

LEARNERS' VOICES IN SCHOOL BASED
ASSESSMENT:
A CASE OF ONE SCHOOL IN THE UTHUKELA
DISTRICT

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PERSONAL DECLARATION

I Rosemary Busisiwe Xulu (213560408) declare that:

- The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated is my original work.
- The dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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Signature Student

Signature Supervisor

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this Master's Degree in Tourism Education to my late parents Mrs Florence Msindose (MaDlamini) and Simon Zwelakhe Xulu. I will never forget how much you wanted us to get education. That has always kept me going all these years.

ABSTRACT

Guided by my understanding of the importance of SBA in Tourism, my main aim was to determine if both summative and formative assessment helped learners to master the required SBA tasks. My desire to pursue this study emanated from my personal interest in and professional experiences of teaching Tourism in Grades 10-12. In my experience, new curriculum changes resulted in the introduction of new assessment practices.

This study was framed by the learners' (or students') conceptions of assessment theory (SCoA) that was developed by Brown, Irving and Peterson (2008) as a theory that aims to understand learners' conceptions of assessment. According to Brown and Hirschfeld (2012), learners have at least four major conceptions about assessment as revealed in the Student Conception of Assessment model. Although this theory that was developed by Brown and colleagues was suitable for a survey, this study adapted it as a suitable theoretical framework for a qualitative study on learners' experiences of SBA in Tourism.

Learners who participated in this study demonstrated wide ranging perceptions of SBA, and many of these perceptions contributed to their learning. All participating learners also perceived SBA as a means of improving their ability to be promoted to the next grade at the end of the year as they emphasised the importance of SBA marks for promotion. They also highlighted the challenges that they faced when required to complete SBA tasks; such as time constraints, poor feedback and lack of resources. In general learners commented favourably on the role of SBA in their learning.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

For many years, the word assessment has been used by academics to describe processes of evaluating the effectiveness of sequences of teaching and learning Smith (2011). Assessment is defined by Conradie, Kirsch and Moyce (2012, p. 6) as “a continuously planned process where various forms of assessment are used in order to gather and interpret information about the performance of learners”. From the above definitions one can conclude that feedback on assessment informs the entire process of teaching and learning and thus assists both teachers and learners in improving academic performance. In 2006, the implementation of SBA across all South African schools was an important milestone which indicated a shift from the approach that was dependent on once-off final examinations.

Research has revealed that assessment in the South African context at the time served the purpose of promotion and did not consider other important objectives such as secondary education (McInerney Liem & Brown, 2009; Reyneke, Meyer & Nel, 2010). Hence, researchers assert that assessment based on traditional once-off examinations required the drilling of learners in a narrow set of skills covered in tests which, in some instances, turned out to be harmful to learners’ educational development and thinking (Begum & Farooqui, 2008), and there was thus an over-emphasis on testing and examinations which left learners with few opportunities to learn from their mistakes or to recognise their strengths and abilities (Black & William, 2009). The feedback that was provided by this primarily summative form of assessment was limited in the sense that it was mostly statistical. It informed learners of their performance percentages and did not tell them how they should have answered the questions because, at this stage, promotion and certification were the main foci. In essence, summative assessment, such as traditional tests and examinations, may have had negative effects on learners such as anxiety and stress because such tests became the deciders of learners’ fate and limited feedback was given. Against this background, the current school based assessment (SBA) policy, which focuses on formative assessment, was introduced in conjunction with year-end traditional examinations in the South African curriculum.

As suggested by Hargreaves (2005), formative assessment, or assessment for learning, which is part of SBA is meant to help learners in their learning process. Talib, Kamsah, Naim and Latif (2014) explain that formative assessment is a process of collecting and interpreting evidence on learner performance that teachers use to make decisions regarding learner improvement. This implies that formative assessment reveals the positive and negative aspects regarding the learning processes and its outcomes and thus gives learners opportunities to improve their performance. Similarly, McInerney, et al. (2009) argue that teachers, educational leaders and policy makers assess learners in order to confirm if learning has taken place, evaluate the appropriateness of instruction, and then design strategies to improve learning. According to this principle, teachers should rely strongly on formative assessment to constantly improve their teaching strategies and the instructional quality of their work. The main aim of using SBA which has got a formative aspect is to guide lesson planning and delivery. This form of assessment allows learners to determine their preparedness for their current learning activities and guide teachers to adjust activities so that all learners are able to participate in learning at a meaningful level (Crisp, 2012, p. 13). Therefore, formative assessment can be used to plan each step in learners' process of learning while it can also inform interventions (Talib et al., 2014).

In South Africa, SBA has become one of the most important aspects of teaching and learning. However, it has been shown that learners, who are the end users of SBA, are not involved in assisting their leaders on how they should be optimally assessed. Spiller (2012, p. 2) argues that assessment "is the most important aspect of teaching and learning which determines if learning has taken place". This indicates that assessment is the cornerstone of learning because it determines learning and understanding. Dunn, Morgan, O'Reilly & Parry (2004) also observe that assessment is important in gearing learners towards learning. However, despite much work having been done over many years on assessment (Braun & Kanjee, 2006; Hamp-Lyons, 2009; Black & William, 2009; William, 2011; Conradie, et al., 2012), SBA has not been fully transformed to really address concerns about learning. Thus, changing mind sets about assessment is needed so that not only the summative aspects of SBA are the focus of teaching and learning (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). This means that assessment should fundamentally be about building learners' capacity to use the formative aspects of SBA. In this context, it is important to obtain the views of those who are assessed so that assessors can improve their teaching practices. However, the voices of learners have hardly been heard on how assessment

in basic education should be conducted. A number of studies have been done on students' views of assessment in higher education institutions (HEIs) (see, for example, Fernandes, Flores & Lima, 2012; Sambell, MacDowell & Brown, 1997), but minimal research has focused on the views of Grade 10-12 Tourism learners about SBA strategies. This delineation was important as the study aimed to focus on the views and experiences of learners who had selected Tourism as a subject in the Further Education and Training phase (Grades 10 – 12).

The study was located in a school in a township where the majority of the community was black and suffering from a plethora of social ills and poverty (Levin & Lockhead, 2012). At the time of the study, the school that was selected was classified as under-resourced as it did not have resources beyond unequipped classrooms and dilapidated furniture. The main focus of this study was on learners' views of SBA through the lens of Tourism as a school subject. Tourism was chosen because its subject content is embedded in a real-world industry and reflects situations and vectors that are authentic in the experiences of people. In more ways than one, Tourism as a school subject (Grades 10-12) plays a major role in contributing to the development of the tourism industry in many countries around the world, including South Africa (Earle, 2008). In South Africa, Tourism was introduced as an elective subject in secondary schools with the aim of developing entrepreneurial skills and reducing unemployment (NBI, 2005; Dube, 2014). This aim should be reflected in the assessment practices at school level. In this regard, the practical component of the SBA of Tourism (generally referred to as the PAT) carries a significant weighting in the final matriculation assessment mark for this subject, and this determines learners' potential for future integration into the tourism industry. (This point will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections.) It was against this background that learners' views of their experiences of SBA for Tourism were elicited and evaluated.

1.2 Rationale and Motivation for the study

Guided by my understanding of the importance of SBA in Tourism, my main aim was to determine if both summative and formative assessment helped learners to master the required SBA tasks. My desire to pursue this study emanated from my personal interest in and professional experiences of teaching Tourism in Grades 10-12. In my experience, new curriculum changes resulted in the introduction of new assessment practices. At the time of the study, I was the Subject Advisor for Tourism and worked primarily in under-resourced areas in the Uthukela

District municipality which serves three towns: Bergville, Estcourt and Ladysmith. The introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2006 meant a re-conceptualisation of traditional assessment practices such as tests to accommodate continuous assessment practices. In Tourism, continuous assessment currently comprises SBA tasks, a practical assessment task (the PAT), and formal written examinations. Teachers have to view assessment not only as examinations and tests, but also as part of a learning process that can provide feedback to learners in order to improve learning (Reyneke et al., 2010). I was appointed as the Tourism curriculum advisor and was involved in supporting educators' efforts to implement SBA. During my classroom visits to support Tourism teachers, I observed that the learners were responding to the SBA process in a manner that was unexpected and that often appeared a challenge, and I then became interested in their reasons for this. I started informal conversations with some learners to hear their views on SBA. I found that their opinions differed from those of the teachers and I decided to explore the issue in more depth.

The literature highlights the value of SBA. However, little empirical research has been devoted to the views of learners as the voices of teachers have been highlighted in terms of SBA issues (Black & Wiliam, 2009; William, 2011; Reyneke et al., 2010; Kapambwe, 2010). This was an area of concern given the strong learner-oriented focus of SBA (McInerney, et al., 2009). The same sentiment is shared by the authors of a study that was conducted in Hong Kong, namely Cheng, Andrews and Yu (2010). Their argument is that that learners are the least researched subjects, yet they are the main recipients of assessment. Therefore, the current research study examined the views of learners about SBA, with specific attention to Tourism. It was envisaged that the findings would contribute to and further inform debates on the implementation of SBA and its impact on learners.

1.3 Problem Statement

There has been a major shift in many countries from high stake once-off examinations to SBA (Black, et al., 2003; Hamp-Lyons, 2007; Rea-Dickins, 2007). This general trend about SBA has been echoed by the South African education system through the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). This shift in assessment practices augmented the summative assessment component in all school subjects in Grades 10-12. The fundamental principle of SBA is assessment for learning which, to some extent, challenges deeply rooted concepts of promotion

and certification held by teachers and learners about assessment (William, 2011). SBA is integrated into the teaching and learning process and could help in improving learning while identifying learners' strengths and weaknesses. In the South Africa context, SBA is based on scheduled classroom based assessment tasks that require the collection of information on learners' learning and are included in the annual teaching plan (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2012).

SBA in South Africa comprises formative tasks as well as summative tests and examinations that culminate in the final grades of a learner per subject, and both components thus have a significant impact on the promotion of learners. In essence, learners are awarded marks based on their performance in SBA tasks. In Tourism, the SBA component contributes 25% to learners' overall pass requirement and is used in conjunction with the mark attained in the year-end examination which contributes 75%. This latter percentage constitutes a practical assessment task (PAT) that counts 25%, and a formal examination mark that counts 75%.

Given the learning oriented and the learner-centred nature of SBA, it was deemed important to explore the views of learners on SBA. While SBA has been considered effective in enhancing learning and improving learner performance, it is unrealistic to assume that what has worked in other countries – such as the UK – will work in the South African context. Moreover, learners are the main recipients of SBA, yet their views with regards to the implementation of SBA have never been solicited (Cheng, Andrews & Yu, 2010). Learners have thus not been given a chance to air their views so that assessment can help to improve their learning.

It was therefore argued that, by obtaining Tourism learners' views on SBA, these views could be deployed to assist learners to attain the desired outcomes in Tourism. It was thus important to conduct this research as it elucidated learners' understanding of and response to SBA requirements for Tourism.

1.4 Purpose of the study

While I was observing assessments practices as implemented by teachers in secondary school classrooms as a Subject Advisor for Tourism, I observed that learners were struggling with SBA tasks. I then became interested and started discussing SBA with some learners to hear their

perspectives. I found that their opinions different from those of teachers and I decided to explore the issue in greater depth. Hence the purpose of the study was to explore the views that Tourism learners harboured in terms of the SBA tasks for this subject.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

- To explore learners' perceptions of SBA in Tourism in a secondary school;
- To examine learners' response on the use of SBA tasks in the context of Tourism to enhance leaning.

1.6 Research Questions

The study was directed by two main research questions:

- What are learners' perceptions of SBA in Tourism in a secondary school?
- How do learners use SBA in the context of Tourism to enhance learning in a secondary school?

1.7 Methodological Approach

This study was qualitative in nature and was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm as it emphasised "understanding of social behaviour, and how people make meaning of their views" (Lichtman, 2012, p. 35). In essence, the significance of a paradigm lies in its philosophical assumptions pertaining to knowledge, reality and values. In the interpretivist paradigm, reality is considered multiple and subject to one's interpretation (Maree, 2016). The nature and purpose of this study facilitated an interpretive framework that assisted me in gaining in-depth understand of the experiences and views of Tourism learners in an under resourced secondary school. The study focused on their perceptions of SBA and how (and if) completing these tasks enhanced these learners' learning experiences. In keeping with its interpretive paradigm, this study adopted a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach locates itself within the interpretivist worldview with emphasis on "building an understanding of social behaviour, and how people make meaning of their views" (Creswell, 2012, p. 35). The motive for qualitative researchers is the overarching need "to understand how the participants interpret their views, how they construct their world, and what meaning they attribute to their experience" (Merriam, 2009, p.5). Therefore, by

following this research approach, I was able to understand the phenomenon under study through the eyes of selected Grade 11 Tourism learners. The study utilised a case study design as it focused on these particular learners' views of SBA in Tourism in a selected under-resourced school. According to Cohen et al. (2011), the use of a case study in an interpretive paradigm provides a unique example of real people in real situations, and this enables readers of such a report to understand more clearly the issues that were explored. Readers are thus not simply being presented with abstract theories or principles. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), a qualitative case study is a research strategy that allows a researcher to explore a research phenomenon within its context by using data from different sources. In this study, a qualitative case study approach enabled the in-depth exploration of the learners' experiences of SBA in Tourism. As suggested by Yin (2011), the intention of the qualitative study is to engage in an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences and views of participants rather than to generalise the findings to the entire population.

In this study I used the purposive sampling method. This sampling method presupposes that the researcher has sufficient knowledge of the study to make an informed decision about who should serve as participants (Paul, Kleinhammer-Tramill & Fowler, 2009, p. 170). By utilising purposeful sampling, I intentionally selected the research site and the participants in order to learn or understand the central phenomenon. I chose purposive sampling for convenience, as the school was situated within my area of operation. The Grade 11 Tourism class consisted of both boys and girls who were in the second year of studying Tourism as a school subject. The school had a quintile-2 ranking at the time of the study. I explored eight Grade 11 learners' views on SBA by focusing on their perceptions and practical experiences of SBA tasks. The school that I selected was in the Uthukela District.

Tourism is a relatively new subject in the South African school curriculum as it was inceptioned in 1998 and in 2006, with the introduction of NCS, it was offered from Grade 10 to Grade 12. I decided to select Grade 11 learners because in this grade they would have been exposed to SBA in Grade 10 and they might thus have understood formal SBA tasks to provide in depth data. Grade 11 learners were also chosen because I wanted a group that was going to be available in the following year when they would be in Grade 12 in case I needed to obtain follow-up data from them.

Data were generated by means of two focus group discussions and the selected learners' reflective writings. An audio-recording was made of the focus group discussions to capture the verbatim words of the participants. In addition, I also took field notes. The data were analysed using a thematic format. The data were coded and segmented into themes and categories. The analysed data were utilised to generate interpretations and assertions about the learners' perceptions of the use of SBA to acquire knowledge of the tourism field. The methodology that was utilised is discussed in more detail in Chapter three.

1.8 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations form part of the fundamental design of any research undertaking (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, all ethical considerations were rigorously observed during the data collection and analysis phases of this study. Ethical approval to conduct the study was granted by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee (Protocol Reference Number: HSS/1521/016M) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Appendix A). To gain access to the school, I sought and obtained permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education (Appendices B and C). I then negotiated access to the school with the principal as the main gatekeeper who granted me access (Appendix D). I then contacted all the participants (i.e., the learners as well as their parents) to obtain their informed consent based on their understanding of the purpose of the study and their willingness to participate in it, as suggested by Creswell (2014) (Appendices E and F). At the commencement of the study, the participants were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of our interaction as well as the concealment of their school's name throughout the research process and in the dissertation report. For this reason, I use pseudonyms throughout this study report. The group discussions were audio taped with the permission of the participants and their parents. All the participants were assured that the contents of our conversations would be used solely for research purposes.

1.9 Clarification of Concepts

The key concepts as they were understood and used in this study were the following:

1.9.1 Assessment

Assessment is a broad, umbrella term that implies diverse practices and is defined differently by various authors. Lambert and Lines (2000, p. 43) define it as the process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about pupils' responses to educational tasks. Similarly, Harlen (2014, p. 87) argues that assessment in an educational context "involves deciding, collecting and making judgements about evidence relating to the goals of the learning being assessed". Smith (2011, p. 57) defines assessment as a process which is used when trying to understand and draw conclusions about learners' [achievement] of outcomes and progress of learning. Therefore, assessment as understood in this study as a process of gathering and interpreting evidence about the performance of learners, using various forms of assessment.

1.9.2 School based assessment (SBA)

This concept is mainly used to refer to the assessment of learners' abilities in both formative and summative tasks that are administered within a particular school context (Brown, 2001). According to William (2011), assessment during the learning process should be given systematically and should contain information about competence. It should be given as reports on how to move forward and how to progress in the subject. Therefore, school-based assessment as understood in this study comprises multiple assessments that are part of the teaching and learning processes. The outcomes of SBA provide teachers with opportunities to continuously monitor their learners and give constructive feedback to improve their learning abilities, while the learners are actively engaged in learning through assessment.

1.9.3 Experience

Experience is a term that is often used in education as it relates to teaching, learning and assessment. Experience is conceptualised by Vyas and Van der Veer (2005, p. 5) as "the meaning that is created, communicated and maintained by the person as he/she interacts with a phenomenon". Roth and Jornet (2014) argue that experience allows a holistic approach to education, in the sense that it is based on the interaction between human beings and their surroundings. A learner's experiences of SBA thus impact his/her views on and use of assessment for learning (Black & Wiliam, 2010; Brown, Harris & Harnett, 2012). In this study, learners' views were understood as those statements that expressed what they thought about assessment and their experiences of its application in Tourism. Examining the views of learners was

important as it would expose the benefits and flaws of the SBA system from the perspective of the recipients of this policy.

1.10 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter One introduces the reader to the study and, in particular, outlines the background to and the rationale for it. The research questions are also presented. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the research design and the ethical issues that were addressed in the execution of the study.

Chapter Two reviews the literature that relates to assessment practices, formative and summative SBA, and the context of SBA in Tourism. It concludes with the theoretical framework that informed the study.

Chapter Three provides a comprehensive discussion on the design and the methodological orientation of the study. It explains the decision to locate the study within the interpretive paradigm. The discourse describes and explains the research approach, data collection and analysis methods, ethical issues, and the limitations of the study.

Chapters Four presents the findings and addresses the two research questions that gave impetus to the study.

Chapter Five presents an analysis of the findings and develops a theoretical understanding of learners' views of SBA in Tourism. Based on the findings, the chapter is concluded with meaningful comments, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

1.11 Synthesis

The purpose of this chapter was to orientate the reader so that a clear perception of the entire study would result. Thus, an introduction to and a background of the study were provided so that the focus, purpose and rationale for the study became clear. The foregoing was followed by a clear illumination of the research questions, an explanation of the research strategy, and an elucidation of the key concepts used throughout the dissertation. The research methodology was outlined and I explained the use of the interpretive paradigm and the case study design that allowed me to follow a qualitative approach when collecting and interpreting the data. The next

chapter will explore relevant literature and the views of other researchers on assessment practices, with particular focus on SBA.

CHAPTER 2

SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is a means of demonstrating that the author is knowledgeable about the field of study, particularly its key concepts, theories, and phenomena associated with the study (Randolph, 2009, p. 1). The purpose of a literature review, which was conducted in a systematic and thematic manner, was to gain an understanding of existing research in the field and to access debates that are relevant to SBA. A concerted attempt was made to access information pertaining to SBA in terms of Tourism, but limited information on this topic was available. The review consisted of an overview and a critical appraisal to trace relevant evidence that was important for the current study (Ridley, 2012). The purpose was to document, critically evaluate, and summarise findings related to learners' views on SBA.

I begin this chapter of framing assessment by considering international conceptualisations of assessment trends and the purpose of summative and formative assessment strategies. I then review literature on SBA in the context of the South African NCS and CAPS and I also focus on the benefits and challenges of SBA and its impact on learners. This is followed by a review of assessment practices in Tourism while literature on learners' perceptions of assessment are also explored. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the theoretical framework that underpinned this study.

2.2 Framing Assessment

The focus of the study was to examine learners' views of SBA, with particular reference to Tourism as an elective subject in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in secondary schools. In pursuing this focus, it was necessary to frame and outline what is understood under assessment. This section will review different and similar views of scholars on assessment, types of assessment, and feedback subsequent to assessment.

2.2.1 What is assessment?

Assessment is a broad term that is defined differently by various authors. As was previously stated, Lambert and Lines (2000, p. 43) define assessment as “the process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about pupils’ responses to educational tasks” (Lambert & Lines, 2000, p. 43). This definition implies that the aim of conducting assessment is to collect evidence about learners’ progress or learning. Nitko (2006, p. 56) defines assessment as “a process of observing information that could be used to make a decision about a student, the curriculum and programs as well as educational policy. Through assessment, learners are given the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of new knowledge”. According to Ngcobo (2009), assessment is a tool used by the teacher in order to determine the shortcomings as well as the successes of any teaching and learning situation. Teachers conduct assessment to determine if learners are learning, the level at which they are learning, and their understanding of what they are learning. Puckett and Black (2008) identify key elements of assessment; i.e., to determine individual developmental needs, growth, strengths, aspirations, learning progress, and academic achievements and challenges; and to communicate with and assist learners in reflecting on their own progress and setting learning and achievement goals. From these definitions one can conclude that assessment emphasises the importance of deciding about learners while assisting them to learn the content at hand.

Assessment has been identified as an essential element of effective pedagogy and requires some expertise. Without assessment, teachers and learners would have no way of knowing whether learning is taking place, or what it is that has been learnt (Broadfoot, 2012). Assessment is thus seen as one of the most powerful educational tools for promoting effective learning. The emphasis is on measuring, judging and gauging learners’ learning, which agrees with growing trends brought about by external authorities and policy makers. This definition is consistent with that of Verhoeven and Devos (2005, p. 256), who define assessment as “the collection and interpretation of data about the teaching and learning process in order to measure the progress of the learners and form a basis for making decisions about the improvement of the teaching-learning process”. Seen in this context, assessment should be an integral part of teaching and learning (Grosser & Lombard, 2005; Chilala & Mweemba, 2007). This means that assessment may not be left till the end of the teaching activity because it is through assessment that the teacher is able to identify gaps and close them in good time. Therefore, to a large extent, assessment should inform teaching. In this regard, assessment measures and supports teaching

and learning because it facilitates and evaluation of the ability of learners to translate what has been taught in class to the real world (Black & William, 2009). This implies that assessment serves the purpose of supporting learning. Therefore, learner participation is vital in assessment. Moreover, different forms of assessment encourage learners to be active during the facilitation process because their learning abilities are catered for.

2.2.2 Types of assessment

The use of a range of forms of assessment within education is an extension of this process and is integral to teaching and learning. Assessment can be classified into two categories: summative assessment (assessment *of* learning), and formative assessment (assessment *for* learning) (Black & William, 2009). As stated previously, for many years, assessment was used to describe the processes of evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning at the end of the learning process (William, 2011). This means that the main focus was summative assessment which occurred mainly for promotion and certification purposes. Little emphasis was placed on other forms of assessment such as formative assessment. Summative assessment may be defined as “the assessments carried out at the end of an instructional unit or course of study for the purpose of giving grades or otherwise certifying student proficiency” (Shepard, 2006, p. 627). In a way, summative assessment is administered after the learning has been completed and provides information that judges the success of the teaching and learning process. William (2011) argues that summative assessment provides a concluding picture of a learner’s achievement, and is usually administered at the end of a set point, such as the end of a term to assess what has been learned and how well it was taught (Earl, 2003). In summative assessment, the focus is usually on awarding marks or grades to indicate whether the learner has an acceptable level of knowledge and can be progressed to the next grade. In a nutshell, summative assessment is more concerned about the end result and thus the final product of a learner’s learning. This includes traditional examinations, formal tests, and research projects. Sambell, MacDowell and Brown (1997) argue that, for learners in higher education, traditional tests and examinations are mostly preferred because they are the easiest way of obtaining marks. But some scholars also perceive research as a summative approach and see it as important in empowering students to achieve other outcomes such as responsibility, teamwork, and communication skills (Fernandes, et al., 2012, p. 173). With regards to traditional examinations, learners prefer them above projects and essays because they argue that grading is much fairer and the efforts required are lighter in for example formal examinations (Fernandes, et al., 2012). In essence, these authors suggest that traditional

examinations have the ability to inspire rote learning in learners, hence they have to be planned in such a way that they are based on critical outcomes and require application from learners when answering questions.

Conversely, Black and William (2009) define formative assessment as all the activities carried out by teachers and their learners with the intention of providing information on learning that could be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities in their classrooms. As argued by Torrance (2013), formative assessment is concerned with assessing the quality of student responses in various performances or pieces of work to shape and improve the student's competence. This role of formative assessment is in line with the definition of formative assessment provided by Black and William (2009, p. 5), which is that it is "a practice of eliciting, interpreting and using student achievement to make decisions about the next step in instruction". Seen in this context, formative assessment provides feedback to both the teacher and the learner during the process of teaching and learning. Thus, the primary role of formative assessment is to identify areas that may need improvement. Blanchard (2009, p. 19) emphasises that formative assessment is "the making of judgments about how to take learners' learning forward, meaning that it forms part of the learning process; hence it is process-oriented and allows learners room to improve".

Formative assessment is explained as assessment for learning and a process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there (Talib et al., 2014). Similarly, Brown et al. (2008) argue that teachers, educational leaders and policy makers assess learners in order to improve learning, to certify that learning has taken place, and to evaluate the quality of instruction. Teachers rely strongly on formative and diagnostic assessment to constantly improve teaching strategies and instructional quality. It has been established that assessment is beneficial to both teachers and learners as it helps learners to identify and improve their weaknesses and teachers to adjust their teaching strategies accordingly (Barley, 2011). This highlights the importance of proper implementation of assessment as this activity has a potential of influencing the whole process of teaching and learning.

Formative assessment is expected to help learners to learn their subject/module, content, and other topics. It is thus ‘assessment for learning’ because it is taking place during the facilitation context and pedagogies with the aim of developing learning, which means it is based on learning goals (Tara, 2005). In this regard, formative assessment takes place while teaching and learning are in progress with the aim of identifying gaps and making improvements if needed. Hence it involves gathering evidence of learning and providing feedback to learners and the teacher to inform teaching strategies (McMillan, 2013).

According to Mosiane (2014) formative assessment serves to guide learner improvement, to diagnose problems, to enable learners to rectify mistakes, to determine learners’ prior knowledge, to provide feedback on teachers’ teaching, to motivate learners, and to add variety to teaching and learning. Therefore, if SBA is to fulfil a formative role, teachers should be given greater responsibility to design quality assessment tasks that align with the learning objectives; thus, they have to continuously monitor learners’ work and give constructive feedback.

Formative assessment allows the teacher to understand what learners know (Enerson, Plank & Johnson, 2007). However, drawbacks occur when teachers discover that students’ background and preparation are at odds with their expectations. But despite this weakness, Enerson, Plank and Johnson (2007) argue that it is better to know than not to know, and they propose that the best way of dealing with such a diagnostic assessment style is not to grade such tasks.

Projects form part of formative assessment (Fernandes, et al., 2012) as they focus on deep learning and critical thinking because they provide learners with the opportunity to understand and link course content to real-life situations. This indicates that most formative assessments inculcate critical outcomes as envisaged by the South African government. Hargreaves (1997) states that the weaknesses of using projects as a form of assessment are that some learners do not enjoy them because they force learners to apply knowledge, and the majority of such tasks are used mainly for the purpose of summative assessment. Another negative impact of projects that is raised by Fernandes, et al. (2012) is that the workload for and time management of learners become obstacles when they have to do projects because they are expected to engage in stacks of work for which many get low marks. However, regardless of these shortcomings, presentations of work can be improved and this assists with assessment that is developmental.

Research has also shown that group work assessment is commonly used in higher education institutions and scholars have argued that this has both positive and negative effects (Sharp, 2006; Kuisma, 2007; Nordberg, 2008). Some drawbacks are that it is difficult to assess an individual when working in a group (Kuisma, 2007). Sharp (2006) points out that the contribution of an individual to a group cannot be adequately represented by a single mark because contribution is multi-dimensional. On the same note, Nordberg (2008) argues that some learners loaf when working in a group and that, in some instances, an individual's inputs get lost in the process. To deal with such complexities, Lejk and Wyvill (2001) suggest that peer assessment within a group is important because learners can be used to self-assess both summative and formative and the teacher can moderate the evaluation.

Essays form part of formative assessment and this assists in assessing learners' writing, interpretation, critical thinking, and creative skills (Mafenya, 2016). However, large classes are a drawback (Khumalo & Mji, 2014). This also affects effective assessment that allows the development of learners because they are not given different essays to improve their writing skills. The solution to large classes and giving learners essays is offered by Bloxham Boyd & Orr (2011, p. 663), who argue that peer assessment can be used; but the drawback is that peers normally do not take such tasks seriously when they assess because they mainly focus on perceptions of learners' efforts which is normally biased and not appropriate for the task at hand. However, Talib, et al. (2014) maintain that group work and other formative assessments are pivotal in developing learners' abilities to attain high achievement.

2.2.3 Feedback and assessment

Feedback that is based on assessment is the information that provides the teacher with direct useable insights into the current performance levels of learners (Lee, 2007). Feedback also allows learners a chance to reflect on their past performances. Hattie and Timberly (2017) perceive feedback in education as comprising of information provided by a teacher, peer, book, parent, self or experience regarding aspects of the learner's performance or achievement. As stated by Kapambwe (2010), learners are interested in experimenting with a wider range of feedback options, including class discussions, peer evaluation, and conferences with teachers. It is thus crucial to give feedback to the learners after every assessment activity in order to avoid a

repeat of the same mistakes. Learners seek immediate feedback after an assessment task for application in upcoming tasks (Bayerlein, 2014). Feedback can thus become ‘feedforward’ as it is forward looking and helps learners to improve their future performance. Lee (2007) argues that, in order for feedback to be able to promote assessment for learning, learners must be told about their strengths and weaknesses so that they can improve and excel. Learners respond to the teacher’s feedback that must be provided along with opportunities to improve their learning. This may lead to self-regulatory learning, as suggested by Zimmerman and Schunk (2004). The latter authors argue that assessment assists learners in becoming self-regulatory and less dependent on teacher support when they engage in SBA activities.

Learners welcome alternative ways to go about responding to teachers’ written feedback and embrace opportunities to revise their writing (Lee, 2007; Kapambwe, 2010; Tong & Adamson, 2015). Learners seem to prefer written feedback to verbal feedback. Lee (2007) argues that while learners appreciate teachers’ oral feedback given to the whole class, they think that written feedback has a more significant impact on their learning. Therefore, feedback is an essential component of SBA and plays a crucial role in enhancing teaching and learning.

From the above discussion one can conclude that the main aim of assessment is to determine learners’ strengths and weaknesses in learning so that teachers can improve their teaching strategies and provide more opportunities for learners to achieve the desired learning outcomes and to progress to the next grade. It was against this backdrop that SBA has been adopted in many countries, including South Africa. A balance between summative and formative aspects of assessment is also important. Summative assessment is characterised by standardised tests about what learners have learned at the end of a learning period. In contrast, formative assessment is characterised by learners’ active engagement in the assessment and feedback provided by the teacher to help them learn. It was thus important in the current study to understand learners’ views of SBA in Tourism.

2.3 SBA in the Context of the NCS and CAPS

With the emergence of democracy, curriculum transformation in South Africa post-1994 resulted in the incorporation of SBA in the assessment process for all schools in South Africa. Assessment,

as outlined by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R–12, is viewed as an integral part of teaching and learning with emphasis on continuous formative and summative assessment (Department of Basic Education, 2011a; Department of Basic Education, 2011b). The role of assessment shifted from being dominated by mainly examinations and tests at the end of school terms to more emphasis on SBA (Beets, Jansen, Meelkop, Temmerrman, Saetens, Rademakers & Schoofs, 2012). This means that assessment is now seen as developmental and an integral part of teaching and learning. Assessment is the process of collecting and interpreting evidence to determine learners' progress and to make judgments about learners' performance (Department of Basic Education, 2011a; Van Staden & Motsamai, 2017). Therefore, assessment is entrenched in the National Curriculum Statement and outlined in the CAPS document for each phase and subject. It requires a continuous, planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners and using various forms of assessment (Conradie, et al., 2012).

SBA can be used for a variety of reasons such as individual growth, learner development and the promotion of learners. As stated previously, SBA refers to assessment that comprises both formative and summative assessment practices that are administered in totality within a particular school context (Department of Basic Education, 2011b). SBA is therefore a shift from traditional assessment practices where the learners were assessed by using summative tests to a form of assessment by means of which learners' overall development is monitored. The learners' progress is monitored continuously by the teacher while he/she is involved in the teaching and learning process. This implies that the planning of assessment, the setting of assessment tasks, and the completion and marking of such tasks are all done in a particular school. In essence, SBA includes informal as well as formal assessment tasks that are managed by the school. In SBA, teachers have to assume responsibility for the design of quality assessment tasks that are aligned with the content topics and Bloom's taxonomy as outlined in all CAPS documents, while they also have to take the context of the learners into consideration. The main aim of introducing the current form of SBA was to ensure diversified assessment practices that would accommodate individual learners' needs as outlined in the principles of the NCS. Therefore, SBA is designed to assess learners, is integral to the teaching process, and is embedded in the social and cultural life of the classroom rather than in external and formalised activities only (Hamp-Lyons, 2009).

SBA endeavours to integrate formative as well as summative components of assessment. Thus, assessment is intended to provide feedback and enhance learners' learning while awarding marks for progression and promotion. In other words, SBA offers a more holistic appraisal of learners' abilities, and their abilities and readiness are appraised continuously. In order to address the purpose of SBA, teachers are encouraged to use various methods such as quizzes, question and answer sessions, short writing, dramas, and role-playing to assess learning outcomes (Davison, 2007; Kadri, Al-Moamary, Magzoub, & van der Vleuten, 2011). It includes aspects that cannot be easily assessed in public examination settings but are highly valued in the modern world, for instance communication strategies in authentic settings, problem solving skills development, and creativity (Killen, 2007). In effect, teachers have to develop a series of effective teaching and assessment strategies to enhance the learning of all learners by recognising their different abilities (Mansor, Leng, Rasul, Raof & Yusoff, 2013).

The policy assumes that the application of SBA can improve the reliability and validity of the public examination system. As stated in the National Protocol on Assessment Grades R–12 (Department of Basic Education, 2011b), SBA and practical assessment tasks (PATs) are designed to address content knowledge, competencies, skills, and values and attitudes pertaining to a subject that cannot be assessed in a once-off examination. The NCS assessment policy necessitates a rigorous approach to SBA that requires teachers to collect, synthesise and interpret information to assist in decision making in the classroom (Black & Wiliam, 2009) and that will improve student learning (McMillan, 2013). In essence, SBA is administered in schools as part of the learning and teaching process, with learners being assessed by their subject teachers who give feedback in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. However, even though SBA is implemented in South African schools, it appears as if the summative aspect of SBA still receives considerably more attention than the formative aspect of SBA (Spaull, 2013), as promotion in the FET phase is still based on 75% of the marks achieved in the summative end-of-year examination.

Research studies have gathered evidence that demonstrates the benefits of SBA for learning outcomes (Black & William, 1998). The use of effective assessment practices has been linked to benefits for learning, increased levels of learner achievement, and improvements in pedagogy (Abell & Siegel, 2011; Black & William, 2009; Mertler, 2005; DeLuca, Klinger, Searle, & Shulha, 2010). Assessment allows learners to demonstrate cognitive skills and provides them with

opportunities to apply and further develop generic skills (Bisman, 2009). In essence, SBA should be viewed as a tool to measure both the teaching and learning processes and is the main driver of student learning. Another important benefit of SBA is that it fosters student autonomy (Carless, 2011). In this regard, it improves learners' capability to direct their learning, which Boekaerts and Corno (2005) refer to as self-regulation.

SBA in Tourism should provide stable and conducive forms of assessment that reduce over reliance on standardised examinations in order to promote innovative teaching and assessment methods. If this is achieved, independent learning will be encouraged (Majid, 2011). According to Killen (2007), SBA reduces the power of formal tests and examinations by encouraging and making provision for the implementation of a variety of other forms of assessment. It also emphasises the transparency of assessment and makes assessment more learner-friendly.

A study by Talib, et al. (2014) showed that SBA made learners relax and they were happier because they did not have examinations to worry about. Drake, Reid and Kolohon (2014) argue that this form of assessment makes learners feel more confident, communicate better, and gives them the ability to work collaboratively when working in groups. Similarly, a study conducted by Mansor et al. (2013) in Malaysia revealed that SBA put learners in a good position to attain educational goals as it relieved them from pressure while allowing teachers to be creative in their assessment. SBA requires that teachers are involved throughout the assessment process; i.e., in terms of planning, gathering evidence, interpreting evidence, and using the results for decision making. However, the same cannot be said about SBA in South Africa, as there are still SBA tasks in South Africa that are planned without the involvement of the teacher (Faraday, Overton & Cooper, 2011). For example, common tests are set and moderated externally and these tests are delivered to the schools to be written on specified dates as instructed by the Provincial Department of Basic Education (du Plooy & Zilindile, 2014).

Despite the benefits of SBA, the literature notes a number of challenges associated with this system, such as inadequate training for teachers (Kanjee, 2006; Byabato & Kisamo, 2014; Maile, 2013). In some developing countries such as Malaysia, Nigeria and Tanzania, teachers seem to lack expertise and confidence in undertaking SBA tasks (Adediwura, 2012; Omorogiuwa & Aibangbee, 2017). Azleena (2007) discovered that teachers encountered problems completing the

assessment tasks according to the schedule and ensuring the authenticity of the tasks. This suggests that these teachers did not have sufficient knowledge to conduct SBA adequately. A study by Reyneke, et al. (2010) also revealed that many teachers in South Africa were required to adhere to the new curriculum without proper training. Another challenge that the literature identifies is a lack of resources. In a study conducted by Yip and Cheung (2010), the results indicated that the implementation of continuous assessment, of which SBA was part, was hampered by a lack of materials. Schools in general seem to be bemoaning the shortage of LTSM and ‘tools of the trade’ (Reyneke et al., 2010). Uncurbed and high levels of absenteeism among learners is also identified as a serious problem that hampers SBA (Purvin, 2011). Another major disadvantage around the issue of SBA is that learners might not take advantage of it (O’Farrell & Bates 2009). Learners are mostly motivated by what will contribute to their final mark as this will be the ultimate measure of success, particularly in the South African education system, because the country predominantly measures the success of its educational endeavours in terms of end-of-year (particularly Grade 12) examination results (Polio, 2012). Therefore, if SBA has no direct link to a final year mark and is not efficiently utilised, it could be seen as nothing but a waste of time by learners. Thus, learners must be made aware of the impact of and contribution that SBA has on their final promotion mark (Byabato & Kisamo, 2014). This is being addressed by the national requirement for all schools to record marks on the SA-SAMS system – i.e., the school assessment management system – which is a step in the direction to enforce SBA marks to contribute to promotion marks. However, in deep rural areas where there are no electricity driven computer systems, the challenge is deepening.

Another challenge for the effective implementation of SBA is poor feedback given to learners. Many teachers fail to give individual feedback due to factors such as overcrowded classrooms and time constraints (Brown, Kennedy, Fok, Chan, & Yu, 2009; Kapambwe, 2010). Assessment, in particular SBA, can make significant demands on the time of teachers and learners, especially if the numbers of learners are large and feedback is only given in the form of a mark. This is the case especially when one considers that timely feedback is an important part of SBA as it informs the learners of how well they are progressing and how they can improve (Brookhart & Nitko, 2008; Everson, 2010; Hernández, 2012). In addition, Brown et al. (2008) note that teachers complain about the work involved in issuing and marking (grading) SBA tasks.

As was previously alluded to, in South Africa the CAPS documents indicate that SBA marks amount to a small percentage (25%) of the total assessment mark in the FET phase (grades 10- 12) as the final examination mark contributes 75% to learners' promotion mark. However, when the bigger picture is considered, the fact that SBA transforms classroom teaching and learning processes and results in benefits for learners is a significant step in the right direction.

2.4 Formative and Summative Roles of SBA

Formative and summative assessment tasks require different interpretations and actions (Harlen, 2014; William & Black, 1996). Owing to their different nature, summative and formative assessments are adopted for different uses. Summative assessment is used to grade or certify learners or to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum (Fisher & Frey, 2007), whilst formative assessment is concerned with how judgments about the quality of student responses (performance, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve the learners' competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning (Rudolph, Simon, Raemer, & Eppich, 2008) and this is supported by (Sadler, 1989, p. 120, 2012). Formative assessment aims at developing and informing learning (Davison & Leung, 2009), while summative assessment is increasingly used in summarising learning achievement (Black & William, 2009). Therefore, SBA is viewed as an ideal system that fulfils both the formative and summative roles of assessment and thus serves as a means of attaining educational goals (Mansor et al., 2013).

Summative assessment is done at the end of a learning period and is used to give an overall picture of learners' progress at a given time (DBE, 2011b). This form of assessment is linked to tests or examinations that are usually administered to determine learner promotion to the next grade (Marnewick & Rouhani, 2006). Stated differently, summative aspects of SBA are to assess learners' competency at the end of an instructional phase for the purposes of reporting (Fisher & Frey, 2007, p. 4). Thus, it is used as a means of grading and making judgements regarding learners' achievements for purposes of promotion and certification. Summative assessment is used primarily to see whether and what learning has occurred for learners at a particular time, usually at the end of a unit of work or at the end of a course (Abell & Siegel, 2011). The CAPS documents state that the judgements that are made about learners' achievements – typically represented in the form of grades, percentages, marks and/or comments – are used for a variety of purposes within the school environment and also for issues that are external to the school (Harlen, 2014). Within the school,

summative assessment results are used for ongoing teacher decision making and planning and to report student progress to parents and to learners themselves. External to the school, summative assessment results can be used to determine the accountability of the examining body and to plan intervention strategies (McInerney et al., 2009; Reyneke, et al., 2010).

As was stated earlier, Black and William (1998, p. 537) note that assessment also serves a formative function when it produces evidence that forms the basis for action that leads to improving learner performance. Tarrance (2013) states that, for the activity to be regarded as formative, teachers need to do more than just assess learners regularly as they have to act upon feedback. Feedback becomes a critical and core teaching activity which should support learning and provide information to learners that will enable them to identify knowledge, skills and competencies they can demonstrate, and to identify pathways for improvement (Brookhart, 2008). Thus, the principal purpose of formative assessment is to contribute through feedback and feedforward towards learners' learning.

SBA provides learners with an opportunity to learn from the feedback that is provided through the formative component of assessment. The effectiveness of the formative component of SBA is determined by the quality of the feedback both teachers and learners receive. A concern about feedback is that learners focus more on scores rather than on the value of an assignment (Carless, 2007). Feedback provides opportunities for learners to engage with their facilitators when they discuss an assessment outcome (Carless, 2007). It is difficult to guess learners' performance levels until some form of assessment has been administered. This means that feedback on learners' performance can be used immediately to plan for the next steps in their learning (Talib, et al., 2014). Feedback is important at all levels of assessment as it paves the way for the next steps of planning, teaching and learning. Assessment that neglects the provision of authentic and meaningful feedback to learners misses its fundamental role (Byabato & Kisamo, 2014).

Summative assessment tasks or examinations during the school year can be used to provide feedback which can be used by the learners in preparation for their later assessments, especially assessments that examine much of the same material. However, care is needed as such summative tasks can limit rather than enhance learning by narrowing the learning focus for the student and it can thus lead to 'teaching to the test' by the teacher (Crooks, 2011; Hume & Coll, 2008; McMillan,

2013). Analysis of the National Senior Certificate October/November examination results plays a crucial role in planning for the next year's activities, as feedback obtained from this examination becomes useful even to the education system as a whole. Although summative in nature, feedback from this examination that is compiled by analytical moderators for each examinable subject helps in identifying content gaps and allowing ample space to close them. Analysis of learner performance on a quarterly basis also helps to inform the nature of intervention activities by districts. For example, winter and spring camps are informed by these results. Summative assessment therefore becomes formative in nature only when feedback is used to support and enhance teaching and learning.

Although formative and summative assessment processes were presented in the above discussion as two discrete purposes for assessment, there is considerable overlap. Black (2013) highlights that the formative and summative purposes of assessment are interwoven in that they are mutually supportive rather than contradictory. Teachers can thus use assessment information from both systems to enhance teaching and learning.

2.5 Tourism as a Subject in the School Curriculum

In order to understand learners' views of SBA in Tourism, it was important to understand the context of Tourism as a subject within the school curriculum. In South Africa, the subject Tourism was introduced as a vocational oriented subject in 1998 in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase (Grades 10 – 12) with the aim of developing entrepreneurial skills and reducing unemployment (National Business Initiative [NBI], 2005). Currently, with the introduction of the NCS, Tourism is one of the 29 subjects from which a school may construct a curriculum for learners to obtain the National Senior Certificate. This vocational origin of Tourism has had significant implications for the implementation of assessment practices. A study by Dube-Xaba (2017) highlights that, in South Africa, the development of the tourism industry and Tourism as a school subject have been linked by the government as part of the plan to achieve the goal of reducing unemployment and alleviating poverty. Despite the expectations of this subject to meet some of the country's needs, Tourism as a school subject was received with mixed response. One reason is that schools and the public were sceptical about the low status awarded to the subject (Dube, 2014). Moreover, negative perceptions about the subject were not only a South African challenge, as other countries were experiencing a similar challenge. For example, in New Zealand

Tourism and Hospitality were removed from the country’ review list of approved subjects for university entrance because the subjects were perceived to be more vocational than academic (Andreassen, 2018). This negative reception of and perceptions about the subject may have implications for its implementation and assessment strategies, and this may influence learners’ learning.

Although Tourism has evolved to be regarded as a subject that enhances certain skills and addresses employment challenges, it has developed as a subsidiary to other subjects in the curriculum as it is perceived as ‘an easy’ option (Dube, 2014). Thus, learners’ perception of Tourism needed to be addressed, particularly in terms of their experiences of SBA.

2.6 School Based Assessment in Tourism

Offering Tourism in schools requires adherence to assessment policies that are expounded in the CAPS document and the Protocol on Assessment Grades R–12. SBA in South African secondary schools is a scheduled classroom based assessment process that is based on the collection of information on learners’ learning and the manner in which teachers are teaching

(Department of Basic Education, 2012). The Tourism SBA framework in South Africa consists of seven tasks, namely a project, a March test, a May test, a midyear examination, an open book test, and the preparatory examination. All the marks that are attained are weighted to 25% of the final promotion mark. The practical assessment task (PAT) is weighted to 25% of the end-of-year examination mark. However, the PAT is conducted as a task in the SBA component although the marks are calculated as part of the final examination each year (grades 10 – 12).

Table 2.1: Assessment requirements and format for Tourism

Source: Adapted from the CAPS document for Tourism (Department of Basic Education, 2011a)

Formal assessment Grades 10-11				Formal assessment Grade 12			
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4 Promotion	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 3 Certification mark
Test 75% Project 25%	Test 25% Midyear examination	Test 75% Test/open book test	SBA = Term 1+2+3 = $300 \div 3 = 100$ PAT 1 + 2 = 50x2 Examination	Test 75% Project	Test 25% Midyear examination	Test 25% Trial examination	Term 1+2+3 = $300 \div 3$ 1 + 2 = $200 \div 2 =$ Examination
			$400 \div 4 = 100$				$400 \div 4 = 100$

In grades 10 and 11, all SBA tasks, the PAT and the end-of-year examination are set, marked and moderated internally, while in grade 12 the SBA tasks are set and marked internally while moderated externally; the PAT is set externally, marked internally and moderated externally; and the final NSC examination is set, marked and moderated externally. Both SBA and end-of-year examination marks affect the overall grades of a student and thus have a significant impact on promotion and certification. The contribution of SBA to the promotion mark is reflected in Table 2.1 above.

2.7 Learners' Perceptions of SBA

In terms of assessment, a perusal of the literature revealed that learners are the least researched group yet they are the main recipients of assessment (Yu, 2010). They are also the main participants in the assessment process and their views and attitudes regarding a particular form of assessment should be considered (Scott, 2007). A guiding principle of the education curriculum in South Africa is that it should be learner-centred, which suggests that learners should be the main characters in the learning process (DBE, 2011a). The SBA initiative thus requires that learners' views should be placed at the centre, as their learning and improvement are top priorities (Hamp-Lyons, 2009).

Understanding learners' views of SBA is vital as their perceptions of assessment for learning are determining factors of success (Stiggins, 2007). The literature has revealed that learners in secondary schools have various – and often contradictory – views of assessment (Brown & Harries, 2012; Xiao & Carless, 2013; Kadri et al., 2011; Brown, 2014). A study on learners' perspectives of SBA in Hong Kong by Tong, Adamson and Cheng (2015) showed that many learners in one school held a positive outlook on the initiative. For example, their participation in oral discussions were active and relaxed, and this allowed them to demonstrate their actual abilities better. In a similar study conducted by Brown and Harries (2012) in New Zealand, it was found that the learners understood the concept of assessment, that they were positive about assessment in their early years of schooling, and that they accepted the policy requirements. However, this changed as they progressed through their schooling years. Senior learners were perturbed by more assessment tasks in the secondary school and some thought that teachers' assessment decisions were subjective. The latter authors also found that some learners thought that high stake university tests were not necessary as these tests were unnecessary obstacles to their future (Brown & Harries 2008). Peterson and Irving (2008) found that learners were more likely to talk about how they studied for tests than what they had to learn. The results of the latter study were similar to those of various other researchers who explored learners' views on assessment (Cheng et al., 2010; Xiao & Carless, 2013). An earlier results of the Brookhart and Bronowicz (2003) study suggested that learners perceived assessment as pressurising them to get good grades, and these grades were considered the only indicator of learners' success. However, there were also a few positive conceptions due to high test scores and praise by the teacher. For example, in a study conducted by Al-Moamary et al. (2011), it was revealed that learners considered assessment fair and that it assisted them to engage in an in-depth approach to learning when it was aligned to curriculum objectives. Learners were more likely to collaborate or share their views with their peers or teachers concerning the assessment experience. All these factors contributed to the improvement of learning. In general, SBA may enable learners to develop self-confidence and motivation to learn and it allows them to achieve their best in a more relaxed and conducive setting (HampLyons, 2007).

Brown and Harris (2012) unequivocally argue that learners are aware that assessment improves learning and therefore they want honest, comprehensive and constructive feedback on how to improve. Brown et al. (2008) assert that learners judge assessment to be fair when a task was

completed under controlled conditions and without any assistance or second chances. Learners are also very sensitive when assessment is perceived as unfair, bad or irrelevant. The same sentiment is voiced by Cotton (2017), who argue that learners learning is related to assessment practices. However, assessment practices that enforce disclosure of ignorance in front of peers is not welcomed by learners (Brown, 2014). Some learners may shy away from completing tasks they perceive to be difficult in order to avoid being ridiculed in front of their peers. Learners thus prefer authentic assessment tasks that make learning realistic and powerful.

2.8 Ramifications of SBA in Under-Resourced Schools in the South African Context

Years after democracy in South Africa, the country is still characterised by great inequalities. Research evidence suggests that there is still a huge disparity between well-resourced and poorly resourced schools which the country has not yet succeeded to address (Russo, Beckmann & Jansen, 2005). Generally, most rural and township settlements still lack basic services such as running water, electricity, sanitation, and health and educational facilities. The lack of such resources impacts negatively on access to and the quality of education. The implementation of the new curriculum, which entrenches SBA, is particularly difficult in schools that were historically disadvantaged by the apartheid system (Levin & Lockhead, 2012). For example, Ramurath (2007) argues that, in most cases, teachers in such schools do not have enough resources when implementing the new curriculum or new assessment practices. The problems associated with a lack of quality education are further aggravated by inadequate infrastructure in schools (Ebersohn, 2015). This lack of resources which receives inadequate attention becomes a main stumbling block on the journey towards quality education (Ebersohn, 2015). Under-resourced schools usually have dilapidated buildings; insufficient classrooms; broken windows; limited or no access to water, electricity and sanitation; and restricted access to resources such as libraries and books, information technology and specialised resources (Department of Education, 2005). Gustaffson (2007) suggests a link between the quality of schools and physical infrastructure and performance. Effective teaching and learning in any subject can only be realised when there are adequate and appropriate teaching and learning support materials and infrastructure such as libraries and laboratories. The availability of such resources is, in turn, dependent on the school budget. The allocation of resources in the form of funds and other physical and material resources also influences the nature of teaching and learning in schools (Yin, 2017). Schools that are better

resourced seem to be able to avoid many of the major problems, whereas under-resourced schools are not able to do so. Indeed, the implementation of assessment practices such as SBA in the classroom becomes even more challenging if the school is under-resourced.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This study was framed by the learners' (or students') conceptions of assessment theory (SCoA) that was developed by Brown, Irving and Peterson (2009) as a theory that aims to understand learners' conceptions of assessment. According to Brown and Hirschfeld (2012), learners have at least four major conceptions about assessment as revealed in the Student Conception of Assessment model. These beliefs include the following:

- Learners are aware that the aim of assessment is to improve learning and teaching;
- Assessment is used to evaluate external factors outside their own control;
- Assessment is enjoyable and helps classmates to be more supportive of one another and has an effective impact;
- Assessment can be unfair, negative and irrelevant (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008; Harris, Harnett, & Brown, 2009).

Although this theory that was developed by Brown and colleagues was suitable for a survey, this study adapted it as a suitable theoretical framework for a qualitative study on learners' experiences of SBA in Tourism.

Various scholars have used or adapted the SCoA theory to either examine learners' conceptions of assessment in the general sense (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008; Otunuku, Brown & Airini, 2013), or to investigate learners' perceptions or attitudes towards one specific assessment form (Cowie, 2009; Wise & Cotten, 2009). For example, research using the SCoA in New Zealand has shown that the improvement conception has an adaptive effect on standardised test performance in mathematics (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2007; Brown, et al., 2009) and reading (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008). It was also revealed that it is a belief system that is aligned with self-regulation theories (e.g., those of Boekaerts & Corno, 2005 & Zimmerman, 2008). In other words, increased endorsement of the improvement conception predicted increased academic performance. In

contrast, the more learners endorsed the conceptions of external attribution and irrelevance, the lower their achievement scores were in both studies.

This theory that underpinned the current study posits that learners are aware that assessment improves learning and therefore they want honest, comprehensive and constructive feedback on how to improve. Good teachers regularly test and give feedback to learners about their learning. In fact, learners perceive assessment as a way of getting feedback and they thus think that assessment makes them accountable for their learning (Brown and Harris, 2012).

Some learners begin school in a very positive frame of mind; however, many become negative as they work their way through the system. Many learners think that more assessment tasks at secondary school level are difficult to handle, and many also do not trust the intentions of their teachers in relation to assessment (Omorogiuwa & Aibangbee, 2017). Learners are not happy with high stake university entrance tests as they think these tests are just unfair obstacles that limit their chances in life (Cotton, 2017). Learners perceive assessment to be fair only if it is completed individually under controlled conditions and without any assistance or second chances. The theory sites that learners are very sensitive to assessment which they perceive to be unfair, bad or irrelevant (Brown & Hirschfeld, 2008). Brown and Harris (2012) argue that learners prefer whatever system of assessment they experience regardless of the merits or deficiencies of that system. They may not really be in a position to evaluate assessment methods; however, they prefer more authentic assessment that makes learning more realistic and powerful.

Against this backdrop, this theoretical framework was deemed relevant for my study as I allowed the authentic voices of Tourism learners to narrate their experiences and perceptions of SBA. To achieve this aim, a case study focusing on an under-resourced school in the Uthukela District was conducted.

The current study aimed to explore learners' views of SBA, and the study aimed to illuminate both their conceptions of SBA and their perceptions on the purpose served by SBA. By listening to their views, learners' active construction of and participation in this form of assessment could therefore be explored.

2.10 Synthesis

SBA is the assessment practice or method used by teachers and learners to identify their teacher/learning strengths and weaknesses with the aim of improving learning. This chapter reviewed literature that focuses on various conceptualisations of assessment trends in the international and South African contexts. Literature on SBA in the context of the NCS and CAPS in South Africa was explored, and various aspects such as the benefits and challenges of SBA and its impact on learners, the different roles of SBA in the classroom, the SBA requirements for Tourism as a school subject, and learners' conceptions of assessment were illuminated. The challenges experienced by under-resourced schools were discussed, and the theoretical framing of the study was elucidated. More specifically, the chapter first presented a review of the literature to underscore broader debates on assessment and SBA practices in different countries. The literature suggests that different understandings of SBA inform its purpose and implementation in each country.

The review of the literature was narrowed down to the implementation of SBA in the South African curriculum, with specific reference to Tourism. In this context, the literature revealed that the national policy has implications for the views of learners pertaining to SBA, as their input will provide a framework for the effective implementation of SBA in Tourism. The literature revealed that, in South Africa, SBA fulfils both a summative and a formative role and that these roles shape learners' views of the successful implementation of SBA or not. The literature suggests that learners' perceptions of assessment influence their approach to SBA tasks and that these perceptions thus impact their learning. The literature also suggests that most schools in South Africa are still lagging behind in terms of resources to support teaching, learning and assessment. These limitations have implications for the implementation of SBA, particularly in Tourism as a subject that relies on current and real world information. Moreover, the reviewed literature asserts that learners value feedback, as much of the research regarding SBA assumes that learners are interested in the formative aspects of assessment such as receiving feedback. Thus, valuing learners' perspectives on SBA strategies can help teachers to reframe their thinking of learners as end users of assessment. This knowledge can lead to a deeper understanding of how formative assessment practices may be used to improve learning in the classroom.

Finally, the chapter presented the theoretical framework that informed my analyses of the data. The learners' (students') conceptions of assessment (SCoA) theory that was developed by Brown, et al., (2009) was adopted as a theoretical framework and it thus informed the data analysis and evaluation processes. This framework was adopted to understand learners' conceptions of assessment as it posits that learners have at least four major conceptions about assessment that make them aware that assessment improves their learning.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine Tourism learners' conceptions of SBA and the extent to which their conceptions of SBA impacted their learning. The previous chapter examined available literature in the field of assessment and SBA in particular. This chapter sheds some light on the research methodology that was employed in the study, which is a blueprint of the research activities that I conducted to examine learners' views of SBA in Tourism in an under- resourced school. According to Yin (2011), research methodology is a systematic way of solving a research problem. This chapter will try to systematically elucidate the workable methods that were employed to generate data on learners' views of SBA in the under-resourced school under study. It also provides an explanation and discussion of the research methods and techniques, the sample size, the sampling procedures, and the data collection and analysis processes. The trustworthiness of the study and the ethical aspects that were adhered to are also underscored.

3.2 Interpretive Paradigm

This study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm which is a way of thinking, perceiving or approaching work. A qualitative research approach was adopted. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) describe a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guide action and comprise ethics, epistemology, ontology and methodology. It allows an in-depth understanding of the participants' views. The interpretivist paradigm focuses on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied, and offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice (Merriam, 2009). Adopting an interpretivist paradigm provided a unique opportunity to study the phenomenon of SBA in a real-life situation, and it facilitated focus on how learners made sense of their reality, with emphasis in this case on learners' conceptions of SBA and the extent to which their conceptions impacted their learning (Creswell & Poth, 2017) assert that, in an interpretive paradigm, reality (ontology) is a socially defined or constructed idea, which implies that there are many ways of seeing the world and hence multiple realities. This means that research participants exhibit their subjective and multiple realities (Creswell, Hanson & Clark, 2007). Linked to the concept of ontology is epistemology, which is narrowly defined by

Bertram & Christiansen (2014, p. 37) as “a way of knowing”. The basic assumption of this paradigm is that knowledge (epistemology) is socially constructed by those in the research process, and that it is the duty of the researcher to understand these complex experiences from the point of view of the participants. It was thus important for me to grasp the meanings that constituted a particular action and to understand that social action. This paradigm was most suited to this study as I aimed to explore the reality of the conceptions of learners when they engaged in SBA tasks and how these conceptions impacted their learning. Furthermore, the knowledge that I could gain about learners’ conceptions of SBA was subjective and was developed from learners’ views and their interpretations, as well as the interpretations of the researcher.

3.3 Qualitative Case Study Design

According to Creswell (2014), a research design is a conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it is thus a blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. The research design incorporates different ways of generating data during the research process. As such, the design includes an outline of what the researcher will do – from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of the data. In keeping with its interpretive paradigm, this study adopted a qualitative case-study methodology by focusing on Tourism learners’ conceptions of SBA and how these conceptions impacted their learning. The qualitative research approach was used as I wanted to explore learners’ views in full detail by collecting and analysing rich and thick descriptive data pertaining to SBA in Tourism.

As noted by Cohen et al. (2011), the interpretive approach is qualitative in nature as it explores the ‘how’ and the ‘why’, and therefore the study was based on how individual learners made meaning of their world through interaction. The qualitative approach was suitable because it enabled me to explore and gain insight into learners’ conceptions of SBA and how their conceptions impacted their learning. Yin (2017) agrees that the qualitative approach is the most useful approach to understand what meanings people attach to the views they hold. The focus of a qualitative study is thus to be able to derive rich data from the meanings people attach to issues. Yin (2017) describes a case study as a full scrutiny of a research phenomenon that comprises of parts of a narrative. In this regard Bertram & Christiansen (2014) argues that the qualitative case study examines a phenomenon, and this is the ‘case’ in a real-world context. Creswell and Poth (2017) note that a case study enables the researcher to spend plenty of time with the participants to ensure that rich

data are procured. In this study I was thus personally in contact with the activities and operations that enabled an in-depth exploration of the case. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), a qualitative case study is a research strategy in which a researcher makes the exploration of a research phenomenon easier by using data from different sources. I thus engaged in an in depth exploration of the lived views of selected learners on SBA, rather than to generalise my findings to a large population (Creswell, 2014). This approach assisted me in probing for information most adequately as I followed the qualitative approach.

A case study design was considered appropriate for the exploration of eight Grade 11

Tourism learners' conceptions of SBA and the extent to which these conceptions impacted their learning. Yin (2011, p. 4) describes a case study as "an in-depth contextual understanding of the case relying on multiple data sources". The case study approach provided an exceptional example of real people in a real situation, as proposed by Stake (2010) and Yin (2011).

The case study was also best suited for this study because I wanted to gain in-depth understanding of the situation and of those involved (Cohen et al., 2011). I also wanted to understand why things happened as they did, and this required an in-depth investigation of the interdependencies and the patterns that emerged. My focus was on the phenomenon that I studied rather than on the participants, and for this I used qualitative methods to collect the data. These methods were: conducting focus group discussions with the learners, and analysing their reflective journals to corroborate the data. These instruments allowed me to obtain in-depth information on the phenomenon under study. Cohen et al. (2011) refer to this method of data collection as 'triangulation' which is defined as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour". Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 10) assert that triangulation is "a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation". The two methods thus assisted in the triangulation of the data and enabled me to identify consistencies and inconsistencies. The triangulation strategy also assisted in ensuring the trustworthiness of the data in the sense that the findings were compared. The two data collection methods will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

3.4 Sampling

According to Cresswell and Porth (2017) view the selection procedure of study participants as a process of selecting a number of individuals from a group so that the selected group is representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. In this study I used the purposive sampling method, which presupposes that the researcher has sufficient knowledge of the study to make an informed decision about who should serve as participants (Paul, Kleinhammer-Tramill & Fowler, 2009). Creswell (2014) opines that, in purposeful sampling, the researcher intentionally selects individuals and sites to learn or understand a central phenomenon under study. For the purpose of this study, eight learners from one secondary school in the Uthukela District were purposively selected. I requested the subject teacher to allow me to use the SBA mark grid so that I was able to purposively select three high flyers, three average learners and two below average learners to allow for rich data collection from the sample. As the study had to be conducted within a predetermined time period because my participants were learners at a school, efficiency and focus were crucial. I therefore limited the number of learners who participated in the study so that I could manage the body of data that had to be analysed effectively. Moreover, a qualitative study does not consider figures due to data saturation (Cohen, Manion & Marrison, 2011), and thus a small sample was suitable as it was easy to produce rich data due to my intensive engagement with the participants (Human, 2009). The section below elaborates on the research site and the participants.

3.4.1 Research Site

The study was conducted in the Uthukela district in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. The district is one of the biggest in the province as it stretches over three towns: Estcourt, Bergville and Ladysmith, which are popular tourist destinations within the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg World Heritage Site and the Battlefields. The district has three clusters (Mnambithi, Estcourt and Bergville) and fifteen circuits. A school from the Kliprivier circuit in the Mnambithi cluster was selected for this study. The school will be referred to as Bonga Secondary School¹. The school was chosen because it is a township school and caters for learners from the township as well as rural and semi-peripheral urban areas. At the time of the study it was the only school in the township that offered Tourism in its curriculum in the Uthukela District.

¹ This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the school and the learners.

Most of the learners attending the school came from around the school and the majority reached the school on foot. The longest distance some learners walked was eight kilometers. Only a small percentage came from the neighbouring areas and they used public transport to get to the School.

The school is located eight kilometres from the nearest town. It is not difficult to get to the school as roads leading to the school are all tarred and in a good condition. The school had a total enrolment of 900 learners and 30 teachers with one administrative assistant and one caretaker at the time of data collection. All the teachers were qualified for the subjects they taught and held higher certificates, diplomas and degrees in education. The school had a quintile 4 ranking¹. Quintile ranking is based on the national poverty table prepared by Treasury which determines the poverty ranking of the area (Hall, 2009) and is an indication of the socio-economic status of the school. Schools are ranked according to the level of poverty in the community where the school is located. A low quintile ranking determines the no fee status of the school. Lower quintile schools are also determined by poor communities and smaller enrolment figures. A quintile 4 school is a school that is located in mostly affluent communities and has an enrolment of above 650 learners. Bonga High School partly met the criteria because it had an enrolment of 900 learners, which was far above the benchmark of 650. However, in terms of poverty status it was not a 'wealthy' school as most of the learners were from poverty-stricken communities that had minimal resources for survival. But due to the fact that the school is near a town, is accessible and is in the township, it was automatically ranked as a quintile 4 and parents had to pay a school fee of R300.00 per learner per annum. Reportedly, most of the parents did not pay school fees. As one of the older schools in the area, I noted that it was dilapidated and I was informed that it had been victim to crimes and burglaries. There were electricity and running water in the school, but most of the lights in the classrooms were not working. I counted twenty-one normal classrooms, three multipurpose rooms, four laboratories, a library, a woodwork centre, and a kitchen for Consumer Studies. There were sufficient toilets for both learners and teachers.

When I did the field work at the school, I was informed that most of the parents were unemployed. The majority of the employed group received an average weekly income of R420.00, which indicated that poverty was rife. As a result, the area was affected by crime and alcohol and drug

abuse, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition and teenage pregnancy. The majority of the families depended on social grants and the government housing scheme, and a great number of households were headed by children. Eighty percent (720 out of 900) of the learners at the school received a social grant. However, the school was excluded from the government school nutrition programme because of its quintile ranking. One can only conclude that it was a travesty that the school was ranked an affluent school but that the evidence indicated that it was not the case.

The school's performance since the inception of the CAPS policy in 2006 could be described as on a 'yo-yo scale'²; however, some positive improvement occurred in the three years prior to the study as the Matriculation pass rate of 79% in 2014 improved to 97% in 2016. The school had a 100% pass rate for Tourism in the NSC exam for the previous five years. However, the Grade 12 quarterly performance for Tourism showed an average of 87% over the previous five years.

3.4.2 Selection of participants

The qualitative approach usually allows the researcher to focus on a few individuals who are likely to be informative because of who they are, and because the researcher anticipates the opportunity to interact with them extensively (Rayford, 2010). Purposive sampling was used as I approached individuals who had in-depth knowledge and experience about SBA for Tourism, as proposed by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011). I deemed a sample of eight participants sufficient for this study as Mason (2010) indicates that, in a qualitative approach, the samples are usually much smaller than those used in quantitative studies. Rayford (2010) reinforces that a well-designed qualitative study usually requires a relatively small number of participants to yield rich and saturated data that are needed to understand even subtle meanings about the phenomenon under focus. The logic of sample size is thus related to the purpose, the collection strategy and the availability of information-rich cases (Drew, Hardman & Hosp, 2008). Purposive sampling was used to select eight Grade 11 Tourism learners because they were in their second year of doing SBA in Tourism and they would yield rich data. Creswell (2014) states that purposive sampling assumes that one needs to select a sample that one feels will yield the best understanding of the phenomenon under study. Due to constraints of time, resources and the sensitive nature of the research that would use learners, a smaller sample was appropriate. The eight Grade 11 Tourism

² Performance fluctuating

learners were purposively selected according to their performance levels using the SBA mark grid.

Table 3.1 presents the profile of the learners who participated in this study.

Table 3.1: Profile of the learner participants

No.	Pseudonym	Brief Profile
1	Mqondisi	Boy, 18 years old, had both parents, lived with parents, started doing Tourism in Grade 10, and had not repeated a grade, received social grant.
2	Thoti	Girl, 17 years old, orphaned, lived with grandparents, started Tourism in Grade 10, received social grant.
3	Phindi	Girl, 19 years, lived with mother, had child, started Tourism in grade 11 after failing Science in Grade 11; received social grant.
4	Senzo	Boy, 18 years old, had both parents, lived with parents, started Tourism in Grade 10, hadn't repeated a grade, received social grant.
5	Msizi	Boy, 19 years old, lived with father, started Tourism in grade 10, repeated Grade 11, received social grant.
6	Thumpu	18 years old, no parents, lived with grandmother, started Tourism in Grade 10, hadn't repeated a grade, received social grant.
7	Vuvu	Boy, 18 years old, orphaned, lived with siblings, started Tourism Grade 10, hadn't repeated a grade, received social grant.
8	Zaza	Girl, 18 years old, lived with mother, started Tourism in Grade 10, hadn't repeated a grade, received social grant.

3.5 Data Generation Methods and Procedures

Data collection is accomplished by means of various methods and techniques (Cohen et al., 2011). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), qualitative researchers acquire information directly from the source by spending a considerable time interacting with the participants being studied. I intended to get close to the participants to obtain in-depth understanding of their views on SBA in Tourism and planned to use two data generation methods, namely focus group interviews and reflective journals.

3.5.1 Focus group discussions

I used focus group discussions (FGD) to facilitate the collection of rich data. Focus groups are group discussions of approximately four to twelve people who share similar characteristics or common interests (Cohen et al., 2011). In other words, a focus group discussion involves a group of people who have similar views or concerns and discuss a specific issue (Kimu, 2012). Utilising focus group discussions thus allowed me to explore the learners' views in a conducive, non-threatening environment. McQuarrie (2011) explains that focus group interviewing encourages respondents to develop their own ideas, feelings, insights, expectations and attitudes and, in doing so, it allows the respondents to say what they think and do with great richness and spontaneity. According to Nagle and Williams (2013), data that are collected by means of focus group interviews provide deep understanding of the phenomenon being studied. During sessions with focus groups, participants are encouraged to talk to one another and to share ideas, views and comments. During a focus group interview the participants are able to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one-on-one interview. Although there are some disadvantages associated with this method of data collection (e.g., confidentiality is highly compromised by the presence of a number of participants), this method was appropriate for my study because I was able to interview a group of learners at the same time in three sessions.

A focus group can also be relatively small and could include four to twelve participants (McQuarrie, 2011). I had three sessions of eight learners in a group. Our first meeting lasted for 30 minutes, during which I introduced myself and the study to the learners and gave a brief discussion of how we were going to work together to go forward. I thanked them for volunteering to be part of my study. I told them that they could withdraw at any time if they felt they were not interested or comfortable, and I assured them that their identities would remain confidential and

that I was not going to share any of our discussions with their teacher. I brought notebooks for each learner which they were going to keep to record their perceptions, feelings and views in the form of reflective journals. They were assured that nobody but the researcher would have access to these journals.

During the second meeting, I used a recording device and a notebook for field notes and I had brought refreshments for the learners. I made them aware that our discussions were going to be recorded and all offered their consent. The conversations were recorded for quality and verification purposes.

During the second focus group session, when the discussions were commenced, we went through the questions very slowly and it took about seventy minutes to cover all the questions. I noticed that the shy learners were somewhat overwhelmed by the more outspoken ones, and I thus tried my best to allow everybody some space to respond to the questions. However, I became aware that I might not get all the information I required as the shy learners might have withheld some information. The reflective journals would therefore become very useful and informative. At the end of the discussion session I requested the learners to write in their reflective journals in their own time. The follow-up (third) focus group meeting lasted longer as the learners were enjoying the discussions and expressed themselves more freely. This group interview elicited insights that were synergistic to those of the second focus group discussion but it had more depth, detail and elicited more meaningful information at a very personal level of experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Transcripts were done at the end of each focus group interview.

3.5.2 Reflective Journal

Reflective journals were used in conjunction with the focus group interviews to allow the participants ample space and freedom to express their conceptions about SBA. Levett-Jones, 2007) who demonstrated how journals could be used effectively in qualitative studies, argues that journal writing that is shared between participant and researcher may offer the researcher an opportunity for triangulation of data at multiple levels. In this manner the researcher has access to similar data that are presented by means of different data collection tools, which is a useful verification and validation process. According to Ortlip (2008), reflective journals do not only provide evidence of understanding of content knowledge, but also enhance critical self-reflection and self-awareness.

Writers of such journals are at liberty to dig deep within themselves and to express their inner feelings in writing. McGuinness & Brien (2007) cites seven techniques as suggested by Levett-Jones (2007) for writing journals, namely lists, portraits, maps of consciousness, guided imagery, altered point of view, unsent letters, and dialogues. For my purposes I asked the participants to include maps of consciousness in their reflective journals as I envisaged that these maps would be a rich source of data. McGuinness & Brien (2007) explains that the technique on maps of consciousness is borrowed from the arts and involves putting one's thoughts in writing. The writer may be using sticks, lines, or shapeless blobs. This allows one's thoughts to flow freely and the writer may put them on paper in different forms. These maps of consciousness allowed the writers to be more reflective, to write uninterruptedly, and to remain focused. It also allowed these learner participants to use their voices and to be heard (Levett-Jones, 2007).

Learners were asked to make journal entries on the reflective journal once they have completed a particular SBA tasks and received feedback (either written/verbal) from the teacher. To ensure that learners were dedicated in recording their reflections in the journals, I asked the teacher to facilitate the process once a particular SBA task was completed. They all had four entries in their journals as they completed four SBA tasks during the data generation period.

3.5.3 Data analysis

Data analysis can be described as “the systematic means to study the whole and break it down into different parts (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 370). This means that analysing data is not a task that can be completed within a short space of time. Thus, as soon as data had been collected from the transcripts of the focus group discussions and the reflective journals, a thorough analysis was conducted. Creswell (2014) is of the view that data analysis in qualitative research is an on-going process that involves the identification of significant statements and the subsequent generation of themes and descriptions. The data analysis process thus started immediately after the first focus group discussion and the first time I collected the reflective journals. Only at the end of the entire interviewing process and the analysis of the reflective journals did the actual in-depth analyses of the data commence. Babbie and Mouton (2008) opine that there is no one neat and tidy approach to qualitative data analysis, but I followed the thematic approach as it assisted me in understanding these learners' views of SBA. I went through all the transcripts of the focus group discussions and my notes on the reflective journals, and arranged similar information key codes for data coding.

During this analysis process, categories and themes emerged that were grouped together for further evaluation.

3.6 Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of data is important as the quality and validity of the findings need to be ensured. Most researchers agree that the trustworthiness of a qualitative study cannot be ensured in the same way as it is in a quantitative study, simply because quantitative research is measurable with figures. However, a qualitative study checks how congruent the results are with reality (Anney, 2014; Shenton, 2004; Pitney, 2004; Morrow, 2005). These authors argue that Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model of trustworthiness is useful in evaluating qualitative studies as the criteria they suggest include transferability, dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. Hence in this study Lincoln and Guba's (1985) model was used to ensure trustworthiness.

3.6.1 Transferability

The concept of transferability is used to establish the extent to which research findings from a specific piece of research can be generalised to other situations and people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This study was a case study which was not meant to be generalized; however, the findings are transferable to similar contexts (Christiansen et al., 2010). In this study, transferability was achieved as I ensured that the purpose of the study was clearly explained to all the participants. This ensured that all the findings that were based on the data were well earmarked so that they would be easily transferable to other contexts.

3.6.2 Dependability

Dependability is the extent of authenticity that the data can contain (Elo et al., 2014). In other words, dependability means the stability of findings over time (Cohen et al., 2011). In order to ensure dependability, it is important to engage in member checking, prolonged engagement and observation in the research field (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In this study I managed to do member checking with the participants in the following year. Dependability counts on providing truthful data, and that is why I made use of audio recordings and journal notes so that the evidence of the data that I collected is easily retrievable. The authentic and unedited observations and comments of the participants are presented in this report, and this makes the findings accessible to readers.

3.6.3 Credibility

According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), credibility is achieved by ensuring that the findings generated from the study reflect the reality and lived views of the participants. Credibility is thus viewed as the confidence that can be placed in the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I ensured credibility by methodological triangulation; that is, I used more than one method to obtain the data and I consistently ensured that discrepancies and inconsistencies were highlighted and explained. The fact that I used voice recordings during the focus group discussions and authentic reflective journals enhanced the credibility of the data. The data were thus recorded and transcribed verbatim. Although this process was time consuming, it generated data that were authentic, accurate and credible.

3.6.4 Confirmability

Adhering to the requirement of conformability means that the interpretations and findings are free from bias and that the research procedures and results conform to ethical research standards (Bester, 2013). Thus, conformability is the extent to which the findings are the end products of the aims of the research and not of the subjectivity of the researcher (Mouton, 2001). In essence, confirmability means the degree to which the findings of a research can be confirmed by other researchers (Shenton, 2004; Pitney, 2004; Anney, 2014). I could not appoint a research assistant to assist me during the focus group discussions to maximize the confirmability of the data, but the supervisor of this study, as well as other reputable postgraduate students, acted as assistants and monitors to ensure confirmability during the writing retreats. A seminar was also organized by my supervisor so that my peers could examine and interrogate my data and the findings. Moreover, triangulation of the data ensured the trustworthiness of the study.

The data will be stored in a safe place for six years before the transcriptions and recordings will be discarded safely. The interview transcripts will be retained in a protected file in the supervisor's office. Data in the audio records and field notes will only be used for research purposes and, thereafter, securely stored at the University of KwaZulu-Natal where only the supervisor and I will be able to access them. The data will be kept in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher and the supervisor will have access. The raw data will thus not fall into the hands of the other researchers who might misappropriate them. Electronic files with interviewee names and addresses

will be in password protected documents on a password protected drive and this will only be accessible to the researcher and the supervisor.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Researchers are guided by certain ethics when studies are conducted. “Ethics exemplify individual and communal codes of conduct that require adherence to some principles” (Busher, James, 2012, p. 2). Ethics require adherence to rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards participants. According to Pillay (2014, p. 202), “ethical consideration plays a vital role in all research studies and must be attended to by researchers”. Educational research involves people as participants in the research, therefore ethical and legal considerations are of great concern. I thus had to obtain ethical approval from and address the concerns of various stakeholders prior to engaging in the study.

To gain access to a research site, qualitative researchers must locate a setting in which the study will take place (Cohen, et al., 2011). I had to carefully negotiate with the gatekeepers of the school in order to gain access to the site and the participants. After I had identified the school as a research site, I started the process of negotiating access to the school. Access to a research site involves continuing negotiations and renegotiations until the field is exited (Creswell, 2014). I thus had to sell my research idea to the principal, and this included giving him full details of my research and the processes that would include the learners. I then made an appointment to meet with the principal to negotiate access and explain the research process. The principal was very excited about this and welcomed me warmly. After securing my position in the school, I then did the formalities and sent a letter to the principal (Appendix C) which fully explained the nature of the study.

I then had to obtain permission from the provincial Department of Basic Education to access the school as a research site. Once the sample school had been identified, I sent a proposal for the project to the Department for approval by the Head of Department (HOD) whose consent I obtained (Appendix B). It was also necessary to obtain the informed consent of the participants and their parents because the participants were minors. I also sought approval from the subject teacher whose learners in Grade 11 I would use as the study participants (Appendices D). After the principal and parents/guardians had consented to the involvement of the learners, I then

contacted all the participants (i.e., learners) to obtain their assent based on their understanding of the purpose of the study and their willingness to participate in it, as suggested by Creswell (2014) (Appendix E). Finally, I applied for ethical clearance from the UKZN to conduct a study that would involve human elements who would also be minors. The university's ethical committee granted permission to conduct the study (Appendix A).

Informed consent means that prospective research participants must be fully informed about the purpose of the study as well as the procedures and risks involved in the research (Cohen et al., 2011) and they must freely give their consent to participate. Schofield (2014) states that informed consent promotes autonomy and trust. I also wrote letters to the participants informing them about the research and its purpose, and I requesting them to participate in the research. The participants were promised anonymity and that their participation was voluntary. In the letters to the participants, I made it clear that they had the right to withdraw from the research if they felt that they were no longer comfortable. None of the participant chose this option.

Confidentiality as defined by Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles (2007) refers to the removal of all identifying information about individuals from research reports to protect the identity of research participants. When a researcher ensures the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, no information exists to link it back to specific participants. This is meant to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. In this study the personal details and names of the individual participants were not required, and the real name of the school is not going to be used. I thus use pseudonyms instead of real names in order to protect each individual's identity. The use of specific names and the address of the research site could also compromise the principles of anonymity and confidentiality in that the participants might be easily located. To avoid any contamination, I make general reference to the Uthukela District without providing the name of a specific township/town where the participants were sourced.

3.8 Methodological Limitations

The study was conducted in one school in an education district and was restricted to one focus group consisting of eight participants. Given that this was a case study, I did not intend to

generalise the findings; however, the findings of this study can be transferred to similar contexts for comparison or as a basis for future studies.

Not all the participants freely volunteered information in the first discussion session as about thirty percent of the group was quite shy. This non-responsiveness was a limitation to some degree, and it is acknowledged that a larger sample would have allowed a broader scope for triangulation. However, the sample had been chosen purposefully as it was envisaged that their views would be useful. I had to add another visit during which we engaged in an icebreaker session and I managed to establish better rapport with all the participants. This session yielded positive results as they all started to open up. In addition, the reflective journals were used to capture the learners' views and to bridge the gap for those who were shy and reserved.

A possible limitation was the language issue. To minimise this threat, the discussions were conducted in the language (IsiZulu) in which the learners felt most comfortable, and the transcriptions were carefully translated into English without compromising the voices of the learners. The learners' verbatim responses are presented in English and are unedited in this report.

Another limitation was that limited research had been conducted on secondary school learners' perceptions of SBA, especially in Tourism. Most of the available literature referred to universities and other institutions of higher education. I thus had to rely on limited literature during the review phase of the study.

3.9 Synthesis

In this chapter I described the methodology that was employed in the study. A discussion of the research paradigm and the qualitative approach for data collection was presented. I elucidated that a case study design involving interviews and analysis of documents was adopted to enable me to generate data from the particular context of my study, which was a secondary school in a township area. A description of the research site and the participants was offered to contextualise the case study. To assist me in understanding and interpreting the data, a detailed description of the sampling procedures and the contextual factors associated with the sampled school were presented. The two instruments that were used to generate data were discussed and their relevance to the

study was illuminated. Ethical issues such as seeking permission to conduct the study, ethical clearance, avoiding the use of the names of the participants, and the protection of the rights of the participants were discussed. The limitations of the study were outlined and it was explained how they were minimised to ensure progress. This chapter is the pillar on which the case study narratives will rest. Therefore, in the next chapter, I present the data and discuss the findings pertaining to learners' views of SBA in Tourism.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter three I provided a description of the research design and methodology that were employed in this study. In this chapter I present the data that were generated by means of focus groups discussions, field notes and reflective journals and I analyse and interpret the findings. Three focus group discussion sessions were conducted with all eight learners. The first was just an information session whereas the second and third were conducted to elicit the data. All the participants were requested to keep reflective journals in the periods between the focus group discussions and they were required to record their views and experiences of SBA in Tourism in these exercise books. I recorded the discussions during the meetings and made field notes. The findings from the data were responding to the two research questions driving the study which were:

- *What are learners' perceptions of SBA in Tourism in a secondary school?*
- *How do learners use SBA in the context of Tourism to enhance learning in a secondary school?*

The data were presented according to the themes that emerged and that could be linked to the research questions. Two measure themes that emerged were: learners' perceptions of SBA in Tourism; and learners' use of SBA to enhance learning.

4.2 Learners' Perceptions of SBA in Tourism

This study assumed that learners' perceptions of SBA would be an important factor in understanding their experiences of SBA in Tourism as an elective subject. In response to the research question: *What are learners' perceptions of SBA in Tourism in a secondary school?* the data revealed that the learners had mixed views regarding SBA in Tourism. In fact, a paradox emerged in that, on the one hand, the learners in this class had a strong learning orientation that was stimulated by SBA tasks, and it was clear that their perceptions linked SBA tasks to examinations. On the other hand, the learners expressed reservations due to the challenges they experienced with SBA tasks in Tourism. These findings are discussed in more detail below.

4.2.1 The link between SBA and examinations

The findings revealed that the learners perceived SBA as contributing to the end-of-year examination mark. Generally, their responses were centred on examinations and the need to obtain marks for a pass. This was indicated by five of the participants who maintained that the teacher took a certain percentage of their SBA marks and added that to the examination mark. The learners seemed to view SBA from an examination requirement point of view as they were all aware that marks obtained for SBA tasks and the PAT in Tourism (which they thought was similar to an SBA task) were used for promotion and progression. Van Staden and Motsamai (2017) note that learners' scores for SBA tasks are indeed used for the purpose of promotion. The learner will then write an examination to obtain the required remaining marks for progression to the next grade. The learners strongly perceived SBA as important because it contributed to their end-of-year marks, and for no other reason. They stated that a certain percentage of SBA marks was added to the end-of-year mark which put them in a better position to pass. For example, Phindi stated:

The teacher takes a certain percentage, though I can't remember she said how many percent, but those marks are added to the final promotion mark. You may not do very well in the examination, but if you have good marks for the SBA and PAT you pass. (Phindi: Focus Group Discussion)

This perception suggests that the learners saw a connection between continuous assessment and their final examination marks for progression. It was explained in Chapter two that, in Tourism, learners have to complete SBA tasks that contribute 25% and a PAT that contributes another 25% to the final examination mark. The SBA tasks are completed continuously as prescribed by CAPS and the PAT is completed concurrently during the academic year. The 25% that the SBA mark contributes and the 25% that the PAT contributes to the examination mark were regarded as crucial marks by the learners for promotion. It was disheartening but not surprising that these learners were concerned with SBA marks and not learning outcomes, as the success of the examination system in South Africa is measured by the pass rate at the end of the FET phase (Grade 12) (Spaull, 2013). All eight the participants concurred that the SBA marks were used by the teacher and that it contributed to their final promotion mark.

The learners unanimously perceived SBA as a series of tests to obtain marks on a continuous basis to add to their year-end or final marks. For example, all eight regarded SBA as comprising of tests

that were similar to the examination at the end of the year which they should pass in order to improve their final mark. This perception revealed a high focus on and a fear of testing, particularly written tests, because for them their performance in SBA tasks represented their marks:

Every task we write for SBA is counted in the final mark. The teacher says they combine it with the examination that we write at the end of the year. This makes me always have anxiety when we do SBA tasks because if I don't do well I will get low marks. (Zaza: Focus Group Discussion)

Therefore, despite the fact that SBA is viewed in the literature as fulfilling both formative and summative roles (Mansor et al., 2013), the learners' perception was that these tests placed emphasis on the summative role of SBA. It was not surprising that these learners focused more on the summative aspect of SBA as the country measures its educational success by end-of-year examinations (Polia, 2010). What was disturbing about this perception was the fear that not only examinations, but even SBA tasks engendered in the learners.

An exclusive focus of the learners was the association between SBA and the need to obtain high marks. For example, an entry in the reflective journal of Thumpu read:

I got full marks for the project (50) and today I almost got full marks for the test (90). I think I will have good marks for all my tasks in order to get a good percentage for my year-end results. (Thumpu: Reflective Journal, 19 April 2017)

Thoti wrote in her reflective journal:

I did well in this test. At least I will have better marks for my SBA but I am worried about my PAT mark which is not back yet. (Thoti: Reflective Journal, 15 May 2017)

It is evident from the above learners' voices that they were satisfied about getting full or high marks and they felt that SBA was meant to improve their marks. Thus, the learners' major perception of SBA was that the marks they achieved had to augment the final examination mark. In this regard, Maile (2013) argues that learners are influenced by the pressure to produce good marks. For the participants, SBA was a summative process as they linked it to the standards of conventional testing and examination, and hence they put more focus on marks rather than on the skills they need to acquire when engaging in SBA tasks. For example, in a focus group discussion Vuvu stated:

I think SBA is conducted to award us marks according to our performance in each term and is done by our teacher and we get better marks in SBA than in the year-end written examination. (Vuvu: Focus Group Discussion)

Similar to Vuvu, most of the learners thought that the major purpose of SBA was to test them, so according to their view SBA focused learners on obtaining good marks. This finding suggests that the learners would pay special attention to the completion of SBA tasks and the PAT and would try to score good marks in these tasks. Actually, in SBA the marks are awarded by a teacher who might deliberately give learners high marks (sometimes even full marks) in order to improve the subject pass rate. Vuvu understood this, as scoring well was seen as a measure to reduce the pressure of the examination. Clearly, the learners knew that they would obtain marks for SBA tasks that would contribute to the final examination mark. However, Byabato and Kisano (2014) affirm that SBA was introduced to reduce the excessive emphasis on written examinations and that candidates' SBA marks should be obtained throughout the year by means of a variety of tasks that are skills based. Kapambwe (2010) also notes the narrow view held by learners that SBA marks are summative and that these assessment activities are done to score good marks to effect a pass at the end of the year. In this context, SBA becomes one-sided and fulfil only a summative role, which is undesirable in any educational context. Thus Kapambwe (2010) is of the view that SBA does not achieve its goal, as it establishes a system of managing learners' cumulative marks for the purpose of using them in combination with examination marks for promotion purposes. The findings of the current study corroborated this view to a large extent.

Another pervasive view was that SBA prepared learners for the year-end examination. It emerged during the focus group discussions and in the reflective journals that SBA tasks clearly prepared the learners for the examination because the questions and the style of questioning were repeated in the examination. This implies that the learners were guided to perceive SBA as a measure of examination preparation and less as a measure of their learning. One participant stated:

Completing SBA tasks clearly prepares us for the examination because some of the questions are repeated in the final examination paper. If you pay attention to the topics assessed in SBA you just pass the examination because those topics will be repeated. (Msizi: Focus Group Discussion)

For the learners, SBA was just like a pre-examination. For example, Msizi articulated that completing SBA tasks clearly prepared them for the examination because some of the questions were repeated in the final examination question paper. Although SBA was a tool for learning for some of the learners, the others focused solely on SBA tasks as a means of preparing them for the final examination. This practice is perceived by Ryan and Weinstein (2009, p. 229) as teaching to test which has a negative effect on learning. However, it was not unusual that these learners perceived SBA as a test or an examination, as they were likely to be influenced by the education system which puts emphasis on learners' accountability in terms of examinations, as this summative process determined promotion or failure, and nothing else (Spaull, 2013). This has resulted in learners failing to appreciate the positive impact of SBA on their learning, and it has prevented them from channelling SBA tasks as powerful tools for skills development.

Several learners also pointed out that common tests that had to be written in June and September in Grade 11 were evidence of examination preparation. For instance, Thoti said:

SBA tasks prepare us for the examination because they are like practice tasks. They got to know the teacher's style of questioning and some questions are repeated in the examination, especially [those in] the common tests. (Thoti: Focus Group Discussion).

The common tests referred to are SBA tasks set by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Examination and Assessment section and learners in 'under-performing schools' are required to write these examinations at the end of each quarter. These tasks are externally set and moderated but internally marked and moderated in the districts. The attention given to common tests naturally causes learners to view them in the same light as the final examination. When learners view SBA tasks as just the same as an examination, they might be prone to be more focused on their performance as they gauge their readiness for the yearend examination. This exclusive emphasis on examination preparation might arouse a relatively high desire to learn or prepare for tests, but it impedes learners from engaging in formative activities that should be part of SBA. This limitation is thus reflected in Thoti's comment above.

The point that was made that common test questions were repeated in examinations indicated a focus on rote learning and drilling for the examination. In this context, the logic of the role of SBA

as formative assessment or assessment for learning was absent from some learners' perceptions of SBA, possibly because their understanding had been shaped by a proliferation of standardised tests that had to be completed as SBA tasks.

In addition, the learners who participated in this study revealed that SBA tasks lacked variety and creativity as the main focus was on examination preparation. This perception was expressed by most of the learners in the focus group in comments such as the following:

SBA tasks prepare us for the examination because they are like practice tests. We write five tests set by the teacher and the Provincial Department of Education where we get to know the teacher's and the external examiner's style of questioning, and most of these questions are repeated in the year-end examination. If you pay attention to the topics assessed in SBA you just pass the examination. (Thoti: Focus Group Discussion)

Another participant confirmed the lack of using different methods in Tourism:

I think there are too many tests in the SBA which test the same thing. Although they help us with marks, if you are not good with written examinations and tests you stand a good chance of failing in Tourism because there are no assignments; it's only one project. (Msizi: Focus Group Discussion)

The learners perceived that SBA in Tourism leaned more towards high stake examinations and less towards other methods of assessment. All the participants were of the view that SBA required the same skills as those that were needed for examinations. To illustrate, Msizi explained:

For me the SBA is no different to the examination because we write five tests with similar questions repeated for both tests and examinations. (Msizi: Focus Group Discussion).

The participants were thus confused by the nature of the SBA tasks. They stated that the large number of tests and examinations required for SBA suggested an emphasis on examinations as similar skills were tested over and over. This means that, while these learners were being prepared for examinations, their holistic development had to take a back seat. The focus on examination writing clearly did not cater for a variety of assessment methods and, despite the dual role of SBA

as both formative and summative (Mansor et al., 2013), the learners understood that a large percentage of SBA tasks assessed skills that had to be addressed in the final examination. The main purpose of SBA is formative assessment which is assessment *for* learning. Summative assessment, which is assessment *of* learning, should not be a focus in SBA.

The CAPS for Tourism spells out the time frames and topics to be tested in a grade and in a particular school term. The Programme of Assessment for Tourism states that the subject has six SBA tasks and the PAT, which are completed in a particular term. The SBA comprises of a project and a test (completed in Term 1); a midyear examination and a May test (completed in Term 2); and two tests (completed in Term 3). Of the six SBA tasks, five assess similar skills and are examination orientated. It is no wonder that Maile (2013) argues that tests dominate the assessment regime in South Africa, if other subjects follow the same pattern. Some learners such as Thumpu, Vuvu, Senzo and Zaza also reiterated the negative effects of tests and examinations in their learning. Senzo wrote in her reflective journal:

Another test! I am tired of the same method of assessment. This is since I am not good with tests. SBA in Tourism does not help me much to improve on my performance since it is having too many tests that are similar to examinations. If you are not good with examinations as I am not, the SBA does not assist you. (Senzo: Reflective Journal, 23 August 2017)

The above perception reflects the negative impact of focusing on test and examination writing methods of assessment in SBA. The negative effects of examinations and testing on teaching and learning are outlined by Shepard (2006), who laments increasing test scores without corresponding improvement in learners' performance. Senzo suggested that the focus on tests did not allow her to demonstrate other skills. This could be a result of the fact that the South African education system places emphasis on matric performance as the main measurement of the country's overall scholastic performance (Spaull, 2013). This practice may impact the fact that SBA is viewed as a means to drill examination skills into learners' heads so that they may pass the final examination. Msizi endorsed this point by stating that questions were repeated in tests and examinations.

4.2.2 Learners' perception that SBA tasks are challenging

Despite their apparent appreciation of the SBA contribution to examinations, the learners tended to have negative perceptions of SBA. For example, Thoti, Zaza and Senzo were of the view that SBA tasks were difficult. During the focus group interviews they pointed out that the PAT (which for the learners was part of SBA) and projects were the most difficult tasks. I found that their perceptions of the challenges of SBA were mixed. For example, Thoti expressed the following concern in the focus group discussion:

The amount of work in the PAT and the project for Tourism is too much and is difficult. (Thoti: Focus Group Discussion)

Zaza concurred by writing in her journal:

Today the class ended before I even got halfway with the task we were doing for the PAT. I did not understand exactly what was required of me. (Zaza: Reflective Journal)

Similar sentiments were shared by another learner:

When the teacher gives instructions, we think we understand; however, when we must complete the project on our own we just get lost. (Senzo: Focus Group Discussion)

The length of the tasks was also perceived by the learners as contributing to the complexity and difficulty of the SBA tasks. The learners also commented that source-based questions, usually found in common tests, were long and difficult to read. They thought that common tests could be much easier without scenarios. For example:

SBA tasks are challenging. They must be reduced because they take long to complete. (Msizi: Focus Group Discussion)

Another learner expressed her views regarding the difficult tasks as follows:

There are too many readings, especially in March and June tests and by the time you finish reading you have little time to write answers. (Mqondisi: Focus Group Discussion)

Mqondisi and Msizi complained that quarterly papers were very long because of source based questions and scenarios. They commented that this kind of question took too long to read and was difficult to understand. For these reasons, participants such as Msizi, Mqonidisi and Vuvu were of the view that source-based questions should be removed from the common papers because they made the SBA tasks (that are actually tests) too long.

In addition, the learners perceived that difficult tasks were linked to inadequate support material for Tourism. A lack of resources such as magazines, the internet, and additional books was lamented. The onus appeared to be on the creativity of the teachers to provide additional resources. For example, in a focus group discussion a learner expressed her views as follows:

Tasks like projects and practical assessment tasks, commonly known as PAT, are difficult. We don't have resources to complete them. Only the teacher brings us some resources.
(Phindi: Focus Group Discussion)

Another learner elaborated on the impact of the lack of resources on their completion of SBA tasks:

The PAT requires researched information and we do not have access to the internet. Our teacher would download and print resources for us. In most cases they are few copies and we have to share or they are not in colour to give us a clear picture. (Thumpu: Focus Group Discussion)

The learners proposed the use of additional resources for SBA tasks in Tourism to enhance their performance. They felt that original copies would be far better than black and white pictures. Thumpu added that projects and case studies would be better understood if they were in colour. This implies that there was an urgent need for adequate and quality resources and support material in this school. The fact that these learners lamented the absence of such materials indicates their interest in and motivation to do well in Tourism, and therefore the probability that their pleas will fall on deaf ears is unfortunate.

Some of the learners such as Msizi, Senzo, Phindile and Zaza argued that SBA tasks were time consuming and thus some failed to see the benefits for learning. The literature also emphasises the point that time is a major limitation in the effective adoption of SBA practices (Raibojane, 2005; Cassim, 2010). Most of the learners were of the view that the time to complete the project and the PAT was too long and took up a lot of their time for other subjects. They stressed the point that they had a lot (i.e., six) other subjects to work on and they could not devote so much time to one subject alone. One student commented as follows in the reflective journal:

I am very disappointed with my PAT results because I have spent quite a bit of time on the PAT but I do not see much improvement in my PAT. I could have studied for my Geography test then (Msizi, Reflective Journal, 12 June 2017)

The PAT seemed to be one aspect that was perceived by the learners as time consuming. The PAT in Tourism consists of two phases that have to be completed in the second and third terms respectively. It is quite an intense task that requires a lot of research and writing. Without the use of a library or access to the internet and a printer, a PAT can be very difficult to complete. Most participants depended largely on resources supplied by the teacher to complete their PAT. Vuvu commented as follows:

Tasks take not less than three weeks to complete, especially those that require pictures and graphics take too long to complete. PAT and projects take a long time to complete while looking for information outside school like in the community library. (Vuvu: Focus Group Discussion)

Most of the learners, including Phindile, Msizi, Vuvu, Zaza and Thumpu, revealed that they struggled to access resources. The project requires that they look for pictures and extra information before it can be completed. They had to visit the town library because the library in the school was dysfunctional and not resourced to support teaching and learning. One learner lamented:

The project that I submitted was incomplete because it was too long and required internet. (Senzo: Focus Group Discussion)

Completing the project requires research and putting together pictures and graphics, which was challenging, unusual and difficult for these learners. The PAT and the project are two tasks that are completed continuously and that assesses various skills. As was mentioned earlier, the learners seemed to be comfortable with those SBA tasks that focused on examination skills, hence they perceived the more practical SBA tasks that assess other skills as difficult and time consuming. Although completing a PAT is viewed as a low-level desktop research project (Booyse, 2009), a lot of internet research and writing are required to complete it. Some learners might copy their work directly from a source, but the amount of time spent is notable and plagiarism is a real danger.

4.3 Learners' use of SBA tasks to enhance learning

This study assumed that learners' perceptions of assessment affected their willingness to embrace assessment and that it would impact the value they placed on assessment methods and tasks. In this section, I present the findings that address the research question: *How do learners use SBA in the context of Tourism as a subject in a secondary school?* In a nutshell, the findings were: Learners use SBA to get feedback from the teacher; learners use SBA to collaborate with peers; and learners use SBA for self-regulated learning. These themes are elaborated in the discussions that follow.

4.3.1 Learners participate/complete SBA tasks to get feedback from the teacher

All the participants indicated that SBA tasks were used by the teacher to give them feedback regarding their performance. However, most of them seemed dissatisfied as they were worried that their teacher did not give them adequate feedback. One learner stated:

The teacher does not want to give us feedback. She gives us feedback only on selected SBA tasks which I feel is not useful as it is also not done frequently after each task.

(Thoti: Focus Group Discussion)

Similarly, Mqondisi explained:

The teacher wants us to look for feedback on our own. (Mqondisi: Focus group Discussion)

This view was corroborated by Zizi, as she stated:

I don't worry [about] the teacher anymore because she does not share answers after a test. We must find solutions on our own. (Zizi: Focus Group Discussion)

As reflected by the statements above, the learners felt that SBA tasks should be used to provide feedback on their performance in each task. The literature suggests that feedback on SBA tasks should occur as soon as possible after completion. For instance, Bayerlein (2014) opines that learners often need immediate feedback for application in upcoming tasks. The learners' responses during the focus group discussion corroborated this requirement.

Another issue that was underscored was that feedback was not clear and did not address the need for improvement. One learner wrote in the reflective journal:

The teacher wrote in my test script next to the mark that I should “improve”, but I was not clear as to where exactly did I lack. (Thumpu: Reflective Journal, 26 July 2018)

The learners wanted more feedback than mere marks and not merely one word/short statement. Thumpu, Zaza and Msizi all agreed that the feedback that they had received up to that point for their Tourism tasks had been nebulous and had not supported their need to improve. Reineke (2011) mentions that learners require feedback that explains why their work was not rated excellent when it was rated poorly so that they may use the feedback to encourage learning and improvement. This finding resonates well with that of Nieuwoudt and Reyneke (2011), who argue that effective assessment and teacher feedback enhance learners’ learning in the classroom.

Another view that was aired by the learners regarding the use of SBA feedback was that they were interested in experimenting with a wider range of feedback options than the marks they received. They thus expressed a need for both written and oral feedback by teachers. Authors such as Kapambwe et al. (2010) state that learners welcome alternative ways to go about responding to teachers’ written feedback and that they welcome opportunities to revise their writing (Lee, 2007; Kapambwe, 2010; Tong & Adamson, 2015). Mqondisi and Zaza were not happy about the scanty comments given by the teacher and were of the view that more individualised feedback would be more beneficial. Mqondisi explained:

The teacher when giving us feedback she usually gives general comments in class and as individuals we get the marks and indication of right or wrong answers. I would prefer more personalised feedback that would help me to improve my learning. (Mqondisi, Focus Group Discussion)

While learners such as Mqondisi and Zana appreciated their teachers’ general feedback in class, they would appreciate more individualised feedback. Lee (2007) corroborates this sentiment and argues that learners appreciate teachers’ efforts when they respond in a personalised manner to their writing. Teachers’ general oral feedback given to the entire class was viewed as vague and of little purpose, and they thought that teachers’ written feedback, when not personalised or specific, served to inform them of their errors without having a significant impact on their writing or learning. These views sent a clear message that learners preferred feedback that specified what

was wrong in their work and how it should be fixed. These statements confirmed a similar finding that was reported by Lee (2008).

McKay (2007) also confirms that learners want to use feedback to know how well they were doing or have done and what they might do next to enhance their performance and improve their knowledge. In this context, feedback may also be seen as feedforward. Lee (2007) argues that, in order for feedback to be able to promote learning, learners must be told about their strengths and what must be done to improve their work. This information should thus be communicated clearly and made available to learners as soon as possible after a task. Black and William (2009) also argue that effective feedback leads to learning gains.

Although all the learners indicated that they required feedback of their performance in SBA tasks, their understanding of it differed. Senzo, Msizi and Phindi were of the view that getting model answers for tasks was the best feedback that would lead to learning. To illustrate, Phindi lamented:

The teacher doesn't want to assist us with model answers. It is really limited and this hinders our learning because I want to identify those questions that I got wrong and study them using model answers. (Phindi: Focus Group Discussion).

However, Mqondisi, Zaza, Thumpu, Vuvu, and Thoti felt that feedback that guided them on how they were supposed to complete the task without the exact answers would lead to learning. For example, Vuvu explained:

I think the best feedback is when the teacher guides us on what was expected of the task and we look for answers on our own. (Vuvu, Focus Group Discussion)

The above statement reflects a very mature attitude to learning, which is self-discovery. This response was contrary to Phindi's opinion that feedback was about the provision of model answers, which suggests a focus on rote learning and not self-discovery. Vuvu's response is supported by the literature which suggests that feedback is information that provides the learner with direct useable insights into current performance, based on tangible differences between a current performance and a hoped for performance (Lee, 2007; Hattie & Timberly, 2017). If learners merely pay attention to the questions they got wrong and expect the teacher to furnish them with correct

answers to help them in future performances, very little learning actually occurs. Thus, feedback should focus on strategies for self-evaluation and selfdiscovery which will support learning and knowledge acquisition in a more positive manner.

4.3.2 Collaboration with peers to complete SBA tasks

The findings revealed that SBA tasks were viewed as an opportunity to collaborate with peers, and most learners were of the view that SBA promoted group work. All the learners commented that when they had completed an SBA task they were given an opportunity to work with other learners in the class. Phindi stated:

When we complete the project of PAT we have to share the resources and that forces collaboration amongst ourselves. Group study helps with more commitment and [access to] a variety of resources. (Phindi: Focus Group Discussion)

Completing SBA tasks thus plays a major role in learning as it encourages learners to work together. In this process information is exchanged and learners help one another. This principle was embraced by the learners, as Senzo stated:

We work in groups and assist one another to complete tasks as we can argue until we get the correct response. (Senzo: Focus Group Discussion)

Mqondisi also found this process useful and commented as follows:

Although we do not complete SBA tasks in groups but some of us had set up our own self-help group where we discuss the project or PAT and study for the tests together. (Mqondisi: Focus Group Discussion)

Collaboration was thus embraced as it was felt that it assisted the learners to share available resources and information. Given that fact that the school was under resourced at the time, it seemed a normal practice for learners to share resources. This assisted them to learn from one another while completing their SBA tasks. They were also of the view that collaboration facilitated understanding of content and maximised opportunities for scoring high marks. Mqondisi, Vuvu, Zaza, and Thumpu were all of the view that SBA encouraged collaboration and they felt it was a very useful strategy to learn. This finding is confirmed by Talib et al. (2014), who argue that

learners who work in small groups tend to learn more and retain information longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats.

Enthusiasm is a valuable attribute in any teaching and learning context. It was thus notable that the learners expressed a sense of enthusiasm for cooperation. This was evident in some of the learners' reflective journal entries such as the following:

Working with Mandi in PAT helped me to locate different attractions in the map for the itinerary. (Vuvu: Reflective Journal, 21 April 2017)

Another learner expressed a similar sentiment, stating that they used SBA tasks as an opportunity to learn from their peers. She wrote:

Tomorrow, I will have to ask Boni to work with me on the project because she is good with map work. (Zaza: Reflective Journal, 23 April 2017).

The above comments showed that the learners used SBA tasks to create collaborative learning opportunities. This finding corroborates a statement made by Boerkaerts and Corno (2005, p. 211), who assert the following: "Collaborative learning enhances deep learning because peers model and discuss their own learning and motivation strategies, which are then distributed across the group for individuals to pick up and modify to suit their own needs".

4.3.3 Learners' participation in SBA tasks for self-regulated learning

The findings suggest that SBA inculcated a sense of self-regulation in the learners. When I talked with the learners about their daily practices to complete SBA tasks, they stated that they were 'made to go all out' looking for information on their own in order to complete the tasks. Most of the learners corroborated the point that the teacher would give them the task and instructed them to look for information on their own. For example, Senzo stated:

Completing SBA tasks sometimes makes you look for information on your own. The teacher wants us to look for correct answers on our own before rendering assistance. (Senzo: Focus Group Discussion)

Msizi expressed a similar view as he said:

She expects us to look for information on our own. I guess it is good as she gives us projects and PAT that forces us to study specifics. For me that is important because I get that feeling of mastering something on my own. (Msizi: Focus Group Discussion)

Senzo's and Msizi's comments indicated that the SBA tasks were used by some learners to become actively involved in their learning as they naturally searched for information on their own. This suggests that SBA tasks encouraged self-motivation to study, do research, and complete tasks. However, as Senzo suggested earlier, most of the learners were not keen to engage in self-discovery and knowledge acquisition processes, yet Msizi's comment implies that completing SBA tasks inculcated a sense of self-regulation in some learners. When learners reach this stage, they are more responsible and they can work on their own without the teacher's supervision. In this regard, Carless (2012) is of the view that assessment fosters learners' autonomy. They develop a very strong urge to complete tasks (Boekaerts & Corno, 2005) and, through self-regulation, learners gain the capacity to direct their own learning in school and beyond. This point was underscored by Msizi's comment above.

Three other learners also revealed that SBA tasks were drivers of self-regulated learning as they always strove towards completing the SBA tasks correctly. Some learners stated that they had to complete SBA tasks because they wanted to pass the end-of-year examination. This suggests that the desire to complete SBA tasks facilitated self-motivation to learn and to acquire skills, because instructions had to be followed in order to attain good marks. For example, Zaza stated:

I work hard to respond to all instructions because I know if I get good marks I will pass (Zaza: Focus Group Discussion)

Vuvu's comment also pointed out how they used SBA tasks as motivation because of an urge to pass the final examination:

We are forced to complete SBA tasks because we want to pass at the end of the year. (Vuvu: Focus Group Discussion)

Another learner made the following entry in the journal:

I am so happy today I passed the June examination better than the March test. I think the test we wrote for our SBA in May helped me to improve my marks. SBA helps me to learn more and I end up getting good marks. (Thumpu: Reflective Journal)

As Thumpu mentioned, information gained from SBA tasks helped her to strive for higher marks; thus, she placed emphasis on improving her marks rather than improving the quality of her learning. By her own reckoning, she had to place emphasis on the fact that the marks she obtained for SBA tasks would contribute towards success at the end of the year. Although this implies that she had to work harder and better, she did not verbalise better learning strategies. Thus, the learners identified a relationship between SBA and getting good marks, but they did not reveal much about the relationship between getting good marks and improving their learning strategies. This finding is confirmed by Pollard and Triggs (2000), who state that classroom assessments, which are intended by policy makers to be formative, may be interpreted by learners as purely summative in purpose.

The majority of the learners such as Zaza, Thumpu, Phindi and Thoti were of the view that they used SBA tasks to guide their own learning. They felt that SBA tasks encouraged them to become active learners as they were forced to complete certain tasks on their own. These learners revealed that they used SBA tasks to enhance their ability to learn different concepts in Tourism because they could complete tasks without the fear that is provoked by examination conditions. For example, one student commented as follows in the reflective journal:

Today I have learned new concepts in Tourism as I was working on my project while I was not under pressure. (Thumpu: Reflective Journal, 3 March 2017)

The learners also indicated that they used SBA as a push for learning. For example, one of the learners wrote in the reflective journal:

Today I have to look for my grade 10 notebook because there is work that we did which is in the PAT. (Thoti: Reflective Journal, 6 March 2017)

These comments contained information about learners' use of SBA to drive self-regulatory learning. The learners revealed that they had to formulate their own task goals in order to complete a specific SBA task. This encouraged self-regulatory learning and assuming control over their learning. Zimmerman and Schunk (2004) also found that assessment assisted the learners in their study to become self-regulatory and less dependent on teacher support when they engaged in SBA activities. This finding was supported by the finding of the current study, which suggests that SBA affords learners an opportunity to work independently of the teacher and instils in them a sense of self-motivation which encourages self-regulatory learning.

4.4 Synthesis

The learners who participated in this study demonstrated wide ranging perceptions of SBA, and many of these perceptions contributed to their learning. However, all these learners also perceived SBA as a means of improving their ability to be promoted to the next grade at the end of the year as they emphasised the importance of SBA marks for promotion. They also highlighted the challenges that they faced when required to complete SBA tasks, such as time constraints, poor feedback, and lack of resources. In general, the learners commented favourably on the role of SBA in their learning. They viewed SBA tasks as another form of learning, and some thought that it was highly effective in increasing their marks for promotion. The learners appreciated SBA activities due to their ability to challenge them and for the fact that they provided them with a clear idea of their progress during the year. The learners also underscored the point that SBA tasks encouraged more effort to attain better marks in order to pass at the end of year, and some further revealed that SBA tasks were a stimulus for collaborative and self-regulatory learning. It was particularly the latter findings that were encouraging as enhanced learning is essentially the purpose of SBA.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four presented the findings that emanated from the data that had been generated by means of focus group discussions and journal entries. The purpose of this chapter is to determine to what extent the main aim of the study was addressed, which was to explore learners' views of SBA in Tourism. The study was driven by two research questions:

- *What are learners' perceptions of SBA in Tourism in a secondary school?*
- *How do learners use SBA in the context of Tourism to enhance learning in a secondary school?*

This chapter provides an overview of the study by relating the findings as presented in Chapter four to the respective research questions, the objectives, and the ultimate purpose of the study. An account of the most prominent findings from the literature and the empirical study will be provided with a view to formulating recommendations for policy and practice. The discussion will start with the review of the study and a summary of the findings, followed by a discussion of the findings and the implications of the study. The chapter will be concluded with a brief synthesis.

5.2 Review of the Study

The study addressed the research questions as presented above. To respond to these questions, I first reflected on the reasons why I was interested in the topic of the proposed study. My interest was stirred while I conducting observational assessments of teachers in secondary school classrooms as a Subject Advisor for Tourism. I observed that learners were struggling with SBA and this prompted my interest in listening and giving substance to the voices of learners and to hear their perspectives. I found that their opinions differed and I decided to explore the issue in greater detail.

I first conducted an intensive literature review. The findings were presented in Chapter two of this dissertation. The review focused on broad debates on assessment as a phenomenon that is conceptualised internationally and in the South African context. The literature suggests that different understandings of SBA inform its purpose and implementation in each country. The review of policies and guidelines pertaining to SBA in the South African curriculum in general and in Tourism specifically revealed that SBA fulfils both a summative and a formative role in schools in South Africa. I was thus curious to see how SBA shaped learners' views about the implementation of assessment practices in Tourism, which is a subject that is my passion. The literature that was consulted revealed that national policies provide a framework for the implementation of SBA in Tourism. There was limited literature on the views of secondary school learners in terms of SBA in Tourism, and thus the literature on learners' conception of assessment was relevant to frame the debate that is presented in this dissertation. The literature showed that assessment practices could potentially impact student performance and success and could shape learners' perceptions of SBA. However, the literature lacked specific information on learners' views on Tourism, which was a gap that this study endeavoured to fill. I also identified a theoretical framework that assisted me in understanding learners' views on SBA in Tourism. The learners' conceptions of assessment (SCoA) theory that was developed by Brown, et al. (2009) was used to inform the data analysis process that was employed in this study. This framework underscored the phenomenon of learners' conceptions of assessment and helped me to extract and developed themes from the data for analysis.

Guided by the research questions, the study was located within an interpretive paradigm and employed a qualitative approach to research. The study was undertaken in one secondary school in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. A qualitative case study was conducted which allowed me to focus on learners' views of SBA in Tourism. To collect the required data, focus group discussions were conducted with a sample of eight Grade 11 learners. The design allowed me to collect in-depth data in a natural setting. For example, I had a chance to attend more than one focus group and to facilitate the discussions. During our sessions, I observed that the participants were gradually finding it easier to share their views without fear, and this assisted me in gathering as much information as I possibly could. The design further allowed me to utilise another data collection instrument, namely reflective journals. These journals were completed by each learner individually and they were allowed to reflect on their views of SBA tasks in writing. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. The focus group discussions were

recorded using an audio recorder while field notes were also written. The data that emerged were analysed using a thematic format and then utilised to arrive at interpretations and assertions about the views of learners regarding SBA.

Chapter four focused on the presentation and analysis of the data. The findings that emerged revealed that the learners had some understanding of the value of SBA as they were generally positive and felt that these tasks were useful. All the learners agreed that SBA should enhance teaching and learning through feedback, but they were unanimous in their view that feedback was currently not sufficient and timely. They were predominantly positive about SBA because, if they did well, it contributed to their exam marks and this alleviated their fear of not being promoted at the end of the year. Some of them complained that some SBA tasks (e.g., common tests, projects and the PAT) were difficult, while others thought SBA was good as it encouraged them to work on their own and in groups, even in the absence of the teacher. In a nutshell, the learners cast SBA in a positive rather than a negative light.

5.3 Summary of the findings

The findings were presented according to themes and subthemes. The two main themes that emerged also addressed the research questions, namely: Learners' perceptions of SBA in Tourism; and Learners' use of SBA to enhance learning. It emerged from the data that all the learners perceived SBA as tests to obtain marks on a continuous basis to add to their year-end final marks. They perceived that SBA tasks generally assessed the same skills that would be required to do well in the year-end examination. This perception illuminated a predominant focus on SBA as a testing mechanism because, for them, their performance in the SBA represented poor or high marks. The findings thus revealed that, for these participants, SBA had the strongest significance as it contributed to the examination requirements for promotion. When the focus group discussion and the reflective journal data were triangulated, this finding was corroborated. Moreover, Kapambwe (2010) reported a similar finding. In essence, the learners perceived SBA as fulfilling a summative rather than formative assessment role as they linked the marks they obtained with the standards of conventional testing and examination. More aptly put, the participants believed that there was a clear relationship between SBA and obtaining good marks. This finding raises concerns, as the learners did not understand the relationship between getting a good score and good quality of teaching and learning. Their perceptions (refer to the comments by Thothi, Phindi, Msizi and Vuvu

in the focus group discussions) thus emphasised a one-sided perspective on SBA and relegated this system to a summative assessment process.

Linked to the above finding, another prevalent perception was that SBA prepared learners for the year-end examination. They highlighted the importance of common tests in the SBA as part of the year-end examination, and these tests were thus approached as final examination components. They were consequently prone to be more focused on their performance in terms of marks as this gauged their readiness for the year-end examination. The learners clearly missed the point here that the tests and tasks required for SBA in Tourism should assist them in gaining a variety of other skills as well (Black & William, 1998; Rea-Dickins, 2007). Phindi, Tothi, Msizi and Vuvu in particular were of the opinion that the tests and examinations they had to write as part of the SBA programme suggested an emphasis on examination preparation, and they thus assessed the importance of knowledge required for the final examination as vital rather than as components of learner development and steps towards holistic learning.

On the other hand, most of the learners also viewed SBA tasks as challenging. The reason was that SBA tasks were perceived as difficult and time consuming. This was indicated in the focus group discussions by Mqondisi, Senzo and Vuvu, who felt that length contributed to the complexity and difficulty of the SBA tasks. Phindi, Senzo, Mqondisi, Thothi and Zaza also found that the source-based questions in common tests were long and difficult to read. In addition, the learners perceived that tasks were difficult because there was inadequate support material to assist them. Senzo in particular lamented the absence of support learning materials. This lack of resources was perceived as a factor that contributed to the difficulty of the tasks that had to be completed.

The findings further revealed that the learners linked SBA to feedback regarding their performance in order for them to learn and thus 'feedforward'. Msizi, Senzo and Zaza felt that SBA would have enhanced their learning if feedback had been given in time. Although the learners were of the view that feedback was important, they also wanted to know how well they had done in a task and what they might do next to enhance their performance and knowledge. Learners such as Mqondisi, Zaza, Thumpu, Vuvu, Thoti and Senzo explained that they were interested in experimenting with a wider range of feedback options and not only marks, and they were keen to receive teachers' oral or written feedback which, unfortunately, was not forthcoming.

Collaboration with peers was viewed as important in tackling SBA tasks as most of the participants (Mqondisi, Senzo, Msizi, Vuvu and Zaza) were of the view that SBA tasks gave them opportunities to collaborate and work together with other learners. This role of SBA is important as it encourages learners to work together to exchange information and it guides learners towards self-regulatory learning. This suggests that SBA inculcated a sense of self-regulation in the learners as SBA tasks were a means for them of becoming actively involved in their learning as they searched for information on their own. The findings thus revealed that the learners used SBA tasks as self-motivating tools to study on their own and to make sure they completed these tasks.

5.4 Discussion of the Findings

The learners' conceptions of assessment theory (SCoA) that was developed by Brown, et al., (2008) underpinned the data analysis process and the subsequent findings of the study. Evidence from earlier research has shown that the way learners conceive assessment determines their final achievement (Brown & Hirschfeld 2008; Harris, Harnett & Brown, 2009; Cowie, 2009). It was thus important to explore learners' authentic views of SBA in Tourism to understand the impact of these tasks on their performance and achievement. The findings suggest that learners perceived this form of assessment as a means of evaluating external factors outside their own control. The focus on SBA as a main contributor to the final examination mark was an indication that learners perceived this form of assessment as a way of making them accountable for their learning as argued in the literature (see for example, Brookhart & Nitko, 2008; Fernandes, et al., 2012). For the learners, the fact that SBA contributed to their final examination mark and prepared them for the year-end examinations was acceptable as they perceived this as supportive of their academic advancement. They thus, in some sense, welcomed and was comforted by the SBA process, especially the common tests, as they would be better prepared for the final examination. It can be inferred from this finding that the focus on end-of-phase/year results in South Africa results in SBA being conceived as an examination model that prepares learners for the final year-end examination and for getting good marks rather than a learning tool. This finding is in line with what was discovered by previous studies (Cheng et al., 2010), Xiao & Carless, 2013) in which the participants also perceived test grades as an indicator of success. Compulsory assessment tasks thus seem to encourage learners to strive for good marks rather than to try to improve their learning processes.

In consideration of the learners' conceptions of assessment theory, the findings further suggest that the learners were aware that the aim of SBA assessment was to improve learning and teaching. This finding makes sense in light of the self-regulation theory which argues that SBA assists learners to be self-regulatory and less dependent on teacher support when they engage in SBA activities (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2004). The learners of this study wanted constructive feedback from teachers to improve their learning. One learner pointed out in the reflective journal that SBA helped her to improve her learning as she had to refer to the work from a previous grade to complete an assessment task in the current grade.

However, although the learners tended to agree with the intended purposes of SBA and they realised that it could have been useful in improving teaching and learning, in their own words they revealed that this was not happening in practice. Boekaerts and Corno (2005) reported a similar finding. The data from both the focus group discussions and the reflective journals showed that the learners realised that SBA should be used to improve their learning; however, they focused their learning on preparing for the final examinations by paying attention to the marks for their SBA tasks. For example, Msizi explicitly argued during a focus group discussion that completing SBA tasks clearly prepared them for the examination because some of the questions were repeated in the final examination paper. Thus, if learners paid attention to the topics assessed in SBA tasks, they would pass the examination because those topics would again be addressed. This perception of the learners is understandable considering that policy makers – and indeed CAPS – place specific emphasis on testing and utilising SBA for summative purposes. For example, high-stake externally administered

SBA common tests are disseminated to schools on a regular basis 'to ensure' that learners are prepared for the final examination at the end of various grades but particularly at the end of Grade 12. This also means that these assessment tasks are taken out of the hands of teachers who are no longer capacitated to assess their learners according to their educational insights and understanding of their learners' needs. Moreover, external examinations in SBA are also not the intention of the SBA system, as is argued by various authors such as William and Black (1998) and William (2011).

On a positive note, some learners experienced SBA assessment as enjoyable and they used these tasks to help and be supportive of one another. However, most of the learners complained that the more practical components of the SBA tasks were difficult, lengthy and thus time consuming. Conversely, some were of the view that they could use SBA tasks to promote collaboration among themselves. In this sense, SBA encouraged shared knowledge and information among the learners, which was a positive learning strategy. This made SBA tasks such as the project and the PAT seem less stressful than tests and examinations. However, Bloxham et al. (2011) argue that many learners normally do not take these tasks seriously enough and thus they take too long to complete them. Sambell, MacDowell and Brown (1997) also argue that traditional tests and examinations are mostly preferred by higher education students because they are the easiest way of obtaining marks.

According to the learners' conceptions of assessment theory (Brown et al., 2008), assessment should be enjoyable and should help classmates to be more supportive of one another. This was endorsed by the learners of the current study as they stated that doing assessment tasks together had a positive impact on their learning and not only on the marks had they achieved. For instance, Mqondisi and his friends had initiated collaboration amongst themselves and he emphasised that, although SBA tasks in Tourism were completed individually, they had set up their own self-help group where they discussed and resolved challenges and studied for tests together. Learner collaboration is encouraged by the formative assessment model, while Drake et al. (2014) also argue that it encourages collaborative work and learning among peers.

The learners' conceptions of assessment theory (Brown et al., 2008) acknowledges that some learners might experience SBA as unfair, negative and irrelevant. This was corroborated by the findings as Senzo explained that SBA tasks in Tourism were challenging and thus made it difficult to learn from them. The main challenges were the difficulty level, the length, and the time-consuming nature of these tasks. For example, in the words of Zaza, some of the Tourism tasks were too time consuming and thus she failed to see the benefits for learning that might accrue. According to her and some other participants, they did not have adequate time to complete the tasks because they demanded lengthy research and writing sessions. In addition, limited or no access to support material was a challenge that was highlighted by all the participants. This was exacerbated by a lack of feedback and model answers to check where errors had slipped in when

tests had been done. For example, Phindi, Msizi and Thumpu related feedback to marks, while a few of the learners related feedback to model answers provided by the teacher after each SBA task. Some felt that feedback in the form of marks was irrelevant for their development and preparation for examinations, and none of the learners perceived feedback as fulfilling a formative assessment role. For example, Mqondisi, Zaza, Thumpu, Vuvu, Thoti and Senzo related feedback to grades, while Phindi and Msizi connected it with model answers for SBA tasks. Feedback in formative assessment is described as information provided for pupils that guides them and helps them to make progress and it relies on comments rather than being about grades (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

The findings that were discussed above confirm the claim by Brown et al. (2008) in the learners' conceptions of assessment theory that learners are aware that assessment improves learning and therefore they want honest, comprehensive and constructive feedback on how to improve.

In a nutshell, the findings revealed that some learners did not comprehensively understand the role of feedback as they limited feedback to a model answer that is tantamount to rote learning. This indicates that a lot of work needs to be done to teach these learners – and possibly learners across the board – of the purpose and role of various assessment strategies. Likewise, it is a wake-up call for teachers, education officials and policy makers to ensure that they allow learners to have input in assessment strategies and policies, and that these policies in turn ensure the delivery of their intended educational outcomes.

5.5 Implications of the Study and Recommendations

This study has shown that SBA is persistently used in support of the summative assessment model with less vivid application for formative assessment purposes. The over-emphasis on tests and examinations in the SBA system entrenches summative assessment practices that focus on marks and examination preparation instead of on learning and the holistic development of learners. Although the findings of this study cannot be generalised to all the schools in the country and even the district where it was conducted, they can make a valuable contribution towards improving teaching and learning, especially in terms of assessment practices at secondary schools, with particular reference to Tourism as a subject in the FET phase.

A perusal of the findings of the study will shed some light on an area that has not received significant attention in the literature, namely the perspectives of secondary school learners on assessment strategies in Tourism as an elective subject. The findings suggest that, if learner performance in the NSC examination is to be improved, the administration of SBA tasks needs to take the views of learners into consideration. This study thus opened the door widely to continued discourse and research on this topic, and it is thus envisaged that future researchers will adopt similar strategies and methodologies to extend the scope of their studies and to fill the gaps that this study could not cover.

The Department of Basic Education should put stringent systems in place to ensure that proper implementation and monitoring of SBA at secondary schools take place. Schools must be supported and encouraged to increase both the quantity and quality of informal assessment tasks.

Feedback is a very important part of assessment as it guides learners on how to approach tasks in the future. I do understand that there are systems in place to support this principle; however, it seems that policy makers and executive officers pay special attention to formal assessment and neglect informal (or school based) assessment. Schools have thus become the culprits when informal assessment is neglected in favour of formal assessment tasks. Unfortunately, this practice is not only encouraged, but actively enforced by Departmental initiatives that negate the role of formative assessment and replace it with initiatives that focus on summative assessment tasks, especially as lower performing schools are compelled to administer externally set tests and examinations in the interest of higher pass rates at the end of each year.

Educationists must never lose sight of the principle that SBA is important to both the teacher and the learner as it improves the teaching strategies of the teacher and shapes learning. In this context, the marginalisation of teachers in the SBA system when their creative initiatives are replaced by Departmental instructions for the administration of compulsory common tests and examinations is a matter of grave concern. As this is the case in the South African education system, more research on the implementation of SBA is required in order to ensure that it fulfils the role it is meant play.

5.5 Synthesis

This study examined learners' views on SBA in Tourism and highlighted their perceptions of and their use of SBA tasks in this subject. It was found that the learners perceived SBA as a means of improving their year-end promotion marks as some thought that SBA tasks focused on augmenting their marks at the end of the year, and their academic efforts were therefore geared towards higher marks to pass at the end of year rather than towards improved and versatile learning strategies. The learners highlighted the challenges that they faced when completing SBA tasks such as poor feedback and a lack of resources to help them complete SBA tasks. Conversely, they also expressed favourable use of SBA tasks that supported learning, such as collaborative and group learning and self-regulatory learning. However, in general the learners regarded SBA as another type of learning to support promotion at the end of the year, which is a view that is unfortunately supported by Departmental initiatives to standardise tests and examinations that should be part of the SBA process.

In closing, this study concludes that learners' experiences in Tourism influenced their perceptions about and execution of SBA tasks both negatively and positively. However, in the interest of the predominantly positive application and execution of SBA tasks, teachers, educationists and policy makers are urged to reconsider and reaffirm the role that SBA should play in schools and they should adhere to the maxims that engendered this educationally sound initiative.

6. References

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

28 September 2016

Ms Rosemary B Xulu 213560408
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Ms Xulu

Protocol reference number: HSS/1521/016M

Project title: Examine Tourism learners' conceptions of school based assessment in an under resourced school.

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 13 September 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr Zanele Dube-Xaba

cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza

cc School Administrator: Mrs B Bhengu-Mnguni, Mbalenhle Ngcobo, Philisiwe Ncayiyana, Tyzer Khumalo

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/83504567 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4608 Email: singha@ukzn.ac.za / swmami@ukzn.ac.za / mohump@ukzn.ac.za

Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campus

Edgewood

Howard College

Medical School

Pietermaritzburg

Westville

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:2/4/8/924

Ms RB Xulu
PO Box 3026
Ladysmith
3370

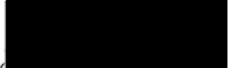
Dear Ms Xulu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“EXAMINE TOURISM LEARNERS CONCEPTIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT IN AN UNDER - RESOURCED SCHOOL”**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 10 October 2016 to 26 April 2018.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Steadville Secondary School


Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 18 October 2016

APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL LETTER

P.O. BOX 3026

LADYSMITH

3370

03 June 2016

rbxulu@telkomsa.net

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN YOUR SCHOOL

I am a Masters student at UKZN Edgewood campus. I wish to request permission to conduct a research study in your school. My study will be looking at Tourism learners' voices about School Based Assessment. I hope to complete the study in a period of twelve months. I wish to state that the identity of your school will be protected, and where necessary pseudo names will be used. Participation of learners is voluntary and they can exit the study at any time.

Your co-operation is appreciated.

Kind regards.

Rosemary Busisiwe Xulu

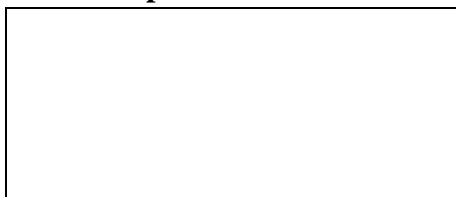
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that ----- principal of Bonga (pseudonym) Secondary School grant/do not grant Ms Rosemary Busisiwe Xulu permission to do an empirical study in our school.

Signature: -----

Date: -----

School stamp



APPENDIX D: LEARNER INFORMATION AND ASSENT FORM

P.O. BOX 3026

LADYSMITH

3370

03 June 2016

rbxulu@telkomsa.net

Dear Participant

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN YOUR CLASS

I am a Masters student at UKZN Edgewood campus. I wish to request permission to conduct a research study in your class. My study will be looking at Tourism learners' voices about School Based Assessment. I hope to complete the study in a period of twelve months. I wish to state that participation in the study is voluntary. You may exit the study at any time. Your identity will be kept anonymous throughout the study and no information gained during the study will be made public.

Your co-operation is appreciated.

Kind regards.

Rosemary Busisiwe Xulu

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that I ----- agree / do not agree to facilitate and assist learners participating in the empirical study that Ms R.B.Xulu seeks to conduct in our school.

Signature: -----

-- Date:-----

**APPENDIX E: PARENTS
INFORMATION AND
CONSENT FORM**

P.O .BOX 3026
Ladysmith 3370
03
June 2016
rbxulu@telkomsa.
net

ISICELO ESIQONDISWE KUMZALI

Ngingumfundi owenza iziqu zobuthishela eNyuvesi yakwaZulu-Natal. Ngenza ucwaningo ngabafundi bamabanga aphakeme. Bengicela imvume yokusebenzisana nomntwana wakho ukuqhuba lolucwaningo.

Imininingwane yomntwana iyogcinwa iyimfihlo. Umntwana akaphoqelekele ukuba yingxenywe yalolucwaningo kanti futhi angayekela noma kunini uma engasagculisekile.

Ngiyojabula ukuubambisana nawe.

Ozithobayo.
Rosemary Busisiwe Xulu

KULOYO EYOQONDANA NAYE

Lencwadi iyisiqiniseko sokuthi mina ----- ongumzali ka-----

----- ofunda eBonga Secondary School
ngiyavuma / angivumi ukuba umntanami abe yingxenywe yocwaningo oluzokwenziwa u Ms R.B.Xulu ekilasini labo.

Igama:-----

Ukusayina:-----

Usuku: -----

-