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MEANINGFUL TEACHING OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION FRAMED BY CULTURE: XHOSA SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEWS

ABSTRACT

African women in the Xhosa culture used to hold powerful positions in the sexuality arena. That has since changed and in contemporary Xhosa culture, they take up submissive roles. This is especially so in the teaching of certain aspects of sexuality, as Xhosa women are not supposed to give guidance in the sexuality of their male learners. In this study, curriculum posters were created to explore Xhosa Life Orientation (LO), Life Sciences (LFSC) and Natural Sciences (NS) teachers' views of the meaningful teaching of sexuality education to Xhosa learners. The research study is located within a critical paradigm, using a participatory visual methodology. Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) was used as a theoretical lens and the findings were contextualised in existing literature. Two themes were identified: 1) Shifting teacher positionality by revisiting pedagogical assumptions and taking ownership in the teaching of sexuality education and 2) Contextualising sexuality education in Xhosa culture through reconnecting to Xhosa values and appreciating cultural roots and practices. The findings indicated that Xhosa women teachers could reclaim their powerful position regarding sexuality when teaching sexuality education and that reflexivity is a critical attribute of a sexuality education teacher. The study has implications for teachers and curriculum developers to contextualise the curriculum in terms of learners' biographies and to engage local and relevant knowledges critically in dealing with issues of sexuality, gender inequality as well as HIV and AIDS.

Keywords: *Adolescent learners; HIV and AIDS; participatory visual methods; sexuality education; sexuality education teachers; Xhosa culture.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The socio-culturally held silences that surround sexuality, as well as gender inequalities in African cultures, need to be challenged. UNESCO (2018) acknowledges that every culture has prescripts for sexual behaviour. This holds true for the many indigenous South African cultures of which the Xhosa culture is one. In sub-Saharan Africa, initiation schools were spaces where sexuality education used to happen (De Haas & Hutter, 2019). Research shows that the

cultural rules do not always facilitate healthy and safe sexuality. Lately, sexuality education has been offered in formal schools. A previous study in South Africa found that teachers fail to equip adolescent learners (possibly also true for Xhosa adolescents) with meaningful knowledge to navigate their sexuality successfully, contributing to high levels of sexually transmitted infections (including HIV) and unintended pregnancies. In this regard, I quote one researcher who notes that indeed

> in spite of some laudable policy initiatives by the Ministry of Education, some of the policies themselves, and the interpretation and implementation thereof at school level, have done little to advance gender equality in schools and particularly to address unintended pregnancies and other sexual and reproductive health issues as barriers to girls' education in South Africa (Moletsane, 2014: 13).

It is no secret that when it comes to sexuality education, the teacher's personal background affects teaching practice (Swanepoel, Beyers & De Wet, 2017). This personal background is informed by the norms and cultural prescripts embodied in a society. Thus, sexuality education teachers need to undergo a process of "self-study" (Roy, 2018) where they interrogate their own beliefs, values and biases regarding sexuality matters to find out how they influence what and how they teach. Could this self-reflexivity contribute to a more responsive equipping of learners with the relevant content and skills for a healthy and safe navigation of sexuality in adolescence? In any practice, it is necessary to pause and reflect on how one conducts "business" and adapt in line with set objectives. In addition, one needs to determine how one could use this understanding of one's analysis to forge ahead in meaningful teaching of sexuality education to adolescent learners. In this article I address the following question: *What are Xhosa LO, LFSC and NS secondary school teachers' views of meaningful teaching of sexuality education to Xhosa learners?*

LO, LFSC and NS isiXhosa speaking teachers are chosen for the study as they are subjects that included anything to do with sexuality and are from Xhosa culture.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture exerts a profound influence on the behaviour of individuals, even regarding sexuality. DePalma and Francis (2014) note that culture as an institution is difficult to challenge. It, however, is not inflexible nor should be looked at as what was and what should forever be. Each culture has its own range of practices and values, some related to sexuality. For example, males are seen as being powerful with regard to sexuality in the Xhosa culture (Cain, Schensul & Mlobeli, 2011). Nevertheless, culture can be adapted to suit present-day demands without it necessarily losing its essence. Important regarding African sexuality, "… African communities recognised the power and centrality of sexuality in human experience …" (Delius & Glaser, 2002: 31). Thus, sexuality was regulated through formally developed structures within these communities. In their 2004 work, Delius and Glaser claim that women and girls had been commanding in African communities and had asserted themselves in intimate sexual relationships. Research studies show that this is no longer the case with black Africans in South Africa, as men and boys are generally more open, aggressive and suggestive about sexuality than women and girls who are censored (Morrell *et al.,* 2009). However, it is difficult to trace early sexuality as it was experienced in indigenous African cultures perhaps due to the illiteracy of the time or what Dlamini (2006) attributes to be a lack of proper documentation. Worth noting is that African culture is characterised by phenomena such as polygamy and the acceptance of men having multiple sexual partners (Delius & Glaser, 2004; Hunting, 2012;

Stern & Buikema, 2013) that spread the HIV virus and render women more susceptible to HIV infection (Wood, 2013). Contemporary Xhosa culture is patriarchal with patriarchal values remaining strong in rural and urban areas alike (Morrell *et al.,* 2009).

In contemporary Xhosa culture, sexuality is viewed as a private and taboo affair. There is a palpable silence when talking about sexual matters, yet it was managed with openness in the era before colonisation and Christianity in South Africa (Delius & Glaser, 2002). Christianity and urbanisation have influenced African people's beliefs about sexuality, contributing to the loss of openness with which it used to be handled (Delius & Glaser, 2002; 2004; Dickinson, 2014; Mudhovozi, Ramarumo & Sodi, 2012). One will find that in the African society today, it is generally forbidden (and is put forward as "having become culture") for adults to speak openly about sexuality matters with children (Jearey-Graham & Macleod, 2015). Today, it is often heard that it is "unAfrican" that older people talk about sexuality matters with children (Wood, 2009). Yet, that was the case before, as sexuality talk occurred when necessary in African culture. Post-colonisation, sexuality regulation was weakened and as a result, the negative consequences of unregulated sexuality surfaced in urban areas, with "illegitimate" children being born, gang rapes occurring and divorce becoming common as promiscuity rose (Delius & Glaser, 2002). What mostly remains regulated is male initiation and customary marriages. In fact, the status of sexuality in Xhosa culture seems to have affected what happens in formal schools regarding sexuality education too.

Mbananga's study reveals the disintegration and abandonment in Xhosa teachers' "wearing masks" (2004:153) when it comes to educating adolescent learners about sexuality. She notes that Xhosa teachers take up a technical and flimsy approach (see also Macleod, 2016; Morrell *et al.,* 2009). Moreover, sexuality education in the curriculum in South Africa is generally neglected or brushed over by sexuality education teachers (DePalma & Francis, 2014; Francis, 2011; Macleod, 2016; Morrell *et al.,* 2009; Mthatyana & Vincent, 2015). This is problematic as sexuality education is a prescribed component of the Life Orientation, Life Sciences and Natural Sciences curricula. It is also important to teach sexuality education in a meaningful way. In a qualitative study with Free State province LO teachers, DePalma and Francis found that indeed there are cultural taboos to talking about sex (DePalma & Francis, 2014). Xhosa teachers do not talk about sex, while they could be talking about the other stuff in sexuality education, such as relationships, sexual orientations, reproduction, gender identities, roles and others.

Sexuality education has evolved from following a biomedical approach when it was first implemented to an emphasis on critical social aspects in the recent past, and now the debate is about attending to cultural aspects (Moletsane, 2014). Teachers grapple with the sexuality education curriculum, citing their own cultural norms, personal values and attitudes as being contradictory to the objectives of the curriculum (Helleve *et al.,* 2011). It is unsurprising that teachers would grapple with the curriculum, as South African teachers have not been adequately "trained" to teach sexuality education (Francis, 2013). These teachers, more specifically LO teachers, are drawn from a wide range of subjects depending on their teaching workloads and they tend to be women (Moletsane, 2014). Notwithstanding these negative aspects, it has become more apparent that the focus in the teaching of sexuality education should be addressing the cultural assumptions that lead teachers to overlook the sexuality component of the curriculum or lends them to being moralistic.

Macleod (2016) sees the cultural assumptions that teachers hold about sexualities and gender as worthy of being deeply reflected upon in the teaching of sexuality education in schools. Reflection makes it possible to reach a deeper level of understanding actions (Dore, 2019). When sexuality education teachers do the self-reflexive exercise analysing their socially and culturally held biases regarding sexuality, they can be better able to understand their teaching practice. They become aware of the influences and interpretations of the curriculum they teach adolescents, leading to innovative and effective teaching strategies. A reflexive practice is lauded by South African researchers, such as Van Laren, Mudaly, Pithouse-Morgan and Singh (2013), for providing insights to enhancing teaching.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I use Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), a name coined by Michael Cole in 1996, which incorporates culture, society and history as dimensions into the mental functioning of humans (Roth & Lee, 2007)*, to frame the study and make meaning of the findings.* CHAT fits in with a critical paradigm, the paradigm suited to the research question of this study. With CHAT, it is understood that "schooling occurs as teachers and learners negotiate complex social interactions, interactions often informed by differing sets of norms and conventions" (Nasir & Hand, 2006: 452). These, however, are not static and can change to ensure the achievement of the object (goal).

CHAT evolved through three generations of theory development. The theory was developed by A.N. Leont'ev and Aleksandr Luria, who were students of Lev Vygotsky, and further developed by Engeström (Roth & Lee, 2007). Vygotsky, the developer of the first generation theory acknowledged that there is a crucial connection between an individual's mind and his/her histo-cultural and institutional settings (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). The second generation theory was spearheaded by Leont'ev and Luria who identified their work as Activity theory, introducing analysis for looking at the interplay between the individual and the environment. Thus, the theory widened the scope of Vygotsky's mediated action through an analysis that recognises activity between various social others and objects in the environment. The third generation theory led by Engeström extended what Leont'ev and Luria had already developed, introducing activity systems analysis. This analysis is used to delineate the mutually inclusive interaction between social other(s) and the environment and how they affect one another (Van Vlaenderen & Neves, 2004).

CHAT theory purports to aid the understanding of complex learning situations and holds that there are six elements in activity systems that interact together towards a goal or motive (object of an activity) (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). The first two elements of the activity system are the *subject*, which is the individual engaged in the activity and the *mediating tool*, which is the prior knowledge and resources that contribute to the subject's action experiences within the activity. Another element is the *rules* that are formal or informal regulations, norms and values that can liberate or constrain the activity providing the subject guidance on correct procedures and acceptable interactions to take with other community members. The *community*, which is the stakeholders or social groups with which the subject identifies while participating in the activity, is the fourth element. Then follows the *division of labour*, which is the roles and responsibilities of those in the activity. Lastly, there is the *object*, which is the goal or motive of engaging in an activity that is transformed into an outcome, the desired effect of the activity.

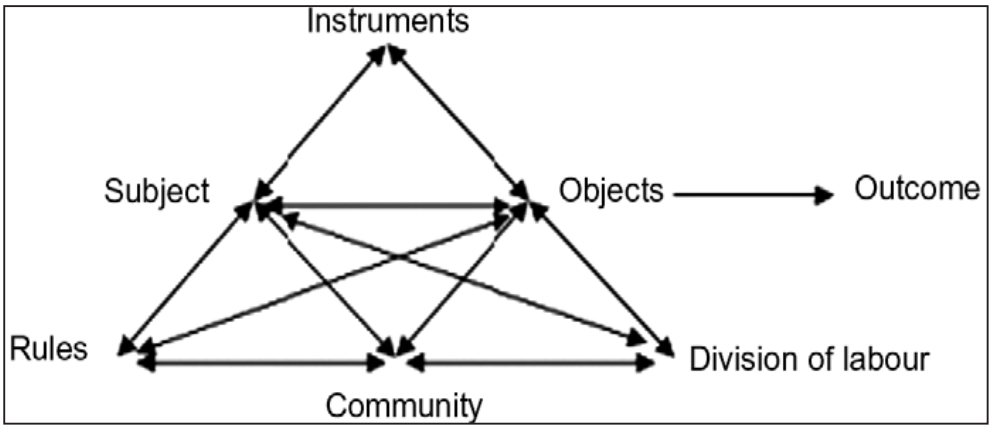

Figure 1: Second generation CHAT (from Nussbaumer, 2012:39)

In the study I drew from the second generation CHAT as illustrated in Figure 1, and I have identified the *subject* as Xhosa LO, LFSC and NS teachers from township secondary schools in Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape as they all teach aspects of sexuality education. The *instrument* or *mediating tool* is the CAPS, the teachers' teaching pedagogies and their cultural viewpoints. The *object* and *outcome* are meaningful sexuality education. The *rules* are Xhosa cultural norms from the community and school norms including the code of conduct for teachers. The *community* is the Department of Basic Education, parents of the learners, as well as learners themselves. The *division of labour* is the role-players: The Department of Basic Education as policy developer and curriculum developer as well as the teachers as fellow curriculum developers, policy implementers and facilitators of learning.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study followed a qualitative design within a critical paradigm, employing a participatory visual methodology. A qualitative design concerns itself with understanding and exploring reality rather than explaining and controlling it (Fouchè & Schurink, 2011). It is subjective as it seeks an insider perspective, constructing the participant's meaning of his or her life world (Creswell, 2013). A critical paradigm holds that social reality is socially constructed through society, media and institutions (Mack, 2010). Kivunja and Kuyini posit that a critical paradigm "assumes a transactional epistemology, (in which the researcher interacts with the participants), an ontology of historical realism, especially as it relates to oppression; a methodology that is dialogic, and an axiology that respects cultural norms" (2017: 35).

Black *et al.* (2018) point out that a participatory visual methodology allows for methods where participants take their own artefacts. Mitchell, De Lange and Moletsane (2017) maintain that participatory visual methods seek to bring change or transformation to a situation. Using a participatory visual methodology could enable participants to express ideas that they might find difficult to put in words. The study adhered to trustworthiness and authenticity criteria looking at whether an account of the participants' worldviews, perspectives and experiences has been rendered as honestly and fully as possible (Schurink, Fouché & De Vos, 2011). Ethical clearance (H15-EDU-ERE-026) was sought and considerations such as voluntary participation, informed consent and confidentiality were made.

4.1 Participant selection and setting

Participants were selected purposively in order to explore the phenomenon. Inclusion criteria were: LO, LFSC and NS teachers; male and female teachers; teachers who come from Xhosa culture; teachers of LO Grade 8 to Grade 12; teachers of LFSC Grade 10 to 12; teachers of NS Grade 8 and 9 and teachers in a secondary school in a black Port Elizabeth township. The final sample of participants was nine female Xhosa LO, LFSC and NS teachers from four Port Elizabeth township secondary schools as the male teachers did not take up the offer to participate in the research study. They were between the ages of 42 and 55 years and all had grown up as children in townships.

Table 1: Biographical data of the participants

Pseudonym	Subject	Qualification	Years of experience	Age
Cikky	Life Orientation	STD & BEd Hons	27yrs	51yrs
Sikelelwa	Life Sciences	B Paed	16yrs	44yrs
Nolwazi	Natural Sciences	BSc & HDE	23yrs	47yrs
Phaphama	Life Sciences	STD & BEd Hons	26yrs	50yrs
Khuthala	Natural Sciences	BSc & PGCE	15yrs	41yrs
Khethiwe	Life Orientation	BA & HDE	17yrs	44yrs
Ntombemsulwa	Natural Sciences	N.Dip	8yrs	45yrs
Ntandokazi	Life Orientation	BA & HDE	17yrs	45yrs
Gcobisa	Life Sciences	STD & BEd Hons	28yrs	51yrs

4.2 Data generation method – curriculum posters

Posters are colourful and attractive media that stimulate interest in a topic by illustrating a concept and giving guidance on the use of its contents (Osa & Musser, 2004). Posters are also eye-catching and informative and serve as effective tools for raising awareness of an issue. They are similar to the visual method of photovoice. I wanted the teachers to explore their agency to effectively teach sexuality education by mapping out their views on the meaningful teaching of sexuality education to Xhosa adolescents. They responded to the following prompt:

> Create curriculum posters depicting meaningful teaching of sexuality education to Xhosa adolescent learners.

The nine Xhosa women teachers were placed in 3 groups and were provided with poster paper, magazines, newspapers and portable printers, and they used their cell phones to take the photos that they planned to use. They had two hours to complete their curriculum

posters. In their curriculum posters, they could include a photograph, drawing, slogans and whatever visual artefact they could include. The Xhosa women teachers needed to take into consideration who the primary audience was. They resolved that their audience was other teachers. De Lange, Mitchell and Moletsane (2015) sketch six steps that may be followed in creating such posters, to which the participants adhered. The participants first went back to the issue for which they had to find a solution, discussed how to present the issue and its solution in a poster. They then planned and created the first draft and presented it to the whole group. Next, they welcomed feedback given to them and refined the poster considering the feedback given. The final step was to present the revised poster to the whole group. As each group presented its curriculum poster, the presentations were video recorded for later transcription and analysis. First, the teachers analysed their own posters through participatory analysis following De Lange *et al.* (2015), which I later analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The Xhosa women teachers reflected that they appreciated their Xhosa culture and that it should, together with participatory visual methodologies, inform the teaching of sexuality education in their township schools.

5. FINDINGS

Two themes were identified from the data, i.e., 1) Shifting teacher positionality through revisiting pedagogical assumptions and taking ownership in teaching sexuality education and 2) Contextualising sexuality education in Xhosa culture by reconnecting to Xhosa values and the appreciation of cultural roots and practices. I provide the curriculum posters that were produced by the 3 subgroups and then present each theme by beginning with a brief conceptualisation of the theme with supporting quotations, and lastly, meaning making of the theme.

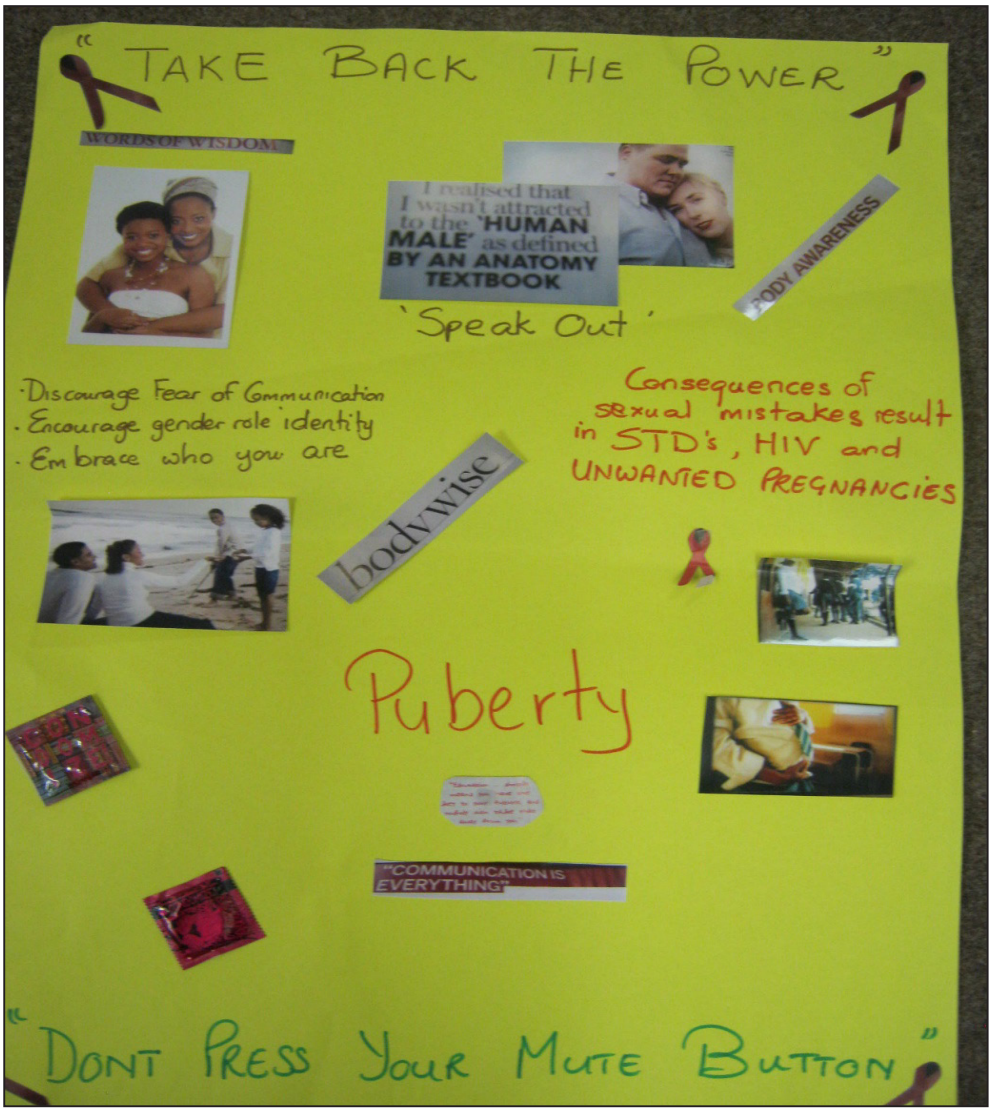

Figure 2: NS subgroup curriculum poster, "Take Back the Power"

Figure 3: LO subgroup curriculum poster 1, "Our Roots… Our Pride"

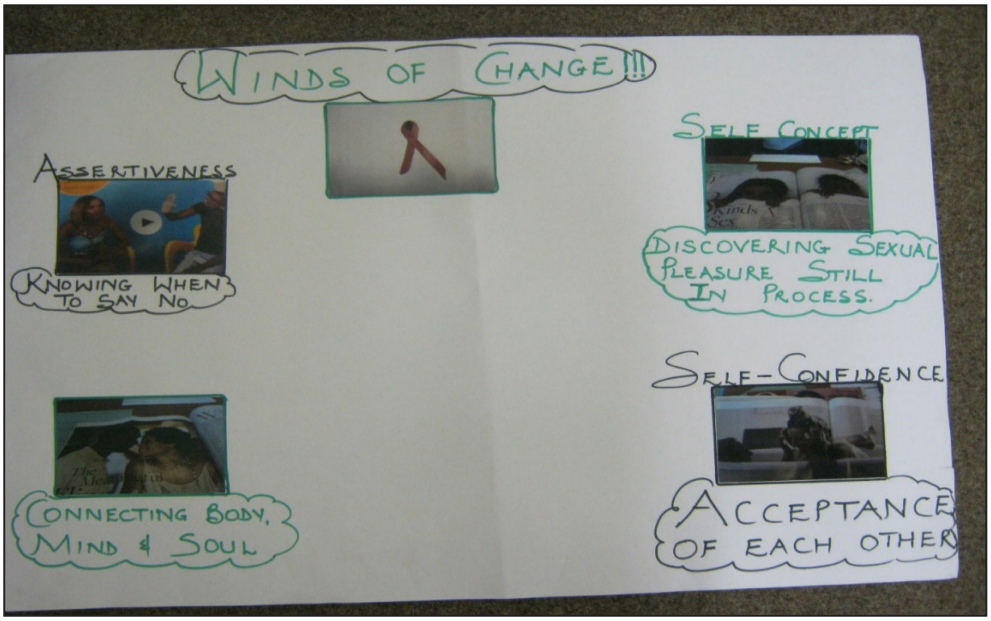

Figure 4: LO subgroup curriculum poster 2, "Winds of Change"

Figure 5: LFSC subgroup curriculum poster: *Wathint'abafazi! Wathint'imbokotho!* (You strike a woman! You strike a rock!)

5.1 Theme one: Shifting teacher positionality

Teacher positionality refers to the teachers' positioning in teaching sexuality education in township secondary schools. Their values and views on sexuality were revisited and modified in response to the needs of adolescent learners in the classes they teach. They were eager to position themselves differently than was the case before to teach sexuality education meaningfully and to see the accomplishment of its educational goals.

The convictions that the Xhosa women teachers now held about the curriculum content, the teaching method, the learners and themselves as teachers teaching sexuality education showed that they were revisiting pedagogical assumptions. These teachers' curriculum posters demonstrated that they felt they could take back ownership of and lead in the teaching of sexuality education, as shown in the title and content of the curriculum posters Figure 2 and Figure 5. Boys tended to be unwilling to be taught certain aspects of sexuality education by female teachers. Some of these aspects included the male reproductive system. The taking back of ownership by the women teachers meant that it was up to teachers in the field to be proactive and push boundaries of what might be outdated. Teachers of sexuality education should not wait for the Department of Basic Education officials to provide what was needed to support effective teaching and learning of sexuality education. It could be very easy to detach oneself from the responsibility especially when one knows there is some superior who was supposed to be held accountable. When no one takes ownership, the necessary change and impactful teaching that is needed will not happen. The following are quotations that act as evidence to these statements:

> In our poster we've got a picture which is showing that in the olden days men thought women should be discriminated in terms of what happens with ulwaluko [initiation] or circumcision. We see here on the poster the females who are in power because nowadays women become part of initiation schools committees ensuring proper and safer circumcision. The whole community becomes aware of what's important when their boys are about to go to initiation schools. I also have got a picture here which is showing the men, they are together, and they are making sure that no one is hearing what they are saying, they have got their secrets. That is why we wrote secrets of men. There were no go areas when it came to some aspects of ulwaluko. This had an effect on the boys we teach in class as female teachers; they would shy away when us female teachers try to teach the male reproductive system. When your mind is muddled up your heart feels turbulent. We expect the boys to keep their minds limber to brace themselves for things as they are today. We say gone are those days when it was thought that the females' place is in the kitchen. Today we see black females in power, for example there are now many female doctors and politicians, and this says to us *"Wathint'abafazi wathint'imbokotho"* [You strike a woman! You strike a rock!] (Phaphama reporting for the LFSC subgroup).

> Communication really has to be the driver of the whole system of taking back the power…. We can play a vital and positive role with regards to that… but we need to go beyond that as teachers; we need to call a spade a spade, we need to encourage communication, communication with elders in the community, anyone the child is comfortable speaking with, not only the parents (Nolwazi reporting for the NS subgroup).

The Xhosa women teachers claimed ownership for teaching sexuality education, thereby taking responsibility for the learners. They also communicated that they needed to be approachable so that the learners can relate to them, pointing to a possible disrupting of the silence that surrounds sexuality matters at present. In addition, they were forthcoming when they sought to involve the parents and the community, trying to guarantee that learning would

be reinforced at home. In doing this, they were positioning themselves aptly for the meaningful teaching of sexuality education to occur. Further, they envisaged that through their teaching, adolescent sexual behaviour could lead to positive outcomes. This means that adolescent learners might not have to be victims of not fully understanding sexuality matters. With the women teachers having looked at their own positionality, next was to consider the context.

5.2 Theme two: Contextualising sexuality education in Xhosa culture

The Xhosa women teachers, in their curriculum posters, promulgated their realisation that sexuality education needs to be taught in context and especially in a cultural context. They recognised that sexuality education would be more comprehensible and meaningful to Xhosa learners if they contextualised it, as depicted in Figures 3, 4 and 5. Although there seemed to be a sense of longing for "things" to be done the way they had been done in the past, they believed that some of the teachings could be critiqued and needed fine-tuning for this particular era and context.

These teachers considered that certain Xhosa values needed to be re-established in their teaching of sexuality education. They saw these as relevant and crucial for Xhosa adolescents today. According to the Xhosa women teachers, the sexuality education offered in Xhosa cultural institutions in the past could be useful to instil values relevant to boys and girls. The kind of values that they could instil was taking responsibility, respect and self-assurance. The curriculum posters also pointed to other values such as assertiveness, self-confidence, self-awareness and identity, which too could contribute to meaningful teaching of sexuality education today. The following quotations serve as evidence to support these statements:

> Our poster here is titled "Our Roots… Our Pride". So where does this title come from? As a group we thought in the olden days things used to be done in a totally different manner. There were different ways that were used to instil values, respect and all the other things in the kids when they were brought up. We first thought of the different gender roles; there we were thinking about the parents specifically the women, will be teaching the young ones about being responsible women. Here we have a picture of Intonjane, it is a cultural activity that is done whereby the young women or girls are kind of taken aside and are taught how to handle themselves as women and tomorrow's mothers, and all the different roles that they need to play. They are also taught to have a sense of pride of themselves; they need to be proud of their bodies understanding that men cannot do as they please with their bodies. For instance if a young men goes up the thighs of a young woman during fondling, the family of that young man will be forced to pay a penalty giving a cow to the girl's family. So they were taught to act responsibly. Men are also taught about their different cultures and how to act responsibly, understanding the consequences of acting irresponsibly; whilst girls went to Intonjane, the males are taken to initiation schools where they would be taught everything about manhood, how to handle themselves, and how to respect the opposite gender (Cikky reporting for the LO subgroup).

> … as educators that our responsibility is not only to talk about the content, as much as the content is important we also need to be conscious of the fact that when we teach this subject a lot of our culture comes into play (Nolwazi reporting for the NS subgroup).

The Xhosa women teachers spoke appreciatively of teachings on sexuality that used to characterise Xhosa culture. They seemed quite nostalgic in that they not only reminisced about their roots but presented Xhosa practices as being all-good and made no substantive mention of any Xhosa practices that might have been undesirable. Cultural practices were intended to transmit unique knowledge traditionally and values from one generation to the other. The purpose of cultural practices is to uphold cultural norms that would set standards

for acceptable behaviour and to clarify how to interact within the culture. Taking pride in their cultural roots assumed an obligation on the part of the women teachers to inform their Xhosa learners of how things used to be done in their Xhosa culture, clearly wanting to pass the cultural knowledge on to the next generation. This knowledge was seen to be able to instil a sense of pride in the learners and that they might own for themselves what their culture has to offer. In all this, there remains the need to be critical of the Xhosa culture, as there is a possibility that what is passed on to the younger generation might not be useful in the age of HIV and AIDS. When contextualising sexuality education in the Xhosa culture, it is necessary to be vigilant of its relevance for today's adolescents and possible contradictions that might exist.

6. DISCUSSION

The exercise of creating curriculum posters enabled reflexivity on the part of the Xhosa women teachers. They could examine their teaching practice and Xhosa culture and determine what they thought would be meaningful teaching of sexuality education. This process meant a modification of teaching sexuality education to Xhosa adolescent learners. A "starting with ourselves" approach (Van Laren *et al.,* 2013), which is a deeply reflexive approach, enabling awareness of own influence on teaching sexuality education and of how that might intentionally break the silence seemingly imposed by culture. Identified in CHAT, a mismatch and sometimes a strengthening of cultural values that are the various elements in an activity system of sexuality education occurred. Nasir and Hand (2006) state that these contradictions may occur in learning and teaching. However, it is interesting how sexuality education teachers in sub-Saharan Africa resolve such contradictions (De Haas & Hutter, 2019). Further research needs to explore how teachers resolve such contradictions in Xhosa culture.

These teachers saw themselves as taking responsibility to lead such a situation, thereby, putting themselves at the forefront of the task of teaching sexuality education to Xhosa adolescents. They demonstrated that culture was relevant for the meaningful teaching of sexuality education, as without the latter, adolescents, especially girls, are more exposed to disheartening reproductive and sexual health practices (Moletsane, 2014). UNESCO (2018) also notes the importance of cultural values in the understanding of sexuality. Baxen and Breidlid (2004) call for the examination of cultural practices and their use in a meaningful way in terms of interventions in sexuality education. The Xhosa women teachers in this study might have observed what Ahlberg (1994) advocates, an education system that focuses positively on peoples' historical backgrounds. Moreover, and only when an education system is able to mobilise peoples' meanings can there be the possibility to empower people to deal with issues of sexuality, including HIV and AIDS meaningfully.

The participatory nature of the research enabled the teachers to revisit their pedagogical assumptions and to facilitate a shift in their teacher positionality, to cultivate a conducive atmosphere for the teaching of sexuality education. The Xhosa women teachers reconsidered the expectation that Xhosa female teachers should not educate boys about sex and sexuality, as it would be opportunities missed if they did not teach the boys too. Xhosa male learners are guarded when they are taught sexuality education by female teachers; they do not expect them to do this because male sexuality is handled by males only in the culture. I could not locate literature on this other than that which says it is usually women who teach subjects that have the sexuality education component (Moletsane, 2014). There is a need to disrupt the notion of the male learners as the family structure has been changing in the country.

There are now more homes that are headed by single women in South Africa (Mudau, Ncube & Mukansi, 2018), which flags the need to call upon teachers of both sexes to be engaged with learners regarding sexuality at school. Sexuality education cannot continue to be a task of women teachers only and they should not give in to pressure about what content they as Xhosa women teachers should and should not teach to boys.

Further, the Xhosa women teachers broke the mould by closing the generational gap between themselves and the adolescent learners to whom they teach sexuality education. The Xhosa teachers encouraged communication, which required them to think about their positionality as they sought to challenge the taboos that surround sexuality in Xhosa culture (Wood, 2013). Over and above that, they took responsibility for teaching sexuality education, not waiting on other role-players to lead it. Considering that sexuality education should not be taught in an a-contextual way, this meant that they could look at the Xhosa cultural values and practices and their relevance in teaching today's adolescent learners and yet be critical of it. In their posters and the discussions that ensued, there was a clear indication that the Xhosa women teachers' thinking was in synchrony with the views of Sani *et al.* (2018) who advocate for the provision of sexuality education not only in the context of culture, but also culture made relevant for today's adolescents.

7. CONCLUSION

I conclude that Xhosa women teachers can break the power dynamics that are eminent in teaching sexuality education in their township schools. The meaningful teaching of sexuality education to Xhosa learners should involve putting the sexuality education they engage with at school, within the Xhosa cultural context, thus making congruent the teaching and subsequent learning from the ecologies of school and home (culture). Although contradictions and tensions become evident, there is potential for synergy between the Xhosa culture and what is taught in sexuality education at school, which would mean a working towards the full attainment of the curriculum goals. The Department of Basic Education and educational institutions should promote a pedagogy that encourages sexuality education teachers to "start with themselves" and to be reflexive in their teaching practice. As some sexuality education researchers recommend, when teachers understand their own positionality, they will proactively equip their learners with the life and decision-making skills necessary for negotiating their sexuality and for meaningful learning of sexuality education.

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