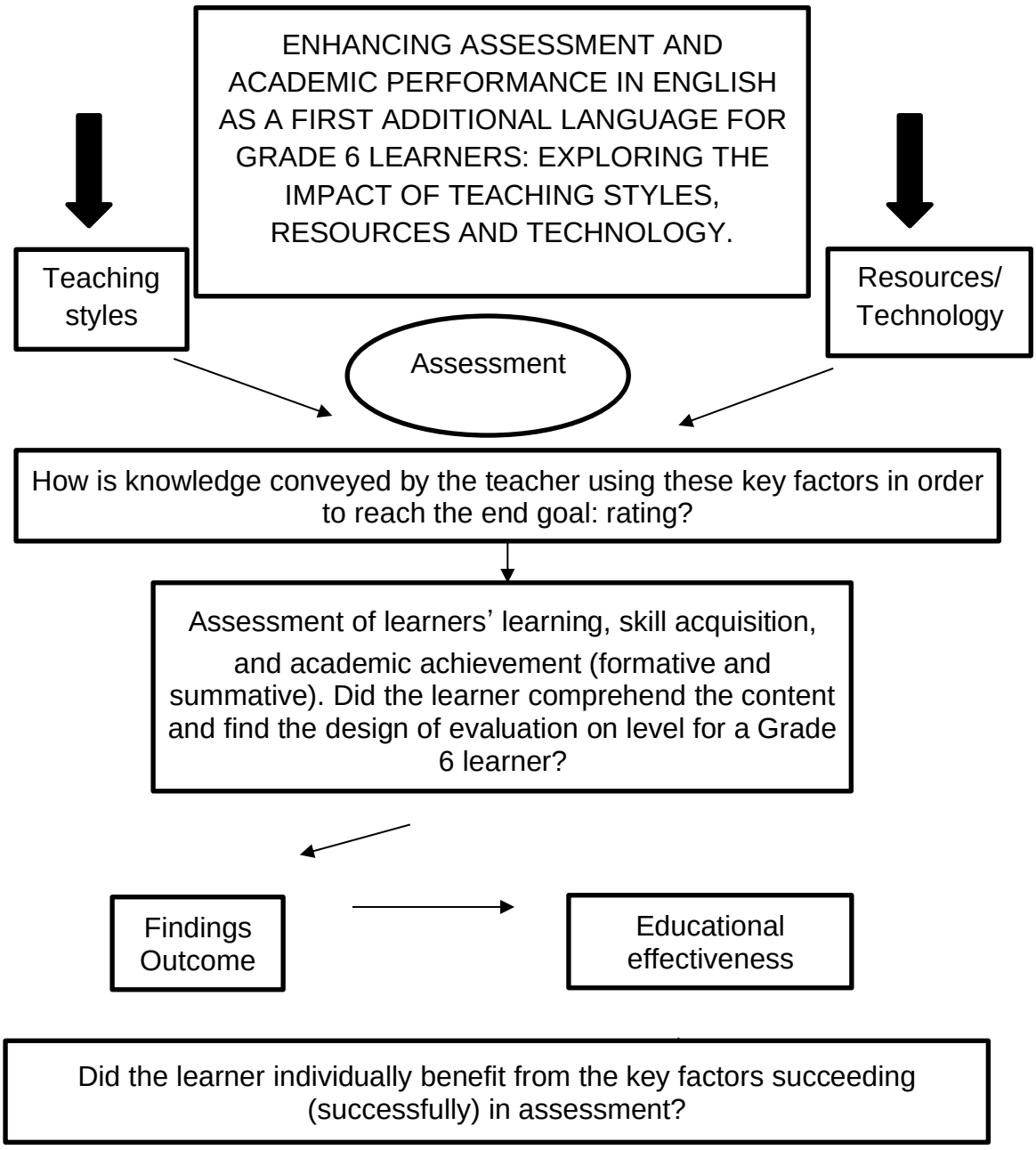

Figure 2.2: A diagram of the contextual, theoretical and conceptual framework of the study

2.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPIRICAL STUDY

This chapter discussed teaching styles and technology and their effect on assessment. The conclusion is that assessment should be effective. Purposeful effectiveness can be determined by the educator after quality teaching has taken place, used the key factors and focusing on assessment.

The main findings from the literature review are:

Quality education is crucial. Research indicates that teaching should follow a learner-centered approach, although didactic teaching is common and a balance between traditional and technological teaching styles are a reality and should be part of any teacher's planning. Fun and social activities where collaborative learning is taking place is key because it creates knowledge and eliminates boredom.

Resources such as technological devices strengthen the way that teachers teach, because technology allows visual and interactive engagement, although problems arise concerning availability and maintenance. The Gen Z generation of learners speak 'technological language' and therefore find resonate with technological devices. For this sake, the next generation of teachers should be trained to teach in the 'language' of these learners. Take note that interactive teaching is fundamental, but so is didactic teaching as well.

FA which takes place during and after the learning process where the educator gives constructive feedback, mainly for the learner to improve his/her attainment, is poorly understood. Therefore, FA should be designed to relate to the learners' interest, criteria and Bloom's Taxonomy. If FA is correctly outlined, learning improves, considering that assessment is an ongoing process and not a once-off activity which affects the effectiveness of education.

Taking all these findings into account, the main gap in this study is that if FA is not understood and applied correctly by the teachers, how can they know what is expected of them and what to teach to assess in the end? FA should be well designed and explained, which leads to educators' understanding of what they need to convey

regarding knowledge. Quality teaching should take place by giving due consideration to the key factors. Similarly, learners should be certain of what is expected of them, so that optimal performance is the outcome; Educational Effectiveness has then reached its ideal.

The end-goal (successful assessment) of what is learnt requires different teaching styles, a supportive environment, availability of resources and a curriculum that is flexible.

Empirical study is a necessity where observation, communication and human interaction take place. Authentic results can be achieved when the researcher applies these methods when teaching and when assessment is done.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study, as discussed in chapter 1, is to investigate how assessment can be enhanced to improve academic performance in EFAL among Grade 6 learners, exploring the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology. Additionally, the study aims to enhance teaching and learning within the classroom by offering effective guidelines for successful implementation of assessment and to identify and evaluate learners' academic performance as an essential component of the education system.

With the recognition that learners have changed over the years, teachers can occupy a unique and advantageous position to thrive or fulfil their specific purposes by meeting the diverse needs, preferences, and learning styles of modern learners. Balakrishnan and Lay (2016) highlight (cf. 2.2.2) that different teaching styles and social media are an important part of how learners learn today. However, Neuhauser (2002) finds that learning activities which include face-to-face instruction and online teaching are equally effective (cf. 2.2.1.3).

This research can help identify which teaching methods work best for Grade 6 EFAL learners, which may lead to evidence-based recommendations for teachers. In the selected school for this study, the LOLT is Afrikaans. However, a significant portion of the learners in Grade 6 EFAL classes receive instruction in English, which serves as their second language. Despite Afrikaans being the primary medium of instruction at the school, the EFAL program accommodates learners who may have a stronger proficiency in English or require additional support in acquiring academic success.

As teaching styles change, as well as resources and technology integration become more widespread, traditional assessment methods may need to evolve as well. This creates an opportunity for researchers to explore and validate alternative assessment techniques, such as project-based assessments and real-time formative assessments facilitated by technology. As noted in sub-section 2.2.3, the subject-related activities

should be fun which leads to a positive attitude towards the subject (Aisah, 2016).

In this chapter I will refer to the techniques used in a research study dealing with academic performance. This includes looking at how data were collected and analysed to achieve the main goal of this study. The systematic process to gather data, analyse information and draw conclusions allude to the overall structure and plan for conducting the study and will be outlined in this chapter. The design determines the type of data that are collected. I used a descriptive design. The interpretivist paradigm was chosen, which accents the individuals' subjective opinions and emotional experiences of reality. A qualitative approach was applied that sought to understand and interpret human experiences, behaviours, beliefs, feelings, and motivations in-depth. For this research study I selected participants purposefully using stratified and convenient sampling and used open-ended questionnaires were completed by teachers over a set timeframe, while focus group interviews with learners were conducted on various days according to a planned schedule. Additionally, observations were made during one teacher's Grade 6 EFAL classes, specifically during FAT administration for data collection that include the teacher and learners. These data underwent thematic analysis to identify specific areas requiring further exploration. After the discussion on data collection, the appropriate analysis techniques to interpret the information will be discussed. At all times during the research, the respect, rights, and well-being of selected participants were kept in mind. A diagrammatical overview of Chapter 3 is presented in Figure 3.1.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Descriptive

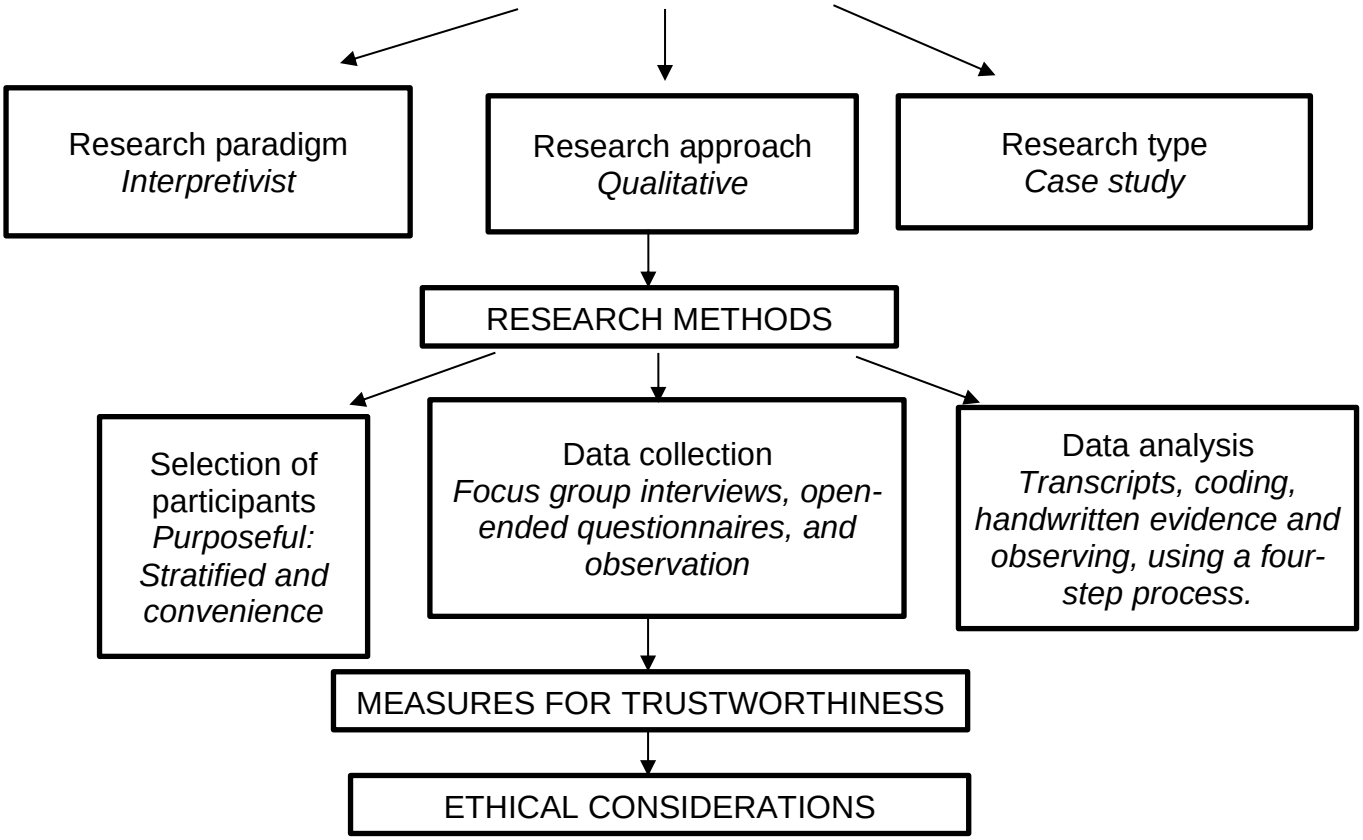

Figure 3.1: A diagrammatical overview of Chapter 3

3.2 RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL INQUIRY

The purpose of this study is to improve classroom teaching among teachers by providing guidelines for effective assessment. For this empirical study to investigate and understand the complex interplay between teaching styles and technology in Grade 6 EFAL classes, with a focus on their collective influence on assessment outcomes and academic performance that has an impact on a school's effectiveness. This study was informed by the theoretical framework of Education Effectiveness (cf. 2.3) to examine how these factors influence assessment, which leads to how learners perform on an academic level.

The primary research question revolved around understanding the effects of teaching styles and technology on assessment outcomes. In line with an interpretivist approach, the theoretical framework of Education Effectiveness considers the learners' reactions

during assessments. I aimed to address the problem of assessment and academic performance in Grade 6 learners in a comprehensive manner.

Empirical evidence from learners' opinions (via focus group interviews), what teachers experienced (via open-ended questionnaires) and classroom observation carried out during assessment confirmed if these factors made a difference to academic performance.

These strategies of data collection shed light on how assessment in Grade 6 EFAL is carried out in order to reach the goal of enhancing academic performance by finding the preferred teaching styles and technology and their optimal operation.

This research involved an in-depth investigation conducted within a selected school in Gauteng to observe how Grade 6 learners comprehend the content taught in EFAL. Aixia, Ying and Wijaya (2020) emphasize the significance of learners' learning quality as an essential aspect of evaluating teaching, highlighting the need for an encouraging learning environment. It is acknowledged that the traditional 'one teaching style fits all' approach, which is teacher-centered, is no longer effective for an increasingly diverse learner population. Contemporary learning theories propose a different role for teachers, wherein they act as facilitators who plan, guide, and manage the classroom to achieve specific learning objectives (Smart, Witt & Scott, 2012).

In line with the findings of Schreeners and Blömeke (2016), the quality of educational outcomes is heavily influenced by the teaching methods employed by educators. Consequently, the final assessment grades serve as a reflection of the dynamics within the classroom where these lessons take place. Even though learners approach learning differently, with some favoring participatory methods while others prefer independent learning, Balakrishnan and Lay (2016) argue that teachers should be mindful of the diverse individuals present in their classrooms. To cater to a wide range of learning preferences, it is crucial for teachers to vary their teaching styles. While acknowledging the challenges associated with FA, it is important to address challenges effectively to facilitate improved learning outcomes (Gewertz, 2015).

I grasp the importance of varying different teaching styles because learners differ in

the way they receive, comprehend, and carry out content.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design serves as a crucial framework for guiding the various aspects of a study (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). It provides essential guidance on practical considerations, aids in exploring research questions, and outlines how researchers interact with the contextual environment to collect and analyses data in the field.

A descriptive design focuses on gathering data that describes the current situation, behaviors, or characteristics of a particular population or situation which offers practical applications. Therefore, real-life situations are a crucial aspect in order to seek answers. Multiple methods such as interviews, questionnaires and observations are synonymous with a descriptive design. In this study data were collected under natural conditions and discovered evidence suggesting that learners demonstrated greater pro-social behavior within the natural environment of their school, under the guidance of their teachers in their classroom. As per by Dopko, Capaldi and Zelenski (2019) the usage of focus group interviews where learners felt comfortable, questionnaires completed by teachers anonymously and observations in an environment that is familiar to learners, constituted an authentic setting.

Assessment is an existing element of education. Touchette et al. (2021) recommend that a descriptive design should be monitored at least three times a week to provide an on-going process. For this reason, I used a descriptive design to track Grade 6 EFAL learners on a regular, weekly basis as recommended by Touchette et al. (2021).

I chose the descriptive design, because it is useful to find accurate answers of what is being seen and experienced. The main purpose is describing, explaining, and justifying the outcome of the study based on factual and noticeable proof.

The subsequent sub-sections discuss the research paradigm, research approach, and research type, providing a comprehensive exploration of these fundamental aspects of the study.

3.3.1 Interpretivist research paradigm

The term paradigm refers to the researchers' worldview, as noted by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017). It represents the perspective or framework from which research is conducted to seek solutions to potential problems.

Onthology, according to Jacquette (2014), refers to what exists and what it means for something or someone to exist. Therefore, the understanding about the nature of reality is seen in the situation where Grade 6 learners find themselves, referring to a school environment, where they function on a regular basis and where they are exposed to teachers with certain teaching styles. This setting is particularly well-suited for the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasizes personal opinions and experiences of reality. In chapter 1, sub-section 1.7.1.1., Potrack et al. (2014) state that the interpretive paradigm posits that people's experiences and perspectives are important. Researchers using this paradigm focus on individuals' unique viewpoints and feelings. They may also need to handle the emotions of the people they study.

The presence of Grade 6 learners in the classroom influences their measurement of achievement. Reality is thus natural. It acknowledges that individuals and groups create their own meanings and interpretations of the world based on their experiences, values, and opinions, especially touching on teaching styles and technology.

In this study, data were collected via a qualitative approach which emphasizes the fact that participants react to how they experience teaching styles and technology during assessment time. Therefore, the interpretivist paradigm aims to understand the realities that humans experience. According to Potrack et al. (2014), what people go through and how they see things matter. Educational Effectiveness will thus be achieved where learners produce desired outcomes in terms of learning, because I as a researcher and teacher grasp what learners need in the school environment regarding assessment.

3.3.2 Research approach

In the context of assessment, a qualitative approach is particularly valuable as it enables the personal exploration of the cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of the assessment process based on teachers and learners' opinions on preferences for teaching styles and technology declared by the primary role-players (teachers and learners) who form part of the assessment process. The ways to support teachers as they transition into non-traditional teaching must be developed, according to Keiler (2018). Rich insights into the thoughts, perceptions, and experiences of teachers and learners during the assessment process were uncovered and a platform was provided for participants to share their unique perspectives and experiences, including the difficulties teachers face as their roles and identities shift (Keiler, 2018). The study shed light on the thoughts, experiences, and challenges faced by both teachers and learners, ultimately contributing to the improvement and effectiveness of assessment practices in this educational context with a view to educational effectiveness.

Through qualitative methods such as focus group interviews, questionnaires and observations, the researcher can gather in-depth data that goes beyond mere numerical data or statistical analysis. Skovdal and Cornish (2015) agree that these detailed data collection methods, such as participatory learning and action, focus group discussions and observations, build the skills and confidence of development practitioners to use qualitative methods authoritatively, and to communicate findings to different audiences. In this study this approach encouraged the participants to express their thoughts, beliefs, and experiences related to assessment in EFAL, as well as effect of different teaching styles and technology on academic performance.

An interpretivist focus uncovers how individuals make sense of their experiences, beliefs and actions; by capturing their subjective viewpoints and researchers can gain insights why teachers and learners feel the way that they do. The active involvement of participants (teachers completing questionnaires, selected Grade 6 learners taking part in focus group interviews and my personal observations) value voices and empower participants to share their experiences and perspectives concerning teaching styles, technology, and the influence these have on academic performance.

For this study, I opted for a qualitative approach. By choosing a qualitative approach the focus was on exploring the thoughts, perspectives and experiences of both

teachers and learners during the assessment process, pointing out teaching styles and technology.

3.3.3 Research type

The formation of concepts (organizing and classifying information to facilitate understanding) is a continuous part of teaching (Bulmer, 2017). I as a teacher have observed a growing trend of available resources like observations, focus groups, and textual materials, such as online content and textbooks, to capture the truths that shape our understanding of reality and knowledge that we receive. Success depends on how we use the new media (internet) to communicate successfully to the audience (i.e., teachers conveying information to learners) (Kardes, Cronley & Cline, 2014). Therefore, case study research is the most widely used qualitative research method in information systems research and is well suited to understanding the interactions between technology and how they are applied in different institutions. Teachers' familiarity, use, and comfort with technology plays an important role in teaching (McKnight, O'Malley, Ruzic, Horsley, Franey & Bassett, 2016).

Although case study research is useful, challenges due to practical difficulties may arise, such as access to sensitive information and it may be time consuming.

By focusing on real-life tasks and interactions, researchers can uncover the meanings that shape the happening that will be studied; in this case key factors were studied influencing assessment and academic performance in EFAL Grade 6 contributing to a deeper understanding of reality within the interpretivist paradigm. Evans (2019) emphasizes that providing detailed descriptions in case studies enhances readers' understanding of the study's intricacies and depth. The case in this study was a primary school in Gauteng where the focus is on the EFAL Grade 6 learners and teachers. Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan and Hoagwood (2013) describe this as purposeful selection, where the center of attention is on identifying information-rich cases relevant to the study’s interests. This is where I am involved and where a contribution to this specific school can be made as well as to other schools.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODS

In line with Larrinaga (2017), a research method includes the key aspects which are involved in designing the research, such as gathering evidence and analysis of the collected data.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, the influence of teaching styles, resources and technology on a Grade 6 learner's performance during assessments has become a subject of intense research as teachers and schools strive to create effective learning environments. This investigation delves into the research process, examining the multifaceted factors that influence a learner's academic achievement. By analysing various teaching methodologies, integrating innovative technological resources, and exploring the tools used to assess end-results, we can gain valuable insights into how to optimise the learning experience for Grade 6 learners and foster their academic success.

3.4.1 Selection of participants

Choosing participants is crucial because it ensures that a wide range of opinions from the general public is represented, which directly influences how the events are planned and their final results (Mao & Andria, 2013). To select these participants purposefully will ensure a broad viewpoint of how teachers and learners experience assessment and how content is transferred. The findings can be applied practically in schools to achieve the best interests of the teacher and learner. This creates an environment of openness and approachability, which helps to focus on understanding personal experiences and individual perspectives.

The participants were identified and selected using the following comprehensive approach:

Grade 6 learners (stratified sampling) were sampled, which included sub-groups where the Grade 6 learners were divided into five groups based on their academic performance. Jing, Tian and Huang (2015) define stratified sampling as a cluster that features data in a few feature groups called feature strata. Participants were selected from each group, ensuring a representation of different academic levels.

Stratton (2021) says that where the participants are selected by the researcher, convenience or non-probability sampling is applied. Based on their varied teaching styles and approaches I chose the Grade 6 teachers (convenience sampling) who have been teaching Grade 6 learners and were willing to participate. I approached Grade 6 teachers from different classrooms to ensure a mix of teaching styles in the study.

The choice of this sample is grounded in the study's focus on assessing the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology on learners' academic performance. By selecting Grade 6 learners who experience different teaching methods and Grade 6 teachers who employ diverse teaching styles, the study aims to comprehensively examine the influence of these factors on assessment outcomes. Stratified sampling ensures that learners with varying academic performances are represented, contributing to a holistic understanding of the issue. The inclusion of Grade 6 teachers with different teaching styles allowed for a nuanced exploration of the relationships between instructional methods and learners' academic achievements. Overall, this sample choice aligns with the study's objectives and provides a foundation for insightful analysis and meaningful conclusions. To select participants, purposeful selection was employed, as it is a commonly used method in research. The identification and selection of information-rich cases are referred to purposeful sampling (Palinkas et al., 2013). The study involved 30 Grade 6 learners who were selected according to their academic performance (ten whose performance was excellent; ten whose performance was average; and ten whose performance was poor) and six Grade 6 teachers as participants.

In this research, the focus is on Grade 6 learners and how teaching styles and technology influence their academic performance. This will help me understand how

learners experience different teaching styles and how it influences their academic performance.

3.4.2 Data collection

To gather data, I conducted five focus group interviews, each consisting of six learners. In addition, I gathered data by means of open-ended questionnaires distributed to the six Grade 6 teachers, which covered their teaching styles, assessment methods, and the reasons behind their instructional approaches. I carried out observation during assessments. This multiple approach to data gathering provided valuable insights into how teaching styles and technology affect the learners' academic achievement. Data were thus identified by using different data collection techniques: focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observation notes.

I focused on obtaining data through open-ended and conversational communication. Using this type of method, the researcher tries to understand the participant’s feelings and motivations. This comprehension helped me arrive at conclusions.

3.4.2.1 Focus group Interviews

Based on Krueger and Casey (2015), focus groups are a great way to gather information for evaluation. I oversaw the focus group interview and led the discussion, with the help of the focus group participants. Focus group interviews facilitate group discussions where participants can share their perspectives and engage in interactive conversations.

Focus group interviews were done with five focus groups, consisting of six learners per group. Focus group interviews were conducted with Grade 6 learners to delve into their experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding teaching styles, resources, technology integration, and assessment. Discussion points, as well as questions were used (Appendices C and D). This way a conversation took place in which I asked

questions and the participants answered. These focus group interviews were audio recorded and lasted at least 40 minutes. Audio recording ensured accurate capturing of participants' responses.

Conducting focus group interviews with Grade 6 learners offer a special way to see how they think, see things, and interact. These interviews revealed raw opinions and viewpoints.

Firstly, setting up discussion points (keeping extra-mural activities in mind) was challenging (Appendix C) and getting permission from parents was important; I also considered where I would hold the session, how the participants should sit and even the start which can make a big difference to how comfortable and willing everyone is to join in.

I decided to do the focus group interviews in my classroom where learners feel safe, starting with a welcoming message to put each one at ease where they sat in a circle, feeling part of the conversation. This definitely worked because they did not experience the discussion as a lesson, and I gave all of the participants a chocolate to show my appreciation.

I compiled questions (Appendix D (I) and revised them more than once so that they fit the age and were open-ended to make the discussions meaningful. Grade 6 learners were gathered in groups, and they shared ideas and discussions, uncovering deeper insights. I became aware of how these young individuals talk, argue, and agree. I found in two of the five focus group interviews, strong willed and extrovert individuals' voices overshadowed the introvert participants; thus, some participants dominated the conversation while others remained silent. I addressed this difficulty to ensure that all participants' voices were heard.

I also made sure that the participants in the group were not similar, for the reason to find different viewpoints. By putting the spotlight on 'dissimilar', I chose per group two strong academic learners, two averages and two who struggle in terms of learning.

Grade 6 learners are under peer pressure, which I thought might cause them to provide answers they perceive as socially acceptable. I experienced genuine, open opinions where the participants really told how they experience assessment, different teaching styles and their perception regarding technology as a tool in class.

3.4.2.2 Open-ended questionnaires

Oudejans (2010) point out that giving feedback to participants can encourage them to answer open-ended questions more willingly and provide better and complete answers. For this purpose, I motivated the selected Grade 6 teachers to respond openly and freely to improve quality of the data. Positive guidance encourages the selected participants to share their thoughts and provide more detailed and accurate answers to the open-ended questions asked.

The questionnaires were handed out to six Grade 6 teachers. Participants were asked to respond to open-ended questions, providing valuable qualitative insights into their teaching processes. The questionnaires were completed by the participants and collected for analysis. The purpose of these questionnaires was to gather as much information from the participants as possible with reference to how the key factors are administered and how these factors regulate the assessment of learners when they must perform academically. The open-ended questionnaire (Appendix E) is comprised of 11 sections, namely Introduction, Teaching Style, Use of Technology, Training and Support in Technology, Effectiveness of Formal Assessments, Necessary Resources and Tools for Teaching Improvement, Incorporating Interactive Activities or Discussions, Types of Formal Assessments Used, Challenges in Conducting Assessments, influence of Teaching Styles and Technology on Academic Performance and Additional Comments.

Open-ended questionnaires (the freedom to elaborate in their own words) allowed teachers to express their viewpoints in depth (Appendix E (I)), which allowed me to see what Grade 6 teachers think and experience regarding the key factors that influence assessment. They shared their thoughts in detail, showing me anonymously how they teach but also what they personally think and want. While open-ended questions offer rich information, the open format led to varied response in length. Some participants provided detailed responses, while others offered brief insights.

Open-ended questions on assessment, specifically referring to different teaching styles of teachers and how/ if they involve technology were the focus point. The main

aim of these types of interviews is for the participants to elaborate on what they feel and experience and how these factors affect their assessment.

Engaging Grade 6 teachers in the questionnaire process can be challenging because of their busy schedules and potential reluctance to participate. However, all teachers agreed to complete the questionnaire, and no-one felt that this task was an extra burden that interfered with their teaching responsibilities.

When planning self-developed open-ended questionnaires, preparation is a necessity. Clear communication regarding the purpose is a necessity. Tailoring the questions to be concise, focused, and aligned with the research objectives ensures valuable responses. I gave the selected teachers enough response time to maximize their responses. One of the six selected teachers was a bit slow, and I encouraged this teacher more than once to complete the questionnaire.

Using a mix of question types encourages well-rounded insights and offering anonymity encourages honest sharing which worked well. Unfortunately, two of the teachers requested me to simplify some questions which they found unclear.

3.4.2.3 Lesson observations

I as the observer gathered data by participating in the daily life of the group (i.e., the Grade 6 class), as defined by Becker (2017). Classroom observations involved my presence during an assessment task in the Grade 6 classrooms. This direct observation approach allows for real-time insight into the dynamics among teaching styles, resources and technology usage, and learners' engagement and performance during assessments. Observations were carefully documented to capture observable behaviors, interactions, and patterns in the classroom environment (Creswell, 2014).

Observations were carried out during my off periods (six periods per week from 31 July to 8 September 2023, which included 28 lesson observations). Observation’s main advantage is its directness. By monitoring the participants, collection of data at

the time occurs. The observer does not have to ask people about their behavior and reports from others. The observer can simply watch as individuals act and speak. As two teachers, I solely observed my colleague during the research process, ensuring that data collection did not involve my own classes. This approach was adopted to mitigate ethical concerns and maintain the integrity of the study. Sinclair et al. (2014) found that comparing the observed results among similar groups produced accurate data. This enabled me to see if the information gathered was similar, which it was.

This viewing provides the opportunity to monitor or assess a process or situation and document evidence of what is seen and heard. Seeing actions and behaviors within a natural context, or as they usually occur provides insights and understanding of the event, activity or situation being evaluated. These learners were viewed during formative and summative assessment. I observed if there was ongoing feedback given to reduce learners' mistakes and I also observed summative assessment where evaluation of learners' learning, skill acquisition, and academic achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period (typically at the end of a project) was given. An observation sheet was used (Appendix F).

During a Research Project that the Grade 6's had to do during Term 3, I did lesson observations (Appendix F (I) and I decided to use my notepad for the reason to take down notes. The plan was to shadow an experienced and knowledgeable teacher who has spent a significant amount of time teaching and has accumulated a wealth of practical knowledge, skills, and insights in his field.

Watching how the teacher engaged with his learners in thoughtful discussions about their Research Project that focused on the topic of homework provided a rich understanding of how assessments could be used to help learners learn and improve, focusing on relevant information that interests learners, such as homework (a perfect debatable topic), precisely alluding to the title of my research study: enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners.

Unfortunately, one significant obstacle was the lack of time for in-depth discussions. This was caused by periods which are only 40 minutes and extra-mural activities where learners were called out early to attend activities that are representing the school. These take time out of the teacher's planning; the need for direct instruction and the learner who needs to catch up in time for marks to be finalized create challenges. This highlighted the delicate balance teachers must strike between assessment, instructional time and keeping school activities in mind. I once again realized how teachers need to carefully balance checking learners' learning, teaching, and outside-of-class activities: multi-tasking is the best albeit challenging way.

3.4.3 Data analysis

To begin, I used the collected data to answer the research questions, something toward which effort was directed. The aim of this study was to investigate and understand the complex interplay between teaching styles and technology in Grade 6 EFAL classes, with a focus on their collective influence on assessment outcomes and academic performance.

The research involved a descriptive analysis conducted through a four-step analytical process that dealt with data gathered in real time (Kuzuno & Karam, 2017). Focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observations were all based on reality as explained in sub-section 3.4.2. The questions in the focus group interviews and questionnaires were to the point and context-specific to encourage participants to share their opinions and experiences (Züll, 2016), especially regarding their behavior during assessments.

Data analysis was used to make purposeful discoveries, suggest conclusions, support decision-making, and process raw data with the view to making informed decisions. Gelderblom, Schildkamp, Pieters and Ehren (2016) maintain that data-based decision-making means using information (classroom observation) to make choices in education.

The researcher collects data, examines, and understands the data. Data are used to change how teachers teach and to ascertain the degree of improvements to check if

learners are learning more effectively.

The data were organized and grouped based on shared characteristics, repeated occurrences, dominant trends, and reliable indicators to explore how teaching styles and technology influence assessment outcomes for Grade 6 learners in EFAL.

3.4.3.1 Analysis of focus group interviews

Focus group interviews are popular to gather the public's opinions (Then, Rankin & Ali, 2014). Focus group interviews provide in-depth and detailed information as participants can express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in their own words. In this case the focus was on assessment and how teaching styles and technology usage influence it.

An inductive thematic analysis was conducted to analyse and interpret the transcribed data systematically from the focus groups. Castleberry and Nolan (2018) mention that the term thematic analysis is used in research studies labeled as qualitative research. This review of the methodology explains how to carry out a thorough process on qualitative data to draw interpretations from the data. I commenced by transcribing the participants' responses to the semi-structured interviews by reading the notes that I took during the interviews. The notes were read several times to describe the pattern of the participants' views. The responses of the participants that were audio taped were transcribed verbatim. The notes taken during the interviews as well as the audio taped responses were compared in order not to misinterpret or misquote the participants' responses or views. How content is both heard and perceived by the transcriptionist and the form and accuracy of its transcription play a key role in determining what data are analyzed and with what degree of dependability (Stuckey, 2014). Immediately, I therefore started coding the interviews once they were transcribed and reviewed. This involved breaking down or reducing the raw data into smaller segments to that which were important and relevant to the research topic. Thematic coding is thus like sorting and grouping similar ideas in a focus group interview. It helped me, the researcher, to find the main topics participants talked about and to discover important details to better understand what the participants thought

and felt. In line with Vaughn and Turner (2016), a systematic process to organize and highlight meaning is synonymous with thematic coding.

3.4.3.2 Analysis of open-ended questionnaire

Open-ended questionnaires are a commonly used data collection method and are a crucial part of the research (Boparai, Singh & Kathuria, 2018). Data from a questionnaire should be able to address the objectives of the study else it may lead to wrong interpretation. It is important to ensure that the data collected remains relevant and useful for the research to establish the most correct findings.

3.4.3.3 Analysis of lesson observations

Sandiford (2015) states that observations are aimed at understanding the data and the things they observed by looking at what participants say and do. Consequently, participants build on each other's ideas, and this is seen and heard to produce authentic information. Overt observation means subjects are aware that they are being observed. Linneberg and Korsgaard (2019) define descriptive coding in the form of a hands-on review, which refers to a method of analyzing and organizing data through direct engagement and active involvement with the information. Descriptive coding was executed in this study; this involved noticing specific behaviors, interactions, or activities observed during the class, while jotting down notes and filling in the observation schedule.

3.5 MEASURES FOR TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, the objective of trustworthiness is to demonstrate that the findings are reliable (credible), applicable to other contexts (transferable), consistent (dependable), and verifiable (confirmable).

3.5.1 Credibility

According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), credibility in qualitative research means how much the researcher trusts the accuracy of the findings. To ensure credibility, open-

ended questionnaires were used, allowing participants to express their views freely on the key factors that may influence assessment. During the focus group interviews, the main goal was for learners to share their opinions and experiences while I listened carefully. Focus group and observations were recorded, and throughout the process, I remained unbiased and objective. To enhance credibility, member checking is employed as a qualitative technique (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This involves sharing preliminary findings with participants to validate and corroborate the accuracy of the data (Polit & Beck, 2017). The aim was to gather reliable and believable data for the study.

3.5.2 Transferability

As per Terrel (2016), transferability in research means showing that the study's findings can be applied to different situations or settings. The findings obtained from the focus group interviews, questionnaires and observations were used to draw conclusions. These conclusions are transferable, meaning that the findings can be useful and relevant to other areas of study if required. In essence, the results can be applied beyond the current research context in similar research settings.

3.5.3 Dependability

The data collected were reliable and trustworthy. The findings may vary, either being similar or significantly different from each other, but as the researcher, I remained objective and neutral throughout to reach an unbiased and reliable conclusion.

3.5.4 Confirmability

According to Tobin and Begley (2004), confirmability means ensuring that the data and interpretations of the findings are not influenced by the researcher's imagination but are derived directly from the data collected. In this study, to achieve confirmability, I maintained objectivity and the findings obtained were considered final. Furthermore, every participant's identity was kept anonymous, and their information treated confidentially.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To conduct a research study in a school, I informed the school's principal, the participants' parents as well as the participants in writing and obtained permission. The purpose of ethical clearance that refers to a confidentiality agreement (Appendix E) is to protect the rights, welfare, and well-being of research participants, as well as the integrity and credibility of the research itself (Appendix I). The ethical review process assesses the potential risks and benefits of the research. This study did not foresee any harm or risks to participants.

Ethical clearance is not a one-time event. Throughout the research process, I maintained ethical oversight and promptly reported any changes or adverse events. Throughout the study, I strictly adhered to UNISA's ethical guidelines, ensuring all documentation and procedures were followed accordingly. One example of these ethical considerations is obtaining consent from participants through consent- and assent forms (Appendices F and G).

In summary, ethical clearance plays a pivotal role in protecting human participants and upholding the integrity of research studies. It ensures that research is conducted in an ethical and responsible manner, respecting the rights and welfare of those involved while adhering to established ethical guidelines and regulations. Ethical clearance was granted by UNISA, ref 2023/08/10/14800098/15/AM (Appendix A).

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This research study aimed to investigate and understand the complex interplay between teaching styles and technology in Grade 6 EFAL classes, with a focus on their collective influence on assessment. This chapter addressed the research methodology. Elaborations pertaining to qualitative research methods, including focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observations, were made. The selected participants were 30 Grade 6 learners and six Grade 6 teachers from a specific primary school in Gauteng.

Details about the research design include an explanation of the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasizes understanding the realities and experiences of participants. A qualitative approach was used to capture subjective experiences, perceptions, and thoughts related to assessment, teaching styles, and technology. The data analysis involved coding and categorizing to identify patterns and draw conclusions.

Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings. Ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent from participants and adhering to ethical principles, were also addressed.

In Chapter 4 the research findings of the empirical investigation are reported and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the study's objectives (chapter 1) and the subsequent procedures outlined in the methodology (chapter 3), this chapter introduces the investigation and comprehensive side of teaching styles, resources, and technology in Grade 6 EFAL classes, with a focus on their collective influence on assessment outcomes and academic performance. Within this section, I analyse and discuss the research findings obtained from focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires and observing classes during assessment. This analysis is based on the study's goals and the principles outlined in the methodology.

The analysis and interpretation were guided by the subsequent research questions as stated in chapter 1, sub-section 1.5.1.

These key-factors influence led to the findings which give an indication on how content in the EFAL Grade 6 class is transferred and what can be transformed for the good to achieve optimal findings. Chapters 1, sub-section 1.3. highlight the important role that a teacher plays in the classroom; the behavior of a teacher is considered as the starting point of teaching which results in academic performance. For this to be possible, I as the researcher would like to propose realistic guidelines for teachers regarding teaching enhancement.

4.2. RESEARCH PROCESS

In the world of research, the fieldwork of human experiences, thoughts, and actions are marked as qualitative research. As mentioned in Chapter 3, sub-section 3.4.3, the encouragement of participants to share their opinions and experiences is key (Züll, 2016). Therefore, qualitative research delves into the richness of stories, viewpoints, and how people interact. I have used three tools of data gathering: focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observations.

The research process is a systematic and organized approach to gathering, analyzing, and interpreting information to answer specific questions to generate knowledge and make informed decisions. In this study the investigation examined the comprehensive influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology in Grade 6 EFAL classes at a selected primary school to enhance the academic performance of these learners.

4.3. DATA ANALYSIS

This research study's goal was to explore the influence of teaching styles, resources and technology on enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners. The analysis and reporting were guided by the research inquiries provided below as stated in chapter 1, sub-section 1.5.2.

How do different teaching styles employed by teachers in Grade 6 EFAL classes affect learners' engagement, comprehension, and overall performance in assessments?

To what extent does the integration of resources improve teachers' way of teaching in order to reach the foremost potential of every learner?

How can the integration of technology in FAT be optimized to streamline the assessment process for teachers?

Qualitative findings to set up teaching style(s) and resources that bring out the best in teaching when it comes to learners' performance, are related to chapter 1, sub-section 1.6.2 to link to the framework of Educational Effectiveness (chapter 1, sub-section 1.7.2.3 and chapter 2, section 2.3).

Hence, when academic performance mirrors successful outcomes, the identified key factors are implemented correctly and according to how this generation of learners comprehends academic content. Cilliers (2017) highlights in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.3 that teachers who instruct the current generation of learners, (often referred to as "Gen-Z"), are fluent in the language of technology. By referring to chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.4.3 Szymkowiak, Melovick, Dabic, Jeganathan and Kundi (2021) agree that technology progress has influenced the way learners acquire knowledge and

learn, therefore shows that attention to technology is a necessity to train the next generation of language teachers and they should be aware of how this generation of learners thinks and learns and keeps up to date with it. Thus, this shows a definite gap between traditional teacher-centered approaches and modern, interactive methods favored by Gen-Z learners.

Therefore, the implications of this study extend beyond the current context, offering valuable insights to inform educational practices and enhance the learning experience of Grade 6 learners in similar language learning settings.

The analytic process presented employed the example of qualitative data transcribed into narrative data to develop basic themes (Akinyode & Khan, 2018). This statement means that I as the researcher used ‘stories' from people's experiences (qualitative data) to find important ideas (basic themes). These themes (which will be elaborated on in this chapter at sub-section 4.3.2) are:

1. Exploring different approaches to instruction
2. Technological educational resources for enhanced understanding
3. FAT: evaluation in language learning

The participants (Grade 6 learners) expressed how they felt regarding assessment via focus group interviews (Appendix C and D (I) for discussion points and questions), while selected Grade 6 teachers wrote down these stories via open-ended questionnaires (Appendix E (I)) in a way that helped me as the researcher to understand and learn from them. Observations (Appendix F (I)) during assessment gave me a better understanding of how these learners operate and comprehend content in the EFAL classroom. The aim of analyzing the information in this research, using a descriptive design was to understand and explain what the data meant via these research methods. According to Thuillier, Valentin, Marchal and Dacremont (2015), a descriptive method allows participants to express their opinions freely.

I acquainted myself with a descriptive analysis, which was conducted through an analytical process.

1. I first encouraged the selected participants to share their opinions and experiences regarding teaching styles, mixed resources and technology integration, and behavior during assessments. Detailed perspectives and valuable insights into participants' viewpoints were provided, using the encouragement strategy.
2. I gathered data from participants through focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observations.
3. The organization of data based on shared characteristics, repeated occurrences, dominant trends, and reliable indicators was done, referring to the three themes:
   (i) Exploring different approaches to instruction,
   (ii) Leveraging educational resources for enhanced understanding,
   (iii) FAT: Navigating evaluation in language learning.
4. The processing of raw data to extract relevant information for decision-making was done. Analysis outcomes were used to make informed decisions on improving teaching approaches and enhancing learners' performance.
5. I then discover patterns and relationships in the data. The evaluation of educational effectiveness was therefore outlined and where improvement can be made to enhance academic performance.
6. Conclusions were drawn and actionable guidelines suggested. Strategies to effectively align teaching styles, resources, and technology with learners' preferences for better academic outcomes were identified. Again, I became aware that a teacher's behaviour and instructional resources play a critical role in learners' academic performance.

4.3.1 Gathering qualitative data: Methods and techniques

4.3.1.1 Biographical data of participants

(i) Focus group interviews data

Table 4.1. presents the participants' (30 Grade 6 learners) biographical details. These participants were purposefully selected as brought up in chapter 3, sub-section 3.4.1.

Table 4.1: Participants' (Grade 6 learners) biographical details

Interview Group	Participant	Age	Gender	Grade	Language	Academic levels
Interview 1	**Learner 1**	**12**	**MALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Excellent**
	Learner 2	**12**	**FEMALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Poor**
	Learner 3	**12**	**MALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Average**
	Learner 4	**11**	**MALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Excellent**
	Learner 5	**12**	**FEMALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Poor**
	Learner 6	**12**	**FEMALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Average**
Interview 2	**Learner 1**	**12**	**FEMALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Excellent**
	Learner 2	**11**	**MALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Poor**
	Learner 3	**12**	**MALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Average**
	Learner 4	**12**	**MALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Excellent**
	Learner 5	**12**	**MALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Poor**
	Learner 6	**12**	**FEMALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Average**
Interview 3	**Learner 1**	**13**	**MALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Excellent**
	Learner 2	**12**	**FEMALE**	**6**	**English FAL**	**Poor**

Interview Group	Participant	Age	Gender	Grade	Language	Academic levels
	Learner 3	12	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Average
	Learner 4	12	MALE	6	English FAL	Excellent
	Learner 5	11	MALE	6	English FAL	Poor
	Learner 6	12	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Average
Interview 4	Learner 1	12	MALE	6	English FAL	Excellent
	Learner 2	12	MALE	6	English FAL	Poor
	Learner 3	12	MALE	6	English FAL	Average
	Learner 4	12	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Excellent
	Learner 5	12	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Poor
	Learner 6	12	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Average
Interview 5	Learner 1	12	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Excellent
	Learner 2	12	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Poor
	Learner 3	12	MALE	6	English FAL	Average
	Learner 4	11	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Excellent
	Learner 5	11	FEMALE	6	English FAL	Poor
	Learner 6	12	MALE	6	English FAL	Average

These participants (Grade 6 learners) were selected according to their marks (two good, two average and two weak). Education is a complex process that goes beyond academic performance alone. This holistic view helped me to understand the overall educational experience better.

Conducting focus group interviews with learners from various performance levels can give a complete view of education. Including participants with different academic performance levels ensures that a range of perspectives and experiences is represented in the study. This diversity helped me gain a more comprehensive understanding of education, as learners with varying levels of academic achievement may have different insights into their educational experiences, challenges, and needs. It allows teachers and policymakers to address the specific needs of different groups of learners, whether they are high-achievers, average performers, or struggling learners.

By including learners of different genders and academic performances, a fairer assessment of the education system helped to identify and address any differences or unfairness that may exist.

(ii) Open-ended questionnaires

Table 4.2. presents the participants' (Grade 6 teachers) biographical details who completed the open-ended questionnaires.

Table 4.2: Participants' (Grade 6 teachers) biographical details

Participant ID	***Age***	***Gender***	***Occupation***	***Teaching style***

T1	**32**	**Male**	**Vice principal**	**Mixed**
T2	**33**	**Male**	**Subject coordinator**	**Mixed**
T3	**30**	**Female**	**Departmental Head**	**Mixed**
T4	**58**	**Female**	**Teacher PL 1**	**Mixed**
T5	**58**	**Female**	**Teacher PL 1**	**Learner-centred**
T6	**28**	**Female**	**Teacher PL 1**	**Learner-centred**

A combination of teaching styles, ages, and genders can offer a more holistic understanding of the teaching profession. Various Grade 6 teachers were selected according to different teaching styles, age, and gender. Different teachers employ various teaching styles in their classrooms. By selecting teachers with diverse teaching styles, I gained insights into the effectiveness of these methods to understand how they influence learners' learning. This can lead to valuable findings for educational improvement.

Teachers of different ages have different experiences. Younger teachers know about new technology and the modern way of teaching, while the older teachers have lots of experience. Studying both helped me to understand education better. On the other hand, a teacher's gender can change how things feel in a class and what learners think about school; being a man or a woman made teachers teach differently and how learners feel about it.

4.3.1.2 Research data

Findings that were found using these qualitative methods, while focusing on the three main sub-questions dealing with the exploration of the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology on enhancing assessment and academic performance in English as a FAL for Grade 6 Learners, exposed the following:

A) Focus group interviews data

The provided segment outlines the data collected from focus group interviews conducted with 30 Grade 6 learners. The data presentation adheres to the questions outlined in Appendix D (I).

(i) Can you describe your experience with assessments in English class? How do you feel when you have to take tests or exams?

This question was answered unanimously - the importance of managing anxiety and that time is a factor during assessments is real. The pattern in all the focus group interviews showed that the anxiety faced by learners regarding performance is transparent and a reality, a fact that cannot be ignored. Many Grade 6 learners admitted to feeling anxious when it came to assessments. The study reveals that learners often face challenges, such as anxiety and time constraints during assessment. Learner 4 in focus group interview 3 who achieves excellent marks emphasized that when assessment is done it feels like "*a warzone*" and learner 1 in focus group interview 1 described the assessment-process as a "*battlefield"*. His exact words were*: "When I sit down to take a test, it's like going into a battle."* Learner 3 from focus group interview 5, expressed his feelings by saying: *"I can't stop worrying about it."*

The pressure to perform well in English class was a common theme. The weight of expectation dominated heavily, convincing learners to make their utmost effort, fearing that anything less would result in disappointing those around them. Learner 4, focus group interview 1 said: *"You have to do your best, or you'll let everyone down."*
Time management was another issue that learners frequently mentioned. Learner 1 from focus group interview 2 uttered: *"I always feel like there's not enough time to answer all the questions. The clock just keeps ticking faster and faster."*

Learner 1 from focus group 3, who regularly achieves excellent marks, said: *"Getting a good grade, it feels like a big accomplishment was achieved.*

(ii) What do you think are the most important factors that affect your performance in English? For example, is it the teaching style, the learning resources, or something else?

a) Teaching style

Learners appreciate teachers who use a more dramatic and engaging teaching approach. Female teachers are seen as more successful in teaching due to their dramatic way of teaching and humor they bring to the classroom.

Most learners, especially in focus group interviews 2, 3 and 5 mentioned that they find female teachers more successful in teaching, because of their dramatic way of teaching and jokes that they bring to the classroom. Learner 3 from focus group interview 2 said: *"I think T3 is the best, because she makes learning fun with her jokes and stories.*" The boys, especially from the focus group interview 4 commented: "*Drama-queen teachers are a necessity when learning is delivered.*" At least five per focus group interview agreed on the fact that "fun" and "drama" are more or less the same. This engagement and dramatic way of explaining content helps maintain their interest and focus on the subject matter, therefore learners agree that engagement and a dramatic way of explaining content help maintain their interest and focus on the subject matter.

b) Learning resources

Grade 6 learners prefer interactive and engaging teaching styles that encourage their active participation. Learners enjoy when teachers ask questions and encourage discussions with their classmates. This interactive approach is perceived as making learning enjoyable and helping learners better understand the topic. Learners in Grade 6 EFAL classes prefer interactive and engaging teaching styles that encourage their active participation. Learner 2 from focus group interview 3 told with confidence that she loves it when their teacher asks those questions, and they get to discuss them

with their classmates. According to her, it makes learning fun, and she feels like she really understands the topic.

(iii) How do you think different teaching styles impact your learning in English? Can you provide examples of teaching methods that you find effective or ineffective?

a) Effective teaching methods

More interactive and engaging teaching methods were preferred by learners in various focus group interviews. As most of learners, to be specific, 25/30 said: "*We like to be heard and not only seen*." Thus, instead of passively receiving information, learners are encouraged to participate, which can make learning more enjoyable and engaging. According to the five focus group interviews, most of the learners, without any doubt have said with full confidence that when a teacher involves the learners, learning becomes more enjoyable which is needed for delivering good marks. These methods encourage active participation rather than passive reception of information, making the learning experience more enjoyable and engaging. Learners appreciate when teachers involve them, as it leads to better comprehension and potentially better academic performance. The participation in discussions and debates, and group activities, promoting critical thinking and communication skills are necessary for these learners.

b) Ineffective teaching methods

In comparison the teaching approach, which centers on teachers as the main providers of information and guidance, heavily relies on teacher-centered instruction and passive book reading. This approach is viewed negatively by the learners. This approach tends to receive negative feedback from learners where teachers are seen as the primary source of information and instruction, along with passive reading of textbooks. Table 4.3. confirms this specific finding.

Table 4.3: Engaging learners: Enhancing enjoyable learning for better grades

Focus group interviews	**Total out of six (six learners per focus group)**
Focus group 1	6
Focus group 2	6
Focus group 3	3
Focus group 4	4
Focus group 5	6
TOTAL	**25/30**

(iv) Do you feel that technology plays a role in your English education? How does the use of technology, such as visualizers, YouTube videos and PowerPoint slides, enhance or hinder your learning experience?

The incorporation of interactive and engaging teaching methods, like active learner participation and dramatic styles, can influence both the teacher's experience and the enhancement of learning potential. Learner 6 in focus group interview 5 said: "*I love it when we do interactive exercises on technology. It's like having fun while learning, and it makes English class my favourite."* L1 from focus group interview 2 said that she prefers teaching with a visualizer, because it allows her to see the work, while the teacher is explaining. She also verbalised that she is a: "*visual creature*". Referring to L1, focus group interview 2, visualizers are beneficial for English education. They allow teachers to display and discuss written material in a more interactive and visually engaging way. "*I like it when the teacher uses a visualizer because it helps us understand the text better."* Like Learner 1 from focus group interview 2, Learner 6 from focus group 4, is in total agreement. Learner 3 from focus group interview 5, a learner who does not perform well in EFAL commented: *"Watching YouTube videos with English subtitles helps us improve our listening and speaking skills."* Learner 6, focus group interview 5 said: *"We need more interactive activities, not just watching videos or looking at slides."*

(v) Do you prefer English lessons that are teacher-centered (the focus is primarily on the instructor) or learner-centered (the focus is on the learner rather than the teacher)? Why? What teaching approach do you think is more effective for your learning?

Grade 6 students clearly express a strong preference for learner-centered EFAL lessons, emphasizing their desire to actively participate and engage in the learning process. They believe that such interactive and engaging lessons not only make learning enjoyable but also contribute to better academic performance. Learner 4, focus group interview 5 said: "*We definitely prefer lessons that focus on us, the learners. It's not just about seeing and hearing; we want to be heard too."*

(vi) How does your English teacher's teaching style impact your understanding and performance in EFAL?

All the learners expressed a negative attitude towards a teacher-centered approach. They felt that it was less interactive and engaging, potentially leading to reduced motivation and comprehension. The integration of interactive and engaging teaching styles, such as active learner participation and dramatic teaching styles improve not only the teacher's teaching experience, but also enhance the learner's potential. *"When we get to work in groups and discuss things, I understand better. It's more fun, and I remember things longer."* as shared from Learner 1, focus group 4. Learners feel that a learner-centered approach puts learners at the center of the learning process, allowing for more active engagement and participation, which foster self-directed learning. It can lead to deeper understanding and retention of information. Learner 1 from focus group interview 1 felt that when the learners get to participate in class discussions and group projects, their ideas matter. She said: "*It's like we're a team with our teacher."* In agreement with Learner 1 from focus group interview 1, Learner 6 from focus group 1 said: *"I like it when the teacher asks us questions and we can share our thoughts. It makes me feel like I'm a part of the learning, not just listening."*

(vii) How important do you think it is to have interactive activities or discussions in English class? How do these activities contribute to your understanding of the subject?

Particularly when it comes to subjects, they associate a fun atmosphere in the classroom with positive engagement which improves the liking for the subject. Learner 4 from focus group interview 1 said: "*The best classes are the ones where we get to explore our creative side, like when we write stories*." These findings suggest that teaching styles can significantly influence learners' experiences and outcomes in the classroom. Learners emphasize the importance of being actively involved in the learning process and express a preference for teaching styles that create a positive and enjoyable learning environment." *It's nice to know that our opinions matter*" said Learner 1, focus group interview 5.

(viii) Have you noticed any differences in your academic performance in English when technology is integrated into the lessons compared to traditional teaching methods? If so, how do you think it has impacted your learning?

Learners prefer technology that is part of the classroom. "*The interactive apps and videos help me stay focused. I remember things better when we use technology,"* said *l*earner 3 from focus group interview 3. All of the Grade 6 learners declared that when they do traditional book work, they get a bit bored. Learner 6 from focus group interview 2 shared her opinion by saying: *"In regular classes, it's just the book and the teacher talking. It's not as exciting, and I sometimes zone out."* Learner 2 from focus group interview 5 agreed with Learner 6 from focus group interview 2 by confirming: *"Without technology, it's mostly just books and worksheets. It gets boring after a while."* Learner 5 from focus group interview 3, who does quite poorly in EFAL, answered with excitement: "*With technology, it's like a whole new world. I look forward to English class now*."

(ix) How confident do you feel in using technology to assist your English learning outside of the classroom? Are there any specific digital tools or resources that you find helpful?

a) Confidence in using technology outside the classroom

Technology can support teachers in addressing these challenges while fostering a positive and enjoyable learning environment, although only three out of the 30 learners are able to use technology outside the school.

b) Digital tools

As seen at no. a): Confidence in using technology outside the classroom, Grade 6 learners may initially lack confidence in using technology outside the classroom, but there are exceptions when it comes to certain language apps like Duolingo. While 90% of Grade 6 learners hesitate to explore various digital platforms independently, 10% of these Grade 6 learners find Duolingo appealing due to its user-friendly approach to language learning. The app's interactive design not only makes language learning fun but also boosts their confidence in navigating technology outside the classroom. "*Duolingo is easy to use, and as we get better at it, we start feeling more confident using technology for learning*" said Learner 4, focus group interview 1. As they progress in mastering new languages through Duolingo, these learners gradually become more comfortable at using technology for educational purposes.

A graphical representation (Figure 4.1) presents how confident learners feel about using technology, especially learning apps outside of the classroom. The research conducted with Grade 6 learners, reveals a notable pattern of confidence in using technology outside the classroom, particularly in the context of language learning applications such as Duolingo. In summary, most Grade 6 learners are initially unsure about using different digital tools on their own. However, when they use easy and interactive language learning apps like Duolingo, their confidence grows. This not only makes learning fun, but also helps them feel more comfortable and capable when using technology for learning.

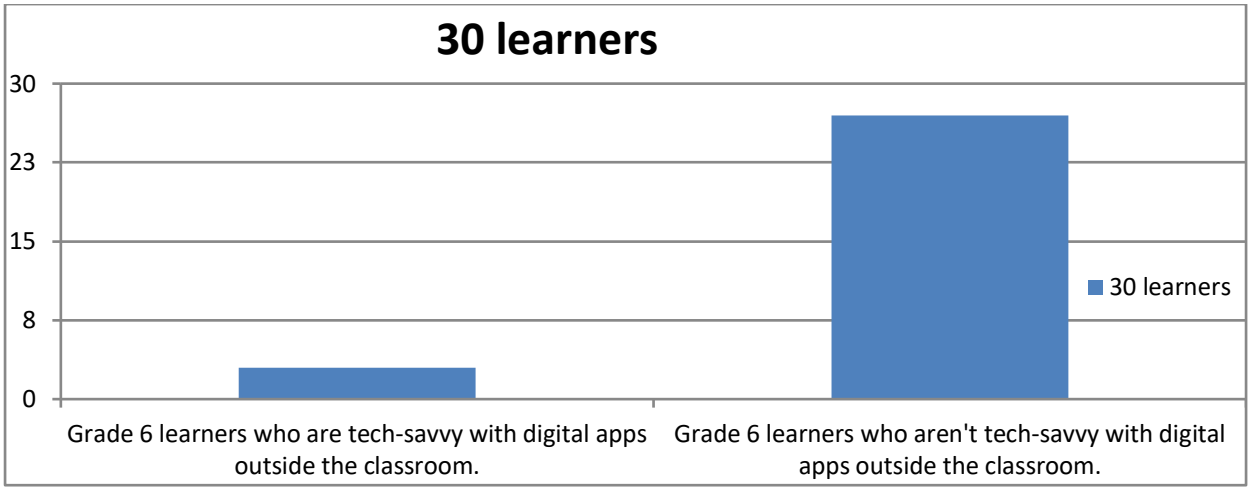

Figure 4.1: Grade 6 learners' digital proficiency beyond the classroom

(x) In what ways do you think your teacher could improve their teaching to help you achieve your full potential in English?

The Gen-Z learners agreed that when there is a fun atmosphere in the classroom, the liking for the subject becomes more positive and class teaching of the teacher improves. The Gen-Z learners agreed that creating a fun atmosphere in the classroom has a positive influence on their liking for the subject and the overall effectiveness of the teacher's teaching. Here follow a few quotes from Grade 6 learners to confirm that "fun" should be part of learning:

Learner 3 from focus group interview 1: *"When our teacher makes the class fun, I look forward to English. It doesn't feel like a boring subject anymore."*

Learner 2 from focus group interview 2: *"I start to like English more when we do exciting activities. It's not just about studying; it's about having fun while learning."*

Learner 4 from focus group interview 2*: "Fun in the classroom makes the teacher's lessons better. We pay more attention, and it's easier to understand."*

Learner 1 from focus group interview 3*: "I learn more when the teacher makes jokes or tells interesting stories. It makes everything stick in my head."*

Learner 5 from focus group interview 4*: "When the teacher makes the class fun, we get closer to our teacher. It feels like they care about us and want us to enjoy learning."*

Learner 4 from focus group interview 5*: "I'm more motivated to do my best in English when the class is enjoyable. It feels like we're in it together with the teacher.*

(xi) Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with assessments and learning English? Any suggestions or ideas that you think would improve your learning in this subject?

A suggestion from Learner 3, focus group interview 2, was that "*Language games and competitions in English class could be fun!"* According to most of these learners, older educators seem disconnected from the newer generation of learners and struggle to adapt to their needs.

b) Open-ended questionnaires

The questions outlined in Appendix E (I) as well as below are summarised as inquiries that were directed to Grade 6 teachers. These inquiries aimed to understand the teachers' approaches to teaching styles, the use of resources, and the integration of technology in their classrooms, as well as to assess the effectiveness of these methods.

(i) Please highlight your teaching style in class

In my findings derived from the open-ended questionnaires of Grade 6 teachers, Grade 6 teachers have varying teaching preferences, which can be categorized into two primary styles. It was evident that teaching preferences varied. A majority of 66.7% indicated a preference for mixed teaching styles, which often blend both traditional and learner-centered approaches to cater to diverse learners' needs. However, a significant 33.3% of teachers expressed a clear preference for learner-centered teaching styles, emphasizing the importance of actively engaging learners in the learning process. These varying preferences highlight teachers' ability to adjust their teaching methods to create engaging and effective learning environments for

Grade 6 learners which shows how flexible and adaptable teachers can be just like the graphical representation (Figure 4.2) presents the findings regarding preferred teaching styles by Grade 6 teachers. What is particularly interesting is the absence of any mention or preference for teacher-centered teaching styles among Grade 6 teachers. This observation highlights the educational landscape's shift away from more traditional, teacher-centered methods, as no teachers in the research sample seemed to favour this approach. Instead, they lean towards mixed or learner-centered styles, underlining their commitment to creating engaging and adaptable learning environments that align with modern pedagogical principles and cater to the diverse needs of their Grade 6 learners. This reflects a positive trend in contemporary education, where the focus is increasingly on active learner participation and personalized learning experiences.

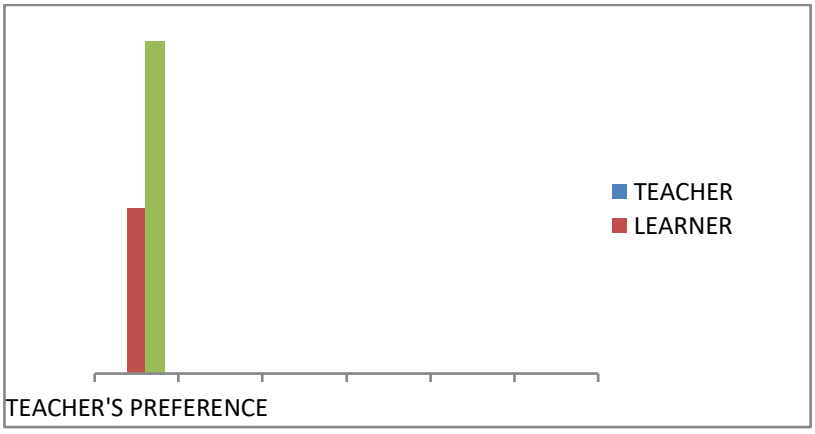

Figure 4.2: Preferred teaching styles among Grade 6 teachers

(ii) How do you perceive the impact of your teaching style on learners' performance? Please explain

The Grade 6 teachers perceive their teaching styles as having a significant impact on learners' performance. They believe that engaging, interactive, and adaptable approaches can lead to increased motivation, better understanding, enhanced confidence, and improved performance among their learners. All these teachers grasp the importance of technology that should be integrated into the way they teach; interactive resources are beneficial and should be implemented in schools.

T1 wrote:

> *"Standing in front of todays' generation of learners with a book, is a joke. I adjust my teaching style to meet different learning needs. This adaptability ensures that all students have a chance to perform at their best."*
>
> T2: *"I adjust my teaching style to meet different learning needs. This adaptability ensures that all learners have a chance to perform at their best."*
>
> T3: *"By using real-life examples and practical applications, I aim to help learners understand the concepts deeply. When they 'get it,' they perform better on tests. Not all learners learn the same way. By offering a variety of approaches, I aim to reach every learner, so no one is left behind."*
>
> T4: *"My teaching style emphasises building self-confidence. When learners believe in themselves, they perform better, because they aren't afraid to take on challenges. I try to create a fun and friendly environment. This sets the stage for effective learning and, ultimately, better performance."*
>
> T5: *"I encourage a growth mindset. When students see their progress over time, it positively impacts their performance. When learners feel safe and supported, they're more likely to excel."*
>
> T6: *"Variety in teaching methods helps learners remember the content better. I've noticed a correlation between engagement and retention."*

(iii) In what ways do you incorporate technology into your lessons? (Highlight all that apply):

The study highlights the need to bridge the gap between traditional and modern teaching approaches, considering the preferences and needs of the newer generation of learners, the Gen-Z students. T1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 use online platforms such as visualizers, YouTube videos and interactive whiteboards. T5 (an older female), is the only teacher who uses the blackboard which draws attention to teacher-centered teaching, which is clearly on the minor side of teaching style preferences. Thus, the importance of incorporating interactive and visually appealing materials into the teaching process to better meet learners' expectations and enhance their learning experiences is essential. T1, a male teacher who is a firm believer of technology in the classroom wrote: "*It's clear that when we use interactive and visually appealing materials, learners' interest in the subject grows*."

Technology allows learners to engage with interactive content where these teachers confirm that they use the internet to find educational websites, video lessons, and digital books to add to their regular teaching materials. T6 felt that interactive whiteboards allow teachers to create dynamic presentations, write notes, and engage learners directly in the content. T1 who teaches robotics emphasized that digital quizzes and assessments can provide instant feedback to learners and help teachers track their progress more efficiently.

(iv) How do you believe the use of technology enhances learners' engagement and understanding in your subject? Please provide specific examples, if any.

a) How technology boosts engagement and comprehension in learning

All six teachers realize that Grade 6 learners prefer engaging and visually appealing materials far beyond the older teaching styles. Additionally, teachers' understanding of the advantages of interactive tools shows that they are eager to use them to enhance teaching and learning performance. They all agree that by integrating technology effectively, teachers can create dynamic and interactive learning experiences that cater to different learning styles and enhance learners' engagement and understanding in various subjects.

b) Specific examples

Visual technology as a resource such as diagrams, videos, and simulations allow learners to see the content and comprehend the content more easily. Online quizzes, using a technological platform like Google Classroom, provide instant feedback and learners can immediately see where they make their mistakes.

(v) Do you feel adequately trained and supported in using technology?

The majority, 83,3%, of teachers feel competent to work with different technological devices, although 16,6% (which is only one of the six teachers), T5 who is a bit older,

needs help and does not have the confidence to work independently with technological resources. She said, ”*Technology keeps changing so fast; it's hard to keep up with the latest trends and apps.”* Although she and the rest of the teachers feel strongly about the compulsory usage of tablets and computers, T1 is convinced that in today's digital age, incorporating tablets and computers into the classroom is essential to prepare learners for the future job market.

(vi) In your opinion, how effective are formal assessments (exams, tests, etc.) in assessing learners' understanding and progress?

All six of the teachers feel that FAT is somewhat effective. They all agree on the finding that it is important to keep teachers actively involved in training workshops where challenges regarding FAT are applied. T3 is wholehearted that “*FAT still require adjustments to achieve a higher level of effectiveness in achieving its intended goals*.” Moreover, again T1 firmly believes that embracing tablets and computers in the modern era is crucial within educational settings to equip learners with the necessary skills. She recognizes the benefits of interactive resources that emphasize the importance of adding technology to create more engaging and effective learning environments for Gen-Z learners; this leads to effective FAT. “*Teachers must strike a balance between assessments, instructional time, and school-related activities due to the demanding curriculum,*” said T2.

(vii) What resources or tools do you believe are necessary to improve your teaching and enhance learners' potential? Please provide specific examples.

The difference in teaching styles for the older teacher (T5) along with newer methods and the strong liking for interesting materials highlights the importance of using resources to make learning better and more engaging. Resources such as visual aids like projectors and visualizers help teachers explain subjects better and make it easier for learners to understand. This indicates the preferences of Gen-Z learners. T2, a committed enthusiast felt that teachers should have the knowledge of what resources today’s learners prefer, because that would lead to the potential improvement regarding how teachers teach and to reach the foremost potential of every learner.

(viii) In what ways do you incorporate interactive activities or discussions in your classes? Please provide examples.

a) Ways to incorporate interactive activities

T1-T6 mentioned the following interactive activities:
Group discussions
Role-play
Interactive quizzes

b) Examples

Group discussions: Put learners in small groups to talk about a particular topic or issue. T4 gave the example of a literature class where the learners chat about the characters in a book.

Role-play: Assign learners in different roles to act out a scenarios which helps the learners to grasp complex concepts. T6 who is a young and enthusiastic maths teacher promotes this way to explain certain concepts. She used the example of a cake. Two learners role-play this situation in order to explain the concept fractions and how a cake can be divided into quarters for an example.

Interactive quizzes: T1 uses technology to conduct quizzes with multiple-choice questions. This promotes active participation using technology as a resource aid. Referring to (iii), T1, a robotics teacher, highlights that digital quizzes and assessments offer immediate feedback to learners and enable teachers to monitor their progress more effectively.

(x) Assessment Practices: Which types of formal assessments (exams, tests, etc.) do you use to assess learners' understanding and progress? (Please tick the applicable options and motivate).

In my findings relating to assessment practices, a variety of formal assessment methods are employed to assess learners' understanding and track their progress. According to my data from the open-ended questionnaires, 83.3% of teachers apply a combination of written assessments and project-based assignments to measure learners' knowledge and application of concepts. These assessments often include multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions, as well as projects that require learners to demonstrate their understanding through practical applications. Additionally, 50% of teachers incorporate oral assessments, where students prepare a speech or engage in discussions to showcase their comprehension. Furthermore, all teachers (100%) make use of portfolio assignments as a means of assessment. Portfolios are collections of learners' work overtime, providing a holistic view of their progress and achievements. These assessment practices aim to ensure learners' abilities and growth in an educational context. The graphical representation (Figure 4.3) illustrates these findings. Grade 6 teachers assess learners using various methods. Most use a mix of written tests and projects (83.3%), some add oral assessments like speeches (50%), and all use portfolio assignments to measure learners' overall growth (100%). These assessments help teachers understand learners' abilities and progress comprehensively.

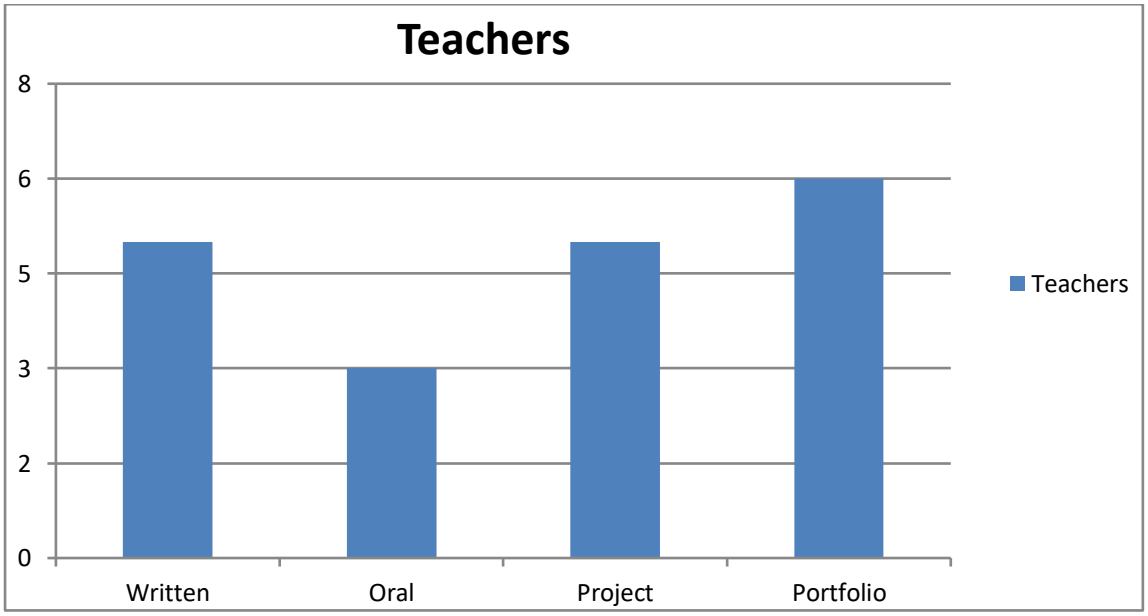

Figure 4.3: Types of formal assessments used by teachers

(xi) Are there any specific challenges you face in conducting assessments? If so, please describe.

All six teachers confirmed that limited time for designing assessments can be a challenge, especially when trying to cover a densely packed curriculum. Adapting these assessments to accommodate diverse learners with different needs can be complex.

(xii) In your experience, how factors such as teaching styles and the use of technology impact learners' academic performance? Please provide any observations or insights you have noticed.

"*In the classroom, the most valuable resource isn't the textbooks or technology; it's a well-prepared teacher"*, remarked T2. Bridging the generation gap, providing modifying materials, offering digital assessment tools with immediate feedback, and facilitating teacher training are of utmost importance which lead to successful FAT outcomes which is a need for all six teachers.

(xiii) Additional comments: Is there anything else you would like to share about factors that have an impact on your assessment and learners' academic performance?

T3 feels strongly about parental support and involvement in a learner's education may have a positive influence on a learner's academic performance, including exam preparation and study habits. T2 hammered on the accessibility to educational resources, including textbooks, technology, and learning materials, which may affect how well learners prepare for assessments.

To be effective, education should adapt to meet the needs of the current generation learners. During the 28 lesson observations of T2 (where I have used Appendix F as my guideline) in Grade 6 EFAL classes, it became evident that teaching styles greatly influence learners' engagement. One continuous observed teaching style was the use of interactive discussions where technology is the main resource. Here follows the discussion of the different categories that I observed:

(i) Engagement and focus

Fortunately, most teachers enjoy popular tools such as computers, online learning platforms, interactive whiteboards, and visual aids, which were shown in the open-ended questionnaires. The reason is (as teachers summarised it) today's generation of learners, known as Gen-Z, is tech-savvy due to growing up with technology. These tools capture their interest because they make learning faster and easier with pictures, videos, and interactive activities. Teachers confirmed that technology saves time and makes explanations simpler. It also helps learners follow instructions more easily and understand concepts better through interactive content.

During these lessons, I observed that the teacher (T2, a male) is less dramatic than female teachers (as learners have clarified). T2 is very competent using technology as a main resource and captured the learners' attention via technology. Some teachers highlighted the need for better guidance on using technology for self-directed learning outside the classroom for learners, which could pose a challenge to educational effectiveness.

(ii) Collaboration and interaction

During the observation of interaction and collaboration among Grade 6 learners during their research project, several important aspects came to light. Firstly, the level of teacher guidance in facilitating collaboration and interaction was notable. T2 provided guidance to improve teamwork, ensuring that learners were on the right track. Many learners exhibited a high degree of enthusiasm and investment in the success of their projects, fostering a positive and productive atmosphere within their teams. It was encouraging to see that many learners actively participated during the research project explanation of T2 and enjoyed the slideshow as a guideline to make the project explanation easier. The observations highlighted the critical role of teacher guidance, the enthusiastic engagement of learners and the effective use of technology.

(iii) Use of resources and materials

While teaching styles may vary between male and female teachers, both can effectively use technology to engage learners. Additionally, providing guidance on using technology for self-directed learning can contribute to educational effectiveness and potentially influence learners' performance in assessments. Notable evidence suggests that integrating resources, particularly technology, substantially enhances teaching methodologies, while concurrently catering to the learning needs of contemporary students, specifically Gen-Z.

Technology enhances teaching methods by making learning more engaging, efficient, and personalized to learners' preferences, ultimately helping learners reach their fullest potential. Matching what learners like, recognizing the advantages of technology in education, and offering guidance for using technology effectively are essential. This makes assessments in EFAL smoother and more successful.

(iv) Time management

In the context of time management in the classroom, I made several key observations which provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the teaching and learning environment. Firstly, it is essential to observe whether the teacher has a well-structured lesson plan in place. T2 was very well prepared every time I attended his class. The learners felt safe and knew what was expected of them. Secondly, assessing how class time is used is crucial. Observations revealed that there are periods where distractions happen. Learners are called out during class periods to attend their extra-mural activities where they represent their school such as rugby or netball matches. Another disturbance is created by absenteeism of learners. It is difficult for the teacher to plan and keep every learner up to date regarding the research project. Additionally, monitoring the management of interruptions, such as unrelated questions, was also observed.

(v) Writing skills

Observing Grade 6 learners' writing skills during a research project yielded valuable insights into various aspects of their language proficiency and communication abilities. Notably, careful attention was given to their command of grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary, as these elements play a critical role in effective written communication. Additionally, I walked through the class and scanned for how creatively the learners did their project. Furthermore, the observations extended to how learners navigated the writing process itself. This encompassed their ability to plan, draft, revise, and edit their work, reflecting their proficiency in organising and refining their ideas. Importantly, the level of T2's involvement and guidance in this process was evident.

4.3.2 Themes and categories

In a research study, themes and categories are important components of qualitative data analysis. They help researchers make sense of the data collected and identify patterns, trends, and insights within that data. Themes provide a way to organise and interpret qualitative data and uncover deeper meanings within it. Categories help researchers further break down and classify the data into meaningful segments. Wong (2008) indicates that analyzing qualitative data entails reading many transcripts looking for similarities or differences, and subsequently finding themes and developing categories.

Findings based on learners' focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires completed by teachers and lastly, lesson observations are discussed as follows:

4.3.2.1 Teaching styles

Learners find traditional teaching methods, with teachers as the primary information source and book-centered instruction, to be less appealing. They prefer interactive

and engaging approaches. Some learners believe that older teachers struggle to connect with and adapt to the preferences of the new generation of learners. This highlights a potential disparity between traditional teacher-centered teaching methods and the contemporary learner's preference for technology-driven and interactive learning approaches.

Teachers seem to favor teacher-centered teaching methods because mixed teaching styles incorporate some teacher-centered instruction. They feel the need to stick to teacher-centered approaches to cover the syllabus efficiently and manage the stress associated with it. This aligns with the view that teacher-centered instruction is necessary for syllabus coverage. Grade 6 learners prefer using technology like slideshows, videos, YouTube, and visual aids in their learning. They want their teachers to use technology that speaks to their generation, emphasizing the importance of interactive and visually engaging materials. They enjoy a fun, dramatic and relatable classroom environment where teachers facilitate enjoyable learning experiences and where laughter and jokes are part of the learning process. Group work and social interaction are also important to them. Teachers believe that creating an engaging classroom environment benefits learners' performance. They see the value of using technology to empower learners and build confidence, aligning with a learner-centered teaching style that focuses on individual growth and independence. Teachers also appreciate the input and perspectives of their students in class.

Learners appreciate a mix of traditional and learner-centered approaches. They have diverse learning preferences, with some preferring structured guidance (spoon-feeding), while others like a more independent and experiential approach.

Teachers recognize that their personality matters in the classroom and adapt their teaching to cater to different learner preferences. They still play a central role in instruction but acknowledge technology as a tool for differentiation. They emphasize responsible technology use and teaching practical skills in various ways to match different learning styles.

4.3.2.2 Technology

Learners appreciate visual aids like newspapers, magazines, and interactive content because they make learning more engaging. Visualizers, a form of mixed media, are preferred over traditional blackboards because they provide better visual representation. This preference aligns with the use of mixed media in teaching.

Teachers highly favor resources like computers, online platforms, interactive whiteboards, and visualizers because they see that today's learners (Gen-Z) are tech-savvy and prefer visual learning. They believe technology saves time, simplifies explanations, and helps learners understand concepts faster. However, some teachers may need additional training for effective technology use. Reliable internet access is crucial for successful implementation. Teachers find visual aids more engaging than auditory methods.

The finding that most learners are not comfortable using technology for self-directed language learning outside the classroom was surprising to me, as I believed that they would feel comfortable using technology on their own. This suggests a need for more guidance and support, although learners like visual aids but are not keen on language learning apps. Some learners feel technology might hinder personal interaction that they value in learning. There is also a gender difference, with girls more interested in technology, while boys prefer physical activities.

According to teachers, the packed curriculum limits classroom freedom, making it challenging to use technology effectively. Teachers stress the importance of using technology to enhance learning. They prefer learners to have their own tablets or computers for self-directed learning outside the classroom as it is more learner friendly.

4.3.2.3 Formal assessment tasks

Learners feel anxious and stressed during continuous assessments, which require ongoing evaluation. They find continuous assessments overwhelming, feel pressured to memorize, and some sense a competitive atmosphere. Balancing academic work with extra-curricular activities is challenging, and they prefer focused and relevant tasks with more preparation time. FAT is somewhat effective but there are difficulties

using diverse assessment methods, keeping learners engaged, and having clear assessment guidelines as teachers have revealed. Constructive feedback plays a crucial role in learner satisfaction. Various challenges to assessment include time constraints, absenteeism, and balancing extra-curricular activities. Teachers believe involving parents in the assessment process could improve learner performance.

During final assessments, learners worry about failing and facing consequences from parents. They find oral exams particularly nerve-wrecking and prefer bonus opportunities like spelling tests. They do better when assessments relate to their interests. Boys like group work, while girls prefer individual assessments.

Standardized tests and written exams evaluate learners' performance. Teachers find similar challenges as mentioned, such as time constraints and the need for guidelines. Both formative and summative assessments should consider learners' emotional well-being and provide support.

Taking all these findings of learners and teachers into account, I attended 28 lesson observations in an EFAL classroom with Grade 6 learners and found that the emotional well-being of learners during assessments can be openly observed. The level of anxiety or stress displayed by learners during the assessment project and how it influences their performance and overall classroom experience are clear during their class period. Even though the learners enjoyed the assessment project topic: Homework, because it was something that they could relate to and the project mentioned strategies that learners appreciated, anxiety marked the ‘mood’ felt during an assessment project that counts marks. To make it more difficult is the limited time available during assessment. The 40-minute class periods and frequent early departures for extracurricular activities disrupt teacher planning, direct instruction, and learners' catch-up time before grade finalization, all within the framework of the Gauteng Department of Basic Education's timeframe.

Teachers need to maintain teaching time between assessments and to consider school activities because of a full, packed curriculum. This challenging juggling act requires careful management of checking learners' progress, teaching, and accommodating outside-of-class activities, which leads to unnecessary stress.

The themes and the elaboration of these in relation to categories that focus on the primary research topic are presented. The primary topic is: Enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners: Exploring the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology, together with sub-questions: How do different teaching styles employed by teachers in Grade 6 EFAL classes affect learners' engagement, comprehension, and overall performance in assessments? To what extent does the integration of the resource aid, technology, improve teachers' ways of teaching in order to reach the foremost potential of every learner? and how can the integration of technology in FAT be optimized to streamline the grading process for teachers? After findings were made, the following themes and categories were matched.

A) THEME 1: Effective instructional approaches

In the field of education, the exploration of diverse instructional approaches has become a focal point to optimize learning outcomes. Three distinct categories emerge when dissecting the methods employed by educators to convey knowledge and engage learners.

Category 1: Teacher-centered instruction: Tradition dominates the classroom as teachers use their expertise to lead and guide the learning process. In this approach, the teacher assumes a central role in delivering information and setting the pace of instruction. Learners, in turn, rely on the instructor as the primary source of knowledge and guidance.

Category 2: Learner-centered instruction: Shifting the spotlight to the learners themselves, this category emphasizes engagement, interaction, and collaboration. Learner-centered instruction fosters a dynamic environment where learners actively participate, share ideas, and collaborate with peers. The teacher transforms into a facilitator, guiding discussions and activities that encourage critical thinking, problem-solving, and social skills.

Category 3: Mixed-learning instruction: Recognizing the learner diversity, in order to accommodate varied learning styles, abilities, and preferences is important. Teachers employ a spectrum of strategies, materials, and approaches to cater to individual needs.

B) THEME 2: Technological educational resources to enhance performance

In today's world, where technology plays a big role, education is boosted by many helpful tools that make learning better. There are two clear groups that show how smart teachers use resources to help learners with respect to academic performance.

Category 1: Mixed media: Newspapers, magazines, textbooks, and tangible objects harmoniously merge with interactive content like visualizers, PowerPoint slides, and captivating YouTube videos. This fusion amplifies engagement, catering to various learning preferences, and nurturing a holistic understanding.

Category 2: Self-directed technology usage: In an era where technology is everywhere, the role of self-directed learning takes center stage. This category explores how learners independently navigate the digital area outside the classroom, utilising technology to sharpen their English skills.

C) THEME 3: Formal assessment tasks: Language assessment

Exploring the development and achievements of learners was a captivating journey, guided by the perspectives of formative and summative assessment. These two distinct categories shed light on the domain of evaluation.

Category 1: Formative assessment: The comprehension on how learners perceive assessment, exploring their feelings, thoughts, and attitudes towards this crucial aspect of education.

Category 2: Summative assessment : Standarized tests and projects stand as pillars of summative assessment, encapsulating learners' total knowledge and skills. This

evaluation method allows teachers to gain insights into the influence of these assessments on learners' academic paths.

Table 4.4. presents the appropriate themes and categories for this research study.

Table 4.4: A demonstration of the appropriate themes and categories for this research study

Theme	***Categories***
Effective instructional approaches	*Category 1:* Teacher-centered instruction *Category 2:* Learner-centered instruction *Category 3:* Mixed-learning instruction
Technological educational resources to enhance performance	*Category 1:* Mixed media *Category 2:* Self-directed technology usage
Formal assessment tasks: Language assessment	*Category 1:* Formative assessment *Category 2:* Summative assessment

4.4 DATA INTERPRETATION

The themes and categories are mentioned in sub-section 4.3.2. and the research findings are interpreted according to the data I have collected and analyzed from Grade 6 learners and teachers. What I have discovered regarding the important patterns and insights hidden in these collected data, referring back to the main

research question: Enhancing assessment and academic performance in English as a First Additional Language for Grade 6 learners: exploring the influence of teaching styles, resources and technology, are presented.

My goal is to help teachers understand what these data mean in the context of what influence teaching styles, resources and technology as a main resource have on school effectiveness and academic outcomes for Grade 6 EFAL learners. This research study aimed to investigate and understand the complex interplay between teaching styles, resources, and technology in Grade 6 E FAL classes, with a focus on their collective influence on assessment.

4.4.1 THEME 1: Effective instructional approaches

Three categories will be discussed under theme one.

4.4.1.1 Category 1: Teacher-centered instruction

(i) Focus group interview findings

The traditional teaching method of teachers was the primary source of information and guidance, emphasizing teacher-centered instruction. Reading from a book is a big negative that refers to the traditional teaching approach and learners in the different focus groups preferred more interactive and engaging methods. According to most of the learners from the focus group interviews, older staff is not in touch with learners and learners feel like they do not adapt to the new generation of learners. In chapter 1, sub-section 1.2. Singh and Dangmei (2016) observed the importance of evolving teaching methods which is a necessity between older staff and modern learners. This point to a potential disconnects between older, more traditional teaching approaches and the preferences of modern learners who are more accustomed to technology and interactive learning. Teachers must be attentive to technology's role in shaping how modern learners think and learn.

(ii) Findings of open-ended questionnaire

Mixed teaching styles are the most popular teaching style (4/6 teachers). For this reason, teachers experience pressure to deliver the syllabus on time; therefore, teacher-centered is necessary and not learner-centered teaching is applicable. Teacher-centered teaching is not a negative according to Dash, Patro and Behera (2013), because 82% of learners prefer blackboard teaching (cf. 1.5). This finding aligns with teacher-centered instruction, where the teacher plays a central role in content delivery, which can be seen as necessary to cover the syllabus efficiently.

(iii) Findings of observations

From the observation information provided above, one finding related to teacher-centered instruction is the emphasis on direct instruction and the teacher's role in leading discussions and providing feedback during assessments. I as the observer noted the teacher's engagement with learners in thoughtful discussions about their research project, indicating a teacher-centered approach where the teacher takes the lead in guiding the learning process.

Additionally, I highlighted the challenges teachers face in balancing instructional time, assessment, and extracurricular activities, suggesting a central role for the teacher in managing these aspects of the classroom environment. This underscores the teacher's authority and responsibility in orchestrating classroom activities and ensuring that learning objectives are met.

Overall, the observation data suggests that the teacher plays a central role in directing and facilitating learning experiences, aligning with the characteristics of teacher-centered instruction.

4.4.1.2 Category 2: Learner-centered instruction

(i) Focus group interviews findings

Grade 6 learners prefer slideshows, social media such as videos, YouTube, and visualizers. The influence of technology on modern learners is undeniable as stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.2.3 (Gómez-Galán, 2020). Therefore, teachers must speak the 'technological language of Gen Z, as stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.2 (Cilliers, 2017). These preferences indicate a desire for more interactive and visually engaging learning materials, aligning with learner-centered methods. For this reason, the use of relevant examples fosters engagement and relates to learner-centered practices that make learning more relevant and practical which is key for Grade 6 learners. Learners desire a fun and relevant classroom environment where the teacher acts as a facilitator of interactive and enjoyable learning experiences. Effectiveness in teaching, as explained by Scheerners (2015) in chapter 1, sub-section 1.3., is a holistic process that encompasses the school's teaching methods. The physical environment of a school, as discussed in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.1. by Prosheva, Kjosevska, and Stefanovska (2020), is integral to the learning process. These preferences highlight the importance of social interaction and peer support. Group work, as noted in chapter 1, sub-section 1.1. by Baines, Blatchford, and Kutnick (2016), encourages active participation among learners.

(ii) Findings of open-ended questionnaire

A learner-centered approach creating an enjoyable and engaging classroom environment is considered beneficial for learners' performance. According to Prosheva, Kosevska and Stefanovska (2020), a healthy environment is necessary for efficient learning, stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.1 the application of technology to engage learners suggests an interactive and technology-enhanced approach to teaching, as Rashid and Asghar (2016) accentuated in chapter 1, sub-section 1.2. Thus, the empowering of learners to comprehend and develop self-confidence which aligns with a learner-centered teaching style that focuses on individual growth and independence takes place. Baines, Blatchford and Kutnick (2016) mentioned in chapter 1, sub-section 1.1. that active participation happens through group work, therefore by encouraging learners to contribute their experiences and knowledge to the class adds value through learners' input and perspectives.

(iii) Findings on observations

The observation data suggests a learner-centered approach in the Grade 6 classroom, evidenced by the teacher's engagement in thoughtful discussions about topics relevant to the learners, such as homework. Through providing ongoing feedback during assessments, the teacher facilitates students' understanding and encourages them to take ownership of their learning journey. Challenges such as time constraints and extracurricular activities underscore the importance of considering learners' needs and schedules in instructional planning, reflecting a commitment to accommodating diverse learner requirements. Overall, the observations highlight a focus on enhancing learning and improvement, indicative of a learner-centered instructional approach that prioritizes learner engagement, feedback, and individualized support.

4.4.1.3 Category 3: Mixed-learning instruction

(i) Focus group interview findings

While learners appreciate some traditional methods, they also value a mix of traditional and learner-centered approaches. A diversity of learning preferences, as found by Hamida and Ragam (2013) in chapter 1, sub-section 1.2, is advisable; 72,1% of learners prefer multiple learning, with some learners benefiting from more structured guidance (spoon-feeding), while others prefer a more independent and experiential approach to learning.

(ii) Findings of open-ended questionnaire

Recognizing the significance of a teacher's personality in the classroom underscores the necessity to tailor teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learner preference. Even if study shows (Kalidas, 2014) that use of drama in content have helped with the enhancement of learners' knowledge of the subject, the teacher still plays the central role in instruction while acknowledging the potential of technology as a tool for differentiation. Technology should be used responsibly; teaching practical skills in different ways to match various learning styles where a bit of drama (using drama techniques, role-playing, and creative activities to engage students in a more

interactive and experiential way, making the learning experience more engaging and memorable). It's a teaching method that encourages students to actively participate and immerse themselves in the subject matter.

(iii) Findings on observations:

The observations in the Grade 6 classroom reveal a balanced approach to mixed learning instruction, where traditional teaching methods are seamlessly integrated with technology usage. The teacher employed a variety of assessment practices, including formative and summative assessments, along with ongoing feedback to monitor learner progress effectively. Despite challenges such as limited time for in-depth discussions due to extracurricular activities, the teacher demonstrated flexibility in adapting instructional strategies to maintain learner engagement.

In summary, my research findings highlight a mix of teacher- and learner-centered preferences among the learners. Balancing traditional and technological methods is essential for maximizing effectiveness as mentioned in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.2 (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2015). Teachers value interactive and engaging teaching methods but also appreciate some aspects of traditional instruction. The findings also underscore the importance for teachers to adapt their teaching to meet the different ways learners like to learn. Some learners prefer interactive and fun lessons with visuals, while others may like more traditional teaching. Teachers should also consider that some learners want more guidance, while others prefer to figure things out on their own. Additionally, the disconnection between older staff and modern learners (Gen-Z) suggests the need for educational institutions to adapt their teaching approaches to better meet the needs and expectations of today's learners. A mix of teaching approaches; (traditional teacher-centered methods and interactive and learner-centered approaches) are clearly outlined by different Grade 6 teachers.

Ferrell and Ferrell (2015) as stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.2 stress the importance of a balance between traditional methods and technology which is essential for maximum effectiveness. This diversity in instructional methods reflects an understanding of the importance of differentiation and adapting teaching styles to meet the needs and preferences of diverse learners.

4.4.2 THEME 2: Technological educational resources to enhance performance

Two categories will be discussed under theme two.

4.4.2.1 Category 1: Mixed media

(i) Focus group interview findings

Visual aids such as newspapers, magazines, and interactive content fall under this category. They enhance the learning experience by providing a visual component to the lessons. Visualizers are a form of mixed media that allows for better visual representation of content compared to traditional blackboards. Learners' preferences for interactive, practical, and visual learning styles align with the findings of Johnston (2013) and Nawas (2020) in chapter 1, sub-section 1.2. This preference aligns with the use of mixed media in teaching. Learners find traditional blackboards less efficient compared to modern mixed media tools, as they require more time to write or draw on.

(ii) Findings of open-ended questionnaire

Popular resources among teachers like computers, online learning platforms, interactive whiteboards, and visualizers are highly favored by teachers. The reason for this is that teachers note that today's generation of learners (Gen-Z) are

technologically proficient because they grow up with technology and are consistently exposed to it. Chapter 1, sub-section 1.2. stated that modern learners, often referred to as Generation Z, are comfortable with technology (Singh & Dangmei, 2016) and value visual learning over auditory methods, as stated in chapter 1, sub-section 1.3. (Rogowsky, Calhoun, & Tallal, 2020). Visual content tends to capture their interest. Teachers find that technology saves time and simplifies explanations because it makes learning quicker and easier by using pictures, videos, and interactive activities, which help learners understand things faster and with less effort. They also observe that learners follow instructions more easily and understand concepts better through interactive content. All teachers in the study feel fully equipped to work with technology independently, except for one teacher who expressed a need for additional knowledge and guidance. Thus, teachers express a positive attitude towards training sessions, especially for introducing new technologies. These sessions are seen as an opportunity to enhance their teaching methods. A major concern for effective technology usage is the need for a stable internet connection. Teachers stressed that reliable internet access is a necessity for successful implementation. Practical resources, including mixed media and technology tools, are essential due to the visual preferences of modern learners. Teachers believe that visual aids are more engaging than auditory ones.

(iii) Findings on observations:

Observations indicate that the teacher engaged with learners in thoughtful discussions about their research projects, incorporating a mix of traditional teaching methods and modern technology usage. This includes using notepads for notetaking, as well as utilizing discussions and technology to enhance learners' understanding of the topic.

Furthermore, the mention of incorporating relevant and debatable topics such as homework into assessments suggests a diverse range of materials and sources being used to enrich the learning experience.

4.4.2.2 Category 2: Self-directed technology usage

(i) Focus group interviews findings

Most learners are not comfortable with technology on their own outside the classroom, although Robinson and Winthrob (2016) feel that learning should take place outside the classroom as well as stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.1. Learners are comfortable with technology for entertainment. The rejection of learning apps show that learners are not inclined to use technology for self-directed language learning. It suggests a need for more guidance and support in this area. This demonstrates the varying levels of technological proficiency among learners, with a minority feeling comfortable using email for educational purposes. Some learners may perceive technology as a barrier to the personal interaction they value in teaching, which is an aspect of self-directed learning. A gender difference in technology usage preferences was observed, with girls showing more interest in technology outside the classroom, while boys prefer physical activities. Despite the fact that learners of today are exposed to social media as Sun (2014) claims in chapter 1, sub-section 1.1, it is important to note that my finding states that learners like using visual aids and tools like visualizers in the classroom, but they are not very comfortable using technology for learning English on their own outside of school. They also do not find language learning apps appealing, but favor visual resources as cited by Johnston (2013) in chapter 1, sub-section 1.2. Additionally, there are differences in how boys and girls prefer to use technology, but this may not affect how they learn English independently.

(ii) Findings of open-ended questionnaire

The current curriculum is densely packed, leaving little room for instructional freedom in the classroom. Not only is the curriculum tight to deliver certain work in a certain timeframe, but how often the curriculum changes are a worry as observed by Du Plessis and Letshwene (2020), chapter 1, sub-section 1.2. which leads to constant FAT changes. This is a challenge when teachers try to incorporate technology effectively, although teachers stress the importance of using technology effectively to make the most of the limited classroom time. The importance for enhancing the learning experience is crucial. Speaking of time, Galavandi, Darvishi and Ashrafi (2019) commented in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.1 that inefficient teaching happens because of limited time, therefore teachers favor that learners should have their own

tablets or computers, because it is more learner friendly. Access to personal devices can facilitate self-directed learning outside the classroom and create the opportunity for learners to learn at their own pace.

(iii) Findings on observations:

Based on the observation information provided, the finding related to self-directed technology usage in the EFAL Grade 6 classroom is that technology appears to play a role in enhancing assessment practices and academic performance. This finding is inferred from the mention of technology usage during assessments and the engagement of learners in discussions about their Research Project, which focused on a topic related to homework.

In summary, my research findings indicate a preference for visual aids and visualizers in the classroom, aligning with the use of mixed media. However, when it comes to self-directed learning outside the classroom, most learners are not comfortable with technology for language learning, and they have reservations about the effectiveness of learning apps. There is also a variation in technological proficiency among learners, with some feeling more confident with certain technology-related tasks. Additionally, gender differences in technology usage preferences were noted outside of the classroom.

Teachers on the other hand find that technology, along with mixed media resources, plays a vital role in enhancing students' understanding and engagement. While they are generally well-prepared to use technology, internet connectivity remains a challenge. Additionally, the crowded curriculum limits their ability to incorporate technology to its full potential. Ferrell and Ferrell (2015) affirm in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.2 that teachers acknowledge the benefits of technology in enhancing student understanding and engagement, but face challenges related to curriculum constraints and internet connectivity. However, with the right support, in order to effectively

integrate technology teachers must receive proper training and stay updated with the latest trends in technology and education according to Hubbard (2008) in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.4.3. Access to personal devices and technology can greatly benefit English language learning.

4.4.3 THEME 3: Formal assessment tasks: Language assessment

Three categories will be discussed under theme one.

4.4.3.1 Category 1: Formative assessment

(i) Focus group interviews findings

Learners are fearful and anxious during assessment. These emotions are related to how learners feel about continuous or ongoing assessments. It suggests that learners experience anxiety and fear when they know they are being continuously evaluated. The perception that continuous assessment requires constant memorisation and retention of information is overwhelming for learners. Performing learners perceive a competitive atmosphere during continuous assessment, which can contribute to their anxiety. Balancing academic demands with extracurricular activities are challenging for learners, and this feeling is enhanced during continuous assessment. Learners prefer focused and relevant assessment tasks during continuous assessment, rather than tasks that they perceive as unnecessary. Insufficient time to prepare adequately for continuous assessments is given and the demarcation of work should be given earlier.

(ii) Findings of open-ended questionnaire

Teachers find that FAT are only somewhat effective. Teachers face difficulties when it comes to using a variety of assessment methods, keeping learners engaged, and having clear guidelines for assessments according to Jian and Luo (2014) as stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.2. The perception of these teachers is that they find

FAT less than satisfactory may stem from a variety of factors, including the need for more diverse assessment methods, alignment with learning objectives and feedback quality. Constructive feedback is a key factor in learner satisfaction as stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.4.4 (Lee, 2014). Learners are required to undergo various types of assessments, including written, project-based, oral, and baseline assessments. Challenges related to compulsory assessment include time constraints, absenteeism affecting assessment continuity, the volume of content to be evaluated simultaneously, and the influence of extracurricular activities on assessments. Therefore, there is a need for clear guidelines outlining what is expected of teachers when conducting assessments because teachers express a lack of guidance in this regard. Teachers believe that involving parents more in the assessment process could be beneficial. This involvement could encourage learners to put in more effort at home, ultimately to improve their academic performance.

(iii) Findings on observations

The observations indicate active engagement in formative assessment practices within the EFAL Grade 6 classroom. The teacher provides ongoing feedback to guide learners' progress and reduce mistakes, while also monitoring engagement and performance in real-time. Assessments are seamlessly integrated into the instructional process, offering insights into learners' actions and behaviors as they occur. Despite time constraints and extracurricular activities, teachers maintain a balance between conducting assessments and delivering instruction, highlighting the importance of formative assessment in supporting student learning and improvement.

4.4.3.2 Category 2: Summative assessment

(i) Focus group interviews findings

The fear of failure and potential consequences from parents are significant concerns for learners during summative assessments. Oral assessment is the biggest concern; learners are shy and do not like attention when it comes to marks. Oral assessments can be particularly challenging for learners, as they may feel self-conscious and anxious about speaking in front of others. Therefore, learners appreciate opportunities

for bonus marks in summative assessments, such as spelling tests. They also respond better to assessment tasks that are relevant and interesting to them personally.

(ii) Findings of open-ended questionnaire

Summative assessments include standardized tests, projects, and written exams, which are used to evaluate learners' academic performance. While not explicitly mentioned in the findings, it can be inferred that challenges like those in Category 1, such as time constraints and the need for guidelines, may also apply to summative assessments. Continuous and summative assessments noted in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.3 should consider the emotional well-being of learners and provide a supportive environment (Aisah, 2016).

(iii) Findings on observation

Observations revealed that learning assessments at the conclusion of instructional periods often lack comprehensive feedback, primarily due to time constraints inhibiting in-depth assessment discussions during summative evaluations.

In summary, the findings provide insights into how learners perceive both continuous and summative assessments. They experience a range of emotions and challenges during assessments, with anxiety, competition, and time management being significant factors. Learners also have preferences for certain types of assessments. FAT is viewed as somewhat effective by teachers, and learners are subjected to various compulsory assessments. Challenges related to assessment include time constraints, absenteeism, and the need for clearer assessment guidelines. Clear assessment guidelines and diverse assessment methods are necessary for effective evaluation as mentioned in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.2 by Jian and Luo (2014). Additionally, involving parents in the assessment process is seen as a potential way to improve student performance. Summative assessments, including written exams, are also used to evaluate learners' academic progress.

4.4.4 Reflection on findings and theoretical insights

Taking all of these themes with each theme's categories into consideration, the connection with the main research question: Enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 Learners: Exploring the influence of teaching styles, resource and technology on assessment, has yielded comprehensive insights into various facets of the English language learning experience among Grade 6 learners and teachers.

The findings include three distinct themes. Firstly, in the realm of instructional approaches, the study reveals a clear divide between teacher-centered methods and more learner-centered, interactive, and technology-enhanced approaches. Modern learners, also known as the Gen-Z, express a strong preference for engaging and visually stimulating instructional materials. Unfortunately, a growing generation gap reflects with older, more traditional teaching styles. A generation gap occurs between older, more traditional teaching styles and the preferences of modern learners (Gen-Z). Teachers should adapt to cater to the preferences and needs of the current generation of learners.

Secondly, in terms of technological educational aids, the importance of mixed media and technology tools, such as visualizers and online resources, is highlighted. Teachers and learners alike recognize the value of technology in enhancing understanding and engagement. However, the study also points out the need for more guidance and support for learners in effectively applies technology for self-directed learning outside the classroom. This highlights the need for more guidance and support for teachers in order for learners to apply technology for self-directed learning effectively. This could be viewed as a potential challenge to educational effectiveness, as it alludes that technology integration is not always straightforward and may require additional support to be effective.

Lastly, the exploration of language learning evaluation, specifically FAT, unveils the emotional and practical challenges learners face. Anxiety, competition, and time constraints are common during assessments, indicating the need for more balanced and well-structured assessment practices. Overall, this research illuminates the multifaceted nature of English language learning and assessment in Grade 6, revealing the potential for improved academic performance through innovative teaching styles, resource application, and technology integration while addressing the diverse needs and preferences of learners.

The theoretical framework, Educational Effectiveness, is a way to see how good teaching styles and resources (the importance of technology tools and mixed media in enhancing understanding and engagement) help learners to learn, do well in school and achieve the goals of their education. According to these findings, the division between traditional teacher-centered teaching style and more learner-centered, interactive, and technology-enhanced approaches align with the educational effectiveness framework by emphasizing the importance of educational practices that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of learners. The emphasis on recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of learners and the modification of teaching styles and resources to cater to the preferences of different generations of learners can contribute to educational effectiveness.

Emotional and practical challenges learners face during assessments, including anxiety, competition, and time constraints should lead to the re-evaluation and reform of assessment methods to reduce anxiety and promote a more balanced and well-structured approach to improve academic performance. Emotional challenges during assessments, such as anxiety and competition, may contradict the ideal of educational effectiveness, which seeks to create a supportive and stress-free learning environment. It also emphasizes the need to address these challenges to enhance the effectiveness of assessment practices.

In essence, the findings do not necessarily contradict the theoretical framework of Educational Effectiveness but rather highlight the complexities and challenges that can arise in real-world educational contexts. The findings may encourage educators and decision-makers to consider how to adapt and refine educational practices to

better align with the principles of Educational Effectiveness while addressing these challenges.

This research study delves into the intricate dynamics of teaching styles and educational resources, specifically technology in Grade 6 EFAL classes, with a specific focus on their collective influence on assessment methods which lead to evaluation. The study combines insights from learners and teachers to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, preferences, and potential solutions in this educational context. Additionally, existing literature is seamlessly integrated into the findings to provide a broader perspective on the subject matter.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter of the study introduced the investigation into teaching styles, resources and technology in Grade 6 EFAL classes, with a focus on the influence on assessment outcomes and academic performance. The research questions revolve around teaching styles and technological resources and the influence on learner engagement and performance. The study uses qualitative research methods, including focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and classroom observations.

The procedure was systematic and aimed to enhance learners' academic performance. Themes and categories emerged from the data, helping to interpret the findings. Three main themes were explored: effective instructional approaches, technology educational resources to enhance performance, and FAT: Language assessment.

Regarding instructional approaches, the research revealed a mix of teacher- and learner-centred preferences among learners, stressing the importance of adaptable teaching methods. Learners prefer visual aids and visualizers in the classroom but are less comfortable with technology for self-directed learning outside the classroom. Teachers acknowledge the benefits of technology, but face challenges related to curriculum constraints and internet connectivity.

The findings shed light on learners' emotions and challenges during assessments, including anxiety, competition, and time management. Teachers view FAT as somewhat effective but note challenges related to assessment guidelines and time constraints. Clear evaluation guidelines and diverse assessment methods are deemed necessary.

In the end, the study aligns with the framework of Educational Effectiveness, highlighting the importance of catering to diverse learner needs and addressing emotional challenges during assessments. While the findings introduce complexities and challenges, they encourage educators to adapt educational practices to align with Educational Effectiveness principles.

The exploration of the influence of teaching styles, resources and technology on Grade 6 EFAL classes provides insights into instructional approaches, technology as a resource, and assessment challenges. The findings underline the need for adaptable teaching methods, effective technology integration, and well-structured assessment practices to enhance learners' academic performance.

4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Analytically and critically, this study delves into the crucial point in time where important decisions are made regarding teaching styles and technology in Grade 6 EFAL classes, with a focus on their influence of assessment outcomes and academic performance. The primary research question revolves around understanding how these elements influence learner engagement and achievement. The findings reveal a refined educational landscape where a balance between teacher- and learner-centered teaching methods is essential, demonstrating the adaptability of instructional approaches to cater to diverse learner preferences. While learners express a preference for visual aids and dramatic teachers with a hint of laughter, jokes and fun in the classroom, there are doubts about technology for self-directed learning, presenting a technological gap to bridge. Teachers acknowledge the potential of technology but face challenges such as curriculum constraints and connectivity issues. Assessment emerges as a situation filled with challenges: emotional challenges for learners, demanding attention to anxiety, competition, and time

management. Despite these complexities, the study indicates the importance of clear evaluation guidelines and diverse assessment methods.

In conclusion, this research highlights the value of matching teaching styles, resources and technology effectively with the principles of Educational Effectiveness and addressing the diverse challenges within the schooling context to enhance learners' academic performance.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

EFAL plays a crucial role in the South African educational landscape. Proficiency in EFAL is not only essential for effective communication but also plays a significant role in determining academic success across various subjects. Therefore, the question of how teaching styles, resources, and technology can enhance assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners becomes a matter of great significance.

In this chapter, I present a comprehensive summary of the findings derived from my investigation into the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology on enhancing assessment which leads to the academic performance in Grade 6 EFAL classrooms. An organized combination of the empirical data collected throughout the study, explaining important patterns and significant discoveries, will be provided.

The core insights I have gained through my investigation and the implications of my findings for Grade 6 EFAL education, will be drawn together and a series of practical recommendations based on my research findings will be outlined. Potential avenues for further research, highlighting areas where deeper investigation is necessary, as well as its limitations and explaining areas that were not addressed, will be outlined.

Finally, concluding remarks will be offered to indicate the importance of ongoing inquiry and innovation in the dynamic field of EFAL education for Grade 6 learners.

5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this study, I aimed to tackle the research questions introduced in chapter 1, sub-section 1.5.2. This section now provides a shortened overview of the primary academic and observational discoveries in a summary of the research findings.

5.2.1 Key scholarly review findings

The interplay between teaching styles, resources, and technology, and their collective influence on learners' academic performance should be drawn together to offer an understanding on how these factors influence assessment.

Kamamia, Ngugi and Thinguri (2014) in chapter 2, sub-section 2.3. reveal that the overall effectiveness of the system of education is determined by the quality of its teachers. Ozgenel and Mert (2019) state in chapter 2, sub-section 2.3. that teachers' performance at school directly contributes to school effectiveness by achieving their educational objectives.

When the focus is put on the first sub-question, chapter 4, sub-section 4.3.1, scholarly findings declare in chapter 2, sub-section 2.4.1 that the comprehension of the learners' learning style and preference both benefit the teacher and the learner (Awla, 2014). Chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.1 highlights that Taiwanese learners prefer traditional face-to-face courses which are instructional and interactive (Wang & Reeves 2007). De Vita (2010) on the other hand, advises that teachers have to consider moving toward a multi-style teaching approach. Rogowsky, Calhoun and Tallal (2020) put the focus on visual learning that scored higher than auditory learning which implies that this generation of learners are more focused on what they see rather than what they hear as mentioned in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.2.

As commented in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.3. Cilliers (2017) the fact that teachers who teach this generation of learners, known as Gen-Z, speak 'technological-language' as stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.3. Brought into conversation from chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.2.3 Ferrell and Ferrell (2015) suggest that classroom technology (which is a learning tool) is there to enhance the learning experience.

Zargaran, Turki, Bhaskar, Spiers and Zargaran (2020) find the total opposite as specified in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.3; although technology reaches a large audience, however traditional teaching remains the learning resource of choice. Keeping all these scholarly findings in mind, chapter 2, sub-section 2.4.2 gives prominence to the pandemic, commonly known as COVID- 19 that modified the mode of how learning takes place (Dube, 2020).

Although Ramnarain and Hlatswayo (2018) voice that teachers have a positive attitude towards this type of teaching, the reality is that the availability of resources such as technology, teaching materials, large classes and the time to complete the curriculum, create stress for teachers, which may lead to demotivated teachers and a decreased understanding as described in chapter 2, sub-section 2.3.

Lastly, Galavandi, Darvishi and Ashrafi (2019), as stated in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.1, mention that time constraints affected effective teaching as reflected in the evaluation criteria. Irons and Elkington (2021), in chapter 2 sub-section 2.2.2.4, underline that assessment takes place to give feedback to learners on where to improve, which is a continuous process. These finding may be the reason for failures on how FA is designed and therefore teachers need clear instructions on how to implement it (chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.4) so that learners know exactly what is expected of them (Jian & Luo, 2014). To expand in chapter 2, sub-section 2.4.3, Burner (2016) discovers that a mutual understanding of FA by teacher and learner is necessary to make the assessment useful and meaningful. To motivate these findings further on in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.4, FA is unfortunately inadequately researched, poorly understood, and improperly implemented because of the lack of professional teacher training (Jian & Luo, 2014). To solve these problems further on, as suggested by Jian and Luo (2014), more financial investments regarding important issues of FA should be supported, the clarification of FA is a necessity and development for teachers on ready-to-use FA is a must.

5.2.2 Key empirical findings

The following findings regarding teaching styles, resources and technology were made, by categorizing each entity in the appropriate theme.

Table 5.1: Insights on impact of teaching styles, resources, and technology on assessment: Perspectives from Grade 6 teachers and learners

Theme	**Categories**
Effective instructional approaches	Category 1: Teacher-centered instruction Category 2: Learner-centered instruction Category 3: Mixed-learning instruction
Technological educational resources to enhance performance	Category 1: Mixed media Category 2: Self-directed technology usage
Formal assessment tasks: Language assessment	Category 1: Formative assessment Category 2: Summative assessment

Teacher ID/ Interviews (Focus groups)	**Teaching Approaches**	**Resources**	**FAT Evaluation Approach**
T1	Mixed	Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides internet connectivity is problematic and an undeniable issue	Room for improvement Time limited Packed curriculum Clarity regarding FAT guidelines Constructive feedback

Teacher ID/ Interviews (Focus groups)	**Teaching Approaches**	**Resources**	**FAT Evaluation Approach**
T2	Mixed	Online platforms: visualizers, Videos, PowerPoint slides internet connectivity is problematic and an undeniable issue	Room for improvement Time limited Packed curriculum Clarity regarding FAT guidelines
T3	Mixed	Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides, group work internet connectivity is problematic and an undeniable issue	Room for improvement Time limited Packed curriculum Clarity regarding FAT guidelines Involvement of parents is a necessity
T4	Mixed	Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides	Room for improvement Time limited Packed curriculum Clarity regarding FAT guidelines

Teacher ID/ Interviews (Focus groups)	**Teaching Approaches**	**Resources**	**FAT Evaluation Approach**
T5	Learner-centered	Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides internet connectivity is problematic and an undeniable issue	Room for improvement Time limited Packed curriculum Clarity regarding FAT guidelines Involvement of parents is a necessity Constructive feedback
T6	Learner-centred	Textbook Black board	Room for improvement Time limited Packed curriculum Clarity regarding FAT guidelines Involvement of parents is a necessity Constructive feedback

Teacher ID/ Interviews (Focus groups)	**<u>Teaching Approaches</u>**	**<u>Resources</u>**	**<u>FAT Evaluation Approach</u>**
Interview 1	Mixed	Humour/ fun Visual Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides Involvement is crucial	Anxious Time limited Competitive Constant- a never ending process Memorization is overwhelming Prefer group work tasks
Interview 2	Learner-centered	Visual Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides Involvement is crucial	Anxious Time limited Competitive Constant - a never ending process Relevant FAT is needed Prefer group work tasks
Interview 3	Mixed	Humour/fun Visual Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides Dramatic Involvement is crucial	Anxious Time limited Competitive Constant- a never ending process Memorization is overwhelming Prefer individual tasks

Teacher ID/ Interviews (Focus groups)	**Teaching Approaches**	**Resources**	**FAT Evaluation Approach**
Interview 4	Mixed	Humour/fun Visual Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides Dramatic Involvement is crucial	Anxious Time limited Competitive Constant - a never ending process Memoristation is overwhelming Relevant FAT is needed Prefer group work tasks
Interview 5	Mixed	Humour/fun Visual Online platforms: visualizers, videos, PowerPoint slides Dramatic Involvement is crucial	Anxious Time limited Competitive Constant- a never ending process Memorization is overwhelming Relevant FAT is needed Prefer group work tasks

5.2.2.1 THEME 1: Effective instructional approaches

My research shows that Grade 6 learners have a mix of preferences when it comes to teaching styles. Referring to chapter 4, sub-section A) (i), most specifically 66.7% of learners preferred mixed teaching styles, which frequently combine traditional and learner-centered methods to accommodate the varied needs of learners. Learners in focus group interviews expressed a strong preference for teaching methods that are interactive and engaging. In fact, 83.3% of them specifically said, "*We like to be heard and not only seen*." As stated in chapter 4, sub-section A) (iii), some like interactive and engaging methods, while others prefer traditional instruction, which is in the minority. It is crucial for teachers to adapt to these different learning styles. Using various teaching approaches, in chapter 4, sub-section A) (vii), learners stress the significance of actively participating in the learning journey and favor teaching methods that foster a positive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. As expressed by Learner 1 in focus group interview 5, "*It's reassuring to see that our input is valued.*" This adaptability is especially important because there is a generation gap between older teachers and Gen Z learners. T2 strongly believes that teachers should possess an understanding of the resources favored by today's learners, bridging the gap between the teaching styles of the older teacher (T5) and more contemporary methods, as stated in chapter 4, sub-section B) (vii).

5.2.2.2 THEME 2: Technological educational resources to enhance performance

Every teacher acknowledged that Grade 6 learners have a strong preference for materials that are engaging and visually attractive, outshining the appeal of older teaching methods (chapter 4, sub-section B) (iv). Furthermore, in chapter 4, sub-section A) (iv), in focus group interview 5, Learner 6 expressed enthusiasm for interactive technology exercises, describing them as enjoyable learning experiences that made EFAL classes their favorite. In contrast, Learner 1 from focus group interview 1 stated a preference for teaching with a visualizer, because it enabled her to visualize the content being explained. She humorously referred to herself as a "*visual creature*." T2, an ardent advocate, believes that teachers should be well-informed about the preferences of today's learners; including the variations in teaching styles between older teachers like T5 and more contemporary approaches as stated

in chapter 4, sub-section 4.3.1.2.2 (vii). It is obvious that learners prefer using visual aids and visualizers in class, especially when mixed media is involved, but outside of class, they are not as comfortable with technology for learning and have doubts about learning apps as evident from chapter 4, sub-section 4.3.1.2.1 (ix) where it is stated that the majority (90%) of Grade 6 learners are hesitant to explore different digital platforms independently, while a minority, 10%, find Duolingo attractive, because of its user-friendly language learning approach. There are also differences in how skilled they are with technology, and gender plays a role in their technology preferences. Although teachers find technology, along with mixed media, helpful for improving learner engagement and understanding, they are generally prepared to use technology, but internet issues and a packed curriculum limit its full potential. Teachers contend that the overcrowded curriculum imposes constraints on classroom flexibility; creating difficulties in the effective utilisation of technology as noted in chapter 4, sub-section 4.3.2.2.

5.2.2.3 THEME 3: Formal assessment tasks: Language assessment

The findings reveal how learners feel about both continuous (formative) and final (summative) assessments. Summative assessments, like written exams, are used to measure how well learners are doing academically. For this reason, learners go through a mix of emotions and challenges during tests, like anxiety, competition, and time management. Anxiety during assessments and the pressure of time are genuine concerns. It is clear from all the focus group interviews that learners experience anxiety about their performance. This is a reality that cannot be overlooked, as stated in chapter 4, sub-section A) (i). Teachers find EFAL FAT assessments somewhat effective. Each of the six teachers, as stated in chapter 4, sub-section B) (vi), holds the view that FAT has a moderate level of effectiveness. They unanimously concur that it is crucial to engage teachers actively in training workshops that address challenges related to FAT. T3 is particularly enthusiastic about the notion that FAT still needs refinement to attain a higher degree of effectiveness in fulfilling its intended objectives. Challenges include time limits, absenteeism, and the need for clearer assessment guidelines. In chapter 4, sub-section C) (vi), observations indicated distractions during class time. These distractions include learners being called out of class to participate in extra-mural activities such as rugby or netball matches, as well

as instances of learner absenteeism. These interruptions pose challenges for teachers in terms of planning and keeping every learner updated on their research project progress. The involvement of parents in assessments could improve learner performance. Teachers hold the view in chapter 4, sub-section 4.4.3.1 (ii) that greater parental involvement in the assessment process could yield positive results. Such involvement has the potential to motivate learners to invest more effort in their learning at home, ultimately leading to enhancements in their academic performance.

5.3 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study inquired for an answer to the main question: How can teaching styles, resources, and technology enhance assessment and academic performance in Grade 6 EFAL? The research conclusions provide answers to the initial research questions, with a focus on addressing the sub-questions as foundational components leading to the answer to the main research question as outlined:

5.3.1 Sub-question 1: How do different teaching styles employed by teachers in Grade 6 EFAL classes affect learners' engagement, comprehension, and overall performance in assessments?

5.3.2 Sub-question 2: To what extent does the integration of the resources improve a teacher's way of teaching in order to reach the foremost potential of every learner?

5.3.3 Sub-question 3: How can the integration of technology in FAT be optimized to streamline the assessment process for teachers?

5.3.4 Main research question: Enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners: Exploring the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology.

The study's findings contribute new knowledge by highlighting the significant influence of different teaching styles on learners' engagement, comprehension, and overall performance in assessments. Specifically, it reveals that learners prefer interactive and engaging teaching methods that encourage active participation and help manage anxiety during assessments. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of

integrating technology into teaching to enhance engagement and effectiveness, regardless of teachers' gender. This insight underscores the need for a balanced approach that bridges traditional and modern teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of Generation Z students.

Furthermore, the integration of resources, particularly technology, is shown to improve teaching methods and unlock learners' full potential. By creating more interactive and engaging learning environments, teachers can enhance the overall teaching experience and maximize learner potential. This finding underscores the crucial role of resources in shaping effective teaching practices and ultimately enhancing assessment and academic performance.

Moreover, the study suggests that optimizing the integration of technology in FAT can streamline the assessment process for teachers. By providing tools for interactive teaching, instant feedback, and creating engaging learning environments, technology can help address challenges associated with assessments and anxiety. Strategies such as bridging the generation gap, providing adaptable materials and offering teacher training are identified as key steps in optimizing technology integration.

In summary, the study's findings provide valuable insights into the complexities of enhancing assessment and academic performance in Grade 6 English First Additional Language (EFAL) classes. By exploring the influence of teaching styles, resources, and technology, the study offers practical guidelines for teachers to create more effective assessment environments and meet the diverse needs of learners in a digital age.

The findings of this study shed light on the complexities of enhancing assessment and academic performance in Grade 6 EFAL classes, as explored within the framework of teaching styles, resources, and technology.

The study reveals a clear difference between traditional teacher-centered methods and more learner-centered, interactive, and technology-enhanced approaches. Modern learners, specifically the Gen-Z generation, express a strong preference for engaging and visually stimulating instructional materials. Bridging the generation gap

between older, more traditional teaching styles and the preferences of modern learners is essential to achieving educational effectiveness.

The importance of mixed media and technology tools, such as visualizers and online resources, in enhancing understanding and engagement is emphasized. Both teachers and learners recognize the value of technology in education. However, the study highlights the need for more guidance and support, particularly for learners, in effectively applying technology for self-directed learning. This reinforces the potential challenge of technology integration and the necessity for additional support to maximize its effectiveness.

The exploration of language learning assessment, particularly formative and summative assessments, uncovers the emotional and practical challenges learners face, including anxiety, competition, and time constraints. These challenges call for a re-evaluation and reforming of assessment methods to reduce anxiety and promote a more balanced and well-structured approach, ultimately aiming to improve academic performance.

In the context of the main question: Enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners: Exploring the influence of teaching styles, resources and technology, these findings collectively suggest that enhancing assessment and academic performance requires a total plan. It involves adapting teaching styles and resources to align with the preferences of diverse learners, effectively integrating technology to engage learners, and rethinking assessment methods to address emotional and practical challenges. The goal of educational effectiveness is at the core of these efforts, emphasizing the need to create a supportive and stress-free learning environment while meeting the needs of learners in a digital age.

Integrating the theoretical framework of Educational Effectiveness with the findings underscores the importance of aligning teaching styles with educational goals, optimizing resource usage, streamlining assessment practices, and fostering supportive learning environments in Grade 6 EFAL classes. The varied influence of teaching styles on engagement and comprehension highlights the need for alignment

with educational objectives. Effective resource integration, particularly technology, can unlock learners' potential and enhance instruction. Streamlining assessment practices, especially through technology, ensures efficient feedback and supports learner learning; creating supportive environments addresses emotional and practical challenges, promoting overall educational effectiveness in Grade 6 EFAL settings.

5.3.5 Proposed guidelines for teachers: Enhancing Grade 6 assessment

By following these guidelines, categorized in the different themes, teachers can create a more effective assessment environment in Grade 6 education, accommodating diverse learning styles, utilizing technology effectively, and promoting transparent and supportive assessment practices.

5.3.5.1 Theme 1: Effective instructional approaches

(i) Recognize that Grade 6 learners have varying learning preferences.
(ii) Embrace a flexible approach that combines interactive and traditional teaching methods to cater to the diverse needs of your students.
(iii) Strive to create engaging lessons that encourage active participation.
(iv) Continuously monitor and adapt your teaching style based on the responsiveness of your learners.

5.3.5.2 Theme 2: Technological educational resources

(i) Incorporate visual aids and in-class visualizers into your teaching to enhance comprehension and engagement.
(ii) Ensure that your classroom is equipped with the necessary technology for effective learning.

(iii) Acknowledge that learners may have varying levels of technology proficiency and access outside of school.

(iv) Provide guidance and resources to support their use of technology for independent learning.

(v) Be mindful of potential gender-related differences in technology preferences and skills.

(vi) Encourage all learners to feel comfortable and capable when using technology for educational purposes.

5.3.5.3 Theme 3: Formal Assessment Tasks: Language assessment

(i) Establish transparent assessment criteria and expectations for both formative and summative assessments.

(ii) Ensure that learners understand how they will be evaluated.

(iii) Use a variety of assessment methods, including project-based assessments, oral presentations, and written exams, to accurately determine learners' understanding and skills.

(iv) Recognize the emotional aspects of assessments and create a supportive classroom environment that helps learners manage test-related stress and anxiety.

(v) Explore opportunities to involve parents in the assessment process, by sharing assessment goals, progress, and strategies with parents to foster a collaborative approach to student success.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the analysis of the data and the conclusions drawn from the primary findings in the earlier chapter, this study will put forth recommendations aimed at different stakeholders within the education sector.

5.4.1 National level: Department of Basic Education

At the national level, the DBE plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape of a country. It is tasked with crafting policies and guidelines that influence the entire education system, from curriculum development to teacher training. In the context of enhancing assessment and academic performance in Grade 6 EFAL classes, the DBE holds a central position.

5.4.1.1 Recommendation 1

Encourage the acknowledgment and adoption of diverse teaching styles, including learner-centered and technology-enhanced approaches to cater to Gen-Z learners' preferences. This includes promoting teaching methods that actively involve learners in the learning process, such as group discussions, collaborative projects, and inquiry-based learning. The DBE should also emphasize the integration of technology as a means to engage learners effectively.

5.4.1.2 Recommendation 2

Develop and implement policies that support nationwide professional development workshops for teachers, covering learner-centered strategies and effective technology integration. These workshops should focus on equipping teachers with practical skills to implement learner-centered techniques and use technology effectively in the classroom. The DBE should allocate funding and resources for the design and delivery of these workshops, ensuring that teachers across the country have access to quality training.

5.4.1.3 Recommendation 3

Support ongoing research to explore the changing needs and preferences of Gen-Z learners, particularly regarding technology integration. Researchers and policymakers should fund and promote research initiatives that focus on understanding the evolving needs and preferences of Gen-Z learners in the context of technology integration. This

research should inform the development of effective educational policies and practices.

5.4.1.4 Recommendation 4

Continuously monitor the influence of technology on teaching and learning to inform future policies and practices in education. Researchers and policymakers should establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the influence of technology on teaching and learning. This data should guide the formulation of future educational policies and practices, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in the digital age.

5.4.2 Provincial level: Provincial Basic Education Departments

The provincial Basic Education Departments translate national educational policies and guidelines into actionable strategies and initiatives at the regional level. These departments are entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing and supporting the educational landscape within their respective provinces, working closely with schools, district education offices, and various stakeholders.

5.4.2.1 Recommendation 5

Collaborate with districts to organize regional training workshops for teachers to enhance their skills in adapting teaching methods. Provincial Basic Education Departments should work closely with district education offices to ensure that teachers in various regions have access to specialized training. These workshops should provide in-depth guidance on implementing learner-centered strategies and using technology effectively.

5.4.2.2 Recommendation 6

Monitor and facilitate the implementation of technology-enhanced teaching styles and ensure alignment with national policies. Provincial Basic Education Departments should oversee the integration of technology in classrooms, including the availability

of hardware and software. They should also provide guidance and support to schools to ensure that technology integration aligns with the DBE's policies and guidelines.

5.4.3 District level: District Education Offices

At the district level, the role of District Education Offices is to ensure the effective implementation of educational policies and practices. These offices serve as crucial middlemen between the national education authorities and the individual schools within their respective districts. They play a significant role in facilitating and supporting the translation of national policies into practical strategies that benefit schools and learners.

5.4.3.1 Recommendation 7

Provide on-site support to schools in implementing new teaching styles and technology integration. District education offices should have staff members dedicated to visiting schools and assisting teachers in adopting learner-centered and technology-enhanced approaches. They should offer guidance, workshops, troubleshooting, and resources to ensure smooth implementation.

5.4.3.2 Recommendation 8

Promote collaboration among schools within the district, facilitating the sharing of resources and best practices. District education offices should create platforms or forums where schools can collaborate, share experiences, and exchange ideas. This can encourage a culture of collaboration and peer learning, fostering a supportive environment for teachers to implement new methods.

5.4.4 School level: School principals, teachers and learners

In the realm of education, the school shapes the learning experiences of learners. It covers school principals, dedicated teachers, and the eager learners themselves. This level represents the frontline of education, where the real magic happens—the interaction between educators and learners that fosters growth and knowledge. Their

active participation, collaboration, and commitment are integral to achieving our educational goals tailored to empower and enrich ultimately the entire educational landscape.

5.4.4.1 Recommendation 9

Allocate resources and time for teacher training, create a supportive environment, and encourage experimentation with new methods. School principals should allocate budgetary resources for professional development programmes and allocate time within the school schedule for teacher training. They should foster a supportive environment where teachers feel encouraged to experiment with learner-centered and technology-enhanced methods.

5.4.4.2 Recommendation 10

Actively participate in professional development programs, adapt teaching methods, collaborate with colleagues, and gather feedback from learners. Teachers should actively engage in professional development opportunities provided by the DBE and other relevant entities. They should apply newly acquired skills and knowledge in their classrooms, collaborate with colleagues to share successful practices, and regularly gather feedback from learners to make continuous improvements.

5.4.4.3 Recommendation 11

Actively engage in self-directed learning outside the classroom, seek guidance and resources from teachers and parents for academic improvement. Learners should take initiative in utilizing technology for self-directed learning outside the classroom. They should actively seek guidance and resources from teachers and parents to enhance their academic performance. This includes using educational apps, online resources, and digital content to supplement their learning.

5.4.5 Community Level: Parents, guardians, and community organizations

The active involvement of parents, guardians, and community organizations in the educational journey of learners is an essential support for a strong and successful education system. At the heart of every community, these stakeholders play a vital role in shaping the learning experiences and outcomes of our young learners. Their engagement extends beyond the boundaries of classrooms and school grounds, enriching the educational landscape with support, resources, and opportunities that extend the horizons of knowledge.

5.4.5.1 Recommendation 12

Attend workshops or informational sessions organized by schools and actively support their children's use of technology for learning at home. Parents and guardians should participate in workshops or informational sessions organized by schools to better understand the benefits of learner-centered and technology-enhanced teaching styles. They should actively support their children's use of technology for educational purposes at home, ensuring a conducive learning environment.

5.4.5.2 Recommendation 13

Partner with schools to provide additional resources and support, including mentorship, access to community libraries, and educational events. Community organizations should collaborate with schools to offer additional resources and support. This could include mentorship programs, granting access to community libraries or digital resources, and organizing educational events that involve both learners and community members.

5.5 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In the search to enhance the quality of education and English language learning, this research delved into the dynamic interplay between instructional approaches, technological educational resources, and language assessment practices within the context of Grade 6 learners. The study uncovered valuable insights that could inform and improve the educational experiences of both teachers and learners. Through

extensive research and data analysis, three distinct yet interconnected themes emerged, shedding light on critical aspects of the teaching and learning process.

These themes include the preferences and adaptability of Grade 6 learners when it comes to instructional methods, the role of technological resources in enhancing learning outcomes, and the perceptions and challenges associated with assessments, particularly those related to FAT.

5.5.1 Opportunities for future research

5.5.1.1 Understanding the influence on education of the generation gap between teachers and Gen-Z learners

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, the relationships between teachers and learners have taken on a new level of significance, primarily due to the emergence of Gen-Z learners. Research should take into consideration how the generation gap between teachers and Gen-Z learners could influence teaching and learning. Singh and Dangmei (2016) stated in chapter 2, sub-section 1.2. that Gen-Z generation is raised with the social web, therefore teachers, especially older staff, should adapt to these learners to find their utmost academic potential. This potential avenue for further research, exploring the influence of the generation gap between teachers and Gen-Z learners, is of utmost importance. The context of teaching and learning is undergoing rapid transformation, driven by technological resources, and changing teaching styles. As the teaching profession continues to attract a diverse range of teachers, it is crucial to study how age differences might affect teaching methods, class atmosphere and learner involvement.

Understanding the implications of the generation gap between teachers and Gen-Z learners is vital for several reasons. Firstly, it has affects how schools can adapt to the needs of today's learners, who have their own unique qualities, likes, and digital skills. Secondly, it can shed light on potential challenges and opportunities that arise when teachers from different generations employ teaching methods, technologies, and communication styles. By exploring this, future research can provide valuable insights and recommendations for both teachers and educational policymakers, facilitating

more effective teaching styles that bridge the generation gap, enhance learner-teacher relationships, and ultimately lead to improved learning outcomes in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

5.5.1.2 Meeting learners' needs and preferences

Recurrently in chapter 2, sub-section 1.2., Singh and Dangmei (2016) pointed out that the Gen-Z generation has grown up with social media, so teachers, especially older ones, should adjust their teaching methods to help these learners reach their full academic potential. Technology in education has made significant progress, changing how learners learn and how teachers teach. In today's educational landscape, technology holds the potential to offer adaptable and flexible learning experiences that suit each learner's needs and choices. Unfortunately, Karthigeyan and Nirmala (2013) stress that the maxim ‘one teaching style fits all’ as brought up in chapter 2, sub-section 2.2.1.2 is not efficient, because of diverse learners with diverse learning needs. However, using technology effectively to meet these needs can be difficult. This avenue for further research is crucial because it addresses the need to explore how technology-assisted teaching strategies can be improved to make the learning environment more focused on learners, leading to better engagement, understanding, and academic performance. These strategies include the ‘Flipped Classroom’ where teachers use technology to provide instructional content outside of class, such as through video lectures or online readings. Google Classroom, another technology-assisted teaching strategy, offers teachers the ability to create and manage virtual classrooms. These platforms allow for the delivery of assignments, quizzes, and educational resources in a structured and organized manner. Learners can access materials, submit assignments, and communicate with peers and teachers online.

Uncovering effective strategies that align with learners' diverse learning styles not only enhance educational experiences but also empower teachers to adapt their methods to a rapidly changing learning environment. This research can help create new and better ways of teaching, making technology a strong tool for specific and effective learning.

5.5.1.3 Studying the influence of parent involvement in formal assessment tasks on learners and teacher collaboration

This avenue for further research is essential due to the growing recognition of the role that parents can play in shaping their children's educational journeys. Parental involvement in assessments is a promising aspect of education that demands extensive investigation. Understanding the influence of parental participation in assessments on learner performance holds significant implications for the overall academic development of learners. Moreover, it can contribute to the enhancement of parent-teacher relationships, creating a learning environment where learners do better through teamwork.

The importance of this research lies in its potential to bridge the gap between the home and school, creating an agreeable partnership between parents and teachers. Using methods that help parents, teachers, and learners talk openly, understand each other better, and set common educational goals is very important. Family involvement is increasingly seen as a key factor in learner success, which has the potential to offer valuable insights that benefit learners, parents, teachers, and the education system.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As with any research attempt, the current study on: Enhancing assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners: Exploring the influence of teaching styles, resources and technology has provided valuable insights and contributions. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that no study is without its limitations. Identifying these limitations not only enhances the transparency and credibility of the research but also opens doors to future investigations that can address these gaps and expand our understanding. In this regard, I will discuss two

significant limitations that have emerged from this study, along with the potential avenues for further research to overcome these challenges.

5.6.1 Limitation 1: Sample size

One prominent limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size. While the data collected from this sample has provided valuable findings, it may not fully represent the broader population. The small sample size in this study might make it harder to apply the findings to a bigger group or different situations. So, future research could be improved by using larger and more varied groups to make sure the results can be used in different situations and by different kinds of people.

5.6.2 Limitation 2: Data collection methods

Another limitation pertains to the data collection methods employed in this study. In this study, data collection methods included focus group interviews, questionnaires and lesson observations which provided qualitative data. The data collected in this study might not be completely neutral because people may not always provide completely accurate information when they fill out questionnaires or talk in focus group interviews. Additionally, interviews could be influenced by the person asking the questions and their opinions, which may affect the findings. Improvement for future research could use different methods, like peer review and member-checking where participants review and confirm the accuracy and interpretation of their own data, ensuring trustworthiness. Therefore, the information we gather might not always be completely accurate because people can have their own opinions or misunderstand questions. To improve this, we can try different ways of collecting information, to double-check the results and reduce mistakes.

Researchers can also combine both numbers and words in their studies to get a better understanding of the topic. Thus, in summary, acknowledging and dealing with these issues in my study opens the door for future studies to learn more about improving assessments and English performance in Grade 6 by looking at teaching styles, resources, and technology. By handling these challenges, researchers can keep making progress and find useful ideas for real-world situations.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Engaging in this research journey exploring the areas of assessment and academic performance in EFAL for Grade 6 learners has been a profoundly enriching experience. The search of knowledge in this field has not only deepened my understanding but has also shed light on the transformative potential of effective teaching strategies, resource utilization, and the integration of technology which optimize the academic performance of learners.

The value of this research extends far beyond the confines of academia. It underscores the critical role teachers are playing in shaping the schooling environment, of Grade 6 learners particularly, in supporting school success which refers to my theoretical framework: Educational Effectiveness. Understanding the complex interplay between teaching styles, resources, and technology has shown the way to better teaching and learner success.

As I reflect upon this research effort, I am reminded of the meaningful influence that dedicated teachers, resources, and thoughtful integration of technology can have on the learning journey of young minds (specifically Grade 6 learners in the EFAL classroom). It is a milestone where not only the gathering of knowledge takes place but also the shaping of the future of education together with the future generation of learners.

In conclusion, this research has not only enriched my personal understanding on how teachers teach, and learners learn, but it has also showed me the way to a better future for Grade 6 learners in EFAL education, with diverse teaching styles, efficient use of resources and more technology. This marks a significant moment where blending teaching, learning, and assessing with technology, offers exciting opportunities for future generations.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNISA university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2023/08/10

Ref: **2023/08/10/14800098/15/AM**
Name: Ms R CARSTENS
Student No.:14800098

Dear Ms R CARSTENS

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2023/08/10 to 2026/08/10

Researcher(s): Name: Ms R CARSTENS
E-mail address: rindicarstens@yahoo.com
Telephone: 0840404380

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof. E.C. du Plessis
E-mail address: dplesec@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0828093903

Title of research:

Enhancing Assessment and Academic Performance in English as a First Additional Language for Grade 6 Learners: Exploring the Impact of Teaching Styles, Resources, and Technology

Qualification: MEd Curriculum Studies

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2023/08/10 to 2026/08/10.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2023/08/10 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2026/08/10**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2023/08/10/14800098/15/AM** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Prof Mpine Makoe
EXECUTIVE DEAN
qakisme@unisa.ac.za

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APPENDIX B: LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AND PERMISSION LETTER AT LAERSKOOL [redacted]

Rindi Carstens
197 Springbok Street, Anmar Park Complex, Unit 1
Centurion, Wierdapark
0157
0840404380
8 July 2023

Laerskool [redacted]
Corner of [redacted] Streets
Laerskool [redacted]
Centurion, [redacted]
0157

Subject: ENHANCING ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE FOR GRADE 6 LEARNERS: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING STYLES, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY

Dear Mrs. [redacted]

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Rindi Carstens, and I am writing to inform you about a research project that I have conducted on the topic of how technology and teaching styles influence assessment in the Grade 6 group, specifically focusing on English First Additional Language (FAL).

As an enthusiastic researcher and educator, I have always been passionate about exploring the impact of technology on the educational environment. With the advancement of technology, it has become crucial to understand how it can be effectively integrated into teaching practices to enhance the learning experience of students.

I have diligently examined the influence of technology and different teaching styles on the assessment methods used in the Grade 6 English FAL class. My research aims to shed light on how these factors can shape and improve assessment practices, ultimately benefiting both learners and teachers.

Data will be gathered through quantitative research methods, including focus group interviews with Grade 6 learners, open-ended questionnaires for Grade 6 teachers and classroom observations during assessment. These research methods will allow me to explore various aspects such as the use of educational technology tools, the impact on student engagement, and the effectiveness of different teaching styles in promoting learning and assessment outcomes.

The key findings of my research will indicate if the integration of technology into the teaching process has a positive impact on assessment practices. It has been observed that technology enhances student engagement, fosters independent learning, and promotes critical thinking skills.

Additionally, different teaching styles, such as collaborative learning and personalized instruction, have shown promising results in terms of learner performance and assessment outcomes.

I believe that the findings from my research project can offer valuable insights to the educational community at Laerskool [redacted].

By understanding the influence of technology and teaching styles on assessment in Grade 6 English FAL, we can develop informed strategies and practices that align with the needs of our learners and enhance their learning experience.

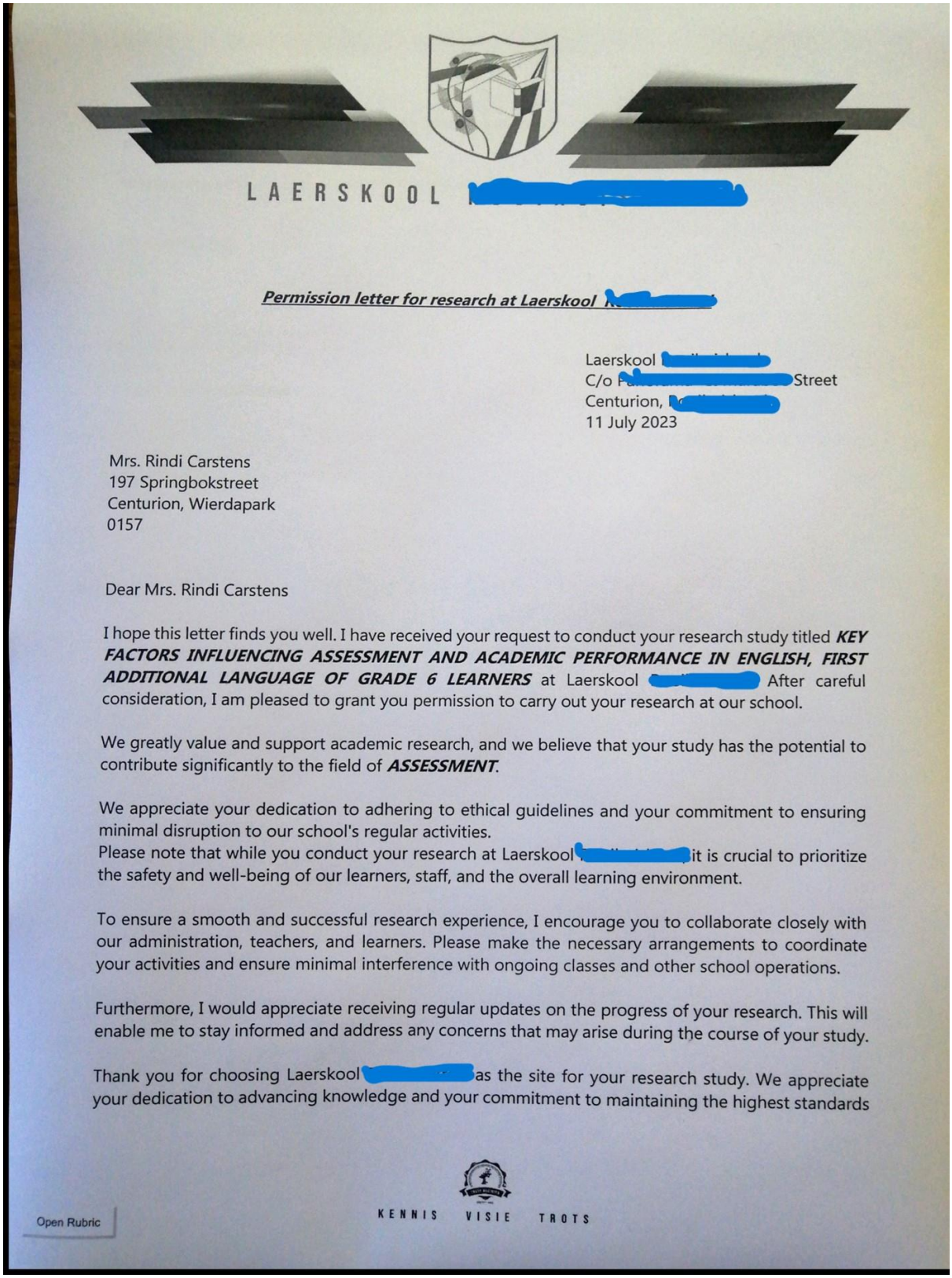
I would be honored to present my research findings and recommendations to the selected Grade 6 educators and learners. Additionally, I would appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with the school in implementing some of the identified best practices and innovative approaches to assessment in the Grade 6 English FAL class.

Thank you for considering my request to share my research findings with Laerskool [redacted]l. I believe that together, we can create a positive impact on the education system and empower our learners for future success.

Please feel free to contact me at 084 0404380 or rindicarstens@yahoo.com if you have any further questions or would like to discuss this matter in detail.

I look forward to hearing from you soon and potentially working together to enhance the educational experience of our learners.

Warm regards,
Rindi Carstens



LAERSKOOL [redacted]

Permission letter for research at Laerskool [redacted]

Laerskool [redacted]
C/o [redacted] Street
Centurion, [redacted]
11 July 2023

Mrs. Rindi Carstens
197 Springbokstreet
Centurion, Wierdapark
0157

Dear Mrs. Rindi Carstens

I hope this letter finds you well. I have received your request to conduct your research study titled ***KEY FACTORS INFLUENCING ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH, FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE OF GRADE 6 LEARNERS*** at Laerskool [redacted] After careful consideration, I am pleased to grant you permission to carry out your research at our school.

We greatly value and support academic research, and we believe that your study has the potential to contribute significantly to the field of ***ASSESSMENT***.

We appreciate your dedication to adhering to ethical guidelines and your commitment to ensuring minimal disruption to our school's regular activities.
Please note that while you conduct your research at Laerskool [redacted] it is crucial to prioritize the safety and well-being of our learners, staff, and the overall learning environment.

To ensure a smooth and successful research experience, I encourage you to collaborate closely with our administration, teachers, and learners. Please make the necessary arrangements to coordinate your activities and ensure minimal interference with ongoing classes and other school operations.

Furthermore, I would appreciate receiving regular updates on the progress of your research. This will enable me to stay informed and address any concerns that may arise during the course of your study.

Thank you for choosing Laerskool [redacted] as the site for your research study. We appreciate your dedication to advancing knowledge and your commitment to maintaining the highest standards

KENNIS VISIE TROTS

Open Rubric

of professionalism and ethical conduct. Should you require any assistance or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wishing you every success in your research endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. [redacted]
Principal
Laerskool [redacted]

KENNIS VISIE TROTS

APPENDIX C: DISCUSSION POINTS FOR OPEN-ENDED FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS

Grade 6 Learner's Experience in English Education on Teaching Styles and Technology Influencing Assessment at School

Date: 2 August – 16 August 2023
Time: 14:15 - 15:15

FOCUS-GROUP 1: Wednesday, 2 August
FOCUS-GROUP 2: Friday, 4 August
FOCUS-GROUP 3: Monday, 7 August
FOCUS-GROUP 4: Tuesday, 15 August
FOCUS-GROUP 5: Wednesday, 16 August

Introduction:

- Welcome and thank the participant for their participation.
- Explain the purpose of the interview: To explore the learner's experiences with assessments and English education, including the impact of teaching styles and technology on their learning.
- Ensure the participant's understanding of the interview's anonymous and confidential nature.

Section I: Assessments in class

1. Can you describe your experience with assessments in English class? How do you feel when you have to take tests or exams?
2. What do you think are the most important factors that affect your performance in English? For example, is it the teaching style, the learning resources, or something else?

Section II: Impact of Teaching Styles on Learning

3. How do you think different teaching styles impact your learning in English? Can you provide examples of teaching methods that you find effective or ineffective?
4. Do you prefer English lessons that are teacher-centered or learner-centered? Why? What teaching approach do you think is more effective for your learning?

Section III: Technology in English Education

5. Do you feel that technology plays a role in your English education? How does the use of technology, such as visualizers, YouTube videos, and PowerPoint slides, enhance or hinder your learning experience?

6. Have you noticed any differences in your academic performance in English when technology is integrated into the lessons compared to traditional teaching methods? If so, how do you think it has impacted your learning?
7. How confident do you feel in using technology to assist your English learning outside of the classroom? Are there any specific digital tools or resources that you find helpful?

Section IV: Teacher's impact and interactive activities

8. How does your English teacher's teaching style impact your understanding and performance in EFAL?
9. How important do you think it is to have interactive activities or discussions in English class? How do these activities contribute to your understanding of the subject?

Section V: Teacher's improvement and final thoughts

10. In what ways do you think your teacher could improve their teaching to help you achieve your full potential in English?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with assessments and learning English? Any suggestions or ideas that you think would improve your learning in this subject?

Conclusion:

- Thank the participant for their valuable insights and contributions to the interview.
- Reiterate the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.
- Ask if there are any questions or clarifications needed.

APPENDIX D (I): OPEN-ENDED FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS

OPEN-ENDED FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS FOR GRADE 6 LEARNERS:

Thank you for participating in this focus group discussion. Your input is valuable in helping us understand your experiences and perspectives on assessment and academic performance in English. Please feel free to share your thoughts openly and honestly. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, and all opinions are important. Your responses will be kept confidential. This information will be recorded, and notes will be jotted down by the researcher.

1. Can you describe your experience with assessments in English class? How do you feel when you have to take tests or exams?
2. What do you think are the most important factors that affect your performance in English? For example is it the teaching style, the learning resources, or something else?
3. How do you think different teaching styles impact your learning in English? Can you provide examples of teaching methods that you find effective or ineffective?
4. Do you feel that technology plays a role in your English education? How does the use of technology, such as visualizers, YouTube video's and PowerPoint slides, enhance or hinder your learning experience?
5. Do you prefer English lessons that are teacher-centered (The focus is primarily on the instructor) or learner-centered (the focus is on the learner rather than the teacher)? Why? What teaching approach do you think is more effective for your learning?
6. How does your English teacher's teaching style impact your understanding and performance in EFAL?
7. How important do you think it is to have interactive activities or discussions in English class? How do these activities contribute to your understanding of the subject?
8. Have you noticed any differences in your academic performance in English when technology is integrated into the lessons compared to traditional teaching methods? If so, how do you think it has impacted your learning?
9. How confident do you feel in using technology to assist your English learning outside of the classroom? Are there any specific digital tools or resources that you find helpful?
10. In what ways do you think your teacher could improve their teaching to help you achieve your full potential in English?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with assessments and learning English? Any suggestions or ideas that you think would improve your learning in this subject?

APPENDIX D (II): AN EXAMPLE OF OPEN-ENDED FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEW 1 WITH GRADE 6 LEARNERS

OPEN-ENDED FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH GRADE 6 LEARNERS:

Thank you for participating in this focus group discussion. Your input is valuable in helping us understand your experiences and perspectives on assessment and academic performance in English. Please feel free to share your thoughts openly and honestly. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers, and all opinions are important. Your responses will be kept confidential. This information will be recorded, and notes will be jotted down by the researcher.

1. Can you describe your experience with assessments in English class? How do you feel when you have to take tests or exams?

   Dealing with stress and feeling the pressure of time during tests is something we definitely experience. It's a common theme that came up when we talked in our groups. We all agreed that feeling anxious about our performance is real, and it's something we can't just ignore. It's tough for us sometimes, especially when we have limited time during assessments. We think it's essential for teachers to understand how we feel and create fair and well-organized tests to support us. One of my friends in our group, who always gets good grades, described it as feeling like we're in a 'battlefield' when we have to take a test.

2. What do you think are the most important factors that affect your performance in English? For example, is it the teaching style, the learning resources, or something else?

   We appreciate teachers who use exciting and captivating teaching methods, believing that these approaches are more effective for specific subjects. "Fun" and "drama" are essentially the same thing. This engaging and dramatic approach to delivering lessons helps them stay interested and focused on the subject matter. Regarding learning resources, we prefer interactive and engaging teaching styles that encourage our active participation.

3. How do you think different teaching styles impact your learning in English? Can you provide examples of teaching methods that you find effective or ineffective?

   Many of us really prefer interactive and fun teaching methods. In fact, we like it when we get to participate and not just sit and listen. Instead of just sitting quietly and listening, we enjoy it when our teachers involve us in the learning process. It makes learning more fun and exciting. Based on what we said, we

all agree that when teachers engage us in class, it helps us learn better and get better grades. Some of the teaching methods we don't like are the ones where the teacher does all the talking and we just read from our books. We don't enjoy that kind of teaching, and it doesn't work well for us.

4. Do you feel that technology plays a role in your English education? How does the use of technology, such as visualizers, YouTube videos and PowerPoint slides, enhance or hinder your learning experience?

   We find that using interactive and fun teaching methods, such as getting to participate actively and using dramatic styles, can make learning more enjoyable and help us learn better. In fact, Learner 1 uttered that she prefers teaching with a visualizer, because it allows her to see the work, while the teacher is explaining. As she also verbalised that she is a: "visual-creature".

5. "Also, in our very first focus group interview, Learner 1 told us that she likes it when the teacher uses a visualizer because it helps her see the work while the teacher explains. She mentioned that she's a 'visual-creature,' which means she learns better when she can see things. "Do you prefer English lessons that are teacher-centered (The focus is primarily on the instructor) or learner-centered (the focus is on the learner rather than the teacher)? Why? What teaching approach do you think is more effective for your learning?

   We would like to make it clear that we really like English FAL lessons when they are centered around us. We want to be actively involved and engaged in the learning process and we believe that this approach not only makes learning fun but also helps us to do better in our marks.

6. How does your English teacher's teaching style impact your understanding and performance in EFAL?

   Using fun and interactive teaching methods where we can join class discussions and work in groups really helps us in Grade 6. It's not just about the teacher talking; it's also about us sharing our ideas. Learner 1 said : "It's like we're a team with our teacher."

7. How important do you think it is to have interactive activities or discussions in English class? How do these activities contribute to your understanding of the subject?

   Especially when it comes to subjects, we really enjoy a "fun" classroom atmosphere, and it makes us like the subject more. Learner 4 mentioned: "The best classes are the ones where we get to explore our creative side, like when we write stories." How teachers teach can make a big difference for us. We want to be part of the learning process and prefer when classes are enjoyable.

8. Have you noticed any differences in your academic performance in English when technology is integrated into the lessons compared to traditional teaching methods? If so, how do you think it has impacted your learning?

   We really like having technology as part of our classroom; doing traditional book work can get a bit boring.

9. How confident do you feel in using technology to assist your English learning outside of the classroom? Are there any specific digital tools or resources that you find helpful?

   When it comes to using technology outside of class, most of don't feel very confident. Talking about digital tools, we aren't too sure about using technology on our own. But there's this one app, Duolingo, that's pretty cool. We really like it because it helps us learn languages in a fun way. L4 *said:* "*Duolingo is easy to use, and as we get better at it, we start feeling more confident using technology for learning."*

10. In what ways do you think your teacher could improve their teaching to help you achieve your full potential in English?

    We all think that when our classroom feels fun, we start to like the subject more, and the teacher's teaching gets better. Teachers must make their learning space and teaching ways interesting.

11. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with assessments and learning English? Any suggestions or ideas that you think would improve your learning in this subject?

    The older teachers don't really get how we learn nowadays, and it's hard for them to change their teaching to what we need. What do we need? TECHNOLOGY!

APPENDIX E (I): OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE

Open-Ended Questionnaire: Grade 6 Teachers' Perspective on Teaching Styles and Technology in Assessment

Dear Grade 6 Teacher,

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. Your feedback is valuable in helping us understand how identified key factors for example teaching styles and technology influence assessment and academic performance. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will be anonymous and confidential.

1. Please highlight your teaching style in class:
   a) Teacher-centered
   b) Learner-centered
   c) Mixed (combination of both)

2. How do you perceive the impact of your teaching style on learners' performance? Please explain.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. In what ways do you incorporate technology into your lessons? (Highlight all that apply):
   a) Computers
   b) Tablets
   c) Interactive whiteboards
   d) Online learning

4. How do you believe the use of technology enhances learners' engagement and understanding in your subject? Please provide specific examples, if any.

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Do you feel adequately trained and supported in using technology?
   a) Yes, I feel confident and supported.
   b) No, I need more training and support.
   c) I have some knowledge but would like further guidance.

6. In your opinion, how effective are formal assessments (exams, tests, etc.) in assessing learners' understanding and progress?
   a) Very effective
   b) Somewhat effective
   c) Not very effective
   d) Not effective at all
   e) Not sure

7. What resources or tools do you believe are necessary to improve your teaching and enhance learners' potential? Please provide specific examples, if any.

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. In what ways do you incorporate interactive activities or discussions in your classes? Please provide examples.

   _____

   _____

9. Assessment Practices: Which types of formal assessments (exams, tests, etc.) do you use to assess learners' understanding and progress? (Please tick the applicable options and motivate).
   a) Written exams
   b) Oral exams
   c) Project-based assessments
   d) Portfolios
   e) Other (please specify) _____

10. Are there any specific challenges you face in conducting assessments? If so, please describe.

    _____

    _____

11. In your experience, how factors such as teaching styles and the use of technology impact learners' academic performance? Please provide any observations or insights you have noticed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Additional Comments: Is there anything else you would like to share about factors that have an impact on your assessment and learners' academic performance?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation! Your input will greatly contribute to our understanding of how teaching styles and technology can be optimized to improve learning and assessment.

APPENDIX E (II) : AN EXAMPLE OF AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE OF T1

Open-Ended Questionnaire: Grade 6 Teachers' Perspective on Teaching Styles and Technology in Assessment

Dear Grade 6 Teacher,

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. Your feedback is valuable in helping us understand how identified key factors for example teaching styles and technology influence assessment and academic performance. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will be anonymous and confidential.

1. Please highlight your teaching style in class:
   a) Teacher-centered
   b) Learner-centered
   c) Mixed (combination of both)

2. How do you perceive the impact of your teaching style on learners' performance? Please explain.

   We teachers, we get it, you know? We know that bringing technology into our teaching is super important. Those interactive resources, they're like gold, and we really should use them more in our schools. I mean: " Standing in front of todays' generation of learners with a book, is a joke."

3. In what ways do you incorporate technology into your lessons? (Highlight all that apply):
   a) Computers
   b) Tablets
   c) Interactive whiteboards
   d) Online learning

4. How do you believe the use of technology enhances learners' engagement and understanding in your subject? Please provide specific examples, if any.

   You see, all of us teachers, we totally get that Grade 6 learners are all about those engaging and eye-catching materials, not the old-school stuff. And trust me, we're all on board with using interactive tools to up our teaching game. It's crystal clear that when we use technology the right way, it makes learning way more exciting and helps kids understand things better, no matter what subject it is. T1 wrote: "It's clear that when we use interactive and visually appealing materials, learners' interest in the subject grows. I like online

quizzes and use Google Classroom for that. Instant feedback! Kids can spot their mistakes right away. It's awesome!

5. Do you feel adequately trained and supported in using technology?
   a) Yes, I feel confident and supported.
   b) No, I need more training and support.
   c) I have some knowledge but would like further guidance.

6. In your opinion, how effective are formal assessments (exams, tests, etc.) in assessing learners' understanding and progress?
   a) Very effective
   b) Somewhat effective
   c) Not very effective
   d) Not effective at all
   e) Not sure

7. What resources or tools do you believe are necessary to improve your teaching and enhance learners' potential? Please provide specific examples, if any.

   You know, when we look at the way older teachers like like to do things and compare it to the newer methods, it's clear that interesting materials are a big hit. It just shows how crucial it is to have resources that amp up the learning experience. I'm talking about stuff like projectors and visualizers – they really help us explain things better, especially when it comes to today's learners and their preferences.

8. In what ways do you incorporate interactive activities or discussions in your classes? Please provide examples.

   Group Discussions
   Interactive Quizzes

   I use technology to run quizzes with those multiple-choice questions. It's a cool way to get the learners actively involved, you know, by using technology as a helping hand.

9. Assessment Practices: Which types of formal assessments (exams, tests, etc.) do you use to assess learners' understanding and progress? (Please tick the applicable options and motivate).
   a) Written exams
   b) Oral exams
   c) Project-based assessments
   d) Portfolios
   e) Other (please specify) _____
10. Are there any specific challenges you face in conducting assessments? If so, please describe.

Yep, all of us teachers agree that sometimes we're strapped for time when it comes to crafting assessments, especially with all that content we need to get through. It can be a bit tricky to tweak those assessments to cater to all the different types of learners in our class.

11. In your experience, how factors such as teaching styles and the use of technology impact learners' academic performance? Please provide any observations or insights you have noticed.

    I believe that to make assessments work for everyone, we've got to bridge that generation gap, give teachers the right materials, provide digital tools that offer quick feedback, and make sure our fellow teachers are well-trained.

12. Additional Comments: Is there anything else you would like to share about factors that have an impact on your assessment and learners' academic performance?

    N/A

    Thank you for your participation! Your input will greatly contribute to our understanding of how teaching styles and technology can be optimized to improve learning and assessment.

APPENDIX F (I): OBSERVATION SHEET

Observation sheet

Grade 6 Learners' Behavior During English Assessment

Observer's Name: Rindi Carstens Date: ***31 July – 8 September 2023***
Class: Grade 6
Subject: English FAL

Objective: To observe the behavior of Grade 6 learners during an English assessment task: RESEARCH PROJECT.

Observation Categories:

1. Engagement and Focus
1.1. Are the learners actively engaged in the assessment task?
1.2. Are they focused on their work without distractions?
1.3. Do they demonstrate concentration and attentiveness?
2. Collaboration and Interaction
2.1. Do the learners collaborate or interact with their peers during the assessment?
2.2. Do they discuss the assessment questions or share ideas?
2.3. Are they helping and supporting each other when needed?
3. Use of Resources and Materials
3.1. Do the learners effectively utilize the provided resources (e.g., textbooks, dictionaries, etc.) during the assessment?
3.2. Are they referring to relevant materials to find answers or clarify doubts?
4. Time Management
4.1. Are the learners managing their time effectively during the assessment?
4.2. Do they pace themselves appropriately to complete the task within the allocated time?
4.3. Are there any learners who finish early or struggle to complete the assessment on time?
5. Writing Skills
5.1. How do the learners demonstrate their writing skills during the assessment?
5.2. Do they structure their responses logically and coherently?
5.3. Are they using appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation?

6. Observation Scale/ Sheet:
Excellent: The learner consistently demonstrates positive behavior in the observed category.
Satisfactory: The learner displays acceptable behavior in the observed category.
Needs Improvement: The learner's behavior in the observed category requires improvement.

Observation Categories	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
1. Engagement and Focus			
2. Collaboration and Interaction			
3. Use of Resources and Materials			
4. Time Management			
5. Writing Skills			

Additional Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F (II) : **MY COMPLETED OBSERVATION SHEET OF T2**

Observation sheet

Grade 6 Learners' Behavior During English Assessment

Observer's Name: Rindi Carstens Date: ***31 July – 8 September 2023***
Class: Grade 6
Subject: English FAL

Objective: To observe the behavior of Grade 6 learners during an English assessment task: RESEARCH PROJECT.

Observation Categories:

1. Engagement and Focus
1.1. Are the learners actively engaged in the assessment task?
1.2. Are they focused on their work without distractions?
1.3. Do they demonstrate concentration and attentiveness?
2. Collaboration and Interaction
2.1. Do the learners collaborate or interact with their peers during the assessment?
2.2. Do they discuss the assessment questions or share ideas?
2.3. Are they helping and supporting each other when needed?
3. Use of Resources and Materials
3.1. Do the learners effectively utilize the provided resources (e.g., textbooks, dictionaries, etc.) during the assessment?
3.2. Are they referring to relevant materials to find answers or clarify doubts?
4. Time Management
4.1. Are the learners managing their time effectively during the assessment?
4.2. Do they pace themselves appropriately to complete the task within the allocated time?
4.3. Are there any learners who finish early or struggle to complete the assessment on time?
5. Writing Skills
5.1. How do the learners demonstrate their writing skills during the assessment?
5.2. Do they structure their responses logically and coherently?
5.3. Are they using appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation?

6. Observation Scale/ Sheet:
Excellent: The learner consistently demonstrates positive behavior in the observed category.
Satisfactory: The learner displays acceptable behavior in the observed category.
Needs Improvement: The learner's behavior in the observed category requires improvement.

Observation Categories	Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
1. Engagement and Focus			
2. Collaboration and Interaction			
3. Use of Resources and Materials			
4. Time Management			
5. Writing Skills			

Additional Notes:

As a Grade 6 teacher myself, I've noticed that T2 really appreciate using popular tools in his classroom like computers, online learning platforms (YouTube), and visual aids such as PowerPoint slides. I have observed that these technological tools captured the teacher and learners' attention, because it makes learning faster and easier with pictures, videos, and interactive activities. Technology saves time and makes explanations simpler, especially the PowerPoint slides which helped the learners to follow instructions more easily and understand concepts better through interactive content. T2 is a bit less dramatic in his approach, but he's very competent in using technology as a main resource, but T2 still managed to capture the learners' attention through technology.

When it comes to collaboration and interaction among Grade 6 learners, I've noticed that teacher guidance plays a crucial role in facilitating teamwork and keeping learners on the right track. Many of the learners have shown great enthusiasm in the success of their research projects.

It's evident that integrating resources, especially technology, significantly improves teaching and aligns with the goal of meeting the needs of current-generation learners (Gen-Z). Technology enhances teaching by making learning more engaging, efficient, and personalized to learners' preferences, ultimately helping them reach their fullest potential. Matching what our learners like, recognizing the advantages of technology in education, and offering guidance for using technology effectively are essential. This helps make assessments in FAL education smoother and more successful.

Lastly, in terms of time management in the classroom, several key observations have occurred in the learning environment. T2 had a well-structured lesson plan in place, ensuring that learners feel safe and know what is expected of them. However, there are periods when distractions occur, such as learners being called out during class for extra-mural activities like rugby- or netball matches. Learner absenteeism also poses challenges, making it difficult to plan and keep every learner up to date regarding their research project.

Regarding Grade 6 learners' writing skills during a research project, I've observed various aspects of their language proficiency and communication abilities. I've paid careful attention to their command of grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary, as these elements play a critical role in effective written communication. I've noted how creative the learners are in approaching their projects; furthermore, I've extended my observations to how learners navigate the writing process itself, including their ability to plan, draft, revise, and edit their work, reflecting their proficiency in organizing and refining their ideas.

APPENDIX G: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Confidentiality agreement

This Confidentiality Agreement regarding the research: how teaching styles and technology affect assessment, is entered into on 31 July 2023 between Rindi Carstens, with a primary school, Die Laerskool [redacted] in Centurion.

The Researcher and the primary school: Laerskool [redacted] intend to engage in discussions, exchanges, and collaborations related to the research project titled: **ENHANCING ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE FOR GRADE 6 LEARNERS: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING STYLES, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY,** including the sharing of confidential and proprietary information.

The purpose of this Agreement is to protect the confidential information disclosed by the primary school to the Researcher during the course of their collaboration.

Definition of Confidential Information refers to any non-public information, including, but not limited to, research data, assessment methodologies, teaching styles, technology platforms, lesson plans, interview transcripts, student information, and any other information that is designated as confidential by the Company. Confidential Information may be disclosed orally, in writing, through presentations, or in any other form.

- The Researcher shall not disclose, publish, or share the Confidential Information with any third party without the prior written consent of the Company, except as required by law.
- The Researcher shall use the Confidential Information solely for the purpose of conducting the Research Project.
- The Researcher shall take all reasonable measures to protect the Confidential Information from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure.
- The Researcher shall limit access to the Confidential Information only to those individuals who have a need to know and who have also agreed to abide by the terms of this Agreement.
- The Researcher shall provide a written confirmation of the return or destruction of the Confidential Information.

Data Privacy and Protection:

- The Researcher shall comply with all applicable data protection laws and regulations.
- The Researcher shall take appropriate security measures to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of personal data.

This Agreement shall remain in effect for the duration of the Research Project. The obligations of confidentiality under this Agreement shall survive its termination or expiration.

This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding between the Parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior discussions, understandings, or agreements, whether oral or written.

By signing below, the Parties acknowledge that they have read and understood the terms of this Confidentiality Agreement and agree to be bound by its provisions.

[Rindi Carstens] [Laerskool [redacted]]

Date: _____

APPENDIX H: CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT/ GUARDIAN

Research Consent Form for Parent/Guardian

Title of the Study: ENHANCING ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE FOR GRADE 6 LEARNERS: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING STYLES, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY.

Researcher: Rindi Carstens ***Institution:*** UNISA ***Contact Information***: 0840404380

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I would like to invite your child, _____ to participate in a research study on the impact of key factors such as teaching styles and technology on learners' assessment and academic performance in English. This study aims to gain insights into the teaching practices and technological integration that influence English education. Your child's participation is entirely voluntary, and this consent form seeks your permission for their involvement in the study.

FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEWS will be held directly after school from 14h15- 15h15 in Mrs. Rindi Carstens' class. These interviews consist of 6 learners who are selected where an open discussion regarding the title of the study will be done orally and recorded as a group.

Please keep the following date open for your child's interview:

_____

Please read the following information carefully before providing your consent for your child's participation:

Purpose of the Study: The aim of the study is to enhance assessment and academic performance in English as a First Addiotional Language for Grade 6 learners by exploring the impact of teaching styles, resources and technology usage in the classroom. The findings will therfore contribute to enhancing teaching practices and optimizing the use of technology in English education.

Procedures: Your child's participation will involve an interview. The interview will provide an opportunity for more in-depth discussions on the topic. The data collected will be anonymized and treated with strict confidentiality.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time without penalty or negative consequences. Your child's decision to participate or not will not affect their academic standing or relationship with the school.

Confidentiality: All data collected during this research will be treated with strict confidentiality. The information obtained will be used for research purposes only and will be reported in aggregate form. Individual identities will be kept anonymous, and any identifying information will be removed during the analysis and reporting of the findings.

Data Storage and Retention: The data collected will be securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. Data will be retained for a period of 5 years and will then be permanently deleted.

Potential Risks and Benefits: Participating in this research study does not pose any known physical or psychological risks to your child. However, the study may benefit the educational community by providing valuable insights into effective teaching practices and the integration of technology in English education.

Contact Information: If you have any questions, concerns, or would like additional information about this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me at 0840404380. Additionally, you may contact Prof. E du Plessis, the research supervisor, at 0828093903.

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above, and you freely give your consent for your child to participate in this research study.

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature:

_____ Date: _____

I understand that I will be provided with a copy of this consent form for my records.

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____
Parent/Guardian's Signature:

_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX I: ASSENT FORM FOR GRADE 6 LEARNER

Assent Form for Grade 6 Learner

Title of the Study: ENHANCING ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE FOR GRADE 6 LEARNERS: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING STYLES, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY.

Researcher: Rindi Carstens ***Institution:*** UNISA ***Contact Information***: 0840404380

Dear _____,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study on the impact of factors such as teaching styles and technology on learners' assessment and academic performance in English. The aim of the study is to use identified key factors, to determine how assessment and academic performance is influenced by Language of Grade 6 learners via a focus group interview. Your participation is completely voluntary, and this assent form seeks your permission to be involved in the study.

Please keep the following date open for your interview:

_____

Please read the following information carefully before providing your assent to participate:

Purpose of the Study: The aim of the study is to enhance assessment and academic performance in English as a First Addiotional Language for Grade 6 learners by exploring the impact of teaching styles, resources and technology usage in the classroom. The findings will therfore contribute to enhancing teaching practices and optimizing the use of technology in English education.

Procedures: Your participation will involve participating in a group interview. The interviews will provide an opportunity for more in-depth discussions on the topic. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Your decision will not affect your grades or your relationship with the school.

Confidentiality: All information you provide during this research will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your identity will remain anonymous, and your individual responses will be kept private. The data collected will be used for research purposes only and reported in a way that ensures your anonymity.

Potential Risks and Benefits: Participating in this research study does not pose any known physical or psychological risks. However, the study may benefit the educational community by providing insights into effective teaching practices and the integration of technology in English education.

Contact Information: If you have any questions, concerns, or need further information about this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me at 0840404380. Additionally, you may contact Prof. E. Du Plessis, the research supervisor, at 0828093903.

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above, and you freely give your assent to participate in this research study.

Learner's Name: _____ Learner's Signature:

_____ Date: _____

I understand that I will be provided with a copy of this assent form for my records.

Parent/Guardian's Name (if applicable): _____
Parent/Guardian's

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX J: EDITING CERTIFICATE

FROM THE DESK OF

EDITING & CRITICAL READING SERVICES

Tuesday, 19 March 24

864 Justice Mohamet St
Brooklyn 0181

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I have edited the following dissertation: ENHANCING ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AS A FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE FOR GRADE 6 LEARNERS: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF TEACHING STYLES, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY by R Carstens for language use. The page layout of the document remains the responsibility of the student.

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