



Teachers' Challenges of Using Local History Projects to Develop Learners' Historical Skills – A Case Study of Motheo Education District

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the teachers' challenges in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Despite the importance of local history projects in developing learners' historical skills and knowledge, there is evidence that teachers are struggling to teach and administer them effectively. The study used critical pedagogy as a critical framework, along with an interpretive paradigm, to guide the qualitative approach to achieve the aim and objective of the study. The study purposefully sampled five participants from five different schools in the Motheo Education District, Free State Province. Semi-structured interviews were used as a data collection strategy. Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data. The researchers' findings show that social science teachers who participated in the study faced many challenges in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. To mitigate these challenges, the Department of Education should develop strategies to organize workshops to empower teachers, specifically in teaching local history projects, using available resources. The paper also recommends a collaborative effort of relevant stakeholders to come together to assist the schools. State the contribution of this study to scholarship. The study is contributing to research on social sciences education by assisting teachersto be aware of challenges that impacts on the teaching of local history project. It is anticipated this with this knowledge Social Science teachers will be able to minimise or circumvent these challenges.

Keywords: Local history project, Historical skills, Teaching History

INTRODUCTION

The study explores teachers' challenges in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The subject of history represents transferring and investigating previous events that are related to human beings and their life aspects.¹ The present is being formed through history, and the future is being drawn.² Rapid change and development in this field also significantly manifest in Social Science as a school subject.³ Studying history develops mental, social, and motor skills, such as critical thinking.⁴

¹ Peter N. Stearns, *The Industrial Revolution in World History* (Routledge, 2020).

² François Jacob, *The Logic of Life: A History of Heredity* (Princeton University Press, 2022).

³ David Byrne and Gillian Callaghan, *Complexity Theory and the Social Sciences: The State of the Art* (Routledge, 2022).

⁴ Roy Suddaby et al., "Rhetorical History as Institutional Work," *Journal of Management Studies* 60, no. 1 (January 28, 2023): 242–78, <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12860>.

Furthermore, these skills are considered necessary in light of the knowledge explosion era that the world is currently witnessing.⁵ Subsequently, these skills impose the necessity of learning new thinking skills such as innovative thinking, critical thinking, and historical thinking skills to face the considerable challenges of the era; hence, the new way of teaching and learning history requires that the subject must focus on developing learners' historical skills.⁶

Through local history, learners are presented with concepts that offer spatial awareness, a sense of chronology, and the capacity to put their lives in a historical context.⁷ It has been positioned as research and a project activity under out-of-school learning.⁸ Therefore, local history projects help learners think historically by providing evidence that can be interpreted and deduced.⁹ Local history project methods can be applied at all levels of the education system, from primary schools to higher education. Still, it is appropriate for primary school learners needing concrete learning. Furthermore, scholars emphasized that oral strategies in presenting local history are a powerful pedagogical tool that can be used in the classroom to develop learners' historical skills.¹⁰ Local history brings history alive to learners by capturing and connecting personal stories and historical events to them.¹¹

Some challenges experienced by teachers when teaching local history include confronting learners' choices and the multidisciplinary teaching of History and Geography.¹² Beginning history teachers face challenges such as a lack of content knowledge, growing emphasis on the standard of accountability, an increasingly diverse learner population, and a lack of support and mentoring.¹³ Despite the importance of teaching learners local history projects in schools to develop their historical skills, proper curriculum implementation is yet to be realized, as demonstrated by the challenges teachers face.¹⁴ Bertram asserts that a plethora of evidence and a growing body of research shows a problem with teaching local history projects that do not seem to develop learners' historical skills.¹⁵

Kabombwe and Mulenga add that teachers teach local history projects through teacher-centred approaches that focus mainly on content, not on developing historical skills.¹⁶ Furthermore, through the local history projects, learners can question, apply, and consolidate new knowledge.¹⁷ The National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2005) and the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) endorsed this educational approach in South Africa.¹⁸ Despite all these successive interventions,

⁵ Roba Abbas et al., "Safeguarding the Guardians to Safeguard the Bio-Economy and Mitigate Social Injustices," in *Cyberbiosecurity* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 185–215, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-26034-6_12.

⁶ Carlota López-Fernández et al., "Putting Critical Thinking at the Center of History Lessons in Primary Education through Error- and Historical Thinking-Based Instruction," *Thinking Skills and Creativity* 49 (September 2023): 101316, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2023.101316>.

⁷ Ayşegül Tural, "Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmen Adaylarının Sözlü Tarih Çalışmalarına İlişkin Tutumları," *Bartın Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, October 30, 2017, 1409–19, <https://doi.org/10.14686/buefad.346862>.

⁸ İlker Dere and Mustafa Kalender, "'I Have a History!' Life Sciences Teaching with Oral History Activities," *Education and Science* 44, no. 200 (September 30, 2019): 153–73, <https://doi.org/10.15390/EB.2019.8132>.

⁹ Margaret S. Crocco and Michael P. Marino, "Promoting Inquiry-Oriented Teacher Preparation in Social Studies through the Use of Local History," *The Journal of Social Studies Research* 41, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2015.11.001>.

¹⁰ Karen M. Dutt-Doner, Susan Allen, and Kathryn Campanaro, "Understanding the Impact of Using Oral Histories in the Classroom," *The Social Studies* 107, no. 6 (November 27, 2016): 257–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00377996.2016.1221792>.

¹¹ Linda S Levstik and Keith C Barton, *Doing History: Investigating with Children in Elementary and Middle Schools* (Routledge, 2022).

¹² Catherine Whalen, Elizabeth Majocha, and Shirley Van Nuland, "Novice Teacher Challenges and Promoting Novice Teacher Retention in Canada," *European Journal of Teacher Education* 42, no. 5 (October 20, 2019): 591–607, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2019.1652906>.

¹³ Marilyn Cochran-Smith, "A Tale of Two Teachers: Learning to Teach Over Time," *Kappa Delta Pi Record* 48, no. 3 (August 7, 2012): 108–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00228958.2012.707501>.

¹⁴ Katherine L Walters, Theodore J Kopcha, and Christopher R Lawton, "'History Comes Alive': Implications for Teacher Professional Development on Place-Based Local History," in *Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference* (Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE), 2020), 1536–45.

¹⁵ Carol Bertram, "What Is Powerful Knowledge in School History? Learning from the South African and Rwandan School Curriculum Documents," *The Curriculum Journal* 30, no. 2 (June 3, 2019): 125–43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2018.1557536>.

¹⁶ Yvonne Malambo Kabombwe and Innocent Mutale Mulenga, "Implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum by Teachers of History in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia," *Yesterday and Today*, no. 22 (2019): 19–41, <https://doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2019/n22a2>.

¹⁷ Adjai Robinson, *Principles and Practice of Teaching* (Routledge, 2022).

¹⁸ Blessing Nemadziva, Steven Sexton, and Catherine Cole, "Science Communication: The Link to Enable Enquiry-Based Learning in under-Resourced Schools," *South African Journal of Science* 119, no. 1/2 (January 31, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2023/12819>.

teaching and learning remain challenging in schools.¹⁹ Some teachers still follow the traditional ways of teaching, which restrict learners' understanding and absorption of the facts and concepts described in the history curriculum.²⁰

In this regard, there must be an emphasis that the teaching method is significant and essential in achieving the educational curriculum objectives based on local history curriculum objectives aimed at developing learners' historical skills.²¹

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Pedagogy (CP) guided the study as a critical framework. CP is more than a theory; it is an inclusive teaching practice in which teachers consider how learners' identities will influence their classroom experience and allow learners a voice to speak in a classroom.²² Freire emphasized that CP is a vital approach to education, highlighting the importance of having a learner actively engaged in the learning process.²³

There must be a dialogue that allows questioning and exchanging of ideas between the teacher and the student.²⁴ Dialogue requires critical thinking and can also generate critical thinking, one of the skills that can be developed by using local history projects.²⁵ The other principle of CP that makes it relevant to the study is the principle of connecting learning with real life.²⁶ Students are not only memorizing what the teacher teaches.²⁷ Using local history can connect learning to real-life situations by bringing objects, statements, text, and pictures to explain, compare, and evaluate, and the students can argue in a real-life situation and be connected to the community.²⁸

Kincheloe made CP more relevant to the study by illuminating the role of teachers and parents and their focus on children's education so that it is closer to the child's point of view and their construction of reality and knowledge with a keen understanding.²⁹ Education aims to enhance learners' critical awareness, and teachers and parents are the most influential characters to guide learners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) emphasizes the significance of History as a subject, empowering learners with historical skills.³⁰ This challenge poses a critical gap that this study seeks to explore the challenge of how teachers can teach local history projects to develop

¹⁹ Brenda M. Modisaotsile, "The Failing Standard of Basic Education in South Africa," *Policy Brief* 72, no. 1 (2012): 1–7.

²⁰ Marina Moseikina, Saken Toktamyssov, and Svetlana Danshina, "Modern Technologies and Gamification in Historical Education," *Simulation & Gaming* 53, no. 2 (April 25, 2022): 135–56, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10468781221075965>.

²¹ Socorro G. Herrera, *Biography-Driven Culturally Responsive Teaching* (Teachers College Press, 2016).

²² Amy C. Bradshaw, "Critical Pedagogy and Educational Technology," in *Culture, Learning, and Technology* (Routledge, 2017), 8–27, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315681689-2>; Nigel C. Gibson, "Relative Opacity: A New Translation of Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*—Mission Betrayed or Fulfilled?," *Social Identities* 13, no. 1 (January 22, 2007): 69–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630601163387>.

²³ Henry A. Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350145016>.

²⁴ Henry A. Giroux and Emiliano Bosio, "Critical Pedagogy and Global Citizenship Education," in *Conversations on Global Citizenship Education* (Routledge, 2021), 3–12.

²⁵ Kathryn Paige and Graham Hardy, "Science as Human Endeavour, Critical Pedagogy and Practitioner Inquiry: Three Early Career Cases," *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education* 17, no. 4 (April 17, 2019): 679–99, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10763-018-9887-x>.

²⁶ Peter McLaren and Emiliano Bosio, "Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy and Critical Global Citizenship Education: A Conversation with Peter McLaren," *Citizenship Teaching & Learning* 17, no. 2 (June 1, 2022): 165–81, https://doi.org/10.1386/ctl_00089_1.

²⁷ Sheila L Macrine, *Critical Pedagogy in Uncertain Times: Hope and Possibilities* (Springer, 2009).

²⁸ Brooke Blevins, Kevin Magill, and Cinthia Salinas, "Critical Historical Inquiry: The Intersection of Ideological Clarity and Pedagogical Content Knowledge," *The Journal of Social Studies Research* 44, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 35–50, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jssr.2019.09.003>; Nesra Yannier, Scott E. Hudson, and Kenneth R. Koedinger, "Active Learning Is About More Than Hands-On: A Mixed-Reality AI System to Support STEM Education," *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education* 30, no. 1 (March 3, 2020): 74–96, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40593-020-00194-3>.

²⁹ Joe L. Kincheloe, "Critical Pedagogy and the Knowledge Wars of the Twenty-First Century," in *Key Works in Critical Pedagogy* (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2011), 385–405, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6091-397-6_29; Joanna Joseph Jeyaraj and Franco Gandolfi, "Empowering Students for Social Justice through a Critical Pedagogy Inspired Framework of Servant Leadership," *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 30, no. 2 (March 15, 2022): 169–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2020.1793216>.

³⁰ M C Kgari-Masondo and S Masondo, "'For Peace Sake': African Language and Xenophobia in South Africa," *Journal of African Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 3 (2019).

learners' historical skills. To position the study to make meaning, there is a need to define both concepts, local history and local history project, and firstly, a perspective on local history will be presented next.

Local History

Local history is a concept taught as a topic that refers to a particular place.³¹ Research regarding local history collects and studies all kinds of past documents about a place to construct local history narratives.³² Magro et al. add that local history studies history in a geographically local context and³³ usually incorporates cultural and social aspects of history.³⁴ Colla adds that it generally focuses on events, people, and cultural aspects within a particular community.³⁵ Conversely, Fardi adds that it involves researching and recording various aspects such as notable figures, community development, local traditions, industries, architecture, and landmarks.³⁶ Local history provides insight into an area's unique characteristics and heritage, emphasizing its importance in understanding the broader historical context and preserving a community's cultural identity.³⁷

Local History Project

The study of local history projects has a strong argument; hence, it must provide data and information from the sources and show evidence.³⁸ The concept is supported by Mallik and Bhar when defining local history projects as giving information about the study in the past and the region under study.³⁹ Zurndorfer, supported by Khalifa, extended the definition of local history project as the study of the history of our home places, including the history of our families, description of tradition, country cuisine, and folklore, and informs people's identity.⁴⁰ Moreover, Kincheloe presents the teaching of local history projects as rooted in historiography while comparing perspectives taken by different historians.⁴¹

The Value of Teaching Local History

Abbas et al. assert that the value of teaching learners local history is to help them better understand their community and other issues they see around them daily and to make sense of their immediate world.⁴² Good local history involves inquiry that allows children to investigate, drawing on their previous historical knowledge and understanding to develop their skills. Furthermore, bringing local history into the classroom helps learners better understand their values and themselves.⁴³ Most importantly, local history is the primary learning medium and source for learners because learners can understand the material they are working with, which helps them develop various skills and apply the

³¹ Stephen Howe, *The New Imperial Histories Reader* (Routledge, 2020).

³² Stephanie Pasternak, "A New Vision of Local History Narrative: Writing History in Cummington, Massachusetts," *Masters Theses*, 2009, 359.

³³ Magro, Graça, Joaquim Ramos De Carvalho, and Maria José Marcelino. *Improving History Learning through Cultural Heritage, Local History and Technology*. International Conference on Mobile Learning 2014 (10th, Madrid, Spain, Feb 28-Mar 2, 2014).

³⁴ Graça Magro, Joaquim Ramos De Carvalho, and Maria José Marcelino, *Improving History Learning through Cultural Heritage, Local History and Technology*. (ERIC, 2014).

³⁵ Piero S. Colla, "A Nation-Building Tool Under Pressure?: 'Invisible Nations', European Integration and History Teaching after 1945," 2023, 17–49, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-27246-2_2.

³⁶ Kyriaki Fardi, "The Concept of Historical Time in Early Childhood Education: Theoretical, Methodological Approaches and Practice," *History Education Research Journal* 19, no. 1 (December 22, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.14324/HERJ.19.1.11>.

³⁷ Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (University of Illinois Press, 2022).

³⁸ Ofianto Ofianto et al., "Development of Online Local History Learning Media Based on Virtual Field Trips to Enhance the Use of Primary Source Evidence," *European Journal of Educational Research* volume-12-2023, no. volume-12-issue-2-april-2023 (April 15, 2023): 775–93, <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.12.2.775>.

³⁹ Supriya Mallik and Dhritiman Bhar, "Public Library and Community Information Service: A Study," in *Indian Library Association International Conference on Sustainable Development of Library and Information Science Profession*, 2017.

⁴⁰ Muhammad Khalifa, *Culturally Responsive School Leadership* (Harvard Education Press, 2020).

⁴¹ Kincheloe, "Critical Pedagogy and the Knowledge Wars of the Twenty-First Century."

⁴² Kuzi Charamba, *Hired Guns and Human Rights: Global Governance and Access to Remedies in the Private Military and Security Industry* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020); Abbas et al., "Safeguarding the Guardians to Safeguard the Bio-Economy and Mitigate Social Injustices."

⁴³ Elyssa Ford, "Bringing Town and Gown Together: Using Local History to Engage Students and Create Collaborative Partnerships," *Journal of Museum Education* 41, no. 4 (October 12, 2016): 262–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2016.1210406>.

value of local wisdom to it.⁴⁴ The next section of the study will deal with the challenges teachers face in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

The Challenges of Teaching Local History Projects

Recent research in the teaching and learning of local history advocates instructional approaches that engage learners in history, including building historical knowledge through primary sources, conducting historical inquiry, and engaging learners to develop historical skills.⁴⁵ To teach learners to do local history projects, teachers must have a deeper understanding of local history projects and how local history inquiry is conducted.⁴⁶ Thus, teachers face many challenges in teaching local history, especially local history projects, as are elucidated below.

Understanding of Local History

De Regt and Baumberger state that to have understanding is to put the pieces together and use them to solve problems and create new ideas.⁴⁷ It is when the teachers understand how to perform their duties diligently, using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Boty et al. assert that, from the teachers' perspective, it is hard to teach this hidden history as it requires teachers to understand that local history contains a wealth of details and stories that help reveal how social changes impacted the lives of ordinary people.⁴⁸

Subsequently, teachers need to understand by engaging learners in local history projects; learners can better understand the complexities of time, place, and change within history.⁴⁹ Over and above, local history allows teachers to know how to utilize interesting primary sources readily accessible within the community.⁵⁰ Engaging learners in exploring stories tied to their locality can elicit curiosity, creativity, and personal connection to the materials.⁵¹

Teachers must understand the importance of local history and incorporate it into the classroom curriculum, which can make the classroom engaging. Whatever methods teachers employ by engaging with local history, learners can learn about their heritage and feel a part of something more significant in the process.⁵²

Focus on Historical Skills

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grade R-12 expresses the knowledge, skills, and values worth learning in South African schools to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives.⁵³ In this regard, the curriculum promotes understanding in a local context while being sensitive to global imperatives.⁵⁴ According to Byron, to acquire knowledge and understanding of history, skills associated with identifying, comprehending, and

⁴⁴ Khalifa, *Culturally Responsive School Leadership*.

⁴⁵ Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann, *Reading Primary Sources* (Routledge, 2008).

⁴⁶ Tom Vander Ark, Emily Liebtag, and Nate McClenen, *The Power of Place: Authentic Learning through Place-Based Education* (ASCD, 2020).

⁴⁷ Henk W. de Regt and Christoph Baumberger, "What Is Scientific Understanding and How Can It Be Achieved?," in *What Is Scientific Knowledge?* (Routledge, 2019), 66–81, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203703809-5>.

⁴⁸ Middya Boty et al., "The Values of Struggle Character Education K.H. Ahmad Hanafiah and Its Implementation in Local History Learning," *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction* 13, no. 02 (January 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.13.02.08>; Ofianto et al., "Development of Online Local History Learning Media Based on Virtual Field Trips to Enhance the Use of Primary Source Evidence."

⁴⁹ Abdul Khoir, "Development of Bekasi History and Culture Learning Model at Elementary School Level," *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Kajian Kepustakaan Di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran* 9, no. 2 (June 5, 2023): 581, <https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v9i2.7556>.

⁵⁰ Andrew Pollard et al., *Reflective Teaching in Primary Schools* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023).

⁵¹ Rizki Rian Sari, Sunardi Sunardi, and Musa Pelu, "Utilization of Local History of Pengging Site as a Source of Digital Literacy-Based History Learning with a Constructivist Approach," *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research* 06, no. 05 (May 27, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i5-66>.

⁵² Martin Stolare, David Ludvigsson, and Cecilia Trenter, "The Educational Power of Heritage Sites," *History Education Research Journal* 18, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.14324/HERJ.18.2.08>.

⁵³ Department of Basic Education, *National Curriculum Statement* (Pretoria, South Africa: Government Publications, 2014).

⁵⁴ Department of Basic Education, "Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS): Technology," 2011, www.thutong.doe.gov.za/Resource download.aspx?

interpreting sources, and communication need to be developed.⁵⁵ These historical skills are developed through a process of inquiry and experiencing history.⁵⁶ Most importantly, these skills help learners in other aspects to make meaningful conclusions about past event and their effects on the present.⁵⁷ Consequently, Abbas et al. write that historical thinking skills can help learners make inferences about the past.⁵⁸

As a challenge, teachers' shortage of knowledge of local history projects influences teachers' readiness to develop these skills.⁵⁹ Teachers' excessive use of textbooks leaves no room to refer to other reference books, which hinders the development of learners' skills.⁶⁰ Furthermore, depending on a single text would not enable learners to use multiple skills.⁶¹

The absence of sensitivity to events happening around us resulted in the teacher merely relying on facts, limiting the teacher's ability to stimulate learners to interpret facts as a skill.⁶² By focusing on skills, teachers can be able to determine critical areas to improve teaching and learning in a classroom.⁶³

Teacher Content Knowledge, Teaching, and Assessment

It is widely accepted that 'teachers cannot teach what they do not know and understand' and they must have deep knowledge of their teaching subject in order to greatly influence the teaching and learning of the subject matter they are teaching.⁶⁴ Content knowledge for teachers is not just a collection of facts about the subject but a deeper understanding of the core concepts involved in the subject.⁶⁵

Teachers with a deep understanding of the subject are able to integrate learners' interests with the activities they are teaching whilst those with no content knowledge will most likely not have adequate skills to teach the subject meaningfully and with confidence.⁶⁶

There are intricacies of planning for both history and geography when teaching Social Sciences, as some teachers are more conversant in one of the two subjects.⁶⁷ The content of the two subjects is essential because it is what the teachers teach during the lessons.⁶⁸ Most teachers teaching History and Geography are not comfortable with either of the subjects, their teaching is determined by the teachers'

⁵⁵ Glennis. Byron, *Dramatic Monologue* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

⁵⁶ Maribel Santiago and Tadashi Dozono, "History Is Critical: Addressing the False Dichotomy between Historical Inquiry and Criticality," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 50, no. 2 (April 3, 2022): 173–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2022.2048426>.

⁵⁷ Wonyong Park and Hohee Cho, "The Interaction of History and STEM Learning Goals in Teacher-Developed Curriculum Materials: Opportunities and Challenges for STEAM Education," *Asia Pacific Education Review* 23, no. 3 (September 29, 2022): 457–74, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-022-09741-0>.

⁵⁸ Abbas et al., "Safeguarding the Guardians to Safeguard the Bio-Economy and Mitigate Social Injustices."

⁵⁹ Amanda Franco, Rui Marques Vieira, and Celina Tenreiro-Vieira, "Educating for Critical Thinking in University: The Criticality of Critical Thinking in Education and Everyday Life," *ESSACHESS* 11, no. 2 (2018).

⁶⁰ Robert Thorp and Anders Persson, "On Historical Thinking and the History Educational Challenge," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 52, no. 8 (July 2, 2020): 891–901, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1712550>.

⁶¹ Tural, "Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmen Adaylarının Sözlü Tarih Çalışmalarına İlişkin Tutumları."

⁶² Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, *Emotions, Learning, and the Brain: Exploring the Educational Implications of Affective Neuroscience (the Norton Series on the Social Neuroscience of Education)* (WW Norton & Company, 2015).

⁶³ Taylor Milan Kessner and Lauren McArthur Harris, "Opportunities to Practice Historical Thinking and Reasoning in a Made-for-School History-Oriented Videogame," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4073128>.

⁶⁴ Nicholas Spaull, "South Africa's Education Crisis: The Quality of Education in South Africa 1994–2011," *Johannesburg: Centre for Development and Enterprise* 21, no. 1 (2013): 1–65; Eko Saputra et al., "EFL Students' Perception Towards Online Learning: What to Consider?," *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)* 7, no. 1 (November 26, 2022): 123, <https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v7i1.1242>.

⁶⁵ Bertram, "What Is Powerful Knowledge in School History? Learning from the South African and Rwandan School Curriculum Documents."

⁶⁶ Tim Allender, *Historical Thinking for History Teachers: A New Approach to Engaging Students and Developing Historical Consciousness* (Routledge, 2020); Mafa-Theledi and Olivia Neo., "Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Subject Matter Content Knowledge: Is the Framework Still Relevant in Teaching of STEM?," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* 8, no. 4 (2024): 836–46.

⁶⁷ F. Simfukwe, "Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching Geography in Junior Secondary School Social Studies: A Study of Selected Schools in Serenje District-Zambia" (University of Zambia, 2023).

⁶⁸ Thandy Sibongile Ndashe, *How Heads of Departments Manage the Teaching of Social Sciences in the Intermediate Phase* (University of Pretoria (South Africa), 2016).

subject knowledge and understanding. Hence, the teachers need to have knowledge of both subject matters.⁶⁹

On the other hand, assessment is regarded as the cornerstone of learning because it gauges the depth of learning and understanding and can be used to determine the effective implementation of competency-based teaching and assessment practices.⁷⁰ Teacher professional development in teaching and assessing skills is therefore crucial as the current teaching and assessment system used cannot adapt to the current demand of developing learners' innovative skills.⁷¹ Subsequently, there is currently little substantial evidence on effective teaching strategies and assessment tools to develop learners' skills.⁷²

Lack of Resources

Learning and teaching resources are essential to any education system.⁷³ A lack of schools affects the teaching of local history projects to develop historical skills.⁷⁴ Materials such as charts, posters, flashcards, maps, and teachers' resource centres play a significant role in the learners' learning process.⁷⁵ In cases where resource materials are available and are used wisely, they significantly enhance lesson impact in developing learners' skills,⁷⁶ stimulate interest and actively engage learners in the learning process.⁷⁷

Historical resources like diaries, letters, drawings, and memories can tell us something that even the best-written article or book cannot convey in the teaching and learning of local history projects, and can expose learners to critical historical concepts.⁷⁸ Thorp and Persson note that when learners use primary sources, they develop critical analytical skills and directly touch the lives of people in the past.⁷⁹ Teachers must turn their classrooms into an active local history laboratory with available resources and teacher imagination.⁸⁰

Lack of Parental Support

Parents are their children's first educators; therefore, their support affects children's development, learning, and educational outcomes including direct support to learning before and during formal

⁶⁹ Wilfried Admiraal et al., "Linking Theory and Practice: Teacher Research in History and Geography Classrooms," *Educational Action Research* 25, no. 2 (March 15, 2017): 316–31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2016.1152904>; Uzma Khan et al., "Educational Paradigm Shift: Long-Term Ramifications of COVID-19 in the Indian Context," *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 8, no. 8 (August 5, 2024): 4629, <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i8.4629>.

⁷⁰ Laura Barber, "Chinese Foreign Policy in the 'Going Out' era: Confronting Challenges and 'Adaptive Learning' in the Case of China-Sudan and South Sudan Relations" (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2014), <http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/3129>; Shirley Eadie et al., "Assessment Practices to Support the Development of Learner Competencies for a Changing World" (NECT <https://nect.org.za/publications/technical-reports/nectedhub-policy...>, 2020).

⁷¹ Chris Joynes, Serena Rossignoli, and Esi Fenyiwa Amonoo-Kuofi, "21st Century Skills: Evidence of Issues in Definition, Demand and Delivery for Development Contexts," 2019; Eadie et al., "Assessment Practices to Support the Development of Learner Competencies for a Changing World."

⁷² Carla Evans, Jeri Thompson, and Chris Brandt, "'Teaching & Assessing 21st Century Skills.' Center for Assessment," <https://www.nciea.org/blog/instructing-assessing-21st-century-skills/>, 2020.

⁷³ Munienge Mbodila and Clever Ndebele, "The Impact of Social Networks on Teaching and Learning at a Rural University in South Africa," *Journal of Educators Online* 19, no. 3 (September 30, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.9743/JEO.2022.19.3.10>.

⁷⁴ Elize Du Plessis and Mantekana Jacobine Letshwene, "A Reflection on Identified Challenges Facing South African Teachers," *The Independent Journal of Teaching and Learning* 15, no. 2 (November 7, 2024): 69–91, <https://doi.org/10.17159/cv8gxf71>.

⁷⁵ Kutu Augustine Adebayo, Nzimande Ntokoza, and Ngema Zukiswa Grace, "Availability of Educational Resources and Student Academic Performances in South Africa," *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 8, no. 8 (2020): 3768–81.

⁷⁶ Kathy Luckett and Suellen Shay, "Reframing the Curriculum: A Transformative Approach," *Critical Studies in Education* 61, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 50–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2017.1356341>.

⁷⁷ Hanneke Bartelds, Geerte M. Savenije, and Carla van Boxtel, "Students' and Teachers' Beliefs about Historical Empathy in Secondary History Education," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 48, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 529–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2020.1808131>.

⁷⁸ Aaron William Moore, "Children We Have Lost: Diaries, Memoirs, and Museum Displays of Childhood and Youth in Wartime Japan," *Cultural and Social History* 17, no. 5 (October 19, 2020): 715–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2021.1898734>; Levstik and Barton, *Doing History: Investigating with Children in Elementary and Middle Schools*.

⁷⁹ Thorp and Persson, "On Historical Thinking and the History Educational Challenge."

⁸⁰ Blevins, Magill, and Salinas, "Critical Historical Inquiry: The Intersection of Ideological Clarity and Pedagogical Content Knowledge."

education.⁸¹ Support tasks range from school and home communication to assistance in home learning activities.⁸²

According to Nurhayati et al., parents do not understand how to assist their children at home in dealing with local history projects because of the lack of knowledge and understanding and this demoralizes the learners' confidence.⁸³ Some parents play a prominent role in educating their children as they serve as community leaders and managers of resource centres in the community where the school is based.⁸⁴ The lack of proper communication channels between teachers and parents to assist the learners in dealing with local history projects poses a serious challenge.⁸⁵

METHODOLOGY

The study explored teachers' challenges in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. To achieve this study's aim, the study was grounded in the interpretive paradigm that resonated with the characteristics of phenomenology, requiring the participants to share their interpretations and experiences.⁸⁶ Since the study is interpretive, a qualitative research design was employed as it is concerned with answering questions about the relationship among variables being measured to explain phenomena.⁸⁷ The researcher found this approach relevant to describe the teachers' current challenges of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

Participants in this study were five Social Sciences teachers from five different schools in Motheo District, Free State. Data was generated through semi-structured face-to-face interviews where teachers narrated their understanding and experience in the study. When the participants could not understand, probing, clarity, and follow-up questions were given to them.⁸⁸ The interviews took place after school and on Saturdays and lasted for forty-five minutes to an hour. The researcher digitally recorded the interviews, in which the participants gave their views and experiences. Data was analyzed utilizing qualitative content analysis.⁸⁹ Data was coded and categorized, and themes were identified.⁹⁰

Before commencing the research, the researcher sought clearance from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2022/1748/22) and permission from the Free State Department of Education and the principals of the schools where the research was conducted. The participants also consented to the study, were assured of their anonymity, and were given pseudonyms. It was also made clear that participation is voluntary and purely academic, and not for financial gain, and they could withdraw from the research without any repercussions.

⁸¹ Mindy Gabriela et al., "The Role of Parents in Helping Arabic Teachers to Improve Students' Vocabulary," *Journal International of Lingua and Technology* 1, no. 2 (August 13, 2022): 131–39, <https://doi.org/10.55849/jiltech.v1i2.83>; Adam Boyette, Senay Cebioglu, and Tanya Broesch, "Teaching Strategies Are Shaped by Experience with Formal Education: Experimental Evidence from Caregiver-Child Dyads in Two Tannese Communities," *Memory & Cognition* 51, no. 3 (April 1, 2023): 792–806, <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13421-022-01340-z>.

⁸² Pollard et al., *Reflective Teaching in Primary Schools*.

⁸³ Soyhunlu Sebu, "Access to Quality Education, a Basic Right of Every Child," *Journal of Education, Society and Behavioural Science* 36, no. 7 (April 28, 2023): 41–46, <https://doi.org/10.9734/jesbs/2023/v36i71234>; Joan Lombardi et al., "Unfolding Opportunity: Advancing Childcare to Support Children, Families, and Societies," *Pediatrics* 151, no. Supplement 2 (May 1, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2023-060221O>.

⁸⁴ Lombardi et al., "Unfolding Opportunity: Advancing Childcare to Support Children, Families, and Societies."

⁸⁵ Adeniyi Adekunle Tirimisiyu and Anselm Iuebego Igbase, "Proven, Probable, Possible, and Contingent Natural Gas Reserves: A Concise and Holistic Review of Major Critical Developmental Steps," in *SPE Nigeria Annual International Conference and Exhibition* (SPE, 2024), D032S030R001.

⁸⁶ M. A. Samuel, S. Reddy, and C. J. W. Brown, "Critical Reflections on Researching Lived and Learning Experiences: Towards a Critical Phenomenology," *African Perspectives of Research in Teaching & Learning*, 2022, 185–205; Patricia Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches* (Guilford Publications, 2022).

⁸⁷ Mohsen Hejsalembrahmi, Bui Thanh Khoa, and Bui Phu Hung, "Qualitative Research in Social Sciences: Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Report Writing," *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management* 9, no. 4 (2022): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPPSPM.2022.10038439>.

⁸⁸ Eleanor Knott et al., "Interviews in the Social Sciences," *Nature Reviews Methods Primers* 2, no. 1 (September 15, 2022): 73, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43586-022-00150-6>.

⁸⁹ Mustafa Nasiri, Birgit Gassler, and Ramona Teuber, "Consumers' Perceptions of Meat Safety and Quality – a Qualitative Content Analysis from Afghanistan," *British Food Journal* 125, no. 9 (August 29, 2023): 3404–21, <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-07-2022-0646>.

⁹⁰ Aisha Ibrahim Ningi, "Data Presentation in Qualitative Research: The Outcomes of the Pattern of Ideas with the Raw Data," *International Journal of Qualitative Research* 1, no. 3 (2022): 196–200.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study explored the teachers' challenges in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. In responding to the question 'What are the challenges experienced by Social Science teachers when teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills?', the researcher identified the following themes after deciphering data from the interviews: the understanding of local history projects, teachers content knowledge, lack of resources, and the lack of parental support when dealing with local history projects. The following section will present data based on the identified themes, and the presentation will include interviews.

Understanding of local history projects

To have an understanding is to have the power to comprehend and grasp nature and its significance.⁹¹ In education, understanding can be viewed as a process by which students create personal meaning or representation of what is being experienced.⁹² Furthermore, Tolman and Kremling assert that the student's understanding may be the same as teachers.⁹³ It was imperative to establish how the participants experienced their understanding of how local history projects are being done in their respective schools.

The teacher in School A responded by saying:

"According to my understanding of local history projects, it helps learners to learn about their community."

The teacher in School B supported the above by saying :

"I believe that in a local history project, learners will be able to learn about their community history."

The teacher in School C responded :

"My understanding of teaching learners' local history projects is to give learners a chance to learn about their local community."

By looking at the responses of the three teachers, one can see that their understanding focuses only on the community. Although it may be viewed as limiting in the understanding of teaching local history projects, it is coherent with the definition of local history projects provided in literature by Brown and Woodcock, who emphasize local history as the learners' communities.⁹⁴ Others view the study of local history projects as being concerned with many subjects within a particular area, such as factual events, cultural heritage, and folklore.⁹⁵

A different response was solicited from the teachers in schools D and E:

"In local history projects, we teach learners to find out about the history of different landmarks in their community."

A similar response from the teacher in School E:

"When teaching local history projects, learners have to find out about the history of their local community through different ways and artefacts."

⁹¹ Tini Mogea, "Improving Students's Reading Comprehension Through Group Discussion Technique," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Sastra Inggris* 3, no. 1 (2023): 91–102.

⁹² Ronald W. Henderson and Linda Cunningham, "Creating Interactive Sociocultural Environments for Self-Regulated Learning," in *Self-Regulation of Learning and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 255–81, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203763353-11>.

⁹³ Anton O Tolman and Janine Kremling, *Why Students Resist Learning: A Practical Model for Understanding and Helping Students* (Taylor & Francis, 2023).

⁹⁴ Geraint Brown and James Woodcock, "Relevant, Rigorous and Revisited: Using Local History to Make Meaning of Historical Significance," *Teaching History*, no. 134 (2009): 4.

⁹⁵ Tomas Nilson and Kristina Thorell, "Cultural Heritage Preservation: The Past, the Present and the Future" (Halmstad University Press, 2018).

The response from both teachers in schools D and E shows that they are aware of the actions that learners will be expected to undertake in generating new knowledge about their community as they teach, which is in line with Hampton and Wheeler, who contend that the teaching and the understanding of local history projects is the study of history in a geographically, local content, often concentrating on a relatively local community.⁹⁶ The assertion is in line with our critical framework, where Freire emphasizes that critical pedagogy highlights the importance of having a learner actively engaged in the learning process and being able to develop their own opinion.⁹⁷

Teachers Content Knowledge

Content knowledge refers to the body of knowledge, facts, theories, principles, ideas, and vocabulary that a teacher must master to be effective.⁹⁸ Teachers should have a deeper understanding of their subject matter and the corresponding curriculum subject content knowledge⁹⁹ in order to inspire high-quality learners.¹⁰⁰ The content knowledge the teachers have must seek to develop learners' historical skills when dealing with local history projects. In trying to get a deeper understanding of teachers' content knowledge, these were the responses from participants:

School A teacher had this to say:

"I am a new teacher in the school, with two years' experience, and I am still learning."

The teacher echoed the same sentiments in School B:

"The challenge in our school is that the management tends to temper subject allocation during the end of each year, which by itself brings about instability in our school; hence, I am new to teaching the subject."

The response from teachers A and B shows that the challenge is about the lack of experience in teaching the subject. Teaching experience is critical because it combines developed skills and training that help a teacher do their current work more effectively.¹⁰¹ It is imperative that teachers have experience in the subject they are teaching.

The teacher in School D responded:

"I have realized in our school that teachers lack pedagogical content knowledge, meaning not knowing how to teach History, even before the teacher can proceed with the content knowledge of local history."

A response from the teacher in School E was:

"Social science as a subject has two disciplines, history and geography; therefore, you find a teacher who is more comfortable in geography than history, which poses a serious challenge."

The response from teachers D and E clearly shows that teachers don't possess the knowledge to teach the subject. Still, literature has shown us that it is common knowledge that teachers need content knowledge to deliver effective instruction in the subject.¹⁰² Spaull further states that teachers must deeply understand their teaching subject to inspire highly quality learners. Teachers must acquire adequate knowledge to teach the subject in schools.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Stephanie E. Hampton and Terry A. Wheeler, "Fostering the Rebirth of Natural History," *Biology Letters* 8, no. 2 (April 23, 2012): 161–63, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2011.0777>.

⁹⁷ Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy*.

⁹⁸ Jacob Filgona, John Sakiyo, and D M Gwany, "Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Students' Academic Achievement: A Theoretical Overview," *Journal of Global Research in Education and Social Science* 14, no. 2 (2020): 14–44.

⁹⁹ Reardon, Mark, and Seth Derner. *Strategies for great teaching: Maximize learning moments*. (New York: Routledge, 2023).

¹⁰⁰ Mark Reardon and Seth Derner, *Strategies for Great Teaching: Maximize Learning Moments* (Routledge, 2023); Spaull, "South Africa's Education Crisis: The Quality of Education in South Africa 1994-2011."

¹⁰¹ Sarah Hopkins et al., "Preparing Preservice Teachers for Working with Students with Intellectual Disability: Evaluating the Impact of Supplementary Fieldwork Experiences," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 28, no. 14 (December 5, 2024): 3518–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2221257>.

¹⁰² Kirsi Tirri and Elina Kuusisto, *Teachers' Professional Ethics: Theoretical Frameworks and Empirical Research from Finland* (Brill, 2022).

¹⁰³ Spaull, "South Africa's Education Crisis: The Quality of Education in South Africa 1994-2011."

A completely opposing view from the teacher in School C, who mentioned that “*teachers seem to have lost their passion for teaching Social Science.*”

Passion is infectious. Love of the subject inspires a person to learn more, dig deeper, and think harder about it, so passion inspires and deepens knowledge.¹⁰⁴ Teachers need to be motivated to be inspired.

Lack of Resources

Resources in teaching and learning help the teacher structure a lesson and incorporate many different learning methods into a single session.¹⁰⁵ Conversely, Mbodila and Ndebele assert that teaching time becomes difficult or monotonous without relevant resources.¹⁰⁶ Teachers need to incorporate as many resources as possible into their teaching methods to inspire teaching and learning in schools.¹⁰⁷ Participant responses were as follows:

School A teacher responded:

“*Learners cannot go to the library because they lack financial resources, learners have to travel, learners do not have magazines, I have to provide.*”

School B teacher shared the same sentiments:

“*Learners are staying far away from the library; they cannot have access to the resources in the library.*”

The participant from School C added,

“*Learners lack resources, like the internet, to assist them with their project; the cellphones are there, but they struggle with data.*”

A response from the participant in School D:

“*The learners don't have enough materials or resources to display and demonstrate the project expectations.*”

Similar response from the participant in School E:

“*Incomplete project as a result of not having access to resources, like computers.*”

All the responses from the participants show that access to resources is challenging. Research has shown that resources and materials available and used wisely significantly enhance lesson impact in developing learners’ skills.¹⁰⁸ Critical pedagogy makes it clear that by bringing objects, statements, text, and pictures to explain, compare, and evaluate, the student can argue in real-life situations.¹⁰⁹

Lack of Parental Support

Learners whose parents stay involved in school have better attendance and behaviour, get better grades, demonstrate better social skills, and adapt better in schools.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, parental involvement and support also set these learners up to develop a lifelong love of learning.¹¹¹ Parents must feel free to tell

¹⁰⁴ Denise Krebs and Gallit Zvi, *The Genius Hour Guidebook: Fostering Passion, Wonder, and Inquiry in the Classroom* (Routledge, 2020).

¹⁰⁵ Marni Manegre and Kashif Ali Sabiri, “Online Language Learning Using Virtual Classrooms: An Analysis of Teacher Perceptions,” *Computer Assisted Language Learning* 35, no. 5–6 (July 4, 2022): 973–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2020.1770290>.

¹⁰⁶ Mbodila and Ndebele, “The Impact of Social Networks on Teaching and Learning at a Rural University in South Africa.”

¹⁰⁷ Huma Akram et al., “Teachers’ Perceptions of Technology Integration in Teaching-Learning Practices: A Systematic Review,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (June 6, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.920317>.

¹⁰⁸ Luckett and Shay, “Reframing the Curriculum: A Transformative Approach.”

¹⁰⁹ Blevins, Magill, and Salinas, “Critical Historical Inquiry: The Intersection of Ideological Clarity and Pedagogical Content Knowledge.”

¹¹⁰ Joyce L Epstein, *Building Culturally Responsive Partnerships Among Schools, Families, and Communities* (Teachers College Press, 2022).

¹¹¹ Janet Goodall, “Parental Engagement,” in *Relational Aspects of Parental Involvement to Support Educational Outcomes* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 22–38, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003128434-3>.

their children stories about similar projects and what knowledge and skills they used as children.¹¹² Ecker further contends that frequent conversations with the child about the project will assist the child in developing communication and interactive skills.¹¹³

A response from the participant in School A:

"Parents have no transport to take their children to the library. Also, parents complain that they have no money for magazines."

The same response from the participant in School B:

"Learners complain that parents at home are not interested in helping them."

The participant in School C:

"The teachers realize that learners bring incomplete projects to school, and when they ask, the learners say they did not assist at home."

The participant from School D responded by saying:

"The lack of parental involvement in our school is a serious challenge; hence, learners bring incomplete projects. As a school, we have called a meeting to engage parents and show them the importance of assisting their children with schoolwork in general."

The exact assertion from the participant in School E:

"Lack of support from home is a serious crisis here at our school that needs to be addressed."

From the presentation above, based on the responses from participants, it is evident that there are challenges concerning parental support during the completion of the local history project. Parents might lack knowledge and skills about the project or lack basic resources to assist their children.

DISCUSSION

The main research question for this study was to explore the teachers' challenges of using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Concerning the analysis of teachers' responses, the study discovered that teachers lack a thorough understanding of teaching learners' local history projects to develop their skills. As Fitrisia et al. write, teachers must understand that local history contains a wealth of details and stories that help reveal how social changes impacted the lives of ordinary people.¹¹⁴ Thus, whatever method teachers use in the classroom when engaging with local history, teachers must make sure that learners have the opportunity to learn about their heritage and feel part of something more significant in the process; in the end, it develops learners' historical skills.¹¹⁵ There seem to be critical gaps, especially in the teacher's understanding of the teaching of local history projects to develop learners' historical skills.

The study findings also revealed that teachers' content knowledge is negatively impacted when teaching local history projects because of the lack of experienced teachers teaching the subject. Some teachers are novice teachers who have just entered the field, and teaching History and Geography as a stand-alone subject poses a severe challenge. Literature has shown that teachers should have a deeper understanding of the subject matter they teach and the corresponding curriculum subject content knowledge.¹¹⁶ History and geography should not be treated as stand-alone subjects; they must be taught collaboratively.

¹¹² Laura Hope Southcott, "Learning Stories: Connecting Parents, Celebrating Success, and Valuing Children's Theories," *Voices* 34 (2015).

¹¹³ Alois Ecker, "Communications on History. Building Identity and 'Making Sense of History' in the History Course—A Matrix for Empowering Historical Thinking," *Creative Education* 13, no. 08 (2022): 2680–2710, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2022.138170>.

¹¹⁴ Ofianto et al., "Development of Online Local History Learning Media Based on Virtual Field Trips to Enhance the Use of Primary Source Evidence."

¹¹⁵ Stolare, Ludvigsson, and Treter, "The Educational Power of Heritage Sites."

¹¹⁶ Reardon and Derner, *Strategies for Great Teaching: Maximize Learning Moments*.

From the data generated, it was also evident that teachers responded out of frustration when one of the teachers remarked that learners submit incomplete projects as a result of not having access to resources. Du Plessis and Letshwene alluded that the lack of resources in schools affects performance in both primary and secondary schools in teaching local history projects to develop learners' historical skills, which is further supported by Mbodila and Ndebele, who said that in learning and teaching resources are an essential part of any education system.¹¹⁷ The availability of relevant resources makes teaching and learning easy, and positive results are attainable.

The quality of local history projects depends on the positive support of parents. Parents can help their children by participating in school activities, advocating for the school, and improving their children's work.¹¹⁸ Moreover, research shows that learners' academic achievement and the presence of home-based activities are more linked with school-based activities.¹¹⁹ For some parents, being supportive and involved means dropping off and picking up their child from school or asking whether their homework is complete, which is a challenge.¹²⁰ Conversely, this is not to say those things are negative or unhelpful. The research is clear: parents and family support create better outcomes for learners, and learners are more likely to achieve better grades and score higher on tests.

RECOMMENDATION

This study has explored teachers' challenges in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. Based on the participants' views and voices, there is a need, for instance, for the Department of Basic Education to empower workshops on the understanding of local history, particularly local history projects, to emphasize developing learners' historical skills. Another recommendation from the study's findings is that teachers must constantly equip themselves with curriculum content knowledge and use different teaching strategies in their daily teaching—using available teaching and learning resources specifically for teaching local history to arouse learners' interest. The Free State Department of Basic Education should prioritize issuing relevant resources that teachers and learners can utilize. Parental support and community involvement are also recommended to enhance learners' understanding of how to do local history projects. When the Department of Education hires ring teachers, it is also recommended that they look at teachers with relevant qualifications, especially in teaching Social Sciences.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore the teachers' challenges in using local history projects to develop learners' historical skills. The views of the five participants, purposefully selected from the five schools in the Motheo Education District, were sought to shed some light on the topic under investigation. The challenges exposed in this paper are very insightful and should serve as a basis for teacher education and continued professional development programmes.

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¹¹⁷ Du Plessis and Letshwene, "A Reflection on Identified Challenges Facing South African Teachers."

¹¹⁸ Garry Hornby and Ian Blackwell, "Barriers to Parental Involvement in Education: An Update," *Educational Review* 70, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 109–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1388612>.

¹¹⁹ William Jeynes, "A Meta-Analysis of the Efficacy of Different Types of Parental Involvement Programs for Urban Students," *Urban Education* 47, no. 4 (July 10, 2012): 706–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085912445643>.

¹²⁰ Maryam Alharthi, "Parental Involvement in Children's Online Education During COVID-19; A Phenomenological Study in Saudi Arabia," *Early Childhood Education Journal* 51, no. 2 (February 22, 2023): 345–59, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-021-01286-y>.

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