CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN TEACHERS' LIVES: UNDERSTANDING TEACHER BE-ING

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in the discipline Curriculum Studies, School of Education, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal

December 2014

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DECLARATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Teachers' lives are complex and dynamic. They find themselves in an era of new challenges and new demands. Recent literature reveals that teachers are experiencing insecurities, confusion and despair. In South Africa there has been a spate of curriculum reforms and a wave of policy changes. Added to this are the severe contextual restraints, such as large classes, lack of resources, poor school leadership, poor parental support, school violence and other social problems, such as HIV/AIDS and poverty. As teachers face these realities on a daily basis, they experience incidents that become turning points in their teaching lives and are deemed by them as 'critical'. These are termed 'critical incidents'. This study seeks to explore how teachers respond to these critical incidents and why they respond the way they do. The use of life history methodology allowed them to tell their stories but more than that it illuminateded how they were influenced by the contexts in which they live and work. The use of in depth interviews provided the opportunity to access their personal, professional, social and moral landscapes to reveal their lived experiences while they experienced the critical incidents. By delving deeper through the different layers of their lived realities and exploring how they interacted with and appraised the different events, their feelings and emotions were revealed. The social-psychological framework on emotions provided a frame to explore how teachers responded to the different influences, that is, the workplace influences, socio-cultural/policy influences and personal influences that came to bear on their teaching lives as they engaged with the socio-cultural milieu in which they were immersed. The study used narrative analysis, content analysis and discourse analysis to make meaning of the data. The use of multiple analysis approaches provided different lenses to interpret and understand the critical incidents. The complexities of teachers' lives were revealed when critical incidents that were triggered by one influence provoked other influences impacting on teachers in multifarious ways. It revealed how teachers interacted with the different contexts, through their ego-identities that comprised their self-and social esteem, values, beliefs, meanings/ideas and life-goals (broader goals). The critical incidents were experienced as teachers appraised the different encounters, which resulted in either congruence or incongruence to their broader goals. An appraisal of goal incongruence led to negative emotions and an appraisal of goal congruence led to positive emotions. The thesis that emerged from the study was that critical incidents in teachers' lives affected the teacher's spirit. Teachers felt either inspirited or dispirited as the critical incident unfolded.

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ACRONYMS

SACE- South African Council of Educators

SEM- Superintendent of Education (Management)

SGB- School Governing Body

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Literature reveals that many teachers globally are feeling insecurity, despair, resentment, confusion, uncertainty (Ball, 2003; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves, 2003; Matoti, 2010; Schulze & Steyn, 2007) and are experiencing high levels of stress (Chaplain, 2008; Kyriacou, 2001; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Peltzer, Shisana, Zuma, Van Wyk, & Zungu- Dirwayi, 2009; Smithers & Robinson, 2003). Some of the reasons for this are attributed to educational reform, time pressures, increased workload, being evaluated by others, maintaining discipline, teaching learners who lack motivation, poor relationships with colleagues, role conflict, lack of support from school leadership, school violence and poor working conditions (de Wet, 2010; Kyriacou, 2001; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Peltzer et al., 2009; Schulze & Steyn, 2007). These issues are affecting the job satisfaction, morale, commitment, health and career decisions of teachers (Day & Smethem, 2009; Jepson & Forrest, 2006; Strydom, Nortje, Beukes, Esterhuyse & van der Westhuisen, 2012).

Day and Gu (2010) contend that governments across the world have intervened in unprecedented ways into the life of schools, their governance and the curriculum as a result of the uncertainty around economic, social and technological contexts in the twenty-first century. This has affected the trust in teachers' judgements about what and how to teach which has been diminishing over the last two decades. Policy makers have used a series of interventions in an attempt to raise standards of student academic achievements as a means of increasing national economic competitiveness in the global economy. Some of the interventions introduced were new systems of classroom assessments, school inspection and teacher surveillance mechanisms. Day and Smethem (2009) posit that the effects have eroded teachers' autonomy and posed a challenge to teachers' personal and professional identities. The authors highlight further that teachers' work internationally has become more transparent and is monitored more closely and teachers are being held accountable for students' progress against a results driven agenda. There is increasing concern about the negative effects on teachers' morale, motivation, well-being and effectiveness. Ball (2003) asserts that the "epidemic of reform does not simply change what people as educators do, it changes who they are" (2003, p. 215). Ball (2003) contends further that teachers are subjected to a myriad

of judgements, targets, measures and comparisons. This leads to a high degree of uncertainty and instability. With the flow of ever changing demands and being constantly judged "we become ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others" (p. 220).

Liu and Ramsey's (2008) survey on teachers' job satisfaction found that teachers were most dissatisfied with unfavourable working conditions linked to insufficient time for planning, preparation and poor salaries. Smithers and Robinson (2003) noted that increased workload, poor learner behavior and increased government initiatives were factors that caused teachers to want to leave teaching altogether. Fullan (2001) claims that globally teachers are feeling beleaguered, stressed and alienated, judging from the rise in work related illnesses and the number of teachers leaving the profession. The author adds that "it is a fact that teachers have become devalued by the community and the public" (Fullan, 2001, p. 115).

Kyriacou (2001) points out that whilst there are general issues that affect teachers there are also issues specific to individual teachers depending on their personality, values, skills and the circumstances they are in. The author goes on further to highlight that issues affecting teachers are also specific to different countries depending on their educational systems and the specific situations regarding teachers and schools in that country.

In South Africa, the democratic elections in 1994, brought with it a radical new era for all South Africans and most significantly for the field of education (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2012). The political thinking was motivated by the abolishment of policies associated with the apartheid era and the introduction of new policies (Mouton et al., 2012). Hence, a plethora of activities and policies have been implemented simultaneously as a result of educational reforms. Some of the major reforms were the new curriculum policy, rationalization and redeployment of teachers[1], White paper 6, to address special needs of learners, school governance, school safety and security and norms and standards for educators (Bearschank, 2010; Jonas, 2001; Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002; Olivier & Venter, 2003; Saptoe, 2000). These new policies and changes caused teachers to feel confused, insecure, uncertain, inadequate and lack confidence (Matoti, 2010).

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[1] The rationalization and redeployment of teachers was agreed upon by the Education Labour Relations Council in resolution No 3 of 1996.

With the educational reforms in South Africa, teachers suddenly found themselves amidst a new curriculum with inadequate training and support (Matoti, 2010). Bantwini (2010) noted that teachers' perception of the new curriculum was that it contributed to increased workload. Teachers appeared skeptical and showed little hope about their future work as teachers and felt inadequate to implement the new approaches and techniques required by the recent curriculum reforms. Time pressures were cited as a huge challenge and competing priorities at school eroded into teaching time. Teachers found the demands around developing detailed lesson plans and maintaining files that were required in implementing the curriculum as unfamiliar to them (Bantwini, 2010) and expressed feelings of confusion, inadequacy and being unsure of themselves as teachers (Bantwini, 2010; Matoti, 2010).

While implementing a globally competitive curriculum (Spreen, 2004), with poor preparation and training, teachers have to cope with the contextual realities prevalent in the majority of South African schools (Morrow, 2007). In most schools there are still large classes, lack of resources due to failure to deliver stationery and textbooks, poor infra-structure and lack of libraries and science laboratories (Bantwini, 2010; Matoti, 2010; Morrow, 2007). Social issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse of learners and school violence are harsh realities that teachers face on a daily basis (Maforah & Schulze, 2012; Morrow, 2007; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010).

Xaba (2011) pointed out that the introduction of school governing bodies as prescribed by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 has been fraught with challenges. Although more than a decade has elapsed, school governing bodies have fallen short in their functionality. Squelch (2001) found that in many schools the school governing bodies do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Xaba (2011) found that there is lack of capacity to fulfil their roles and functions which are complex. The author outlined further that tensions and conflict arise as a result of role confusion. While the principals and teachers apportion blame to the parents' incapacity and low level of education as a reason for the challenges in executing the functions, parents blame the teachers and principals for undermining them. Teachers also blame principals for influencing the parent members of the governing bodies. Van Wyk (2004) found that there were mixed feelings from teachers about the involvement of School Governing Body (SGB) members in issues relating to teachers. While some teachers felt that the SGB should be involved since they are aware of the community needs others expressed anger that those less knowledgeable should be conducting

interviews and disciplining teachers. Teachers felt the SGB members are not always impartial which leads to nepotism.

The introduction of the Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000) gazetted in February 2000, created further demands on teachers by instituting changes in their role expectations. It outlined the seven expected and critical roles of educators as being:

- Learning mediator;
- Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials;
- Leader, administrator and manager;
- Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner;
- Community, citizenship and pastoral role;
- Assessor; and
- Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist (DoE, 2000)

Morrow (2007) argues that the 'seven roles' outlined above ignores the contextual realities of most South African schools. Teachers are teaching in schools that range from functional to dysfunctional with some being barely functional. The author contends further that the 'seven roles' inflates the work of the teacher beyond the demands that any individual can fulfil. Morrow (2007) contends that by fulfilling all these roles teachers will "be faced with a suicidal workload, and lack the professional autonomy and flexibility that is and will increasingly be required in the rough and volatile world in which we try to achieve the ideal of providing quality education for all" (Morrow, 2007, p. 19).

Further insecurities were endured by teachers with the implementation of the rationalization and redeployment policy introduced in 1996 (Chisholm, 1999) due to the government's fiscal policy, moving teachers who are declared in excess from one school to another, often to schools far away from their homes and into contexts with which they are unfamiliar. Victor (2004) contends that the process was flawed as some principals did not follow the correct procedures. In some instances incorrect teachers were declared in excess and in other instances teachers who were unpopular were targeted by principals. Chisholm (1999) pointed out that the redeployment of teachers caused feelings to run high among teachers in schools. This ranged from a hope that it will soon pass to teacher resignations, insecurities, anxieties and anger.

With the constantly changing educational scenario in South Africa, teachers are finding themselves teaching in an environment characterized by new challenges and uncertainties, evoking fear and concerns among them (Matoti, 2010). Many teachers are grappling with who they are in terms of their own sense of professionalism, their content and pedagogic knowledge and who they are as individuals (Bantwini, 2010; Matoti, 2010). However, there are teachers who despite the many challenges, continue to be motivated (Moonsamy, 2011) and embrace the changes and contextual realities as energizers rather than a form of paralysis (Pillay, 2003).

As teachers experience different circumstances, situations and events in their teaching career, it alters and shifts who they are as teachers and may cause them to make certain decisions (Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985). When teachers attach significance and meaning to a particular situation or event it may serve as a turning point or may initiate change in the life of the teacher, and is regarded as a critical incident (Tripp, 1994; Sikes et al., 1985). This study focuses on the critical incidents in teachers' lives and examines how teachers respond to the critical incident and why they respond the way they do. While there have been studies on teachers' lives in South Africa (Moonsamy, 2011; Ramawtar, 2011; Pillay, 2003), very few studies have examined the lives of individual teachers exploring how they responded to incidents that they deem as critical in their teaching lives given the constantly changing and challenging educational environment in which teachers are working.

The topic of the study, *Critical incidents in teachers' lives: Understanding teacher be-ing* focuses also on gaining a deeper understanding of teacher 'be-ing', that is, who the teacher is and how the teacher's life unfolds as he/she experiences the critical incident. Chibber (2010, p. 17) describes "to be" as "the aggregate of all there is in a person." It comprises the person's values, qualities and knowledge. Understanding the teacher 'be-ing' in the topic therefore refers to exploring how the teacher through his /her values, qualities and knowledge interacts with the socio-cultural milieu in which he/she works and lives. 'Be-ing' refers to this as a process, something that is ongoing. Kelchtermans (2009b) argues that teaching is an act that is enacted by someone and it matters who the teacher is. The author contends that teachers develop a personal interpretative framework which involves a set of cognitions or mental representations that form a lens through which they view their job. It guides their actions and interpretations as they interact with different situations and events and are also modified by the interactions within the context. It is therefore a "condition for and a result of

the interactions" (p. 261). Kelchtermans (2009a) posits that teachers have a personal system of knowledge and beliefs referred to as the subjective educational theory that constitutes their professional knowledge which forms the basis on which they make their decisions. The content of the subjective educational theory is seen as idiosyncratic and an accumulation of their personal experiences. These constructs will be discussed further in the theoretical framework in Chapter Two. Teachers' lives therefore are dynamic and they are in a constant state of be-ing as they negotiate through the maze of forces that come to bear on them while they interact with the environment in which they find themselves and enact their jobs as teachers.

1.2   CRITICAL QUESTION GUIDING THE STUDY

The following critical question guided the study:

How did the teachers respond to the critical incident in their teaching lives and why?

1.3   PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore how the teachers responded to the critical incidents in their teaching lives and understand why they responded the way they did. The study focussed on teachers teaching within the South African context and sought to understand how teachers responded to the challenges and demands in the changed and still ever changing educational landscape. The study investigated how teachers interacted with the different influences that come to bear on them as they experienced the critical incident. It explored further the constraints and opportunities teachers experienced within the different contexts in which they worked and lived and how they responded to them.

1.4   RATIONALE FOR CONDUCTING THE STUDY

Researchers often include in their studies the reason for conducting the study and how they came to choose their topic of investigation through reflexivity (Alcoff & Potter, 1993). I will provide some background and my own positioning as a researcher. I have a personal interest in teachers' lives having been a teacher for over two decades. My preliminary readings brought to light many interesting insights regarding teachers' lives that fascinated me. I found myself having 'flash bulb' moments as I related to other teachers' feelings and experiences as they moved on in their careers. I thought that by studying the lives of teachers especially

within the transforming educational setting will benefit me immensely since I am currently working with existing teachers and pre service teachers and these understandings and insights will enhance my role as a lecturer and facilitator in teacher education and development.

This research project has also originated from my own experience of a critical incident in my teaching life. All my thinking and discussions on a suitable topic brought me to the area of teachers' lives. After much probing, it seemed my interest was in exploring teachers' lives and gaining a deeper understanding of how they coped with the different challenges they encountered. On a more profound level, it seemed that I wanted to delve deeper into the experiences of teachers who found that they reached a turning point in their career that may have forced them to make certain decisions that changed the course of their careers altogether (Sikes et al., 1985). It was this quest that moved me in the direction of exploring critical incidents in teachers' lives. It was during my initial readings that I realized that I had in fact experienced a critical incident in my teaching career. It became apparent that even after ten years, I still had unresolved questions for which I did not have answers. I wanted to find out why teachers respond to incidents in their teaching career the way they do. It was apparent that all teachers respond differently. I wanted to find out what it takes for teachers to remain resilient in spite of the insurmountable challenges they sometimes face. My experiences as a teacher are therefore central to this study as it would have shaped how I interacted and co-constructed the narratives with my participants. This research was therefore not a neutral endeavour. My own experiences and background would have influenced the decisions I took during the research process. Below is an account of my own story.

My Story

Growing up…

I grew up in a rural area and attended a primary school that was typical of many schools in rural areas with very poor infrastructure. There was no electricity, no running water, no library, poor sanitation and no tarred roads. The positive side was I lived in a close knit community with no fences, so we all got along well. I walked a long distance on sandy, dusty roads to attend school each day. When I was around eight years old I remember gathering the neighbourhood children to play school. Off course I was always the teacher. We used a piece of Masonite board as the chalkboard and pieces of chalk that I would so eagerly pick up from

the waste basket at the end of the school day. I would present my lessons with great animation and enthusiasm. I loved my teacher role and fitted into it like a fish to water.

Becoming a teacher…

It seemed that the vocation had chosen me from that tender age. I became a teacher! I loved it and I thrived. Ironically I was posted back to my own primary school in the same rural area now as a teacher. Many of the older residents were proud of my achievement and would approach me to write their letters or to seek advice about their children. A few years later a new principal was appointed at the school. He was interested in uplifting the community and I knew I had a lot to contribute and threw myself in many community projects with a desire to give back to the community. I had a strong inclination to make a difference in the lives of children, especially children from this area. Most of the families were from poor socio-economic backgrounds yet they epitomised humility and respect.

Feeling recognized and appreciated…

A few years later, I started my honours degree and had to move to a high school in an urban area. I had moved out of the rural area so my new school was closer to home. It was during this time that I received a merit award for being an outstanding teacher. I was nominated by the Head of Department and had no knowledge of it until an official from the Department of Education had come to check on my work unexpectedly one afternoon. It seemed he was pleased and confirmed the report and I became the recipient of the award. This was a milestone moment in my career.

Move to another school… a downward spiral

Soon after this period, the Department of Education started to implement a rationalization and redeployment policy and I was redeployed back to a primary school. My tenure at this primary school was approximately ten years with several changes in leadership. The school had several acting heads during this time and lacked stability. During this period I drew most of my satisfaction from my students as I always tried to bring in fun and enjoyment in my lessons and I enjoyed my teaching. I sensed the joy in my leaners and felt equally rewarded. I would often bring home notes of their appreciation and gratitude. Finally, a new head was appointed. The new principal seemed enthusiastic about the new position. However, as the months progressed, it was apparent that the principal lacked strong administrative and leadership abilities. Soon some of the senior teachers who were at the school from its

inception began to confront the principal on many issues. It was not long after that the Heads of Department were at loggerheads with the principal. Slowly dyfunctionality began to set in. Most meetings would end with disagreements and conflict. The morale of the teachers began to decline and the school was filled with negativity. Teachers would frequently take leave and absenteeism of teachers began to increase. On many occasions the block that I was teaching in was left with no teachers in the afternoon session. Many would have taken leave and classes would often be left unattended. The block would be chaotic with students running around, there would be huge disturbances and students would run to my class asking for intervention. After assisting a few times I would give up and ask them to report to the office. The principal would send a message back with the student stating that since I was the only teacher in the block I should check on the other classes. It was during these times that frustration would set in and I would feel helpless. The chaos at the school was beginning to have an effect on me personally.

Toxicity…hopelessness

The school was experiencing a dark period and everyone around me seemed morose, lacked drive and motivation. No new programmes were being initiated and everyday was becoming tedious. The only talk in the staff room was about the principal's lapses and it was always negative conversations that were 'energy sappers'. Teachers would recount issues of lack of transparency, miscommunication and errors in judgement. The environment was becoming toxic. I felt the loss of energy the moment I entered the school each day. Teachers would utter statements like, "Oh! This is just a job I come here, do it and go. That is what I am being paid for, nothing more."

I found myself complaining daily about how unfulfilled I felt as a teacher. I tried doing my best in the classroom where felt I had more control but I soon realized the school was a system and if one part was toxic it spread to the whole school. There was no hope in sight. The Department of Education at that time had put a moratorium on all transfers due to the rationalization and redeployment policy that was being implemented. So I was stranded there, with no way out.

There was no accountability at the school, no direction; no goals to achieve, no vision and for most it seemed there was no reason to care. Day by day, I felt my energy and drive diminishing and started to become ill. I felt guilty that I was not doing my job to the fullest.

Any suggestion of an innovation was condemned even before the idea could be given any further thought. All this began to gnaw away at my spirit. I was going through the day to day work like a robot and could not find the space to inject the enthusiasm I felt for my job.

Declared in excess…crushed!

The Department of Education's policy on rationalization and redeployment was still being implemented. Teachers were being declared redundant in schools using a ratio of the number of learners per teacher at the school that was determined by the policy. Quite unexpectedly, one morning as I got out of my car in the school car park, the principal approached me saying that she went to a meeting the previous day and thinks that I am an excess educator and I may be asked to move to another school. At that stage all the available posts were in outlying areas where several incidents of violent crimes were being reported. There were no posts in the surrounding areas and teachers were very nervous about being redeployed. I was already feeling at my lowest as a teacher and had to now cope with this news. I was upset by the unprofessional manner in which this was handled. I thought: "Couldn't the principal wait to conduct a meeting to discuss this, why was I being approached in the car park?" Later that day, a meeting was held and I was declared as an excess educator at the school. It was at the end of the year and teachers were being allocated their teaching loads for the following year. I was labelled Mrs X and I lost my identity as a teacher. By then I had been teaching for 22 years. The school had plans to employ a governing body paid educator to fill my post since I had a full teaching load and redistributing it to the other teachers was not a viable option. The governing body paid teacher was usually an unqualified teacher who will receive a small salary from the school[2]. I held a senior class at that time. The teachers began to reallocate their subjects around and took the subjects of their choice and left the others to Mrs X. On observing all this, I approached the management and enquired whether the senior class will be allocated to a supposedly unqualified teacher. The answer was, "yes, why do you care, the department brings in these policies, so they should take responsibility, we don't care." What concerned me was how an unqualified teacher was going to cope with a senior class. Moreover, until I left the school I had to continue with a teaching load of Mrs X' subjects that other teachers refused to teach. My move from the school could take months, even up to the end of the year and in that time; I had to continue being Mrs X.

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[2] School governing bodies employed additional teachers who became known as 'governing body teachers'

My shattered dream…..My lament as a teacher

To become a teacher was my dream,

I became one, wasn't that supreme!

I taught with passion and success,

Now I am declared in excess.

Where will I go, I feared,

No one had answers, it appeared!

Far away, off course!

By those who show no remorse.

While I wait, I am Mrs X,

I am now not part of the rest.

I felt emptiness, while I taught,

I had suddenly been reduced to naught.

What it will be like, I thought,

The place to which I will be brought.

My head felt light and my tummy felt tight,

Things just didn't seem quite all right.

To the doctor's rooms I flee,

My pressure at one fifty three.

I needed time out to heal,

And come to terms with how I feel.

To become a teacher was my dream.

The final blow…

By now issues I had to face were compounding themselves and my health began to deteriorate. My blood pressure was elevated, and I had succumbed to many health complications. Some were of a serious nature and I was consulting different specialist doctors simultaneously. I was put on three months sick leave during the beginning of the following year. To my horror the principal called me after the end of the three months to let me know that I was declared in excess in error and I should return to school in the following term to resume my position. It was one of the Heads of Department that was supposed to be declared in excess at the school. It was at this moment that I realized that I could not go back to that school as I was going to return to a hopeless situation. I informed the principal that I have decided to resign. To my utter surprise and shock the principal turned up at my home the

following day unannounced, for me to sign some forms. This too I considered improper and unprofessional. I simply signed the forms hoping that this may be my last encounter with a principal who was so tardy and unprofessional.

I resigned from my position as a teacher. While I have moved on and have been working on different projects in education over the years, I do not think I have shut the door of my teacher life, the one that found me at the age of eight.

This study explores how teachers respond to the critical incidents in their teaching lives and examines the influences that come to bear on them as they interact with the environment in which they work and live, how they cope with these influences and why they respond the way they do.

1.5   OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter One provided an orientation to the study by outlining the context and background to the study. It presented the critical question that guided the study and described its purpose and focus. It highlighted further the researchers's impetus to undertake the study by presenting the motivation and rationale to conduct it. A summary of the different chapters below serves to provide an understanding of what was discussed in each chapter, thereby orienting the reader to the study.

Chapter Two is divided into two parts, namely, part one which is the review of literature in the area of the study and part two which is the theoretical framework that framed the study. The literature reviewed focussed on studies on teachers' lives and highlighted their dynamism and fluidity. The concept of 'critical incident' was explored to gain an understanding of the different perspectives and examined the different incidents teachers deem as critical. The different critical influences that come to bear on teachers' lives were also explored. There was an examination of the concept teacher identity which seemed central to most discussions on teachers' lives. This concept was explored highlighting its complexity and the different perspectives from which it is viewed with respect to teachers' lives and work. Finally, four patterns of influences that affect teachers' lives were explored. These were identified by Day and Gu (2010) as key influences in teachers' lives. They are policy, practice setting, pupils

and personal influences. These patterns of influences were explored by drawing from various literature sources.

Finding a suitable theoretical framework that resonated with my research question was a daunting task. The social-psychological theoretical framework developed by van Veen et al. (2005) derived from Lazarus's (1991) cognitive appraisal theory of emotions that was used to explore a teacher's identity, emotions and commitment in the context of school reforms appeared as a promising framework. The framework however, had to be adapted to suit the study since the focus of investigation was different. While some of the core constructs remained the same, new constructs were added. One of the observations made by van Veen et al. (2005) after the use of the framework was that it neglected to emphasize the issues of the context. In order to address this limitation, conceptual constructs on the three clusters of influence on teachers' lives, drawn from the work of Day (2011) were included in the framework. These included the socio-cultural/policy influences, workplace influences and personal influences. The integrated model (See Figure 1) was useful in exploring how teachers responded to the critical incidents as they interacted with the socio-cultural environment in which they were immersed. It also brought to light why teachers responded the way they did. It provided insights into teachers' thinking and feelings as they appraised the different situations and events as they experienced the critical incidents.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological choices and processes. This study adopts a qualitative mode of inquiry and is located in the interpretive paradigm. Life history methodology was chosen as it was most appropriate to explore teachers' lives and their interaction with the context in which they were immersed. Six research participants were selected purposively from the Ethekwini Region of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Purposive sampling technique was used to select research participants who experienced critical incidents in their teaching lives. In depth, conversational interviews allowed for the production of rich data as participants recounted their lived experiences as the critical incident unfolded. The data analysis was conducted using multiple approaches to allow different perspectives and meanings to emerge. Narrative analysis, content analysis and discourse analysis were the different approaches used to engage with the data. To ensure quality in the research process, trustworthiness was ensured by considering issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Ethical concerns were addressed to ensure that "procedural ethics" and "ethics in practice" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 261) were adhered to. The awareness of

the researcher's positioning within the research was addressed through reflexivity, alerting the reader of personal biases, assumptions and values that may have influenced the study (Merriam, 2009).

Chapter Four represents the six teacher stories which were derived from the process of narrative analysis which was the first level of analysis. The stories outline the lived experiences of the teachers as they experienced the critical incident. It provides a coherent account of their stories developed from data extracted from the interview transcriptions. The stories are written in the first person to retain the authencity of the narrator's voice.

Both Chapter Five and Chapter Six present the data analysis of the study. Chapter Five presents an analysis of three participants (Venetia, Romy and Julia[3]) whose critical incidents emanated from workplace influences. These participants experienced mostly negative influences from the socio-cultural environment during their critical incidents. Chapter Six presents the analysis of the remaining three participants (Pritha, Pralene and Saiyen[4]). Pritha's critical incident was triggered by influences in the socio-cultural/policy context and personal context. She experienced both positive and negative influences from the socio-cultural environment. Both Pralene's and Saiyen's critical incident emanated from the personal cluster of influence. It was evident that they experienced mostly positive influences from their interactions with the context during the critical incident. While the two data analysis chapters have been separated into Chapter Five and Chapter Six, they should be viewed as an integrated unit of analysis.

The data analysis for these chapters was derived from content analysis and discourse analysis and comprises of individual scenario analysis of the six participants. The analysis process was guided by the research question, theoretical framework and literature around teachers' lives. For the purpose of the analysis, each scenario was organized into themes that addressed either how the teachers' responded to the critical incident or why they responded the way they did. The themes varied in each scenario depending on the lived experiences of each participant as they interacted with the socio-cultural environment. A summary of the participants' responses to the critical incident is presented in a table at the end of each scenario analysis highlighting the responses that emerged from the three clusters of

[3] Pseudonyms used for the purpose of the study
[4] Pseudonyms used for the purpose of the study

influences, namely, the socio-cultural/policy influences, the workplace influences and the personal influences as the participants interacted with the environment during the critical incident. The table also presents the positive and negative influences that emerged from these three clusters of influences. The participants' responses reflected their feelings and emotions as they engaged with the different influences. At the end of the two data analysis chapters, is a summary of the key findings that emerged from the data analysis.

Chapter Seven being the final chapter provides an exposition of the key findings of the study and the emerging insights that contributed to the thesis of the study. The study limitations, contributions of the study and its implications comprised the concluding components of the chapter.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW – PART 1

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises two parts, namely, part one that presents an exposition of the literature reviewed and part two that outlines the theoretical constructs that provided a framework for the study. Presenting both parts together was useful since the literature review provides a background for the understanding of the constructs in the theoretical framework as it engages with issues central to the teacher and explores the different influences that teachers experience from the environment.

The literature review begins by motivating for the need to study teachers' lives and explores different research projects conducted on teachers' lives. This is followed by an exploration of critical incidents and the different perspectives on critical incidents in teaching and in teachers' lives. It further explores the incidents and influences that teachers deem as critical. Teacher identity which emerged as a crucial element in teachers' lives was explored highlighting its different perspectives. The last section of the literature review, examined the four patterns of critical influences identified by Day and Gu (2010) as being pertinent to teachers' lives. These are policy, practice settings, pupils and personal influences. These four influences were explored highlighting their relevance and impact on teachers' lives.

The second part of the chapter presents the social-psychological theoretical framework on emotions derived from Lazarus's (1991) cognitive appraisal theory of emotions that was developed by van Veen et al. (2005). The framework was adapted to suit the purpose of this study. The work of Day (2011) on the three clusters of influences, being the socio-cultural influence, the workplace influence and the personal influence were included to take into consideration the impact of the context in which teachers work and live. This will be explained further in Section 2.9.

The section below outlines the need to study teachers' lives and examines the different studies on teachers' lives.

2.2 RESEARCHING TEACHERS' LIVES

In outlining the need to study teachers' lives, Goodson (1992) argues that it should represent a counterculture which will "resist the tendency to return teachers to the shadows" (p. 10) but rather generate one that will take them seriously and listen to their voice. He calls for a reconceptualising of educational research so that teachers' voice can be "heard, heard loudly, heard articulately" (p. 10). Teachers, according to Goodson (1992) as an occupational group have been historically marginalized and giving them a voice will allow truths that are located in them to be unravelled. Goodson and Sikes (2001) add that while studies on teachers' lives are informative and fascinating in themselves, they enhance understanding of a wide range of topics in education and schooling because "in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is" (Goodson, 1981, p. 69).

When Sikes et al. (1985) decided to embark on a study on teachers' careers, they decided to look at it from an individual's point of view, which see them "as the moving perspective" in which people see their lives "as a whole" and how they attach meaning to events (p.1). The authors examined the "dialectical relationship between self and circumstances" (p. 2) and how the self was re-formulated after having met new circumstances, how the self changed or crystallized and how it resulted in new directions. Using a life history approach, the study drew a sample of forty eight teachers from three categories, namely, young teachers, mid-career and retired teachers, and revealed teachers' pressures in coping with the demands and constraints and the strategies they developed to manage these. It emerged that teachers' careers were marked by critical incidents or phases which either gave a positive boost or dealt a savage blow or both at the same time. Sikes et al. (1985, p. 20) become aware of repeated references by teachers to 'becoming' or 'being a proper teacher'. This was investigated further to understand what factors are associated with being or not being a proper teacher and what implications these had for teachers and education. It is evident that teachers' interactions and experiences resulted in teachers' 'becoming' and that the teachers' be-ing was being shaped. My study therefore seeks to delve in depth in exploring how teachers responded to the critical incidents in their teaching lives and to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers' be-ing.

Following this study, was the influential work of Michael Huberman in his book, *The lives of Teachers* (Huberman, 1993). Here the teacher's life was construed as a career and it was

presented as career cycles that middle school and high school teachers experienced in Geneva. This involved a large scale study with one hundred and sixty teachers using both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine teachers' careers. The study focussed on whether there were phases or stages in teaching and how teachers perceived themselves at different moments in their careers. Interestingly, the research questions put forth by Huberman (1993) also captured the word 'becoming'. Were teachers 'becoming' more competent with experience, were teachers 'becoming' more cautious, more conservative or more fatalistic? Again is the suggestion that teachers' be-ing was being shaped through their careers.

Huberman (1993) identified different phases in the career life cycle of the teacher. The first phase is the Career Entry Phase characterized by survival and discovery. If this phase is successful, then the teacher moves to the Stabilization Phase where the teacher feels part of the professional guild and commits to teaching as a job. The next phase which is one of Experimentation and Diversification finds teachers increasing their impact in the classroom by experimenting with and diversifying their methods and materials. The next phase which is characterized by self-doubts induced by the monotony of daily life in the classroom, year after year, leads to a period of Reassessment. For some it could lead to disenchantment with successive reforms in education and leads to a crisis situation. A period of uncertainty and crisis gives rise to the Serenity and Relational Distance Phase. This phase is characterized by greater tolerance and spontaneity in the classroom and lesser investment in the work of teaching. The next phase is the one of Conservatism and Complaints. Teachers tend to complain about the learners who they perceive as becoming less interested in learning and becoming poorly disciplined and about the public's attitude towards education and educational policies. Teachers at this phase are more resistant to change and become rigid and dogmatic. There is a clear display of nostalgia for the past with less of a quest for what one does not have and more towards the protection of what one has. The last phase is one of Disengagement characterized by withdrawal and detachment from professional commitments without regrets. There is a selection of preferred tasks and activities in the academic programme.

Huberman's (1993) identification of the different phases that teachers undergo during the course of their career, is seen as portraying teachers' lives in a linear way and does not account for the "dynamic nature of the individual, in other words, the self-will or resource of

the individual, which might be employed to change the situation" (Pillay, 2003, p. 32). Dhunpath (1998, p. 38) argues that it does not capture "the nuances and the irregularities that typify human experience." Pillay (2003) further adds that the study does not explore the unexpected events in teaching that confront the teacher in unanticipated ways. These moments in Pillay's (2003) view are critical, highly charged moments that have "enormous consequences for personal change and development" (p. 32). Huberman's study (1993) does acknowledge that teachers undergo "difficult moments in the career" (p. 257) but this was not investigated further. My study therefore explores these highly charged moments in depth. Huberman's (1993) study however, provides an insightful overview and understanding of teachers as they move through their different careers stages.

Extending the work of Huberman (1993) on teachers' lives, a more recent large scale study was conducted by Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington and Gu (2007) as part of a VITAE project (Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and their Effects on Pupils) between 2001 and 2005 with three hundred teachers from one hundred different schools. The study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods with the aim of identifying factors which may contribute to variations in teachers' professional and personal lives, explicitly addressing the question of teacher effectiveness and how this changed over the course of their teaching lives and work. Day and Gu (2010) point out that instead of using career stages as done by Huberman (1993), the notion of professional life phases were chosen with the main purpose of getting closer to the meaning of being a teacher and gaining a deeper understanding of the complexities that prevail in teachers' lives and work. Consistent with Pillay (2003) and Dhunpath (1998), Day and Gu (2010) argue that the career life cycle was restricting and fails to provide a holistic and nuanced understanding of the dynamic nature and variations in the trajectories of teachers over their professional lives. They argued further that it veers away from the moral purpose of teachers' lives which is an essential part of teaching. This is in line with Palmer's (1998) thinking that teaching, like any human activity is linked to one's inwardness, for better or for worse. For Day and Gu (2010), the analysis of characteristics of professional life phases were grounded in the framework that encompassed the different domains of teacher engagement. This included the cognitive, emotional, personal and moral dimensions in teaching. The research revealed the moderating influences on teachers' effectiveness during the different professional life phases. It was evident that there was interplay between teachers' emotional identities, school contexts and teachers'

personal and professional lives. The study showed variations in teachers' ability to be effective and to sustain their effectiveness.

The VITAE project also extended Huberman's (1993) study by including both primary and secondary teachers in the study sample, adding additional dimensions to teachers' personal and professional lives. The critical incident technique was applied when conducting narrative interviews to explore the teachers' perceptions of their sense of commitment and effectiveness and the factors that shaped these over their professional lives (Day & Gu, 2010). My small scale study is an in depth exploration of critical incidents in teachers' lives and examined how teachers responded to the critical incidents and why they responded the way they did.

Evans (1998) focussed on an exploration of early years teachers' lives, work and careers and found 'time' to be a significant factor in early years teaching. This impacted on how teaching is experienced and conceptualized by the teachers. The first significant finding is linked to the historical background of early years teaching and the way women have come to be accepted as appropriate early years teachers. Secondly, the life histories of early years teachers reflected how their personal biographies influenced the teachers' perceptions, experiences and understanding of their work. Thirdly, the contemporary time of teaching for early years teachers is shown to influence teachers, particularly in terms of how they perceived the educational reforms and how they responded to this. Teachers found the changes to be in conflict with the holistic approach to teaching which many of them adopt (Evans, 1998). It emerged that their experiences were influenced by the biographical, historical and contextual factors. In my study I was also interested in how the contexts in which teachers work and live influence their lives and how they respond to these influences by examining their responses to the critical incidents in their lives.

An African study using a single primary school, explored Gambian teachers' lives and careers (Robert-Holmes, 1998), using the life history approach. The study brought in another perspective to literature on teachers' lives that according to Robert-Holmes (1998) was predominately North American and European at the time of this study. The research highlighted the complex reasons Gambian teachers expressed for joining and remaining in the profession. The study described and analysed the teachers' professional discourses and their sense of professionalism which were embedded in moral discourses of nationalism and Islam.

These discourses helped to empower and sustain the Gambian teachers who work in contexts that are materially challenged. The teachers' stories reflected how they experienced their history, religion and culture and how this was different from the European and North American context. However, it emerged that there were some similarities in the professional discourses with teachers in the European and North American context (Robert-Holmes, 1998). Robert-Holmes's (1998) study highlighted how the country and context in which the teachers taught affected their teaching lives.

A South African study of successful teachers' lives (Pillay, 2003) using a post- structuralist framework, presents an understanding of six successful teachers' lives by exploring different ways in which teachers performed their success. The teachers' performance of success was characterized by changes, variations and uniqueness as teachers reconstructed and deconstructed their identities to maintain their private/public alignment. Teachers were able to sustain their potential for change and continuity through their resistance to normalcy and surveillance in their desire to be successful teachers (Pillay, 2003). On closer examination of the teachers' stories, it was evident that teachers experienced turning points or critical incidents, as they fulfilled their desires to be successful teachers.

A review of studies on teachers' lives revealed that they are dynamic as they encounter events in both their personal and professional lives. A striking observation was that teachers' biographies influenced their experiences in teaching and this shaped their teacher selves. It is evident that while teachers' biographies are unique to themselves and their respective cultures, histories and religions, there are some common issues shared by teachers globally. It is evident that turning points and critical incidents are part of teachers' experiences as they interact with the social, political and cultural context in which they live and work. Critical incidents in teachers' lives featured prominently in studies by both Sikes et al. (1985) and Day and Gu (2010). My study explored in depth how a sample of six South African teachers responded to the critical incidents in their teaching lives and why they responded the way they did.

The next section explores critical incidents in more detail by considering the different perspectives on critical incidents and the kind of incidents that are deemed as critical by teachers. It explores further the critical influences that come to bear on teachers.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING CRITICAL INCIDENTS

2.3.1 Perspectives of critical incidents in teaching and teachers' lives

The use of critical incidents in education research, particularly in teaching and in teachers' lives is seen from the perspective of the person experiencing the critical incident and its relevance and impact in the person's life. Tripp (1994) argues that critical incidents can be used in teaching as a means of developing teachers' professional judgements with the intention of improving their teaching practice. Tripp (1994, p. 24) states that "critical incident refers to some event or situation that meant a significant turning point or change in the life of a person, an institution or in some social phenomenon." Tripp (1994) posits that critical incidents are not something that happen independently of the observer but are created. Incidents happen frequently but incidents are deemed critical depending on the interpretation of the significance of an event. The kind of judgement made influences the significance one attaches to the meaning of the incident. It is the kind of value judgements made by the individual that deems an incident as critical. Tripp (1994) argues that critical incidents help teachers understand how their personal beliefs, views, attitudes and experiences influence their teaching and why it is important for teachers to develop their own theories of teaching. He stresses that the professional judgements teachers make depends on the merging of two aspects. Firstly, who they are as private individuals and secondly who they are as trained and experienced teachers. When teachers interpret critical incidents, it provides them with an opportunity for reflection thereby allowing them the opportunity for improved practice. Incidents are deemed critical retrospectively by the teacher when identified as having significance for their teaching practice (Tripp, 1994). While Tripp's (1994) work on critical incidents focused on teaching, my study is on teachers' lives but will also require the teacher to reflect on the critical incident and determine what significance it had for them that they deemed it critical. This could either have a positive or negative influence on the teacher's life. I viewed this perspective as being relevant to my study as I explored incidents that teachers deem as critical, incidents that they judge as having significance in their lives and incidents that they consider as a turning point or brought changes in their teaching lives. Tripp's (1994) perspective of a critical incident was therefore used in the study.

Tripp's (1994) perspective of a critical incident was used by Halquist and Musanti (2010) who outlined how they used critical incidents in their qualitative research to know and understand human lives more fully. Musanti's study (2005) focused on teachers' lives,

particularly on teachers' professional development. Musanti's (2005) study used a narrative approach to teachers' stories and used the identification of a critical incident in the third level of data analysis. In Musanti's (2005) view, it was an effective analytical tool to delve deeper into the data, especially to interpret the narratives and capture the dynamic nature of the teachers' interactions. Halquist and Musanti (2010) explained how the use of critical incidents allowed for multiple truths and different layers of meaning to emerge and how they provided opportunities for different perspectives and positionality to be uncovered. Musanti (2005) further observed how the use of critical incidents provided opportunities for the participants to identify and illuminate aspects of their lives that may have been obscured. It afforded the teachers opportunities to reflect and revisit different aspects and notions of their practice.

Halquist and Musanti (2010) conclude that this method offered participants the opportunity to critically question their experiences and make visible aspects of their lives and practice thereby expanding their opportunities of knowing. Musanti (2005) engaged with the participants in rendering the incidents 'critical' and is of the view that this contributed to the trustworthiness of the study. One of the challenges, however, was reaching a consensus with the participants about the criticality of the incident. My study is similar in that I used Tripp's (1994) perspective of a critical incident which as Halquist and Musanti (2010) have observed provides opportunities for critical reflection and provides rich data about the experience. I delved deeper to uncover how they responded to the critical incident and why. In my study the participants themselves identified the incident as critical. With respect to the challenge experienced by Musanti (2005), I think that by virtue of the fact that participants themselves identified the incident as critical; the incident would have been judged as having made a significant impact on the teacher either positively or negatively. The participants in my study were informed at the inception that the incident should be an event or situation that they considered as significant and may be considered as a turning point in their teaching lives or may have provoked a change in their teaching lives.

A study by Sikes et al. (1985) illustrates how critical incidents marked periods of major change in teachers' lives. The study was conducted with the aim of exploring how teachers adapted to or sought to change situations, how they managed their roles and constraints and what perceptions they had of their careers. They aimed to investigate how 'crisis' was affecting teachers' views of their jobs, whether, for example, it weakened their sense of

commitment for teaching or caused them to re- define their teacher role or resulted in their search of new career routes. In examining critical incidents in teachers' lives, Sikes et al. (1985) drew on Strauss's (1959) notion of a critical incident. Strauss (1959) worked with chronically ill patients and coined the term critical incident as being a single incident that causes a change which becomes a 'turning point' that causes the person to realize that, "I am not the same as I was and I used to be" (Strauss, 1959, p. 94). As a result the person experiences a transformation of identity. This change is usually evoked by experiences of surprise, shock, tension, anxiety, bafflement and self-questioning (Strauss, 1959, p. 94).

Sikes et al. (1985) concluded that critical incidents are a useful area to study because they "reveal like a flashbulb, the major choice and changing times in people's lives" (p. 57). They usually occur during periods of strain which the authors term "critical phases" (p. 57) which can be extrinsic, intrinsic and personal. The extrinsic critical phase can be attributed to external factors or events in society. These could be, for example, policy reforms or innovations that can have a dramatic effect on teachers' lives. Intrinsic critical phase occurs within the natural progression of the career. For example, the first teaching experience, the first eighteen months of teaching or pre-retirement phase. Personal critical phases are related to major upheavals in a person's life such as marriage, divorce, childbirth or death of a family member. Sikes et al. (1985) are of the view that it is during these periods that changes and choices are required to be made and critical incidents are most likely to occur. The incident itself may represent the end of the decision making process, crystallizing the individual's thinking, rather than being the reason for the decision.

In his narrative-biographical work with teachers through the use of teachers' stories and professional biographies, Kelchtermans (2009a) illustrates how certain events, phases and people became part of the key experiences or turning points in teachers' lives. Drawing on the work of Sikes et al. (1985) on critical incidents, Kelchtermans (2009a, p. 32) adds that turning points "create a kind of rupture in the smooth development of one's work forcing the teacher to re-think and re-assess particular ideas or beliefs or to reconsider taken for granted actions or practices." Kelchtermans (2009a, p. 33) adds the notion of "critical persons" emphasizing that the critical character of the incident may be linked to a particular person/s. For Kelchtermans (2009a, p. 33), 'critical' has to be understood as something compelling and distinctive which more often than not has strong emotional links. These incidents are of such a compelling and emotional nature that they force teachers to stop and reconsider their taken

for granted practices and actions as if they do not have any choice. Kelchtermans (2009a) links it to the concept 'epiphany' used by Denzin (1989, p. 141) which refers to experiences that significantly alter and change the meaning structures in a person's life which can have either positive or negative implications. Kelchtermans (2009a) stresses that the critical nature of the incident does not depend so much on the incident, phase or person but rather in the meaning it has for the person experiencing it. These critical incidents are only identified retrospectively and are constructed by the narrator. This is consistent with the view of Tripp (1994) who pointed out that critical incidents are created by individuals and may become critical depending on the individuals judgement of the incident. It is for this reason, according to Kelchtermans (2009a) that some experiences are judged as a critical incident for one teacher and not the other.

From the literature reviewed it is evident that critical incidents, are emotionally charged events that become turning points in an individual's life, causing them to take certain actions or make certain decisions that change the course of their thinking, feeling and actions (Kelchtermans, 2009a; Sikes et al.,1985). Incidents are perceived as critical to individuals depending on the meaning it holds for them (Tripp, 1994). Sikes et al. (1985) consider critical incidents as occurring during periods of strain, implying a negative connotation. I however, agree with Tripp (1994) that it could have either a positive or negative effect on the individual.

2.3.2 Incidents and influences that teachers deem as critical in their lives

In examining incidents that teachers viewed as critical, Sikes et al. (1985) focused on the intrinsic critical phase, the period of the first eighteen months of teaching where teachers looked back on this period as being particularly challenging, especially with controlling their students. Teachers talked of critical incidents which involved violent encounters between themselves and their students. Sikes et al. (1985, p. 66) observed how critical incidents "sets the teacher off on a path, looking for a new way," linking the change to a change in teacher identity. While some parts of the identity were confirmed others were rejected.

Strauss (1959, p. 93) points out that turning points like these become critical incidents and makes a person recognize that "I am not the same person as I was" and that some changes have occurred. Sikes et al. (1985) argue that the critical incidents do have the potential to

cause the individual to discover parts of the self that were unknown, for example, one's capacity for anger. The critical incident provokes a series of choices as the individual decides which kind of behaviour, or part of the self to display in the teacher role. Sikes et al. (1985) conclude that teachers experience a number of critical phases in their careers and these are likely to have "momentous consequences for the self" (1985, p. 69). The study did not explore this aspect in depth. Although teachers were asked how they responded in the future, it was not explored fully. My study sought to delve deeper as teachers reflected on the incident and examined how the teachers' responded to the critical incident and why. I was interested in discovering how the incident altered how the teacher thinks, feels and acts as a result of this experience. I also used life history approach as a research method and examined teachers' interactions with the context.

Kelchtermans (2009a) in his narrative-biographical work examined the impact of critical incidents, critical phases and critical persons on teachers' professional learning. He used three teachers' career stories from his earlier work to illustrate how these became turning points in teachers' lives. The teachers' stories, the critical incidents, critical phases and critical persons, according to Kelchtermans (2009a, p. 17), comprise "moments of narrative condensation." It brings to light the complex and dynamic interactions between the teachers and their personal beliefs, goals, norms and values on the one hand and the demands of the contexts in which they work, on the other. The author posits that the analysis of the critical incidents serves as a useful tool to reveal the meanings and impact of the potential stress factors in teachers' lives. Kelchtermans (2009a) posits that while coping with such incidents implies developing and displaying efficient social skills and actions, these incidents provoke the teacher to make changes regarding their conception of themselves as well as their beliefs and knowledge of teaching. Kelchtermans (2009a) analysed the stories further using the personal interpretative framework which comprises of two different aspects, that is, the professional self-understanding and subjective educational theory. I have also used these constructs in my analysis of the critical incidents. I explored how the participants' self-image, self-esteem and task perception were affected as the critical incident unfolded. The teachers' subjective educational theory was also relevant in how they perceived certain aspects of their jobs. These aspects will be discussed more in detail in the theoretical framework (Section 2.10.1).

Whist the literature reviewed focused on the critical incidents themselves, Day and Gu's (2010) study on teachers' lives used the critical incident technique but decided to focus on the

critical influences. The focus was on factors that led to the incidents being viewed as critical by teachers. The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' perceptions of their sense of commitment and effectiveness and the various factors that shaped these over the course of their professional lives. In their narrative interviews with one hundred and seventy nine teachers, the authors asked teachers to recall "turning points" (Strauss, 1959, p. 67) over their personal and professional life histories which had a significantly positive or negative impact on their commitment and perceived effectiveness. According to Day and Gu (2010) their research revealed that the critical events had radical effects on teachers' commitment and morale. Their initial analysis therefore shifted from just examining the significance and meaning of the critical incidents to identifying the patterns of critical influences that these incidents revealed. Day and Gu (2010) identified four broad influences being personal, pupil, practice settings and policy. The research results revealed that practice settings have the greatest positive or negative effects on teachers' work, particularly for those in their late professional phases (more than 16 years of experience). These include factors relating to teachers' workplace, support from management and staff, additional roles and responsibilities, promotion, workload and the quality of professional development. While Day and Gu (2010) identified these influences, they were not fully explored. I have explored these four broad influences further in the literature review, later in the chapter drawing from different literature sources.

The next section explores the notion of teacher identity and how it relates to teachers' lives. It highlights the different perspectives and the different ways in which teacher identity is conceived.

2.4 UNDERSTANDING TEACHER IDENTITY

Literature on identity in teacher education, teaching and teachers' lives reveals that there is no common definition of identity. The concept of identity has been used in different ways in the field of teaching and teacher education (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Oslen (2008) points out that the concept has been used in psychology, sociology and anthropology and has been crafted in so many different shapes and tied into so many disciplinary knots that one wonders whether the word itself has not "become used up" and there is a need for another term (p. 4). The author asserts that in the absence of another word, identity is the word we use.

Beijaard et al. (2004) conclude from their review of research on teachers' professional identity that whilst identity assumes different meanings in the literature, there is consensus that "identity is not a fixed attribute of a person, but a relational phenomenon" (p. 108). They view identity as answering the question: "who am I at this moment?" Gee (2001) sees identity development as an ongoing process whereby a person interprets himself or herself as a certain kind of person and is recognised as such in a particular context. As one interacts in different contexts one forms multiple relationships which bring to the fore multiple aspects of oneself (Rogers & Scott, 2005). Lasky (2005) talks of professional identity and views it as being "how teachers define themselves to themselves and to others" (p. 901).

Smagorinsky, Moore, Crook, Jackson & Fry (2004) note the influence of the context on student teachers' identity. They conclude that identity is a joint construction that emerges from engagement with others in cultural practice. Flores and Day (2006) highlighted how the teachers' personal biographies and contextual influences prevalent in the workplace played a role in re-shaping the professional identities of beginning teachers. The authors assert that while the identities of the new teachers were strongly embedded early in their teaching lives, they were destabilized as they confronted negative school cultures and contexts. This challenged the teachers' values, meanings and ideals of what it was to be a teacher and influenced their professional identities which they "deconstructed and (re)constructed over time" (Flores & Day, 2006, p. 230).

Drawing on data from the VITAE Study, Day (2011) concluded that teacher identities are neither intrinsically stable or intrinsically fragmented, but tend to be more or less stable or more or less fragmented, reflecting variations at different times and different ways depending on the personal, socio-cultural/policy and workplace influences. Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons (2006, p. 613) further add that the "architecture of teachers' professional identities" is not always in a state of stability, since at certain times or phases in teachers' lives and careers they may experience turbulence and change and their identities may become fragmented or discontinuous in the continuous struggle to construct and sustain a stable identity. The authors point out that the interaction between the 'structure' (relations between power and status) and 'agency' (the influence which we and others can have) is what determines the way teachers see themselves (p. 613).

Nias (1996) asserts that because teachers invest themselves in their work, they often merge their personal and professional identities and the school becomes the site from which they draw their self-esteem and fulfilment and as a result they become more vulnerable. Whilst Nias (1989) argues for a teacher's substantive self (me) as being stable, it is acknowledged that the nature of teaching makes it difficult to remain detached and immune from the situational influences.

Situational influences can sometimes have a devastating impact on teachers. In a study of school inspection in England, Jeffrey and Woods (1996) made an observation, that the inspection had a devasating effects on teachers. The authors added that since the teachers' professional roles could not be separated from the teachers' real selves, it resulted in an onslaught of the self and its effects pervaded their whole lives. Woods and Jeffrey (2002) further examined what implications the emotions the teachers felt had on their teacher identity. It revealed that teachers reconstructed their teacher identities in light of the reconstruction in education. Woods and Jeffrey (2002) conclude that the teachers' personal identity in view of the reforms had become fragmented and inferior and had become a situational one that had been created to meet the demands of audit accountability. The authors add that "the teachers' real selves are held in reserve, to be realized in other situations outside the school or in some different future within" (p. 105). They observed that there are signs of multiple and situational identities developing that were not there before in the teachers' integrated self-identity. To them this is viewed as identity work that takes up tremendous amounts of emotional and intellectual energy that could be spent on actual teaching. The link between teacher emotions and identity especially in the context of educational reforms has been pronounced in the literature on teachers' lives (Lasky, 2005; van Veen et al., 2005; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). (See Section 2.5 for a more detailed discussion).

It is evident that the teachers' identity is shaped through the relational and contextual influences at a given time. Oslen (2008) suggests that identity is really a label for:

> "the collection of influences and effects from immediate contexts, prior constructs of self, social positioning, and meaning systems (each itself a fluid influence and all together an ever-changing construct) that become intertwined inside the flow of activity as a teacher simultaneously reacts to and negotiates given contexts and human relationships at given moments" (p. 139).

Rogers and Scott (2005) note that identity is always "in the making," rather than being stable, and shifts and changes depending on the context and relationships. It appears "like a deck of cards spread out on a table top, any one might be turned up at any time, depending upon who, what and where of the circumstance" (p. 736). A commonly used way to make sense of it is through the telling of stories or the practice of narratives. This is because it is formed through an ongoing process that involves interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). Clandinin, Downey and Huber (2009) posit that it is through narratives that teachers' identity addresses "the nexus of the personal, practical knowledge of teachers and the past and present landscapes on which teachers' live and work" (p.141-142). These stories tell who they are and who they are becoming. MacLure (1993) argues that identity can be viewed as an organizing element in teachers' lives or as a "resource that people use to explain, justify and make sense of themselves in relation to others, and to the world at large" (p. 311). This study examined how teachers' identities were affected as teachers engaged with different events and influences in the contexts in which they worked and lived while the critical incident unfolded.

The literature on identity reveals that teachers' identity is a complex phenomenon. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) exemplify its complexities in the statement below:

> "One must struggle to comprehend the close connection between identity and the self, the role of emotion in shaping identity, the power of stories and discourse in understanding identity, the role of reflection in shaping identity, the link between identity and agency, the contextual factors that promote or hinder the construction of identity..."(p. 176).

The next section of the literature review explores the factors that influence teachers' lives using the framework presented by Day and Gu (2010) that emerged from the VITAE Project. Day and Gu (2010) identified four broad patterns of critical influences in teachers' lives. These are policy influences, practice setting influences, pupils and personal influences. The policy influence included external policy agenda such as educational policy changes and government interventions. The practice setting influence involved factors emerging from the workplace setting, for example, school culture, school leadership and relationships with colleagues. The pupil influence included pupil behaviour/attitudes, motivation and teacher-pupil relationships. The personal influence involved factors outside the school setting, like personal relationships, family issues and health related issues. This framework was useful to

explore the different influences that come to bear on teachers' lives and how teachers responded to them. Literature from various sources was examined to understand how these different influences impacted on teachers' lives. Each of these influences was explored in the sections that follow.

2.5   TEACHERS' LIVES: POLICY CHANGES AND INTERVENTIONS

A review of literature on policy changes and interventions on teachers' lives revealed that it was inextricably linked to teacher emotions and identity (Lasky, 2005; van Veen et al., 2005; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002; Zembylas, 2005). This section examines how reforms influenced teacher emotions and their identity. Hargreaves (1998) asserts that emotions are at the core of teaching and whether positive or negative exist in all organizations. Teaching, he posits cannot be regarded as technical or clinical. Researchers have found that educational change, especially the mandated ones imposed from the outside affects teachers cognitively and emotionally (Lee &Yin, 2011).

In an earlier qualitative study of school inspection in primary schools in England, Jeffrey and Woods (1996) found that the technicist approach of the school inspection produced a high level of trauma among teachers. It challenged their humanistic values and induced a sense of professional inadequacy. They were left with feelings of anxiety, confusion, uncertainty, fear, despair, humiliation, grief, guilt, and depression, which resulted in doubts about their professional competence. The teachers' responses indicated how they felt dehumanized and mortified and how as a result of this, there was a loss of pedagogic values and loss of confidence in their professional roles which adversely affected their commitment to teaching. Jeffrey and Woods (1996) explain that this is what de-professionalization feels like for teachers. De-professionalization is viewed as a move from being a professional to a technician. Jeffrey and Woods (1996) make an interesting observation that "the inspection induces a trauma which penetrates to innermost being of the teacher" (p. 328) and its effects resulted in the onslaught of the self. This resonates with me as a researcher; as I am interested in how incidents like these, which teachers may regard as critical, affects their lives.

In Lasky's study (2005) which aimed to examine the interplay between teacher identity, context and teacher agency, it was found that teachers experienced professional vulnerability. Vulnerability is considered a multi-dimensional emotional experience that can be influenced

by the way people view their present situation as it interacts with their values, beliefs, identity and perceptions of competence. Lasky (2005) views critical incidents as triggers that can change or intensify a person's state of vulnerability. The author found that while teachers' identities were under threat by the new set of policies, the teachers tried to maintain their higher moral purposes regarding teaching as a human centred profession. While the teachers felt impotent to affect the reforms, they observed tangible evidence of how their personal interactions with their students diminished and how their lack of familiarity with the new curriculum was having negative implications for student learning. In trying to remain focused on their relationships with their students and their own pedagogical practices, the reforms created tensions that required them to take risks which in Lasky's (2005) view, made the teachers vulnerable.

Similar to Jeffrey and Wood's (1996) view on de-professionalization, the teachers explained how the reform context was in conflict with their professional identity and how their professionalism was being eroded. They experienced a sense of vulnerability as they observed their valued working conditions disappear at a fast pace (Lasky, 2005). My study intended to examine the critical incidents that teachers experience a step further by exploring in depth how the teachers responded and how they experienced 'vulnerability' which can evoke either positive or negative emotions.

An exploration of a single teacher's response to reforms revealed how it evoked both positive and negative emotions. Van Veen et al. (2005) explored a teacher's response to reforms, examining in particular how it affected his identity and emotions. The positive feelings were as a result of the reforms being consistent with the teachers own goals and purpose towards teaching. This allowed him opportunities to improve his teaching which enhanced his professional identity. The negative emotions were as a result of the working conditions not being supportive of implementing the reforms effectively. The teacher experienced feelings of anxiety due to time pressures as a result of increased workload and decreased work pleasure. Feelings of shame and guilt towards his students came from not doing his work to the desired standard. As with the study by Jeffrey and Woods (1996), it is evident that if the reforms are not aligned to the teachers' own goals and moral purpose towards teaching, the teacher experiences negative emotions. Ball (2003) points out that teachers' values are often challenged or displaced by the need to perform to certain standards. He refers to this as 'values schizophrenia' (Ball, 2003, p. 221). This occurs when there is a split between the

teachers' own judgement about their need for good practice and the need to comply with standards imposed on them.

Similar to the study by Van Veen et al. (2005), Schmidt and Datnow (2005) found that teachers' emotional responses towards reforms were both positive and negative. The teachers' emotional responses to the reforms were clearly evident when it involved their practice in the classroom. Some of the positive feelings were those of enthusiasm, confidence, joy, satisfaction, while the negative feelings included anxiety, frustration, apathy, uncertainty, worry, guilt and resentment. These emotions were the result of how the teachers interacted (or not) with the reforms. It was evident that the reform implementation in the classrooms was based on the teacher's moral imperatives and what they viewed as being the best for their students. Schmidt and Datnow (2005) concluded that the meaning making of the reforms were fuelled by emotions which were linked to teacher identity. My study sought to take this meaning making process of teachers to a deeper and more profound level by exploring how it affected teachers while they experienced incidents that teachers deem as critical.

Lee and Yin's (2011) study of teacher emotions towards mandated curriculum reform, in two secondary schools provided a Chinese perspective. The findings were in accordance with that of Van Veen et al. (2005) and Schmidt and Datnow (2005) in that teachers displayed both positive and negative feelings. Lee and Yin (2011) found that some teachers displayed excitement and hope with the coming of the reforms whilst others felt frustration with the time and energy needed to learn new ideas and new teaching strategies. Teachers found that familiarizing themselves with new materials and the new requirements was also time consuming. For the more experienced teachers, the new curriculum reforms caused them to lack confidence about their teaching effectiveness.

Hargreaves (2005) adds another dimension by highlighting that teachers' age and career stage affects how teachers respond emotionally to educational change. It was found that teachers in the early career were more enthusiastic and optimistic and have learnt that changes were part of the insecurity of the occupational and social environment in which they worked thereby appearing to be more flexible and pragmatic. They did not have anything else to compare it to; whereas teachers in the later career stage who had a few decades of teaching behind them

found that the changes were wearing them down and were emotionally draining. The study revealed that veteran teachers become skeptical of the changes and assess whether the change will be of a more permanent nature or a trend that will soon pass. Only if they perceived that the change would last will they see the need to adapt to the reforms. They seem to concentrate their energies on making a difference in children's lives and deriving a sense of joy from this. While the middle years teachers retain some of their enthusiasm and remain open they are selective about the change initiatives they are likely to adopt.

An exploration of South African teachers' responses to educational policy was outlined in Chapter One. A review of the literature revealed that teachers are feeling despair, resentment, confusion and uncertainty (Bantwini, 2010; Matoti, 2010) with the spate of policy changes and educational reforms, especially post 1994 after the democratic election. There has been a wave of changes that were introduced simultaneously and teachers felt unprepared to implement them (Matoti, 2010). Morrow (2007) highlighted that the demands on teachers were unrealistic given the contextual constraints in most South African schools.

It is evident from the literature that teachers' meaning making of educational changes affects teachers' emotional responses. If the change was not aligned to their moral imperatives, that is, their values, goals and beliefs about what they consider good teaching practice, they displayed negative emotions. If however, they considered it as adding value to their teaching and aligned to their moral purpose, they displayed positive emotions. Another observation is that teachers' emotional responses to educational change differed depending on the age and stage that they were in their career.

2.6   TEACHERS' LIVES: PRACTICE SETTINGS

Three aspects related to practice settings will be explored in this section. Drawing from the VITAE study, Day and Lee (2011) highlight workplace culture, leadership and relationships with colleagues as being influential in shaping teacher emotional identities either negatively or positively. These aspects will be examined in the next subsections.

2.6.1 School culture

Literature reveals that in schools where a positive school culture is prevalent, teachers have greater job satisfaction and high morale (Stolp & Smith, 1995). According to Deal and Peterson (1991) school culture is the deeply ingrained patterns of values, traditions and beliefs that have been formed over a course of time. Heckman (1993) adds that it is a combination of the beliefs of all who work at the school, the teachers, students and principals and this influences how they work together and deal with crisis as well as accomplishments (Peterson & Deal, 1998). For the school, it will ultimately inform "the way things are done around here" (Kruse & Seashore, p. 3, 2009).

School cultures can be either positive or negative (Hanson and Childs, 1998; Peterson & Deal, 1998). Schools with positive cultures are "places where students and teachers like to be" (Hanson and Childs, p. 15, 1998). Peterson and Deal (1998) describe a positive school culture as a place where staff have a shared sense of purpose and strong commitment, where the norms of collegiality, improvement and hard work is prevalent, where rituals celebrate student accomplishment, teacher innovation and parental involvement and where success, joy and humour abound. On the other hand, schools with a toxic or negative culture are places where nobody wants to be. Their ethos is oppositional and acerbic. It characterizes "places where negativity dominates conversations, interactions, and planning; where the only stories recounted are those of failure" (Peterson and Deal, p. 29, 1998). Staff members go through the motions, feeling pessimistic, discouraged and despondent (Deal & Peterson, 1999). There is usually a lack of positive values and little co-operation takes place. Teachers' sense of personal efficacy and group sense of efficacy declines resulting in inaction (Deal & Peterson, 1999).

The type of school culture influences teachers' well-being, commitment and job satisfaction (Owens, 2004; Sergiovanni, 1984; Zhu, Devos & Li, 2011). Barth (2002) recognizes the power of school culture on teachers and students and highlights that it has even more influence than any other entity, be it the state department, the school board or the principal. Owens (2004) views the organizational culture as being important in shaping and moulding teachers' assumptions and perceptions. It informs the teachers what it means to teach. It influences the teacher's commitment and determines their loyalty to the organization. Similarly, Sergiovanni (1984) noted that in successful schools, the school culture provides

meaning and significance to teachers as they work, it provides a compass pointing people in a common direction and clearly outlines what is expected. For Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith and Dutton (2000) a nurturing professional community seems to act as a container that holds the culture. Here teachers feel "invigorated, challenged, professionally engaged and empowered, just because they teach there" (Senge et al., 2000, p. 326).

A recent study by Zhu et al. (2011) on teachers' perceptions of school culture on their organizational commitment and well-being in a Chinese school revealed that school culture influenced teachers' commitment and well-being, particularly teachers' perception of goal orientation, leadership and shared vision. This means that teachers were likely to be committed in schools that had clear goals, strong leadership and a shared vision. The study identified leadership as playing a crucial role in shaping the school culture which influenced teachers' organizational commitment and well-being. This illustrates the important role of school leadership in shaping school culture and through it, teachers' performance. For Sergiovanni (1984) the cultural life at a school is a constructed reality and the principal's role is key in nurturing and building this reality.

2.6.2 School leadership

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) are of the view that effective school leaders help in developing positive school cultures that foster mutual caring and trusting relationships among all members. A positive school culture sets the tone and context for the achievement of organizational goals. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) add that effective leaders influence the development of their human resources; they offer intellectual stimulation, act as role models and provide individualized support to teachers.

Lui, Siu and Shi (2010) argue that positive leaders who display positive attitudes of passion, confidence and skills have the ability to inspire followers, and elevate them in areas of trust, commitment and well-being. They argue further that the leadership style that promotes these qualities is transformational leadership. This is in line with the thinking of earlier researchers (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978) with regard to the influence of transformational leaders in motivating and elevating their followers' commitment. It is evident that a principal who displays a transformational leadership style will influence the teachers' motivation, commitment and well-being.

In determining the effect of leadership on teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, Aydin, Sarier and Uysal (2013) used a meta-analysis of twelve research findings and found that a transformational leadership style had a positive effect on teachers. It was noted that teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment rose as leaders changed from a transactional to a transformational leadership style. Transactional leaders focus on the achievement of organizational goals through rewards and punishment (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Barnett and McCormick's (2003) study on transformational leaders and vision in schools revealed the importance of relationships in schools and it is through these relationships that a leader is able to display leadership and encourage teachers to commit to the school's vision by applying their expertise, abilities, and efforts in the achievement of shared purposes.

Bogler's (2001) study shows the link between transformational leadership and teachers' perceptions of their occupational status, their self-esteem, autonomy at work, and professional self-development. Based on survey data from seven hundred and forty five teachers in ninety eight Israeli elementary, middle and high schools, Bogler (2001) drew attention to the inner world of teachers. The study suggests that teachers' perceptions of their occupation are highly significant in affecting the satisfaction they gain from the job. It is argued that the more teachers perceived their jobs as a profession and being a central part of their lives, the more they will be satisfied with it. Through displaying transformational leadership styles, principals can help teachers to foster positive feelings and attitudes towards their vocation (Bogler, 2001).

The positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee well-being was confirmed by a Chinese study by Liu et al. (2010). The study revealed a positive link between transformational leadership and an employee's level of trust in the leader as well as increased self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is "an individual's beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). The sources of influence for the development of self-efficacy such as role modelling and verbal/social persuasion are key elements used in transformational leadership (Liu et al., 2010).

Day (2008) adds that the VITAE Project research revealed that leadership was a significant factor that influenced teachers' commitment. Teachers' views reflected that strong leadership

with a clear vision enhances commitment. In cases where teachers' effectiveness was at risk, teachers spoke of negative pressures emanating from lack of leadership support. Teachers reported that lack of support from leaders makes them feel isolated. They felt that leaders need to be visible and show appreciation of teachers' work. Teachers who lacked commitment and effectiveness felt that they were being constantly criticized by their school leaders. Day (2008) concluded that for teachers to be committed, resilient, and effective as well as have a positive sense of well-being, robust support structures need to be in place.

2.6.3 Relationship with colleagues

Hargreaves (2001, 1998) argues that teaching is an emotional practice that influences teachers' thoughts, feelings and actions towards those around them, their colleagues being one such group. It cannot be seen solely from a cognitive and behavioural perspective. Hargreaves (2001) explores critical incidents that have emotionally positive and negative responses involving their colleagues from fifty three Canadian elementary and secondary school teachers. The first finding was the appreciation and acknowledgement that teachers received from their colleagues. Teachers, according to Hargreaves (2001) look forward to expressions of gratitude and appreciation for the work they do and for their achievements. Whilst teachers receive expressions of gratitude from students and parents, their close proximity with their colleagues makes them a source from which teachers receive their gratitude and appreciation. Most of these included interpersonal instances of recognition and appreciation that were routine, like being thanked for taking over their class, doing a good job with something, helping and supporting each other with personal issues.

While teachers acknowledged receiving praise from their seniors, it was evident that there were few instances of recognition from colleagues on the same level with regard to classroom performance (Hargreaves, 2001). This is consistent with findings by Nias (1998) in her research with primary school teachers in England. It was found that colleagues seldom praised one another about their classroom practice. Nias (1998) attributed this to the culture of teaching that did not encourage its members to praise one another. Hargreaves (2001) noted that teachers mentioned formal occasions when their efforts and achievements were acknowledged by their colleagues. Teachers expressed how proud it made them feel and how rewarding and satisfying it was to know that they had done something right. Some of these were done retrospectively during exits and retirements, when the accomplishments were over.

Hargreaves (2001) observed how most people want validation for their moral purposes and accomplishments and found that teachers are no exception. The author posits that while this is such a valued commodity, it is often in short supply.

Another finding that emerged was teachers' reliance on their colleagues for personal support and social acceptance. Hargreaves (2001) posits that in the Emotions of Teaching project, from which this data was drawn, almost a third of the teachers talked of positive emotions that were aroused from moments of receiving support from their colleagues and feeling socially accepted by having common interests. They talked of enjoying social relations, camaraderie and banter in the staffroom. It was observed that most of the references to being socially accepted and engaged were more about friendliness than friendship. It was noted, however that some strong friendships did develop among some colleagues that led to a greater degree of closeness. Nias, Southworth and Yeomans (1989) argued that close relationships among colleagues which were more intimate contributed towards bringing together the personal and professional lives of teachers. Hargreaves (2001) pointed out that close relationships that are fostered through shared values and interests could become closer if there is personal disclosure and support. These relationships can be special and rare. Hargreaves (2001) noted that teachers seek to find at least one close relationship at school. These relationships could emerge from moments of personal crisis when colleagues reach out to help and support.

Research by Nias et al. (1989) with primary school teachers revealed that mutual acceptance, openness, trust, kindness, help, support and shared values not only supported close relationships but enhanced and energised teachers' teaching and their willingness to innovate. They argued that friendships with colleagues influenced the way teachers approached their work and merged the personal and the professional. Hargreaves (2001) concluded that friendships with colleagues may contribute to enhancing the professional work of teachers which may not only aid in emotional understanding but also in intellectual development. Day et al. (2006) outlined in the VITAE Project report that of the two hundred and seventy six teachers interviewed, eighty seven percent indicated that their relationship with their colleagues contributed to their positive sense of commitment and effectiveness while thirteen percent indicated that there was lack of support. The teachers' relationship with their colleagues was one of the most frequently mentioned influences on teachers' work and lives.

De Lima (2001) pointed out that close bonds among teachers is still an unexplored area that has not been researched in depth. De Lima's (2001) research was with secondary school teachers in Portugal. The author is of the view that teachers do not have the energy needed to develop close bonds. De Lima (2001) differs from Hargreaves (2001) and Nias et al. (1989) that strong professional bonds are built on strong personal ties. De Lima (2001) adds that in many cases close personal relationships can be a hindrance to fostering a professional community. Collegiality is viewed as just "a new way of doing old things over and over" (p. 117) because close friends may validate instead of challenge each other's ideas. For school change to occur, independent and alternative thinking is necessary with optimum levels of conflict (de Lima, 2001). Hargreaves (2001) however, acknowledges that close personal relationships among teachers are of little value if it does not promote their professional engagement or if it hinders their professional work.

The data drawn from the Emotions of Teaching project (Hargreaves, 2001) also revealed issues regarding co-operation, collaboration and conflict amongst colleagues. It was evident that teachers working together ranged from co-ordination and co-operation to more intense efforts of joint collaborative work. A striking observation was that intellectual debate, questions and disagreements among colleagues that promote professional growth were only prevalent in one school in the study. Disagreements and conflicts were viewed by teachers in the study as negative emotions and something that should be avoided. Teachers valued thinking alike and the absence of conflict seemed desirable (Hargreaves, 2001). De Lima (2001) however, is of the view that for professional growth and change to occur, some level of conflict was healthy. Teachers in the study acknowledged that conflicts arose from "differences of educational purpose in the delicate moral geographies of schooling" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 521).

The next section examines teachers' relationships with their pupils and explores how their relationships with their pupils affect their lives as teachers. The terms pupils, students and learners are used interchangeably in the study.

2.7   TEACHERS' LIVES: INTERACTIONS WITH PUPILS

Teachers' interactions with their pupils affect their emotions, (Cross & Hong, 2012; Hargreaves, 2000) influences how they feel about their work (Veldman, van Tartwijk, Brekelmans & Wubbels, 2013) and their well-being (Spilt, Koomen & Thijs, 2011).

Cross and Hong's (2012) qualitative case study of two elementary teachers serving high poverty schools examines teacher emotions particularly how their internal psychological attributes transact with the school context to produce teacher emotions. The findings revealed that teacher-pupil interactions were a significant aspect. Both teachers shared positive relationships with their pupils which became a major source of positive emotions. Both experienced great joy from their relationship with their pupils. Despite the fact that the teachers had to play multiple roles, such as being a parent, teacher, friend, caregiver and role model to their pupils, they regarded them as positive and supportive and ones of trust. These findings are consistent with other research that reveals that teachers who perceive their relationship with their pupils as positive tend to be committed, motivated and enjoy their work (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008).

Similiarly, a study by Veldman et al. (2013) showed a strong relationship between high job satisfaction and good student-teacher relations. Using the narrative biographical method, they explored the development of teacher-student relationships and job satisfaction of four veteran teachers who maintained high levels of job satisfaction and found that the stories of all teachers revealed that they enjoyed good relationships with their students. Interestingly, in periods in their career when the relationship with their students was less good they also perceived less job satisfaction. This is consistent with what Lortie (1975) called the "psychic rewards" of teaching which "rotate around the classroom events and relationships with students" (p. 187). It is evident that what happens in the classroom affects how teachers feel about their work.

Hargreaves (2000) concludes that teachers get more psychic rewards from their students since the classic study *Schoolteacher* by Lortie (1975). In his exploration of teacher emotions with respect to teachers' perceptions of their interactions with their students, Hargreaves (2000) interviewed fifty three elementary and secondary school teachers from fifteen Canadian schools. The study revealed that the teachers received much enjoyment and motivation from

their interaction with their students. The study revealed a difference in the level of emotional bonding between the elementary and secondary schools. For reasons of student size and organizational structure the elementary teachers foster closer emotional bonds with their students. Elementary teachers valued being loved by their students, being missed when they were absent, being the students' favourite teacher, sharing humorous moments with them and enjoying the overall atmosphere of warmth with their students. While teachers in elementary schools experienced positive emotions from their interactions with their students, they also experienced strong negative emotions. This occurred when students lacked courtesy, mimicked the teachers' words in front of the children and bravely tell the teacher they hated her (Hargreaves, 2000).

Hargreaves (2000) contends that while the secondary teachers did not enjoy close emotional bonding with their students they did achieve positive emotions. This came from achieving breakthroughs with their students, receiving gratitude from returning students, displays of acknowledgement, appreciation and respect by students. Secondary teachers described negative emotions arising from not feeling known by their students. Teachers complained about being unjustly accused, being misunderstood and not being acknowledged. None of these emotions were raised by the elementary teachers. Hargreaves (2000) argues further that teaching involves emotional work and this is clearly evident in teachers' interactions with their students.

Spilt et al. (2011) point out that the emotionality involved in teacher-student interactions affects the well-being of teachers. They argue that teachers have a basic psychological need for relatedness that can explain the importance of teachers' personal relationships with their students. This need for relatedness triggers a desire for unity and togetherness. Poor relationships go against this need and will make teachers emotionally vulnerable when they are rejected by their students. Spilt et al. (2011) conclude that the frustration of not having the need for relatedness fulfilled will undermine their positive well-being. Nias (1996) is of the view that since teachers invest so much emotion in working with their students; emotional vulnerability may result from both professional and personal failure (Hargreaves, 1998, 2000; O'Connor, 2008).

Spilt et al. (2011) further add that teachers' desire for positive relationships with their students may also stem from the notion that positive relationships help to motivate children

and control their behaviour (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004) which may indirectly affect teachers' ability to be effective in their classrooms. This is consistent with the finding of the VITAE project (Day et al., 2006) that was commissioned to identify factors that led to variations in teacher effectiveness. It revealed that teachers' relationships with their pupils were central to their level of motivation, sense of self-efficacy, commitment and job satisfaction.

The next section will examine the personal influence in teachers' lives, exemplying how teachers' personal and professional lives are closely intertwined.

2.8 TEACHERS' LIVES: PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL

Literature reveals that teachers' personal lives, events and experiences are inextricably linked to their professional lives (Ball & Goodson, 2002; Day & Gu, 2010; Kelchtermans, 2009a; Nias, 1996). Day and Gu (2010) report that the findings of the VITAE Project revealed that teachers' personal life experiences and contexts played a crucial role in teachers' professional lives. It played an integral part in either sustaining or constraining their effectiveness. It affected teachers' commitment, well-being and sense of efficacy. Day et al. (2007) highlighted that some of the personal factors cited by teachers were ill health, resulting from throat problems, diabetes and high blood pressure, depression and miscarriage. Teachers recounted how this affected their ability to teach effectively and negatively influenced their levels of motivation and commitment. Other issues that were raised included looking after elderly parents, being worn out by looking after young children at home, difficult relationships and marital problems. In some cases teachers had to take time out from school to recuperate (Day et al., 2007).

One of the personal factors that sustained teachers' motivation and commitment was teachers' positive values. Teachers' core values, their desire to make a difference in the lives of children, their desire for knowledge, independence and skills helped to keep teachers motivated and committed. The satisfaction gained by working with their pupils and developing relationships with them were cited by most primary school teachers as helping to sustain their motivation (Day et al., 2007) This is consistent with the finding of Hargreaves's study (2000) on teacher emotion and pupil interaction, especially in elementary schools.

Day et al. (2007) further add that secondary school teachers were motivated by core educational values, especially raising standards in their subjects, making a difference in students' learning and uplifting the community. Some secondary school teachers also wanted to work with children and make a difference in their lives. It was evident that teachers' positive values contributed to their commitment and motivation. This is consistent with Nias's (1996) view that teachers invest in the values that represent their work. Troman and Woods (2009) pointed out that this shows the centrality of teachers' selves in the process of setting goals for themselves and how their values and commitment shape their careers.

One of the observations highlighted by Day and Gu (2010) regarding personal influences in teachers' lives from the VITAE project was its impact on teachers in the late professional life phases. It was found that adverse personal experiences or events, influenced their effectiveness negatively and this effect was intensified when teachers entered the later professional life phases (8-15 years and thereafter). Day and Gu (2010) note that this is particularly prevalent in the professional life phase between 8-15 years when teachers begin to experience tensions between their personal and professional demands and commitments. Teachers at this time are in their early thirties and forties, in a time in their lives when family and health become increasingly important as well as when their experience and expertise make them eligible for career advancements. It is at this time that teachers may go through a period of reassessment, questioning "where their career is going and what it has brought to them up to now" (Huberman, 1993, p. 257).

This section explored the four different influences that come to bear on teachers' lives as identified by Day and Gu (2010). It examined policy influences, influences from their practice setting, pupil influences and personal influences by reviewing literature from different sources. The next part of the chapter outlines the theoretical framework that was used to frame the study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK – PART 2

2.9 A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In exploring and understanding how teachers responded to the critical incidents in their teaching lives, a social-psychological theoretical framework on emotions developed by van Veen et al. (2005) which was derived from the work of Lazarus's (1991) cognitive appraisal theory of emotions was used to frame this study. Van Veen et al. (2005) used this framework to understand teachers' identity, emotions and commitment to change in the context of reforms. Since the context of my study is teachers' experience of critical incidents in their lives, this framework was adapted. The social-psychological theoretical framework was a useful framework to understand how teachers responded to critical influences in their socio-cultural contexts that came to bear on their identities through the appraisal process. The framework provided useful insights into how and why certain beliefs, goals, values and ideas that are relevant to the teacher were affected as the teacher interacted with the environment and what emotions were evoked.

Van Veen et al. (2005) used the framework to understand the emotions of a single teacher with respect to the introduction of reforms. It was found that the teacher experienced strong negative emotions of anxiety, anger, guilt and shame as a result of the way reforms unfolded at the school. With regard to the use of the theoretical framework, the authors concluded that whilst the social-psychological approach provided an extensive insight into the theory of emotion with its definitions, propositions and how the emotion process unfolds, it mainly focussed on identity and the appraisal process and paid less attention to the environment. The authors highlighted the importance of contexts and interactions with others within the environment, especially how the structural arrangements within which teachers work and how the social-cultural contexts mediate their actions. These issues were noted and the limitation with respect to the influence of the context was addressed by including in the framework Day's (2011) work on the three clusters of influences that come to bear on teachers' lives. These include the socio-cultural/policy influences, workplace located influences and personal influences. This will be explained later in the chapter (See Section 2.11).

The next section discusses the different constructs in the social-psychological theoretical framework depicted in Figure 1 below.

Ego-identity

- Self & social esteem

- Moral values

- Ego-ideals

- Meanings/ideas

- Life goals
(Lazarus, 1991)

Critical influences from the socio-cultural environment

- Socio-cultural/policy influences

- Workplace influences

- Personal influences (Day, 2011)

Appraisals

Primary Appraisals
- Ego involvement
- Goal relevance
- Goal congruence or incongruence

Secondary Appraisals

- Blame or credit
- Coping potential
- Future expectancy

Teacher emotions

(Positive/negative) responses

Figure 1: Schematization of a social-psychological approach towards emotions, derived from Lazarus (1991) by van Veen et al. (2005) *adapted*

2.10 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY APPRAISAL

Cognitive appraisal can be viewed as a process of "categorizing an encounter and its various facets with respect to its significance for well-being" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 31) and is influenced by both the environmental and personality variables (Lazarus, 1991). The personality variables include the goals, motives and beliefs about the self and the environmental variables include demands, constraints and resources with which a person must cope. This is depicted in Figure 1 as the teachers' ego-identity on the one hand and the critical influences from the socio-cultural environment on the other. As the 'self' interacts with the environment, it encounters certain demands and constraints or is provided with certain resources. The way encounters are evaluated by the 'self' determines how a person responds emotionally (Lazarus, 1999). Lazarus (1991) posits that the intensity and type of emotional response a person experiences when responding to an event reflects two layers of judgements, namely, primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. Primary and secondary appraisal constitutes part of the cognitive component and involves one's appraisal of how relevant and significant a situation or event is to one's life (Lazarus, 1999). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) clarifiy that while the terms primary and secondary may suggest, erroneously, that the one (primary) is more important and precedes the other (secondary); these meanings were not intended. Lazarus (1991) explains that appraisals in real life do not follow a sequence and his use of a decision-tree format was only used as a didactic tool to understand the theoretical or explanatory logic of appraisal. There is no certainty about how appraisal decisions are actually made. Lazarus (1991) adds that a person may not go through the entire appraisal process each time a new encounter is experienced. During appraisals past struggles are considered and sometimes all that is needed is an environmental trigger for appraisal patterns that have been set in advance to be enacted. Appraisals are also dependent on a person's goal hierarchies which prime the person to respond to some circumstances and not to others, thereby making the person more selective. The primary and secondary components will be discussed in more detail in the subsections below.

2.10.1 Primary appraisal components

Primary appraisal includes three components namely, ego involvement through the ego-identity, goal relevance and goal congruence or incongruence (See Figure 1).

2.10.1.1 Ego involvement through the ego-identity

This component comprises the personality variables which Lazarus (1991, p. 101) prefers to call the "ego-identity" although he acknowledges that he has used the words self, ego, identity and ego-identity interchangeably and recognizes the overlaps and divergence in the meanings in relation to emotions. The term ego-identity was a preferred term since the author believes that the concept should encompass the person-in-the-world which embraces roles and relationships within society. Lazarus (1991) has included ego involvements which can be thought of as goals that fall under the rubric of ego-identity. The ego involvements that will be considered include self- and social esteem, moral values, ego-ideals, meanings and ideas and life goals (Lazarus, 1991). All of these types of ego involvements are collections of narrower goals that encompass the many goals of our everyday lives. In relation to teachers, Schutz, Cross, Hong and Osbon (2007) view goals as reference points that they use in their social-historical contexts in which they are embedded to guide their thinking and actions. According to Lazarus (1991) the ego-identity which comprises the ego involvements interacts with the demands, resources or constraints that emerge from the environment and appraisal takes place (See Figure 1). Teachers' critical incidents would have arisen from teachers' appraisal of events in the environments in which they work and live. To understand their responses to the critical incidents, the teachers' interactions with the environmental influences had to be considered and explored. In appraising the events, teachers responded through their ego-identity using the different of ego involvements. These ego involvements were not explained or unpacked by Lazarus (1991). For the purpose of this study different literature sources were used to understand these concepts in relation to teachers' lives. Below is the exposition of the different types of ego involvements which include self- and social esteem, moral values, ego-ideals, meanings and ideas and life goals.

Self- and social esteem
Kelchtermans's (2009a) notion of self-image, self-esteem and task reception were drawn from the authors's personal interpretative framework based on teachers' self-understanding and will be used to understand self- and social esteem. These concepts were relevant because they involved the teachers' perception of themselves as well as the way others perceived them. Instead of the term identity which for Kelchtermans (2009a) denoted a more static state, self-understanding was the preferred term since it refers to the 'self' in its ongoing process of making sense of experiences and the impact it has on the 'self.'

Self-image is viewed by Kelchtermans (2009a) as a descriptive component that describes how teachers typify themselves as teachers. The self-image is based on self-perception and is therefore strongly influenced by the way one is perceived by others. This is dependent to a large extent on what others mirror back to the teachers. This could take the form of comments or judgements from pupils, parents, colleagues and principals.

Self-esteem, according to Kelchtermans (2009a) is regarded as an evaluative component and refers to the teacher's judgement and appreciation of his or her actual job performance ('How well am I doing in my job as a teacher?') Here again feedback from others is considered important, but the feedback is filtered and interpreted. The feedback that is received is not perceived in the same way from all persons in their environment. The person considers particular individuals or groups as more significant than others (Nias, 1989), hence the feedback from these individuals will be considered more relevant, valuable or important than that of others. These individuals can be regarded by the teacher as critical persons. Therefore, a teachers' self-esteem is almost always at stake during a critical incident. Positive self-esteem is to a large extent dependent on the social recognition from others and the fact that this recognition can be withdrawn at almost any time, can result in a specific sense of vulnerability that characterizes teachers' work lives (Kelchtermans, 2011). One feels questioned or questions oneself as to whether or not one is a 'proper teacher' (Kelchtermans, 1996).

Self-esteem is seen as a key element in teachers' self-understanding as it reflects the important role of emotions in teachers' lives. Positive self-esteem helps a teacher to feel at ease in the job, which contributes to job satisfaction and sense of fulfilment. This ultimately results in a feeling of well-being as a teacher. The positive self-evaluations are considered fragile; they fluctuate in time and have to be re-established from time to time. Therefore, negative public judgements, which for an outsider look almost trivial, may have a devastating emotional impact on teachers (Kelchtermans, 1996).

Self-esteem is intertwined with the normative component of self-understanding which is task perception. This involves the teachers' idea of what constitutes his or her professional programme, the tasks and duties that should be fulfilled in order to do a good job. It involves a teacher's personal answer to the question: What must I do to be a proper teacher? The task perception brings to light that teaching is not a neutral encounter. It reflects value-laden

choices and moral considerations. The task perception encompasses one's moral duties and responsibilities as a teacher in order to do justice to students and deeply held beliefs about what constitutes good education. When teachers' deeply held beliefs are brought into question they feel that they themselves are being questioned and this threatens their self-esteem (Kelchtermans, 1996). For example, when new policy regulations differ from or contradict teachers' task perceptions, it will deeply affect their self-esteem and their job satisfaction. Contradictions in teachers' task perceptions will have a strong emotional impact because teachers feel that their moral integrity both as a professional and a person is brought into question and causes vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 2009a).

Moral values

According to Mayer (2012), values are beliefs that we hold as important in our lives and involves our thinking about what distinguishes right from wrong and good over evil. They can be seen as the principles that govern how we live our lives. Halstead and Taylor (2000) contend that values are ideals for which people strive and broad standards or principles by which particular actions and practices are regarded as good or desirable. Muller (2006) adds that values are conceptions of what people consider as desirable that guide their behaviour. Mayer (2012) asserts that when a person experiences a conflict over values, it is difficult to make compromises because; people define themselves by those values and feel that it is an attack on them, their integrity and their self. Nias (1999) posits that for teachers their beliefs and principles form a set of self-defining values which contribute to their stable sense of identity. When they feel under pressure to undertake actions that go against their values they do not feel positive about themselves and their self-esteem is affected adversely. On the other hand, their self-esteem is enhanced when they act consistently with their values.

Ego-ideals

A teacher's ego-ideals refer to the ideals a teacher wants to strive towards while performing his/her job. Hammerness (2006) considers teachers' ideals as their vision. Teachers envision their classrooms, their activities, discussions and projects. They imagine what they would be doing in their classrooms, how they could be interacting with their students and what their students could be achieving. They picture the kind of classroom they work in, the type of school and even the community that would support their dreams. While a vision is more futuristic, it also provides a means of reflecting on past events, experiences and actions.

Hammerness (2006) cautions that while having strong and powerful visions are inspiring and motivating, if they fall short it can lead to disillusionment and despair.

Meanings and ideas

In order to understand teachers' meaning and ideas, Kelchtermans's (2009a) notion of subjective educational theory derived from the author's personal interpretative framework will be used. The subjective educational theory reflects two aspects, that is, the teachers' personal system of knowledge and their beliefs when performing their jobs. It is assumed that it is from these two aspects that teachers make meaning and derive ideas about their job. It involves their professional know how and the basis on which they make their decisions. Knowledge is derived from teacher education programmes, in-service training, professional readings and any other information gained from their professional training. Teachers' beliefs are more personal convictions built up through different career experiences. The teachers' subjective educational theory will assist in making judgements regarding situations and how to make decisions for their actions and approaches they use. It will help to answer personal questions such as "how should I deal with a specific situation?" and "why should I do it that way?" (Kelchtermans, 2009a, p. 42). The teachers' meaning and ideas will be based on the personal experiences of the teacher and what they perceived worked for them.

Life goals

A goal according to Lazarus (1991) is what we believe is valuable or significant. Each individual will invest in different goals, which will range from narrow goals to very broad global goals. Therefore, to understand a person's emotional response fully it would be important to know which goals people believe are at stake in the encounter. Teachers may have both personal and professional goals. Chang and Davies (2011) observed that teachers possess several goals as they conduct their teaching. Some of these goals involve assisting students attain their learning goals and managing students' behaviour. Butler (2007) argues that the school is an institution driven by achievement not only for students but also for teachers. Just as students have goals to achieve so do teachers. However, while teachers may strive to succeed in their jobs, the manner in which they define their success and their goals may differ. In her study of Israeli teachers, Butler (2007) found that teachers' goal orientations were based on four factors. Teachers' goals were directed towards the achievement of professional competence, superior teaching ability, avoiding displaying inferior teaching ability and lastly, striving towards getting through the day with minimal

effort. Butler (2012) also found that teachers placed value on relational goals. Teachers displayed a desire of sharing a close and caring relationship with their students since teaching is an interpersonal interaction.

In the subsection above the ego involvements that form part of the ego-identity were discussed. It is acknowledged that there are overlaps between some of the concepts outlined above. For example, while moral values, ego-ideals and meanings and ideas were discussed separately, values are seen to encompass beliefs and ideals. In the literature, values are referred to as beliefs (Mayer, 2012) and ideals (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). These ego involvements play a crucial role during the primary appraisal process. The ego involvements need to be at stake for an event to be appraised as goal relevant. With regard to the critical incident experienced by the teachers, at any given time one or more of these ego involvements were at stake as they interacted with the environment. An exploration of the teachers' interactions through these different ego involvements in the critical incident was important in understanding the teachers' responses. It provided insights into which ego involvements were at stake for the teacher and how they responded to it and why.

The next subsection discusses the second component in the primary appraisal process which is goal relevance.

2.10.1.2 Goal Relevance

During the primary appraisal process goal relevance is most important. According to Lazarus (1991) goal relevance refers to the extent to which an encounter involves personal cares or in which there is a personal stake. Only if the person has a personal stake in the encounter, for example, one's self- and social esteem or one's moral values are affected, will there be an emotional response (Lazarus, 1991; Lazarus, 1999). In other words, if some aspect of the ego-identity is in question in a person's interaction with the environment, the person will evaluate the event as goal relevant. If there is no goal relevance, there will be no emotional response. When teachers interacted with the environmental influences, events were appraised as goal relevant if one of the ego involvements were affected. For example, if a teacher's moral values were at stake during the critical incident, then the teacher appraised the event as goal relevant. Whether or not the emotional response is negative or positive will be

dependent on whether the event was appraised as goal congruent or goal incongruent. The third component in the primary appraisal process will be examined in the subsection below.

2.10.1.3 Goal congruence or goal incongruence

Goal congruence or incongruence, according to Lazarus (1991) depends on whether the conditions of the transaction are consistent or inconsistent with what the person wants. In other words, does it facilitate or thwart the person's goals. If the transaction facilitates the attainment of a goal then this will result in goal congruence but if it thwarts the attainment of the goal then it will lead to goal incongruence. Goal congruence will result in positive emotions while goal incongruence will result in negative emotions. During the critical incident, if events were appraised by the teachers as goal incongruent, there would be negative emotions expressed. This would have occurred because one of the ego involvements in their ego-identity was affected adversely. If events are appraised as goal congruent by the teacher, positive emotions would have been evoked, since one or more of the ego involvements would have been enhanced in some way. The teachers' appraisal of events during the critical incident as either goal congruent or incongruent led to an understanding of how and why teachers responded the way they did. The subsection below will outline the secondary appraisal elements which also affect the resultant emotions (Lazarus, 1991).

2.10.2 Secondary appraisal components

Secondary appraisal according to Lazarus (1991) comprises three components, which are blame or credit, coping potential and future expectancy (See Figure 1).

2.10.2.1 Blame or credit

Lazarus (1991) asserts that blame or credit can be external, usually directed to someone else or internal, that is, directed at oneself. Both blame and credit are concerned with who is accountable or responsible for the issue at hand. If for example, there is knowledge that the frustrating act is under the control of the person who is accountable, then blame is assigned. It requires a judgement of who is responsible for the threat, harm, challenge or benefit. Lazarus (1999) contends further, that to assess blame or credit is to make an emotional appraisal, that is, if blame is directed to another, anger is felt but if we accept credit, we feel pride. For

example, in the appraisal process during the critical incident the teacher may blame the principal for an action that he or she deems as frustrating and anger will be experienced.

2.10.2.2 Coping potential

Coping potential refers to how and whether the person can manage the demands of the encounter. Lazarus (1991) stresses that this is not the actual coping but an evaluation by the person of the possibilities of doing or thinking something that will, in turn, change or protect the person-environment relationship. Lazarus (1999) adds that this refers to a personal conviction that the person has, that something can or cannot be done to successfully ameliorate the harm/threat or change the situation to benefit the person. For example, during the critical incident the teacher may perceive that nothing can be done to change a harmful relationship in the workplace and this may lead to low coping potential.

2.10.2.3 Future expectancy

Future expectancy can be viewed as positive or negative, that is, whether the person-environment encounter will for any reason change for the better, deteriorate (Lazarus, 1999) or become more or less goal congruent (Lazarus, 1991). For example, if the teacher has appraised the events as mostly goal incongruent, he or she will evaluate the situation at some point and assess whether the prevailing situation has any chance of improving in the future. If the teacher realizes that the circumstances are negative and sees no hope of any improvement then, the future expectancy will be perceived as negative.

The next section will examine the influences from the socio-cultural environment. The three clusters of influences drawn from the work of Day (2011) will be explained.

2.11 ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

Emotional responses occur as a result of a person's interactions with the environment and are influenced by the socio-cultural context in which the transaction occurs (Schutz et al., 2006). Lazarus (1991) argues that "an emotional response does not stem from either a person or the environment but rather from the environment with certain influences and a person with certain attributes, which together produce a relational meaning" (p. 90). With respect to the critical incidents experienced by teachers, Day's (2011) work on the different clusters of

influences was viewed as relevant to explore the situational demands faced by teachers in the context in which they work and live and was included in the framework (See Figure 1). Day (2011) identified three clusters of influence that impact teacher identity. These include the socio-cultural influences, the workplace influences and the personal influences. These comprise a range of factors that at times compete with each other and have to be managed by the teacher. As teachers engage with the environment in which they work one or more elements from these clusters of influences may become dominant and may challenge the teachers' professional identity (Day, 2011). These three clusters of influences as outlined by Day (2011) will be discussed below.

Socio- cultural/policy influences

This category of influences includes the social, cultural and policy expectations of teachers as well as the educational ideals, ethical and moral purposes of the teacher. It includes the influence of changing policy and social trends on the teacher and what constitutes a good teacher. Also reflected here is a number of conflicting and competing elements such as national as well as local policies, continuing professional development, issues of workload and roles and responsibilities.

Workplace influences

These include the micro politics and social relationships of a particular school, department or classroom context and are affected by local conditions which comprise pupil behaviour, relationships with colleagues, the quality of leadership, and the support and feedback in the immediate contexts in which teachers work.

Personal influences

These influences are located in life outside of the school and reflect teachers' personal histories, their present lives, health, family and social relationships and their own sense of personal efficacy and vulnerability.

2.12 THE APPRAISAL PROCESS AND EMOTIONS

Cognitive psychology theorist's (Frijida, 1986; Lazarus, 1991) stress that all our activities, including our thinking are motivated by goals and one's appraisal will be dependent on what important goals (concerns) are at stake. Appraisal involves the teachers' perceptions of how

the pursuit of their goals progresses as they interact with the environment (Schutz et al., 2011). Teachers' goal commitments will include their ego involvements with respect to their self- and social esteem, moral values, ego-ideals, meanings and ideas and life goals (Lazarus, 1991). During primary appraisal, when teachers appraise the incident as goal relevant, that is, they perceive a goal that they care about is at stake then there will be an emotional response. If they judge the encounter as goal incongruent, then negative emotions will be evoked. If they perceive the encounter as positive, that is, if the experience is what they anticipated, then positive emotions will be experienced (Lazarus, 1991, 1999). The primary appraisals influence the valence of the emotional episode (Schutz et al., 2011). During the secondary appraisal process additional components are evaluated which includes, whether blame or credit should be apportioned to the person himself/herself or to someone else. Their coping potential is evaluated and the future expectancy is determined. The person's interaction with the socio-cultural enviroments and the appraisal process that evokes either positive or negative emotions is depicted in Figure 1.

Emotions are viewed as the product of the appraisal of those environmental events that are judged as most relevant to the individuals' goals and well-being (Oatley, 2000). For Lazarus (1991) emotions are "complex, patterned, organismic reactions to how we think we are doing in our lifelong efforts to survive and flourish and to achieve what we wish for ourselves" (p. 6). It reflects the deep personal meaning of the interactions in our social lives that arise from motivational, cognitive, physiological and adaptive processes. He asserts that when we react emotionally, especially a strong reaction, every fibre in our being is affected and engaged. All our attention is drawn into the reaction, including our thoughts, our desires, our needs, including our bodies. Similarly, Mauss, Bunge and Gross (2007) view emotions as being multi-faceted, involving whole-body responses, that prompt changes "in the domains of subjective experience, behaviour, and peripheral physiology" (p. 147). To Lazarus (1991) emotions are the most richly revealing concept in psychology that paint a picture of the way an individual relates to life and more specifically to the physical and social environment. This happens when an important goal is at stake within the environment; the goal may be harmed, placed at risk, enhanced or advanced.

Lazarus (1991) explains that we are threatened or anxious when something that we want in the environmental setting is endangered and we believe we lack the power to attain it. We feel insulted or angry if someone slights us and we yearn for the person's respect or may feel

ego-enhancement and pride when we are identified with or can take credit for something we may regard as socially valued. In other words, relational concepts such as threat, insult or ego-enhancement and their respective emotions like anxiety, anger and pride, lose their meaning when applied to the environment without considering the persons who transact with it. In the same way the relational meaning will be lost if these concepts are applied to the person who has no regards for the environmental conditions that bring these relational meanings that have relevance for the person. Schutz et al. (2006) highlight the social and historical aspects that shape emotional episodes and view emotional experiences as being socially constructed. The quality and intensity of the emotion will be dependent on the individual's appraisal as having either positive or negative significance for their well-being. Person-environment relations are dynamic and can change over time depending on circumstances (situational demands) and can give rise to different emotional responses (Lazarus, 1991).

Lazarus (1991) contends that the stronger or more important the goal commitment activated by the event or encounter, the more effort is invested, which leads to more emotional satisfaction derived when progressing towards the attainment of a goal and more emotional distress when the achievement of the goal is thwarted. Positive emotional states arise when a person perceives that there is appropriate movement towards the attainment of the goal. If the attainment of the goal is thwarted or if there are unexpected delays in attainment of the goal then negative emotional states arise. The motivational principle implies that emotions will depend on the goal commitment that is favoured or thwarted by the environmental conditions. If the outcome is positive, then positive emotions result and if the outcome is negative, then negative emotions will arise. During the appraisal process, more than one emotion can be evoked, since multiple goals are operating at any given time and changes are taking place from moment to moment, highlighting the complexity of emotional lives (Lazarus, 1991). For each emotion, Lazarus (1991) has developed core relational themes that explain the emotion the person experiences. These will be discussed in the next section.

2.13 CORE RELATIONAL THEMES FOR EMOTIONS

Person-environment relationships, according to Lazarus (1991) coalesce with personal meaning and the appraisal process in the concept of core relational themes. Appraisal involves a perception of a particular harm or benefit in the relationship with the environment,

with its multiple implications for well-being, action and coping. A core-relational theme is simply the central (hence core) relational harm or benefit in adaptational encounters that underlies each specific kind of emotion. There are also diverse kinds of harmful relationships, each of which constitutes a core relational theme leading to a distinctive negative emotion. Similarly, there are various kinds of beneficial relationships, each of which constitutes a core relational theme leading to a distinctive positive emotion. Each individual emotion or emotion family is defined by a specific core relational theme. When its implications for well-being are appraised by a person, each thematic relationship produces an action impulse consistent with the core relational theme and the emotion that flows from it (Lazarus, 1991). Lazarus (1991, p. 122) distinguishes fifteen basic emotions and their core relational themes.

Table 1: Core relational theme for each emotion (Lazarus, 1991)

Emotion	Core relational theme for each emotion.
Anger	A demeaning offense against me and mine.
Anxiety	Facing uncertain, existential threat.
Fright	Facing an immediate, concrete and overwhelming physical danger.
Guilt	Having transgressed a moral imperative.
Shame	Having failed to live up to an ego ideal.
Sadness	Having experienced an irrevocable loss.
Envy	Wanting what someone else has.
Jealousy	Resenting a third party for loss or threat to another's affection.
Disgust	Taking in or being too close to an indigestible object or idea (metaphorically speaking).
Happiness	Making reasonable progress toward the realization of a goal.
Pride	Enhancement of one's ego-identity by taking credit for a valued object or achievement, either our own or that of someone or group with whom we identify.
Relief	A distressing goal-incongruent condition that has changed for the better or gone away.
Hope	Fearing the worst but yearning for better.
Love	Desiring or participating in affection, usually but not necessarily reciprocated.
Compassion	Being moved by another's suffering and wanting to help.

Since the study was interested in teachers' response to the critical incidents in their lives, the social-psychological framework was considered helpful to explore the teacher-environment interaction. As teachers interact with the context in which they work, the situational demands will influence certain components of their ego-identity and through the appraisal process will result in certain emotional reactions. It was assumed that emotional responses from the social-psychological perspective will provide insights into what teachers have at stake in their encounters with the socio-cultural context in which they work and live, how they interpret events and how harms, threats and challenges are coped with (Lazarus, 1991).

2.14 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter illuminated research on teachers' lives, provided an overview of literature on critical incidents and critical influences in teachers' lives and examined the four patterns of influences that affect teachers as they interact with the environment in which they work and live. The social-psychological theoretical framework that was used to guide the study was discussed and the different components were explained, highlighting its appropriateness to study teachers' responses to the critical incidents in their lives. The theoretical framework was a key element of the analysis process and provided focus and direction to the study. Chapter three provides an exposition of the research design and methodology adopted for the study.

CHAPTER 3

CHARTING THE METHODOLOGICAL TERRAIN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two provided an overview of the literature reviewed and the theoretical constructs used to frame the study. This chapter outlines the methodological choices and approaches that were considered in the research process. The research design will be explained, highlighting the reason for a qualitative mode of inquiry that is situated within the interpretive paradigm. Life history research, being the chosen methodology will be discussed and a motivation will be provided for its appropriateness for the study. The selection of participants, the sampling procedures and the method used to produce the data will be explained. The data production procedures and the data analysis approaches used in the study will be discussed. Finally, strategies used to ensure quality in the research process and ethical issues that were considered will be outlined. Reflexivity will be deliberated upon, highlighting the researcher's positioning within the research process.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Nieuwenhuis (2007) contends that a research design is a plan or strategy that highlights the underlying philosophical assumptions that guide the study, the selection of the participants, the data production methods and the analysis to be done. The author adds that the choice of the research design will be dependent on the researcher's philosophical assumptions and the design most appropriate to answer the research questions will be selected. The design for this study was the qualitative mode of inquiry, located in the interpretive paradigm which adopted a life history methodology. The rationale for the choice of qualitative research design will be explored in the subsection below.

3.2.1 Qualitative research within the interpretive paradigm

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 2) describe qualitative research as "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world". This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative researchers have an interest in how people construct their life worlds by examining how they interpret and make of sense of their experiences

(Merriam, 2009). Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2010) contend that in order to explore the experiences of people, qualitative research uses a specific set of research methods, such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and observation. The authors add that by the use of these methods, the researcher is able to examine issues from the participants' perspectives and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to their behaviours and events. During qualitative research, the research participants are studied in their natural settings to identify how their actions and behaviours are shaped by the contexts in which they live. Qualitative researchers seek to gain an understanding of the contextual influences on people's lives (Hennink et al., 2010). The qualitative mode of inquiry was appropriate for my study since I was interested in exploring the experiences of teachers who experienced critical incidents in their lives and through the use of life history methodology; I sought to understand the influence of the socio-cultural contexts on their lives. Creswell (2009) stresses that qualitative researchers provide a holistic account of the phenomena under study, by providing multiple views and takes into account many factors involved in the situation.

Merriam (2009) contends that in qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument for data production and analysis. This is appropriate since understanding is the key outcome in this type of research and the human element would be most suited. Another feature is that the data produced is usually "richly descriptive" (Merriam, 2009, p. 16). There are descriptions of the context, the participants and quotes from participants' interviews in the findings. All these add to the descriptive feature of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2009) adds that the qualitative research process is emergent rather than rigidly laid out and followed. In qualitative research, the process and research questions could change and the instruments could be adapted as the research progresses. Hennink et al. (2010) contend that qualitative research is suitable to address "how' questions that describes processes and behaviours and "why" questions that helps with explaining and understanding issues. It is used typically to gain "an in-depth understanding of research issues that embrace the perspectives of the study population and the context in which they live" (Hennink et al., 2010, p. 10). In my study, through qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews I was able to explore how teachers responded to the critical incidents in their teaching lives and why they responded the way they did. It helped to understand the participants' responses and explore the reasons for their actions, thoughts and feelings.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) emphasize the interpretive, naturalistic approach to qualitative inquiry which involves studying the phenomena in the natural setting and interpreting the meanings people ascribe to them. This study was located within the interpretive paradigm since I explored participants meaning making and interpretation of events during the critical incident. Hennink et al. (2010) assert that the interpretive aspect involves gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of the participants from the perspective of the participants themselves. This is often referred to as the emic perspective or an inside perspective. Snape and Spencer (2003) emphasize that through the interpretive paradigm the subjective meanings that people attach to their experiences are explored reflecting multiple perspectives on reality rather than a single truth (Hennink et al., 2010). The interpretive paradigm acknowledges that reality is socially constructed as people's experiences occur within the social, cultural, personal and historical contexts in which they live. Although people engage in the world as individuals, the wider contextual influences impact on their construction of reality (Hennink et al., 2010). Nieuwenhuis (2007) adds that the uniqueness of a particular situation or context is crucial in the understanding and interpreting the meanings constructed. The study explored each participant's experiences and gained multiple perspectives on their responses to the critical incident. It provided an understanding of each participant's construction of reality as they interacted with the influences that emerged from the socio- cultural milieu in which they worked and lived.

The interrelatedness of the different facets of people's lives is an integral part of qualitative research and the psychological, social, cultural and historical factors are all recognised as playing an important role in shaping lives (Snape & Spencer, 2003). It is for this reason that life history methodology was considered appropriate to study the critical incidents in teachers' lives. This methodology will be explored in the next section. The aim of life history methodology will be examined, the use of memory work in the construction of life history will be discussed and the appropriateness of life history as a methodology to study teachers' lives will be explored.

3.3 LIFE HISTORY AS A RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Understanding life history research

In the last few decades social researchers have shown interest in life history research, which Roberts (2002, p. 3) describes as the "collection, interpretation and report writing of a life."

Ojermark (2007) argues that life history research does not necessarily have to involve a full life, but can focus on one segment of a person's life. I explored a part of the teachers' life experience that is the critical incident in their lives.

The emergence of life history research is part of the 'narrative turn' and aims at understanding the human condition more broadly (Cole & Knowles, 2001). It seeks an understanding of relationships and the complex interaction between "life and context, self and place" (p. 11). It is about gaining an understanding about the complexities of a person's day to day life, their decision making and ultimately the consequences that emerge in that life so that insights are gained into the wider collective experience (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Goodson and Gill (2011) also allude to the 'narrative turn' that has emerged as a result of a wave of discussions on the "self, other, community, social, political and historical dynamics" (p.18) and asserts that complexities cannot be found existing out there in the objective world but are the result of "socially mediated human consciousness" (p. 18).

This study privileged a slice of the teacher's life and explored critical incidents that teachers experienced in their teaching lives. It investigated in particular how teachers responded to the critical incidents and why they responded the way they did. To explore the phenomenon, I had to gain an understanding of the teachers' experiences and how they interacted with the context in which they worked and lived. Cole and Knowles (2001) stress that lives are never lived in isolation from their social contexts and gaining an understanding of this dimension is the hallmark of life history research. Bullough (1998) contends that if a researcher wants to find out 'why', 'how', 'what's it like', and 'what does it mean to you', life history would be a suitable mode of enquiry to adopt. Goodson and Gill (2011) describe it as a process where people come together to explore and understand their lives and why they are lived in that way. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) contend that it is through stories that we are able to understand a person's experiences. Life history research, however, is not just a "rendering of lived experience into a life story" (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 17) but adds a second layer allowing the life history researcher to structure the telling of the story to yield rich data about the specific life experience, memories and interpretations of the event (Samuel, 2009).

Moving from life story to life history allows the life history researcher to account for the social and historical contexts within which people are located while taking into consideration the changing patterns of time and space (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Since the study sought to

explore the critical incidents in the teachers' lives, I allowed the teachers to tell their stories about the critical incidents in their lives, which helped to develop insights into how their stories were connected to the different contexts in which they were located and how these influences shaped their responses. Life history research involves listening to life stories, considering their context and exploring possible influences, explanations, interpretations, silences and issues of importance (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). It is about gaining knowledge and understanding of humans by understanding their situations, careers and institutions by getting to know how they live, work, talk and think within a particular social context (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Life history goes beyond the narrative, that is, it goes beyond the person and places, by locating the narrative account and interpretations within a broader context (Cole & Knowles, 2001). The essence of the approach is that the researcher examines how the participants relate their story and how they perceive the social contexts in which they are located (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Cole and Knowles (2001, p. 22) argue that "to be human, is to be moulded by context". All human beings are bound to connections with others as well as societal and institutional influences, whether they are political, historical, economic, social, educational or religious. Life history researchers believe that to understand the life of another, unravelling the complexities of the contextual realities is essential (Cole & Knowles, 2001).

3.3.2   Memory work in life history construction

Since participants were involved in recounting their experiences regarding critical incidents, the issue of memory was relevant, because it entails issues of recall and remembering. Plummer (2005) posits that all life story work is selective work and memories constitute the major pathway to this selection. Life story work "involves recollecting, remembering, re-discovering, along with active processes of memorializing and reconstructing history" (Plummer, 2005, p. 233).

Memory work is seen to be working at a variety of interconnected levels (Plummer, 2005). Three levels of memory work are outlined by Plummer (2005).The first level is about what a person can recall and is referred to as psychological personal memory which varies depending on how well a person can recall which is dependent on issues such as, time of day, mental state, fatigue and illness. This straight forward view has been questioned and memory work is now being viewed more than a personal psychological phenomenon but as a much more socially shared experience. This leads to the next level of memory which is narrative

memory where the focus is on the narratives that people recount of their past. Narratives are then regarded as memories. Bruner (1987) posits that the way stories are told and conceptualized become so habitual that they become a means of structuring experiences and become avenues to memories that guide narratives. The author later added that "there is no such thing psychologically as life itself, it is a selective achievement of memory recall; beyond that, recounting one's life is an interpretative feat" (Bruner, 2004, p. 693). Plummer (2005) refers to the third level of memory work as collective memory that moves beyond the individual's personal perspective but is placed within a social framework of memory. Here the local community and cultural issues become relevant. Plummer (2005) concludes that memory is not simply a psychological phenomenon emerging from within the individual but is shaped by the setting, societal influences and culture. O'Reilly-Scanlon (2000) adds that as we revisit and recollect our memories, it provides the opportunity to increase our understanding of what or who we are in relation to the larger community.

Plummer (2005) argues further that all life stories are constructed which does not mean that all stories can be evaluated as valid or invalid or truth or deception but what is needed is an exploration of what is being constructed. In this study, an exploration of how teachers recounted their memories of the critical incident was considered together with what was being constructed and the reasons for why it was being constructed in that way.

3.3.3 Life history to understand teachers' lives

Life history is a suitable means of inquiry to study teachers' lives "as it is probably the only authentic means of understanding how motives and practices reflect the intimate intersection of institutional and individual experience in the postmodern world" (Dhunpath, 2000, p. 544). There are likely to be many different influences, different relationships and experiences in a teachers' life (Goodson & Sikes, 2001) that account for how teachers make meaning of different situations in their teaching lives. Life history gives voice to the teacher, a voice that has been largely absent from educational research (Dhunpath, 2000). Research on teachers, since the 1980s has been influenced by cognitive psychology and there has been an understanding of how people's actions are linked to their cognitive domain. This "teacher thinking research" has given rise to a narrative methodology which is considered a powerful way to understand teachers' lives (Kelchtermans, 2009b, p. 260). Teachers use stories, anecdotes and metaphors to recall and share their experiences in schools. Storytelling comes

naturally when people want to make sense of the situations, events and incidents they experience (Kelchtermans, 2009b). Added to this, is the biographical perspective in studying teachers' lives (Goodson, 2013) which stresses that people have a personal history which shapes their interpretation, thinking and actions. Present experiences are influenced by the past and affects their future actions (Kelchtermans, 2009b). This narrative emphasis on teacher thinking has influenced my choice in using life history as an approach to allow teachers to share their experience of critical incidents and how these have shaped their responses, especially in relation to the contextual influences. In doing so it helped develop insights into how their stories were connected to the different contexts in which they were located.

The next section will outline how the research participants were sourced for the study. It will describe the sampling technique that was implemented, the process of inviting participants and choice of participants.

3.4 SOURCING PARTICIPANTS FOR THE STUDY

3.4.1 Purposive sampling

Nieuwenhuis (2007) views sampling as a process of selecting a portion of the population for a study. Different sampling techniques are used for different purposes. For the purpose of the research, I decided to engage in purposive sampling in locating participants for the study. Using this sampling technique ensures that participants are selected on the basis of having a particular characteristic that makes them the appropriate persons who can provide the data needed (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Purposive sampling makes it possible for the researcher to satisfy the specific needs of a research project by selecting participants that meet the "researchers' judgement as to the typicality or interest" (Robson, 2002, p. 265) depending on the nature and purpose of the research (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). When the research is focused on a specific social situation and requires the participants to have the appropriate knowledge and experience, purposive sampling would be most appropriate (Goodson & Sikes, 2001). This was the most relevant method to use as I was looking for participants with a specific characteristic, that is, they must have endured a critical incident in their teaching lives. While I preferred participants who had experienced the critical incidents within the last few years so that they could remember the details, some prospective participants pointed out

that time did not matter as they deemed the incident critical and they have vivid memories of their experiences.

This sampling technique is not only restricted to the selection of the participants but also involves the setting, events, incidents or activities (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). As the search for participants continued I incorporated the idea of bringing in diversity with regard to the critical incidents and made choices regarding the participants. I looked for variety in the participants' accounts that represented a wide spectrum of experiences. Patton (2002) calls this "purposeful sampling" and argues that purposeful sampling has the power of providing an in depth understanding of the phenomena since it leads to the selection of "information rich cases" (Patton, 2002. p. 46) which can illuminate the research questions.

3.4.2 Inviting participation

I began looking for participants with the notion that it would be a relatively easy endeavour. Having been a teacher for many years, I was accustomed to teachers talking quite easily about their issues in the workplace whenever I attended workshops or meetings. Moreover, teachers always had complaints about some issue or the other whether it was regarding policy matters or micro politics at the school. Since I was no longer teaching at a school, I started by asking past colleagues and friends if they knew of teachers that may have experienced a critical incident. I explained the concept critical incident using Tripp's (1994, p. 24) perspective that "a critical incident refers to some event or situation that meant a significant turning point or change in the life of a person." I emphasised that it was an incident judged by the teacher as critical in their teaching lives as outlined by Tripp (1994) (See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2). It was reported that teachers did experience incidents but they did not consider them as critical.

I then moved to different sources in search of participants. I intensified my search and enquired from lecturers at the university, my massage therapist and the receptionist at the psychiatrist's rooms that I once visited during my critical incident for possible participants. My massage therapist provided me with a contact number that I pursued and the lecturers at the university gave me a few introductions. An interesting observation was the response from the psychiatrist's rooms. The receptionist was obliging and asked me to develop a short questionnaire highlighting the details of the research project and what was required. A few

weeks later, I went in to see if there were any prospective participants. She gave me back a few filled in questionnaires. They were completed and all refused to be part of the study citing that they did experience critical incidents however, they declined to participate. One stated that, "My story will open up a can of worms so I don't want to talk about it." Another stated that, "I am not ready to speak about the incident" and a few others did not state the reasons for not wanting to participate. I thanked the receptionist for her efforts and abandoned that avenue for seeking participants feeling disappointed with the response. I wondered whether I chose a difficult area to research.

I thereafter continued to ask colleagues, friends and acquaintances if they knew of anyone who would be a possible participant. After some months of effort, I had ten prospective participants. I had telephonic conversations with them and explained all the details of the research project and they all agreed to participate. However, of the ten only six came to fruition. Of the four that dropped out, one continually shifted dates and times, over a few weekends and I gathered that while the teacher was keen to participate she seemed over committed with social engagements and other matters and we resolved that if I still needed her participation at a later stage I would contact her. Two others keenly and enthusiastically related their entire story on the telephone when I first made contact with them even though they were aware that they would have to relate it again during the face to face interview. On the day of the interview one of the participants reported half way into the interview that as she reflects she does not think of the incident as critical anymore. She felt that while it was critical at the time, issues were resolved and she does not feel like going back to the original incident. We jointly decided it was best for her to withdraw from the process. We continued chatting about other issues and both of us parted undeterred. Cole and Knowles (2001) asserts that researchers should engage in authentic researching by displaying personal and professional qualities of relationality, mutuality, empathy as well as care, sensitivity and respect. I think in this instance I wanted to respect the participant's view and did not want to coerce her to persist with the interview. I was sensitive to her needs and she was appreciative of the gesture, apologizing profusely for any inconvenience she may have caused me. Measor and Sikes (1992) add that respect for the participant is crucial and that "researchers have an obligation to protect people from being managed and manipulated in the interest of research" (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p. 211).

The other participant did not respond to telephone calls and messages after the initial contact and I decided not to pursue it further. This participant was not known to me so I did not feel inclined to persist. In the fourth case, an interview was conducted at a coffee shop, a venue chosen by the participant. While it started off well, the coffee machines became noisy as the interview progressed and the interview was inaudible during transcription. I explained to the participant who was happy to redo the interview but subsequently fell sick. I realised thereafter that coffee shop interviews were not a good idea. While it was a comfortable and cosy venue for the interview, background sounds can affect the audio recording. I thereafter pursued with the six remaining participants.

Table 2 below provides a representation of the participants' biography and background information. While the most important criteria for participant selection was teachers who experienced a critical incident in their teaching lives, other variables such as race and gender were noted. While race and gender were not privileged in the study, it is acknowledged that the sample is not representative of the demographics of the country as there were no white participants. During the search for participants, mostly females had agreed to participate in the study. There is therefore a bias in the sample with five female participants and one male participant. From the background information of the participants, it is evident that all the teachers had a positive outlook towards teaching, yet all did not have intentions to choose teaching as a career. For Romy, who had no other career plans, the opportunity for teaching presented itself so she decided to make the best of it. In the case of Saiyen, there were limited career opportunities and his career choice was based on an incentive that came from receiving a bursary from the Department of Education. Overall, the participants all had a strong passion for their job and enjoyed teaching. This was also reflected in their narratives.

Table 2: Biographical profile of participants and reasons for becoming a teacher

Participant	Gender	Race	No. of years in teaching*	What prompted you to become a teacher?
Venitia	Female	Coloured	22	When I was little, we always played school and when I was at high school, I was never with children my own age. I was always with the little ones, so I think that's where it all started.
Romy	Female	Indian	20	I had no intentions to become a teacher, when I finished school. I had no other plans, so the opportunity arose and I became a teacher. I decided if I was going to stay in the profession, I got to make my own way of liking this position and doing the best I can. So that's what I have done over the years.
Julia	Female	Black	19	Initially I started training as a teacher, with no passion for being a teacher. When I started I taught Grade 1 learners and I really enjoyed it.
Pritha	Female	Indian	9	I always wanted to be a teacher, it was always my dream. I love being a teacher.
Pralene	Female	Indian	14	I love children, I love working with children. That was my passion and is still my passion.
Saiyen	Male	Indian	6	We had limited career options and the Department of Education had offered a bursary, which was a big incentive. Once I got stuck into teacher training, I found that it was something that I loved.

Notes: *Years of teaching at the time of critical incident

3.5 THE PILOT INTERVIEW

I conducted the pilot interview with a participant with whom I had a brief acquaintance in the past. I used a conversation guide as suggested by Cole and Knowles (2001) which will be discussed later in the chapter. I read books on unstructured, in depth interviewing techniques (Hollway & Jefferson, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Roulston, 2010) to prepare myself for the interview but nothing was more worthwhile than a practice interview. I used this pilot interview to practice my interviewing skills particularly active listening skills as this research method was new to me. During the interview, I had to probe for some of the details as the participant struggled to describe her feelings. I was conscious of allowing the participant to continue uninterrupted even though I was keen to hear more about an issue. There were times when I may have interrupted the participant and I noted these shortcomings for next interview. As I progressed with the interview I became mindful that I had to listen fully to the story from the participant's perspective and control my enthusiasm when I felt I could identify with an issue and wanted to bring in my own frame of reference.

Most of the learnings from the pilot interview were related to interviewing techniques. I learnt how to use my conversation guide more skilfully after this interview. I gained insights into how to engage with issues in my conversation guide without consciously asking questions but rather skilfully picking up issues more spontaneously at different points in the interview. I also learnt that I had to exercise patience and listen attentively and allow the participant to speak more and limit asking too many questions in between. Hollway and Jefferson (2003) suggest allowing the narrator to talk about their lives without offering judgments, interpretations, or imposing your own relevancies as a researcher. The authors contend that while this may appear simple, it is not easy and requires discipline and practice. All previous interviews that I had conducted were semi-structured so this was a different experience altogether. Listening to the transcription of the pilot interview helped to refine the conversation guide. I noted that I had to zone in on the participants thinking and feeling at different points in the interview as different encounters were recounted. I re-ordered the prompts that I had initially outlined in the conversation guide and removed those prompts that I felt were irrelevant. I amended the guide giving it more structure and coherence. I transcribed the interview immediately and sent a copy to both my supervisors for review. We discussed my learnings from the pilot interview as outlined above and I was asked to proceed

with the other interviews. This pilot interview was incorporated as one of the participants for the research.

The next section will outline the data production process. The interview process and the techniques and strategies used to conduct life history interviews will be explored in detail in the subsections that follow.

3.6 THE DATA PRODUCTION PROCESS

3.6.1 Conducting life history interviews

Interviews were the main instrument for data production. The purpose of my study was to explore teachers' lives and to examine in depth how they responded to the critical incidents they experienced. The study was aimed at "penetrating the personal knowledge" (Kvale, 2007, p. 45) of the teacher. This knowledge is not clearly imprinted in the teacher but could only be unravelled through interaction with them (Creswell, 2007). Since I was interested in the construction of knowledge with my participants, I decided to give my participants a 'voice' so that there could be a joint production of this knowledge (Wengraf, 2001). Babbie and Mouton (2008) warns that this could be a slow and delicate process and a researcher needs to choose an instrument that will allow them to enter the world of the participant. Kvale (2007) argues that if researchers want to know how people understand and make sense of their worlds and their lives, then talking to them about it will be useful. King and Horrocks (2010) agree that conversing with people provides the space to share experiences and understandings. Interviews were therefore chosen as the main source of producing the data for the study.

I had proposed to use a collage during the interviews to ask participants to reflect on their pictures and talk about their thinking and feelings. According to Butler-Kisber (2007) the visual representation frequently reveals new connections and understanding that may have previously remained tacit. Butler-Kisber (2007, p. 270) emphasizes that "the collage process is a spontaneous and intuitive method that is able to re-discover ideas about our experiences." While I was keen to use an arts based method in conjunction with the interviews, this did not materialize as the participants expressed time constraints which became a restraining factor.

Since some of my participants were totally unknown to me, I had telephonic contact with them a few times before the interview to build rapport. While this was about logistics and deciding on dates, times and venues, it gave me the opportunity to get to know them better. Measor and Sikes (1992) agree that building trust within the relationship will allow the researcher to "penetrate several layers of access" (Measor & Sikes, 1992, p. 213).

Since all the interviews were spread over a period of time, scheduling was not a problem and all interviews were conducted at a date, time and venue that suited the participants. The duration of each interview ranged from between one hour to four hours. In some cases a second interview was held on the same day as participants remembered incidents they wanted to recount. While follow-up interviews were planned for all participants, some participants requested telephonic follow-up interviews because they felt that they had told their story and clarifications could be done telephonically, which I agreed to. In other instances participants seemed overly committed, citing work pressures as an issue so telephonic follow-up interviews were conducted. This was noted as a limitation in the study. Some participants however, agreed to face to face follow-up interviews, which was conducted. Cole and Knowles's (2001) view of mutuality is that both the participant and the researcher work collaboratively in determining the research process. Interviews were held at the participants' homes, my home, restaurants, in an office and in one instance, it was held at the staffroom of a participant's school after school hours. The participants suggested suitable venues for the interviews. I was mindful that a quiet venue was needed to minimize distractions and interruptions. I ensured that the participants were emotionally and physically comfortable especially for conversational interviews to yield rich data (Cole & Knowles, 2001). The venue was sometimes shifted from participants' homes to my home when we realized that it may be a quieter venue.

A conversation guide (Cole & Knowles, 2001) was prepared taking into account what issues were relevant to the research inquiry and research questions. I started by asking the participants to tell me about the critical incident they experienced. Some open ended questions were prepared to keep the focus of the inquiry. Key focus areas in the conversation guide included what triggered the critical incident, who were the different people involved and how they were involved in the incident. I was particularly interested in the participants thinking and feelings as they encountered the different events. I wanted to explore whether they received any support during the incident and what was the nature of the support. I was

keen to know whether there was a turning point during the critical incident and whether they perceived the situation to be resolved or not. I was also interested in finding out whether the incident had any implications for them as teachers. Using the conversation guide (See Appendix 1) in the pilot interview helped to make me more adept in using it for subsequent interviews. In some instances, participants themselves alerted me to some issues that they thought were relevant when the interview was over and a second interview ensued on the same day. Cole and Knowles (2001) point out that it is important for the participants to have a good idea of the focus of the study as they may have suggestions of information that they think is important. The authors add that "researchable moments are serendipitous, they cannot be predicted" (p. 78) and suggest a "co-creation of conversational space" where researching issues can be addressed openly and spontaneously in a natural way (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 29).

Plummer (2005) noted that interviews can be a "nerve-wracking process" (p. 143) and it is quite easy to become absorbed with your own anxieties and forget about the person you are interviewing. I must confess that at the start of the interviews I was nervous, especially when the person was unknown to me. Days before the interview, I mentally prepared myself and thought through the interview process. I found that this was useful in making me feel more at ease on the day of the interview. Being well prepared was the key to feeling confident in conducting the interviews. Being organized and arriving early at the venue helped to set the tone for a good interview.

The participants were briefed about the nature and focus of the interview at the inception of the interview process. They were assured of confidentiality and were provided with guidelines regarding their participation. Goodson and Gill (2011) contend that briefing the participants about the nature and focus of the research was an important aspect and note that sharing aspects of the methodology not only encourages the participants to engage more actively but also reinforces the relevance of their experiences in the research process. Participants were made to feel comfortable and additional time was spent with participants that I had met for the first time in developing a relationship before the interview began. We spoke briefly about our backgrounds, work and my own interest in the study. Thereafter, the protocols of signing of documentation regarding informed consent were undertaken. A letter was prepared with all the relevant details (See appendix 2). An explanation of the research

process, what will happen to the data produced and where it will be stored all contributed in building a relationship of trust (Goodson & Gill, 2011).

All the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and the interview duration varied from participant to participant. Cole and Knowles (2001) posit that the length of an interview is a delicate issue and varies from interview to interview. This may be dependent on the participant's time available, their ability to remain focussed and the emotional nature of the interview. I remained guided by the participants and observed that most of the interviews naturally came to an end when the participant had nothing further to say.

While my intention was to conduct a follow up interview, early on in the research process some participants expressed their enormous commitments and time constraints from work pressures and asked if they could conduct a telephonic interview since my intention was mainly to clarify issues. I agreed to the telephonic follow up interviews. I messaged the participants to set up a suitable day and time to conduct the interviews. This was noted as a limitation of the study. In some cases I did meet the participants for a face to face follow up interview. I used the transcriptions of the first interview and the draft of the story portraits for the follow up interviews which were mostly for the purpose of clarifying and confirming issues. The clarification was mostly around checking participants' feelings and emotions at different points in their story.

3.6.2 Adopting in depth interviewing strategies and techniques

As the interviews progressed, I was conscious of listening actively and carefully. I was guided by the three suggestions by Anderson and Jack (1991) of how to immerse myself in the interview and try to listen to the story from the participant's perspective. The first was to listen to the moral language of the participant. This was very apparent in my participant's accounts. I heard statements like: "I am a nothing," "I feel like a failure," "It's my duty to serve my learners." These statements were important as they provided a perspective about how the participants related to their contexts, what they valued, how they felt about themselves, and which moral standards they used to judge themselves. Anderson and Jack (1991) contend that negative self-judgements alert the interviewer about the participant's self-image and self-esteem and what issues are the sources of their despair. It also alerts the researcher as to what values the participants' seek to uphold. When participants are aware

that the researcher is listening actively these deeper issues will emerge (Anderson & Jack, 1991).

The next suggestion pertained to listening to the participants' meta-statements. Here one is alerted to the contradictions and discrepancies within the self. This was important because I became aware of participants' interactions with societal expectations and how they were socialized through their feelings and thoughts regarding certain norms. I became sensitive to the participant's struggles in living up to the expectations laid down by society and their own lived experiences. I also became aware of participants' feelings about conflicts relating to their personal ideals and goals and that of the organizations in which they worked.

Lastly, Anderson and Jack (1991) note the importance of listening to the logic of the narrative. Here one is alerted to the consistency or contradictions about recurring themes and how they relate to each other. It was important to listen carefully to how participants were constructing their experiences around certain issues so that as a researcher I could understand the underlying assumptions and beliefs, values and attitudes that inform the logic of their stories. Listening to their dilemmas, struggles, failures and successes brought to the forefront the complexities of their lives and how their interactions with the socio-cultural environment in which they were immersed influenced their lives.

Using these three suggestions by Anderson and Jack (1991) was very useful especially as I wanted to unravel how participants responded to the critical incidents. These listening techniques brought to light why the incident was deemed by the participant as critical, what issues were of relevance to them and how they responded to the influences that challenged their goals and aspirations. It also highlighted how participants responded to events or encounters that enhanced their beliefs and goals. It allowed me to focus more on the interaction of the participants with the context in which they work and live and how and why events unfolded the way they did. Cole and Knowles (2001) pointed out that in life history interviews "it is much about creating an atmosphere of security, intentional meaning making, reflexivity and genuine interaction" (p. 75).

Together with active listening, clarification was also an important component in the interview process. While I allowed the conversations to flow more freely especially at the beginning of the interview, I later probed issues especially in relation to the context and delved more

deeply into how participants related to certain contextual issues. I explored their thoughts and feelings which was an important aspect of the inquiry. Goodson and Gill (2011) posit that this phased process is what moves the data from life story to life history and note that this is a crucial transition in the meaning making process. The authors add that this is where both parties share their views, experiences, explanations and in so doing, arrive at a new mutually negotiated understanding of the social, cultural and historical influences. It is during this process of collaborative effort that intimacy, trust and reciprocity is further built in the relationship. Goodson and Gill (2011) coined the term 'pedagogic encounter' in life history research highlighting the engagement of an educational endeavour as meanings and changes occur in the sense of self through learning.

Cole and Knowles (2001) contend that researchers must remain alert for meaning making opportunities and possibilities during the interview process. When participants present a key event or a contradictory remark, the researcher should "seize the moment" (p. 78) as these instances sometimes become a celebratory moment in the context of the research process. These moments present opportunities to connect with the participant and gain a deeper level of meaning and interpretation. This could be a turning point or moment of change which can lead to significant understandings. Cole and Knowles (2001) are quick to add that these can only be snippets of the complexities of a life lived and should therefore be seized and "played out" (p. 79) to the maximum. I listened attentively for these opportunities and used them to delve deeper as the interview progressed.

Plummer (2005, p.145-146) stressed a few techniques that lead to good interviewing for life history research of which I took note. The first one involved the *funnelling* technique. This was achieved by thinking through your probing and questions so that it keeps the interview flowing and opens up issues more spontaneously. The author proposes starting with what he terms (p. 145) *'grand-tours'* and then proceeding to *'mini-tours.'* This means starting with broad, wider issues and then proceeding to more intensive interviewing on specific issues. All interviews were telling a different story so I had to think on my feet. I allowed the grand-tours at the beginning and then zoned in on specific issues through the mini-tours as the interview progressed. Having my conversation guide in my mind allowed me to facilitate a flow in the interviews.

The second technique emphasised *attentiveness and responsiveness* by the researcher. It is up to the researcher to create an environment that puts the participant at ease and encourages a willingness to speak freely. This can be achieved by the display of the researcher's interest in the topic, providing the confidence to speak, reducing any form of threat and mildly probing for further clarification. During the interview process the participants could clearly gauge my attentiveness and responsiveness through my body language which usually depicts one's interest in a story. I used non-verbal cues, such as maintaining eye contact, leaning forward, nodding the head and facial expressions to show that I was clearly interested in their experiences and this may have inspired them to speak openly and freely.

The third technique pointed to the use of *language*. The researcher should be aware of the participant's language register and not be bombastic so as to 'show off' his linguistic abilities as this may intimidate the participant. All the participants were teachers so language was not a major issue, however, maintaining patience with less articulate speakers was important for me.

Lastly, Plummer (2005) alerts the researcher to the issue of *resistance*. When the researcher observes that the participant is avoiding a certain issue, strategies need to be employed to probe further at some point in the interview or a follow up interview. I realized that one has to tread cautiously in this area, especially that participants may show even more resistance if this was not approached with sensitivity. Cole and Knowles's (2001) posits that the research relationship is complex and fluid and its boundaries are continuously changing.

In the next section, the data analysis process will be outlined and discussed. I begin by explaining the interview transcription process and discuss the three approaches used in the data analysis of the study. These approaches include narrative analysis, content analysis and discourse analysis.

3.7   DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS (STEPS AND APPROACHES)

The data analysis process started with the transcriptions of the participant interviews (See Figure 2 below). Once the interview transcriptions were complete, the analysis process which consisted of two levels of analysis commenced. The first level was the narrative analysis which involved synthesising the data from the interview transcriptions into a story in a

coherent manner highlighting the socio-cultural historical descriptions. The analytic task required that the researcher develops a plot that shows linkages among the data elements (Polkinghorne, 1995). The second level of data analysis involved both content and discourse analysis which was conducted using the participants' stories and the interview transcriptions. The content analysis facilitated the coding and categorization of the data and discourse analysis provided a lens to engage with the dynamics of the participants' interaction with the socio-cultural context through the use of language. The exposition of the analysis process was done as individual scenario analysis. The research question, the theoretical framework and the literature guided the entire process providing focus and direction. The theoretical framework provided a lens through which the data was interpreted. Throughout the data analysis process, I moved back and forth between the transcriptions and the analysis which depicted the iterative nature of the process. The data analysis and the insights that emerged gave rise to the thesis of the study. Figure 2 below provides a visual representation of the data analysis process and how it progressed to the findings of the study. Each step will be discussed in the subsections that follow.
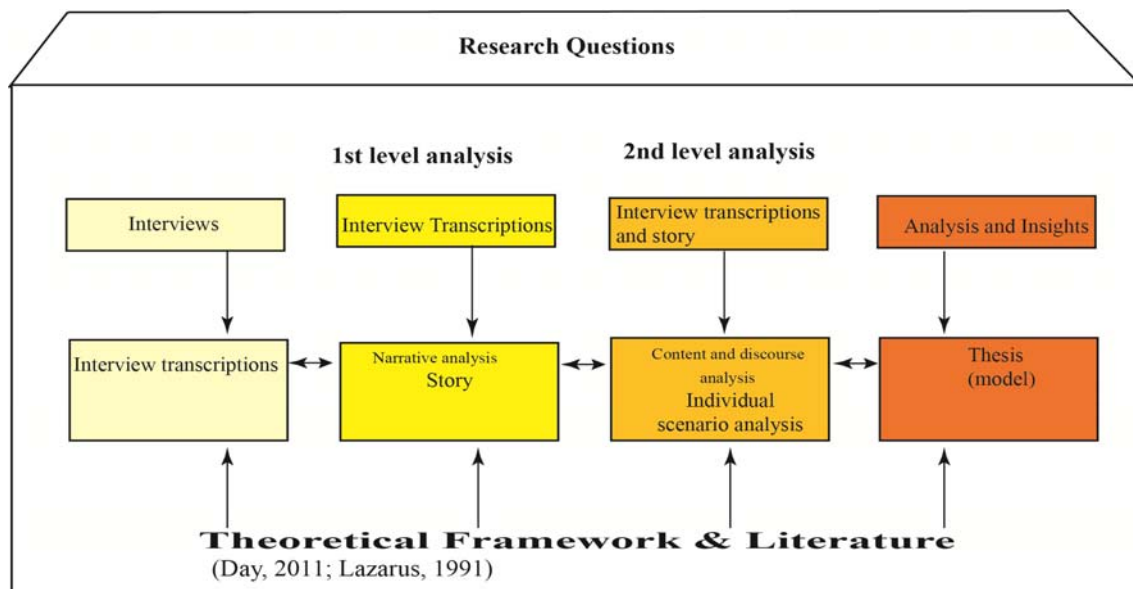
Figure 2: Methodological steps and processes

3.7.1 Generation of interview transcriptions

While it may have been tempting to outsource the task of transcriptions of the interviews, I decided to transcribe all interviews myself. Goodson (2008) points out that outsourcing the transcriptions is a bad move on the part of the researcher. The author contends that by the

researcher doing the transcriptions immediately after the interview, the process offers an opportunity to recreate the scene of the interview and generates a flow of complementary ideas. I must concur with Goodson (2008) that transcribing the interviews myself was a highly beneficial exercise. I was able to become deeply immersed in the data, I relived the interview process and key issues from each interview began to emerge. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) point out that the issues of transcriptions are not given much attention in research yet it is a very pertinent process. The authors add that while the interview is a face to face conversation between researcher and participant, during transcriptions the verbal exchange becomes abstracted and fixed in a written form. The transcription becomes a translation from one narrative mode to another, from oral discourse to written discourse. The audio recording becomes the first level of abstraction of the data and the transcription into written form is the second level of abstraction (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I did the transcriptions word by word in a formal written style separating my voice and that of the participant.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) the social and emotional aspects of the interview becomes reawakened during transcriptions and during this time the analysis process would have begun. This was a good platform to launch into the next stage of the research process which was the narrative analysis while the data was still fresh in my memory. After the transcriptions were completed, copies were sent to the participants for member checking. There were no changes that were needed to be effected in the data transcripts.

In the next section, the three data analysis approaches are discussed. The use of multiple approaches allowed for interpretation of the data from different perspectives. I used the participant stories to describe their experiences and their interactions with the context in which they live and work through narrative analysis. The additional use of content analysis and discourse analysis provided deeper and varied interpretations of the participants' experiences. While content analysis allowed for interpretation of data by coding and identification of themes and categories, discourse analysis heightened the complexities and conflicts participants experienced as they interacted with the contexts in which they worked and lived. It illumined the values and beliefs of participants and how these influenced their responses to the critical incidents.

3.7.2   Narrative analysis

I decided to conduct a narrative analysis as the first level of data analysis (See Figure 2). Polkinghorne (1995) differentiates between narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. Narrative analysis uses narrative reasoning in its analysis whereas analysis of narratives is based on paradigmatic reasoning. Narrative analysis as a procedure is used by the researcher to organize the data into a coherent account that involves synthesizing it rather than separation into different parts. Narrative analysis synthesizes events into an explanation using various plots as organizing principles moving the different elements into a story (Polkinghorne, 1995). Figure 2 reflects that the interview transcriptions were synthesized into a story as the first level of analysis. In the study, the narrative analysis will explain the critical incident as a story of each participant depicting the events and happenings as they unfolded. I did not use all the elements from the transcriptions but rather chose those that were relevant to the plot. The story serves to bring order and meaningfulness that was not apparent in the data transcriptions.

3.7.2.1   *Writing up the story*

I began writing up the participants' stories after immersing myself in the data. When I felt confident to proceed with writing up the stories, I faced a dilemma. I grappled with whether I should write them in the first person or third person. I began with one story and I wrote several drafts using the different modes. After reading through the stories in the first and third person modes, I decided that writing in the first person was the most appropriate. It sounded more authentic and was closest to the participant's voice. It brought out their feelings and emotions more lucidly. Plummer (2005) posits that many social science writers and most students are told not to use the first person 'I', they are instructed to conceal it and write in the third person. They are advised to use "a mode of writing that is characterized by distance, objectivity and neutrality" (Plummer, 2005, p.181). He argues that feminist researchers are fighting back against this tendency and reasserting the significance of the "self in the text" (p. 180). It is acknowledged that the issues of authors, voices and self are complex but they could lead us to the possibilities of creating more open and democratic texts.

Polkinghorne (1995, p. 17) emphasized the "bounded temporal period" of the story, so I was mindful of marking the beginning and end of the critical incident. It was also highlighted that the story needed to focus on the specific context in which the plot occurred. I was particularly

aware of the socio-cultural environment and explained the relationships between the participants and others in the environment. With regard to the coherence of the story, Mishler (1999) concluded that it is an ambiguous concept which is used in many ways and is often undefined. The author contends that it boils down to the notion that "if we can make sense of a passage–any kind of sense–it is *ipso facto* coherent" (p. 84). I read the stories many times ensuring that they made sense and sent them to the participants for member checking. While some acknowledged receipt and stated that it was a true reflection of the interview, other participants highlighted how they felt after reading it. Some responses indicated that they enjoyed reading their stories in written form and found them to be well expressed. While Plummer (2005) alluded to creative and innovative ways of representing the story using more artistic modes, I thought the written account served the purpose for which it was intended, which was providing an interpretation and synthesis of the story in a coherent way.

In the next subsection, I explain how I organised and made sense of the data from the interview transcriptions. I then describe how content analysis and discourse analysis brought different levels of interpretation to the data (See Figure 2).

3.7.3 Making meaning of the data

I began by reading the interview transcripts of each participant that I printed. I read them all a few times and subsequently decided to work with each participant's transcript separately as they were all different and each participant had a different story line altogether. Marshall and Rossman (2011) pointed out that there is "no substitute for intimate engagement with the data" (p. 201). Having written the transcriptions myself proved very useful as I found them familiar to me. Initially I read with the intention of identifying the issues that were emerging from the data. I did not engage in line by line coding but began noting in the right hand side margins of the transcripts issues that I thought were noteworthy in the data segments. To guide the coding process, I asked the following questions: What is happening here in this discussion? What are the issues? What is at stake for the participant? Who is involved? At the back of my mind were constructs from my theoretical framework, the literature and my research question. I was mindful of my research methodology, which was life history research approach and focussed on the relations of the participants with the socio-cultural environment. I began making notes of key issues. I stayed close to the transcripts and worked with them for a few days, re-reading and re-reading to check if I may have missed something

important. I then progressed with the next transcript and followed the same procedure. I looked at key happenings or events and asked the same questions and noted issues in the right side margins of the transcripts.

After the coding process was over, I worked with each transcript separately and developed a summary of the issues for each participant in a mind map on separate blank pages. After this was done, I began studying the mind maps individually and could see more clearly the issues that were relevant for each of the participants. Thereafter, I looked at them in conjunction with each other. As I studied the mind maps I began to observe relationships and patterns. There were overlaps of issues in some cases, in others I observed similarities and differences and in some positive and negative influences. As I continued to examine the mind maps more closely, I started to realize that there were some broad categories running across all the mind maps. I realized that the issues could be categorised into four broad categories. These were professional, personal, social and moral/spiritual dimensions. It seemed that the teachers had concerns in these broad areas. I then returned to each transcript with this new insight and began to highlight the data from the different dimensions in different colours and noted the dimension on the left hand side margin of the transcript.

After completing the process for all the participants, I opened up electronic folders for each category and labelled them *Professional, Social, Personal and Moral/Spiritual*. I returned to the electronic copies of the transcripts of each participant and extracted the data as per the highlighted sections in the hard copies and cut and pasted them into their respective files labelling them accordingly. I noted the name of the participant at the top, keeping the data for each participant separate. In each folder I had data of the different participants combined pertaining to the different categories. I printed the copies for each category and began working with the documents again. I began the coding process again, with fresh eyes identifying what issues, for example, within the professional dimension were at stake for each participant. I drew up another mind map integrating the previous one and completed this for all the different dimensions for all the participants. Marshall and Rossman (2011) contend that each phase of the analysis involves data reduction as the data is brought into more manageable chunks as the researcher derives meanings and insights from the data. I felt that I was now ready to start my first draft of the data analysis chapter. I started using the different dimensions as a framework, using the broad headings, *Professional, Social, Personal and Moral/Spiritual.*

After the end of the first section of the analysis on the professional dimension I realized that it was not working to my satisfaction as something was missing. I lost the uniqueness of the individual participant's story line, moreover, the flow of the issues was absent, which in some cases was important to show how one encounter spiralled into another. My feeling was that the analysis lacked richness and coherence. At this point I realized that I had to change from using the broad headings, *Professional, Social, Personal and Moral/Spiritual* to an individual scenario analysis highlighting the issues that were pertinent to each participant. I began reorganizing the data. I had to consolidate the data for each dimension that is, *Professional, Social, Personal and Moral/Spiritual* for each participant at that point. I copied and pasted the relevant data and brought it together it into one file. I opened folders again this time using the name of the participant. I now worked with six different folders. I printed the copies for each participant and I began noting issues within the different dimensions for each participant and then started the writing process. The different categories served their purpose during the meaning making process but were dropped and I concentrated rather on issues embedded in them as I proceeded. It provided a good framework to work within during the initial stages but was no longer needed. Throughout the process I kept my research question, my theoretical framework and literature in mind. I was acutely aware of my research question and focused on the fact that I had to concentrate on how the participants responded to the critical incident and why they responded in the way they did. During this stage another dimension emerged. This was the emotional dimension that came largely from responding to the research questions and the use of the theoretical framework. This then permeated all the issues that were relevant in the data analysis process. In the next subsection, I will explain how content analysis was used as an approach for the analysis process.

3.7.4 Content analysis

According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p.1278) content analysis "is a research method used for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns." Three different types of content analysis were identified by Hsieh and Shannon (2005), namely, conventional content analysis, directed content analysis and summative content analysis. In the conventional content analysis coding categories are derived solely from the data and the analysis is inductive. In the directed approach it depends primarily on theory and is more deductive. The

summative approach involves identifying and quantifying key words and content followed by an interpretation of the contextual use of the words or content.

In the content analysis which was part of the second level of analysis (See Figure 2), I adopted a combination of the conventional and the directed approach to content analysis. Whilst I was concentrating on what was emerging from the data itself, using the conventional content analysis approach, I had my research question, theoretical constructs and literature in mind which directed the coding process during content analysis. I need to acknowledge that I did not enter the process with a totally naïve perspective. Potter and Levine-Donnerstein (1999) have observed that many content analysis researchers begin the analysis with a theory which makes the coding process more focussed. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) add that one of the main strengths of using a directed approach to content analysis is that the findings help to either support or contradict the theory used. It can also be used to extend the theory.

I began the content analysis by reading all the transcripts repeatedly to immerse myself in the data and obtain a holistic sense (Tesch, 1990). I then approached the text by making notes of the first impressions and thoughts. This was part of the initial analysis process although the coding had not begun at that point (Henning, 2004). Thereafter, the coding process started as I read the different segments of the data. These codes emerged directly from the transcripts or from theoretical constructs that were relevant. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) contend that the success of content analysis is largely dependent on the coding process. I used a few open ended questions to help with the coding process which was mentioned in Section 3.7.3. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) posit that if data is produced primarily from interviews then open ended questions can be used in facilitating the coding process. I intuitively turned to mind maps to organize the data and to acquire a more global perspective. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that the use of schemas in data analysis can be useful to streamline the data. It is through the coding process that researchers are able to identify ways in which the codes can be clustered or grouped together into themes or categories (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) point out that as the analysis proceeds additional codes are developed and initial codes are revised or refined. The coding process and the mind maps helped me to identify the broad categories.

Henning (2004) adds that when the researcher is satisfied that the themes or categories are representative of a reasonable part of the data; they can begin to form arguments and

discussions around them. The author further posits that themes do not have any status of findings until they are discussed and argued to make a point that is linked to the research question. Henning (2004) concludes that content analysis is an important tool for "chunking the data and synthesising the chunks again to create a new whole" (p. 6). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) highlight that one of the challenges of the conventional method and the directed method is that it may have a tendency to cloud the issues of the context. I was mindful of the context throughout the process since my research methodology was embedded in issues of the interaction between "life and context" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 11). The next subsection will explain the use of discourse analysis as a data analysis approach in the study.

3.7.5 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis was part of the second level of analysis that was used in conjunction with content analysis (See Figure 2). Talja (1999) views discourse analysis as the analysis of "interpretative repertoires" which is the "systematic examination of context dependent variability in talk and texts" (p. 461). It is argued that discourse analysis is not solely to identify the interpretative repertoires but to alert one to the power and influence of certain narratives and examine their potential effects on societal and institutional ways of functioning. Potter and Wetherell (1987) assert that through discourse analysis the reader is able to weigh the consequences of different discourses and illustrate the problems and possibilities that are illuminated by their existence. Parker (1992) adds that discourse analysis highlights the variability of interpretations and brings forth assumptions that are rarely brought to the forefront yet are implicitly part of a particular way of how individuals talk of things.

Since my study was on teachers' lives, discourse analysis provided the space to zone into issues that impacted teachers that may have otherwise been hidden or obscured. Talja (1999) argues that it makes visible certain important debates and conflicts about interpretation within society and highlights the real ambivalence of many questions and issues of a social nature. Since the study was interested in the teachers' interaction with the socio-cultural contexts in which they work and live, the use of discourse analysis was an appropriate approach to highlight and illumine the complexities and conflicts as the teachers interacted with others in their everyday lives. Volosinov (1986) contends that language is a crucial part of a person's self-understanding since words are an integral part in the act of interpretation. Talja (1999)

highlights that discourse analysis affirms that values, meanings, ethics and principles are not an individual's creation but are socially mediated through communication and social action and interview data is therefore analysed as social texts. Discourse analysis highlights how the use of language plays a crucial role in the construction of social reality (Talja, 1999). Through the use of discourse analysis, I was able to engage with the dynamics of the participant's interaction with the environment and explore the role and impact of values, beliefs and attitudes and how they responded to these issues through the use of language. The participants' world views were crucial in understanding their response to the various events they encountered.

Taylor (2001) views discourse analysis as a "close study of language in use" (p. 5) and asserts that in order to understand what is being done with language, it is necessary to consider its situated use within the context of ongoing interaction. The author explains four approaches to discourse analysis. Firstly, it is used to discover how "language in use" (p. 5) varies and links this to the social environment or between users. Secondly, it highlights how language use can be considered as a process to explore the to-and-fro interactions between parties (at least two people). Thirdly, discourse analysis is used to look for patterns of language use in relation to certain topics and issues and explores the meanings associated with it. Fourthly, it can be extended to wider contexts, for example, the analyst may investigate patterns in classifying people's activities in society. This will consider the impact of values, principles, beliefs and philosophies in the classification process. Taylor (2001) highlights "discourse as a fluid, shifting medium in which meaning is created and contested" (p. 9). Taylor (2001) emphasizes that the language user is not a detached, isolated communicator but one who is largely constrained by his or her choice of language and action, although this may not be determined. Discourse analysis proved useful in the study in exploring how the participants constructed their interpretations and meanings. These provided insights into the different influences that came to bear on them and how they responded. I was able to examine the participants' thinking and feelings through their language expression and my own positioning as a teacher.

Talja (1999) avers that through discourse analysis, the different ways of talking are systematized to reveal the different perspectives on which knowledge and meanings are derived and constructed in different historical moments. It brings to light how certain discourses produce and transform social realities as well as enables an evaluation of the

different pathways of interpreting a particular phenomenon. Discourse analysis provided another lens through which I could view the data. It provided for in depth analysis especially that life history methodology foregrounds the influence of the context in which the participants live and work. By paying attention to language use in the meaning construction process through the dynamics of social interaction, I was able to engage with my research question in a more comprehensive way.

The next section will explore the efforts made to maintain quality in the research process. In order to ensure trustworthiness in the research process, the issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability were considered. These elements will be examined below.

3.8   ENSURING QUALITY IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Since reliability and validity in qualitative research have been questioned by positivists, trustworthiness has emerged as an alternative concept (Shenton, 2004). I used the approach of Lincoln and Guba (1985) in the discussion on trustworthiness and will explain how it relates to the study in ensuring quality. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the concepts credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability can be used to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research. These concepts will be discussed below.

3.8.1   Credibility

Tobin and Begley (2004) contend that creditability is comparable to internal validity and refers to whether there is a 'fit' between the participants' views and the researchers' representation of it. Member checking is one of the most crucial ways of ensuring creditability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Merriam (2009) posits that member checks are done when the researcher solicits feedback from the participants interviewed. This is also referred to as respondent validation. Member checking was done in two respects in the research process. Firstly, the transcriptions were returned to the participants to check for accuracy and secondly, the stories developed from the transcriptions were sent to the participants to check if the narration was a true reflection of what they said. This process helped to ensure that I was not misrepresenting their perspectives and meanings in any way. Member checking is a practice in research that shows respect for participants and their rights (Rule & John, 2011).

Participants were asked to feel free to revert to me if anything needed revision or parts that needed to be removed. This was used to ensure accuracy which contributed to the credibility of the study. Peer review was a strategy used to check my research instruments and interview transcriptions. My supervisors checked my conversation guide before conducting the interviews and the transcriptions were sent to my supervisors for their review.

Another strategy that was adopted was peer debriefing. Throughout the research process I worked closely with a fellow doctoral student, who served as a critical friend. This was a reciprocal relationship as we both assisted each other in the debriefing process. This served as a platform to discuss the research process which was often deliberated upon, documents were checked and comments and suggestions were noted. These debriefing sessions helped to clarify issues pertaining to the research process and served as a space in which meanings and interpretations were explored and challenged. Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlighted that too much criticism from a peer may be damaging but overall debriefing is an invaluable experience. It helped to critique my researching skills and was useful in my own reflection process. Besides playing the devils' advocate, my peer served as a support structure when energies were depleted and became a source of encouragement. It was apparent that in the absence of my peer, my research journey could have been a lonely process. Having a peer who was a critical friend and who had full knowledge of the study added to the credibility of the research process.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability which is comparable to external validity is very different in qualitative inquiry as there is no single or 'true' interpretation within the naturalistic paradigm within which subjectivity is a central tenet (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The use of thick descriptions has emerged as a way of ensuring transferability in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). It refers to the description of the settings and the participants and provides a detailed and comprehensive account of the findings with sufficient and adequate evidence provided in the form of direct quotes from participant interviews and other documents (Merriam, 2009). In ensuring the widest range of information for developing thick descriptions, purposive sampling may be considered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I endeavoured to provide thick descriptions by using direct quotes in the data analysis process. The stories of participants were detailed accounts that depicted the events and issues that came to bear on the

participants as they interacted with the socio-cultural environments in which they lived and worked (See Chapter 4). Highlighting the influence of the contexts added to the thick descriptions which is an important tenet of life history research as emphasized by Cole and Knowles (2001).

According to Merriam (2009) striving for maximum variety in the sample selection also enhances transferability. I made efforts during the sample selection process to attain diversity in the cases to allow for a wider range of application of the findings. I looked for participants with critical incidents that were triggered by a variety of influences. This links with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) view about purposive sampling to ensure transferability. With regard to transferability in qualitative research, it is not the researcher's task to provide an "index of transferability" (p. 316) but it is his or her responsibility to provide a data base that allows for transferability judgements to be made by reader (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability which is comparable to reliability is achieved through a process of auditing (Tobin & Begley, 2004) and is likened to a "fiscal audit" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 317) that authenticates the processes by which accounts are kept. Examination of documents and processes were authenticated throughout the research process by the involvement of the peer reviewer and the research project supervisors.

3.8.4 Conformability

Conformability which is comparable to objectivity is concerned with confirming whether the research was in fact conducted and is not fabricated by the researcher (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that the best way to achieve this is to produce an audit trail. An audit trail will include all documentation pertaining to the research process. As a researcher I stored all audio recordings of the participant interviews, have filed copies of all notes, memos, emails and mind maps that were used during the research process to show an audit trail. All these documents provide evidence that verifies that the research was carried out in an authentic manner.

In the next section, I explore how I critically reflected on my 'self' as a researcher during the research process through the process of reflexivity.

3.9 REFLEXIVITY DURING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In Chapter One, a detailed explanation was provided of my rationale for conducting the study and outlining my interest in it. This declaration of my positioning within the study was important to alert the reader of my own personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study. Awareness of a researcher's positioning, biases and assumptions is referred to as reflexivity (Merriam, 2009). Due to having experienced a critical incident in my own teaching life, I believe I would have brought greater understanding to the study and this would have enhanced my sensitivity to many of the challenges, issues and setbacks experienced by the participants. However, this brings with it certain biases. Although every effort was made to ensure authenticity during the entire research process, my positioning would have invariably shaped the way I viewed, understood and interpreted the data.

Throughout the research process I was acutely aware of my positioning, my biases, dispositions and assumptions and reflected on my thoughts and feelings to keep myself in check. Finlay (2002) contends that through critical reflection employed through reflexivity researchers monitor and audit the research process increasing the integrity and trustworthiness of the findings.

Below are outlined few such moments of reflexivity:
One moment was during an interview with one of the participants who recounted her sadness and guilt at being unable to fulfil her ideals and personal goals as a teacher with regard to making a difference in the lives of her learners and expressed how disillusioned she felt about not being able to do her best as a teacher. She was so deeply affected that she broke down emotionally while talking about it. During this moment I could empathize fully as I could identify with her. During my critical incident as a teacher it was this issue that caused me the most amount of inner turmoil. After the interview was over, I felt the need to tell my story and we identified many similarities in our experiences. After the data analysis process I began to better understand my own dilemmas and conflicts I felt as a teacher, and reconciled why I had felt so strongly about resigning from teaching after my critical incident. The literature I reviewed also brought insights and new understandings to me.

In another instance, while transcribing the interview of a participant who experienced bullying by the principal, I felt anger and resentment towards the principal. For the days while I transcribed the interview I felt disturbed that someone had to endure such mistreatment. Although I personally did not experience bullying as a teacher, I began to live the experiences of my participant. As the interview transcription progressed my feelings began to change. This occurred when the participant displayed agency and started to make efforts to fight back, and eventually emerged stronger. I became aware of my own sense of relief as the participant experienced reprieve from the trauma and emotional pain. I wondered later why I felt so strongly. Was it because she felt so unhappy and depressed for so many years that affected me? Was it because I could identify with it in some way? Was it because as a teacher I too felt that one needed to be happy at the workplace, a place where a person spends most of their time? Was it that I felt strongly about issues of unfairness and mistreatment of teachers? I grappled with these thoughts and feelings.

In another instance, while conducting an interview with one of my participants I felt 'uneasiness' and 'dismantled' as she recounted episodes of drugs and sex. The interview was filled with conflict and contradictions with moments of strong rebellion against the norms of society. The interview spanned many hours and I was exhausted when I arrived home. I felt my own values and assumptions challenged during the interview and questioned my feelings and emotions. I thought, perhaps my notions of sexuality were too conservative. I wondered whether I represented a part of society against whom the participant rebelled. I took some time out before transcribing the interview to allow myself time and space to process my own thoughts, and emotions.

Lincoln and Guba (2003) view reflexivity as reflecting critically on one's self as a researcher as the instrument of the research. "It is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processs of research itself" (p. 283). Cole and Knowles (2001) add that through reflexivity the researcher becomes aware of the self, other and self-other interaction. Through the research process I found that I began to confront my own issues, issues that I have been grappling with and arrived at a better understanding of myself. Lincoln and Guba (2003) further highlight that as researchers we need to interrogate how our research efforts are shaped around "the binaries, contradictions and paradoxes that form our own lives" (p. 283). Finlay (2002) posits that reflexivity allows researchers to examine their "own personal, possibly unconscious,

reactions" (Finlay, 2002, p. 224) during the research process. Plummer (2005) adds that having a greater social self-awareness of the whole research process is crucial in life history research. What is taken into the research and what is taken out must be considered. Finlay (2002) posits that while researchers use introspection during the research process, it should not result in making personal revelations as an end in itself but should serve as a springboard for interpretation and insights. By reflecting critically, I became aware of my own feelings, thoughts and personal philosophy which promoted a certain level of understanding of how it shaped my interactions with the research and social context.

The next section addresses the ethical issues that were considered during the research process. Sound ethics are crucial while conducting research and every effort should be made by the researcher to adhere to ethical research practices.

3.10 ETHICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH

Ethical tensions exist in all kinds of research and researchers need to address them as they arise in the research process (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Marshall and Rossman (2011) state that ethical research practices and procedures are grounded in moral principles. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) identify two different dimensions of ethical practice. These include "procedural ethics" and "ethics in practice" (p. 261). Procedural ethics involve ethical codes laid down by professions and organizations and ethics in practice is the everyday practice of ethics while in the field.

In qualitative research one of the first stages of the research process involves the completion of ethical clearance documentation. I completed all the necessary documentation and submitted them for ethical clearance to the ethics committee of the university. This was part of the procedural ethics that was compulsory. After approval was attained I was able to enter the field and conduct the research (See Appendix 3). The documentation required an ethics checklist that alerted me to issues to consider when conducting the research. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) point out that once ethical clearance is obtained the ethics committee has no direct control over what the researcher does in practice once the research begins. It is therefore incumbent upon the researcher to ensure that ethical issues are carefully considered throughout the research process.

My interaction with most of my participants began with telephonic contact. It was during this time that I explained to the participants what the research entails, the purpose of the research and the steps in the research process. I discussed the various issues in the consent letter outlining that their participation is voluntary and that if for any reason they wished to withdraw they were free to do so. Participants were ensured of confidentiality and were further assured that their identities will be protected by the use of pseudonyms. Participants were requested to read the consent letter (See Appendix 2) and append their signature granting consent if they were satisfied. Christians (2003) posits that informed consent is consistent with individual's autonomy and emphasizes the need for participants to be informed about the nature and consequences of their participation. It is further argued that deception or deliberate misrepresentation is forbidden and morally unacceptable. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) point out that signing of the consent form should not be considered a matter of "jumping the bureaucratic hoops" (p. 272) instead researchers must realize that the persuading of participants to participate in the research forms the heart of the interpersonal relationship between the researcher and the participant and efforts should be made to ensure that participants have a good understanding of the research process.

Another issue that was considered was avoiding harm to the participants. This is not only physical harm but emotional or social harm (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Since my research project involved critical incidents in teachers' lives, I was mindful of any harm that participants may endure during the interview process, especially emotional harm. I was particularly concerned about one of my participants who became emotionally distraught towards the end of the interview while recounting her experience on a certain issue. She declined an offer of counselling and reported that it was a therapeutic experience since this was the first time she spoke to someone about the critical incident. This was later confirmed when I received an email regarding her response on member checking where she reported that she considered her participation in the research as a healing experience (See appendix 4).

Care, sensitivity and respect, according to Cole and Knowles (2001) cannot be prescribed or applied in an intellectual way but should rather emerge more authentically. This is achieved by the researcher engaging with the participant in a mutually respectful way. It should be felt and lived rather than applied in a strictly controlled way. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) shared similar views to Cole and Knowles (2001) about the relationship between the researcher and participant in life history research. They maintain that empathy, collaboration

and dialogue were important principles to adhere to. I was always conscious that my topic on critical incidents in teachers' lives may be sensitive and I ensured that the values of compassion, empathy, understanding, care and respect were fostered throughout my engagement with the participants.

3.11 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In this chapter, I outlined the methodological processes that were undertaken in the research study. The research design was explained highlighting the reason for conducting a qualitative, interpretive study using life history methodology. The co-construction of data production was outlined, paying particular attention to issues of context. The multiple approaches used in the data analysis were described, highlighting how the use of the different approaches enhanced the meaning making process. To ensure trustworthiness in the research process, the concepts credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability were considered and explained. My own postioning, biases and assumptions with respect to the research were explored through reflexivity. Finally, the importance of observing ethical research practices was explained. In the next chapter, I represent the six participants' stories as the first level of analysis.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHERS' STORIES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I represent the six teachers' stories that were derived from the interview transcriptions. The stories emerged from narrative analysis by writing up the stories into a coherent account reflecting the teachers' experiences. Each story represents an account of the teachers' personal experiences with the critical incident. Each of the six stories is unique and emanated from different circumstances illumining the diversity of critical incidents in teachers' lives. The stories are represented in the first person to retain the authenticity of the narrator's voice.

4.2 STORY REPRESENTATIONS

Below are the inscriptions of the six stories represented in the chapter.

Venetia's story: 'From doing my best to mediocrity… I have come too far!'

Romy's story: 'I was victimized for being part of a clique or was it more than that. I will never know.'

Julia' story: 'When making changes, changes everything'

Pritha's story: 'I was jilted just a week before my wedding'

Pralene's story: 'My stroke broke me …..My learners made me whole again'

Saiyen's story: 'My fatal motor accident'

4.3   VENETIA'S STORY

'From doing my best to mediocrity… I have come too far!'

It started on that dreadful Tuesday….

It is practice in my school when educators are absent, classes are split. I was busily engrossed in my teaching, when a few learners entered my class to remain for the day. When the learners went to be seated, to my horror, the unthinkable happened! Dilane[5] rose from his seat and violently struck one of the boys across the face. My horror changed into anger. I summoned Dilane to the front and hurriedly asked, "Dilane, why did you do that?" He retorted, "During the break this boy had a fight with me." I continued, "So how could you retaliate when the boy comes in, you know that there are teachers on duty, if someone interferes with you, you were supposed to report to the teacher on duty, you are not allowed to just attack another child." He arrogantly replied, "He must pay, he hurt me so I must repay him. He hurt me, I will hurt him too!"

My attention then moved to the boy who was by now bleeding profusely. I enlisted the help of other learners to clean the blood that was oozing from the fresh wound. I thought, "Will the boy's parent blame me for this incident, this looks serious." I looked at Dilane again, this time even more angry and asked him to kneel in front of the class. Thoughts of Dilane's poor behavior, inattentiveness in class and constantly being in trouble flashed through my mind. The policy at school was that if a learner misbehaved, you need to send the parent a letter. This letter should be signed by the teacher concerned and the Head of Department. I hurriedly, got the letter prepared and approached the secretary to allow me to see the Head of Department for the signature. She refused, stating that the management was locked in a meeting regarding some administrative issue. I followed up three times explaining the urgency of the matter but it was to no avail. The letter did not go.

That afternoon….

While I was leaving the school gate, I saw Dilane walking with someone who looked like his sister. I asked her, "Are you Dilane's sister?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Please tell your mum to come and see me, I haven't been able to send the letter. Dilane is very playful, he is naughty, and soon it is the June examination, but the main reason I want to see her, is because

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[5] Pseudonym

he hurt another boy, I need to talk to her about his behavior." The sister smiled as if she understood.

The next day….

In the afternoon, I was told that a parent was in school to see me. As I walked into the office area, I saw a lady who I guessed was Dilane's mother. I said to her, "Please wait, I am just going to hand in my keys and my register, I will be with you now." By the time I got to her, she looked visibly angry. I thought perhaps she may have been kept waiting for a long time. As I tried to explain what had happened with Dilane, she immediately went off at a tangent, accusing me of not calling her early enough about Dilane's progress and that I was to be blamed for his poor results. She kept condoning her son and kept passing the blame to me. I explained to her that the Head of Department also experienced problems with him in Mathematics and sent a letter home. I called the Head of Department in to verify this. The parent was emphatic that she received no letters from the school. When the Head of Department asked Dilane who was standing beside his mother about the letter, he looked away shyly, the guilt of not giving the letter to his mum evident in his body language. When the mother realized that her child was at fault, she became even more angry and continued to blame me. I became anxious as the meeting was not going as I had envisaged. I explained that I was not the one at fault and we should talk this through in a calm manner. She began screaming at me, saying that I could have telephoned her or sent her an email. I became emotional and was upset by her screaming. She was a big lady and I was fearful. I couldn't contain myself as she continued, I broke down. Amist tears I explained to her that I cannot telephone her as it is the school policy that we send out letters and could only telephone parents in case of an emergency. She accused me of treating her son badly and stated that if he was an Indian, I would have reacted differently. I became more emotional and appealed to her to stop condoning her child. By now both our voices were raised. The parent become angrier and moved towards me, to assault me. I felt helpless and began pleading with her not to assault me. The two Heads of Department stepped in to stop her and pulled her away from me. This meeting had gone all wrong!

The next morning…..

The school management team had a meeting and concluded that I had acted unprofessionally; by becoming emotional in the presence of the parent and that I had raised my voice when I told her to stop condoning her child. A letter was prepared to this effect and I was asked to

sign. At the bottom of the letter, the Head of Department who observed the incident asked the question as to what measures were in place to protect a teacher if a parent threatens to become violent. At this point I was still experiencing the trauma of the previous day's incident and took note only of what was at the bottom of the letter and appended my signature on it not realizing I was implicating myself.

Being charged….

It was the school holiday and I was in town busy with some shopping with my family when I bumped into the parent again quiet co-incidently. I alerted my family that that as the parent who had threatened to assault me. I could observe from her body language that she was also telling her daughter something about me, but I continued to walk on. When the school re-opened, it would seem that she had contacted the school and sent in a letter with a number of allegations about me. The principal did not discuss the letter with me or ask for my version of the incident, but instead sent the letter through to The South African Council of Educators (SACE).[6] I was surprised when I received the faxed letter from SACE with the principal's signature outlining all the allegations. I immediately took the letter to my union and asked for advice. I was advised that I should respond to all the allegations as I was being charged for misconduct. The charges were that I refused to telephone the parent about her son's progress, that I had verbally abused her and that I stated that my children are doing well at school and that I don't care about her child. I responded to all the allegations which to me were false and unfounded and sent it though to SACE.

I then received a letter from SACE stating that there will be an investigation about this matter. The principal also received the same letter. The principal immediately called a staff meeting and read the letter aloud to the entire staff. I was in total shock at his action. He did not even ask me to excuse myself, since it was about me. I was trembling as I sat listening to this. The staff members empathized with me after the meeting, but this made me even more emotional. The date was set and I was in anticipation of the visit from SACE.

In the meantime ….

I prayed to God for strength to see the year through as Dilane was extremely arrogant towards me and life as his teacher was becoming unbearable. I was taunted by the boy as the months

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[6] South African Council for Educators Act No 31 of 2000 outlined a Code of Professional Ethics for Educators.

progressed. This made me emotionally and mentally sick. Months of waiting, not knowing what to expect from the investigation was driving me insane. Rumours spread throughout the school that I, Mrs V was assaulted by the parent. When one of the Heads of Department gave a parent letter to a learner, the learner made a jet and sent it flying back to the teacher. The learner told the Head of Department, "You can do nothing to me because my mother will come to school and assault you just as Mrs V was assaulted." These incidents were reflected in the minutes of the meetings. All instances of Dilane's poor behaviour and disrespect were also noted in the minutes. A clean-up campaign was held by the management in preparation for the investigation from SACE. The management ensured that pages of the minute books were torn apart and secretaries rewrote the minutes, sanitizing them, so that the school was not shown in poor light.

The trial day finally arrived…

I was called in together with my union representative. Mr Mweli[7] from SACE started the meeting by putting his digital recorder on. I began to tremble and shake. I was feeling nervous, anxious and stressed. I couldn't believe I was being investigated for something I did not do. The first meeting was with the school management. The principal took out a large file which was a compilation of all my so called 'transgressions' of which I was not aware. One that stands out was the manner that I write reports of learner misbehavior. I once wrote a report of a learner who brought alcohol to school, assaulted other children and had concluded that "he was a law unto himself." This was highlighted as a transgression, as the words I chose were regarded as 'unprofessional'.

Being the only Coloured educator at the school was always a sensitive issue for me. I always felt I was being treated differently from the rest of the staff members; especially with regard to my teaching load. I had to always argue my case. I nevertheless, accepted a bigger teaching load as I liked the subjects I taught. I must admit that I had brought up several issues with the senior management especially with regard to learners' needs. I always made them accountable and was seen as a thorn in their side. I always felt that more could be done for the learners at our school and fought for inclusion of more activities, one being soccer for the boys.

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[7] Mr Mweli is a pseudonym

The second part of the meeting was with me and the team alone. I was asked many questions, including why I signed the letter which implicated me. I was asked about how many subjects I taught and the policies we had at school with regard to parent interviews and so on. While I gave my side of the story and stated my case, I became very emotional and felt traumatized by the investigation. I really did not know where I stood and wondered whether I was going to lose my job.

The third part of the interview was with the two Heads of Department. They were asked about my teaching load and how I performed as a teacher. I did not know all the details but after speaking to one of the Heads of Department, who observed the incident, she gave me some hope. I got the impression that the team noted many anomalies at the school. At the end, I asked the SACE representative when will l get to know the outcome of the investigation and he assured me that as soon as a meeting with the parent was held, the outcome will be sent to school and I will receive a copy via the principal. I am sad to report that to date, two years later I have not received the reply.

As for me….sadly

I am doing the bare minimum now. I will never send out a parent letter ever, I can't… I won't. Considering the pain and trauma I experienced, the humiliation, the abuse, I won't put myself through that again. Many people have asked me why I had not contacted SACE to find out the outcome. To be honest, I opened up my email page to do it, but I couldn't go through with it. I thought, "Let sleeping dogs lie." I did not want to revisit the issue again, it was too painful. It broke me… This means that I cannot do the maximum that I so much desire. I grew up on a farm and came from an impoverished background. My thinking was that if I could become a teacher, then other children who come from challenging backgrounds can also succeed, it is not impossible. But I think I was under an illusion that a lone voice, 'me' a level one educator could make a difference in the children's lives. I was just conceited and too ambitious. It is not possible. You need a team that has a vision, you need management support and support from parents, and we all need to pull together.

Violence erupts in my school on a daily basis. There is 'learner on learner' violence and 'learner on teacher' violence. I feel helpless that I cannot protect the children who are vulnerable. I feel abused everyday as a teacher. When I look around me, there is just lawlessness. Oops! I am using that word again! Once I had to be a witness for a court case. I

was busy teaching when I heard a huge commotion coming from the class next door. I peeped through the slightly opened door and was shocked to observe a learner who I had taught previously, with a huge brick in his hand ready to plunge into his teacher. I had to scream, "Cedrick![8] What are you doing?" "Put down that brick, please!" He did so after some pleading. The teacher's life was saved but I had to go to court to testify because I witnessed the incident. Going to court was not something I am familiar with and this made me uncomfortable and uneasy.

Very little teaching and learning takes place at the school. I long for just one hour of un-interrupted teaching but it is a rare privilege. I suffer from laryngitis and often lose my voice. We have been labeled the Intensive Care Unit School by the Department of Education because of the worse results in the Annual National Assessments. This means that the school is failing, the school is dying but I cannot do anything to change this on my own. I do not want to be part of something that is dying. I have always been a passionate and dynamic teacher who wants to give off my best. When I passed my Masters in Education Degree and presented my certificate to the principal to submit to the Department of Education, he said, "Mam, please, you need to leave this school, you need to go." I couldn't understand why he said this. But now I realize that a life-long learner, a reflective practitioner does not belong here. I am dying inside; I need to get out… I know there is better out there… I need to get out!

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[8] Pseudonym

4.4 ROMY'S STORY

'I was victimized for being part of a clique or was it more than that. I will never know.'

Where it all started…

The memories of that incident remain vividly etched in my mind. It is because it made such an impact on me as a person. I can just talk about it at any time. It is the relationship that I had with my principal over the years. It spanned for over six years, I cannot remember exactly. It was a negative and tense relationship that made me feel like a powerless, helpless victim. It started when I was part of a clique at school. Like in most schools, teachers form cliques, so I was part of a clique as well. It was just the two of us. I joined a clique because I was insecure and wanted to be aligned to someone. One day, my colleague had a disagreement with my principal about something that he had mentioned in the staff meeting. When she later confronted the principal, he denied having said that. My colleague immediately pounced on me to verify that the principal had actually said that. To be honest, at that time I was not sure whether he had in fact said that or not. I immediately felt the need to be loyal to my colleague, so I backed her up and confirmed that what she was saying was the correct version.

That is where, it all started. From that day onwards I was the target of his victimization and harassment. He resented me and did everything in his authority to exert power over me. I was denied all understanding and pastoral care that was enjoyed by the other teachers. If my child was ill and I wanted to leave early to take him to the doctor, permission was denied. If I wanted to go to a union meeting, permission was denied. Permission was denied for countless requests. I watched and listened to how patient and understanding the principal was towards other teachers who had the same needs. I was just being victimized. Even if I tried to make eye contact with him and wanted greet him, he will not relent. I have not experienced a more vindictive person in my life.

Targeting where it hurts the most….

When life at school was becoming unbearable, my colleague and I decided to approach the union for assistance. We documented all our grievances in what we called a 'dossier.' This dossier was submitted to the union but because the principal held a senior position in that union, all our grievances fell on deaf ears and never saw the light of day. The Superintendent

of Education (Management) (SEM) for my district was approached and at a meeting with her, we outlined all our grievances. Still nothing came of our interventions and efforts. It was being subverted. The victimization and harassment continued for many years on a daily basis. The principal was obsessed with finding something he could use against me. I remember once being called in for a meeting regarding my child who was attending the same school. Every morning I would take my child who was in pre-school at that time to his class as he was a fairly insecure child. I was called into the office and told by the principal that my child is old enough to get to his class on his own and that I should refrain from accompanying him. Not long after, I was called in for another meeting. This time it was brought to my attention by the principal that the school was not an after care facility and I should make alternate arrangements for my child after school. I came out of the meeting in tears. I could not think of an alternative plan as this was totally unexpected to me. I expected other issues but not this one. When I tried to point out to the principal that children of other teachers were allowed to come to school and why was I being treated differently. He asked me to substantiate and I explained further to make my case. He noted the names of the teachers I mentioned in the discussion and called a meeting with those teachers stating that I was accusing them of being offered privileges at the school with regard to their children. They were horrified that I could implicate them. I tried to explain that, that was not my intention and that I was only using that as an example to point out that I was treated unfairly. It was to no avail. I was devastated at the way he had turned the staff members against me. I had no intention of implicating them. It was a trap and I fell into it!

The next day to my utter surprise the SEM was at school and called me in for a meeting. Usually it was very difficult to get in contact with the SEM, let alone arrange a meeting at short notice. She reinforced to me that the school was not an after care facility and that I should make alternative arrangements for my child. I realized that I had no choice but to move the children to another school. It was one of the most painful experiences of my life. I did not have a chance to prepare the children emotionally for this sudden transition. I was emotionally upset and so were the children.

Feeling watched…

By now the victimization was consuming me. There were days, and even months that went by that I felt alone and the problems were just escalating. I was so unhappy at work. I had to constantly watch my back at school. I had to ensure that I never sat at the table and my

lessons were always well prepared, that my books were always marked meticulously and that I was teaching at hundred percent every day. I felt I was under constant surveillance for all the hours that I spent at school. This was exhausting and energy draining. It was inhuman! Initially I would talk to my colleagues about some of the issues I was experiencing. I was really naïve and trusting then. Before the day ended the message was transmitted to the principal. I guess that was their way of getting into his 'good books'.

The day I brought my new car to school….

Life growing up was very tough and we had very little luxuries so on the day I bought a brand new car, I considered it a huge achievement. Some of my colleagues congratulated me and I felt happy and excited. In the afternoon as I left the school, I was stopped by a fellow motorist to alert me that a huge nail was inserted in my tyre. He asked me to rush to the nearest garage to have it repaired. When I saw the tyre, it was clear that it was not a nail I picked up while driving, it was clearly pierced into the middle of the tyre. I did not know what to make of this, but I felt a sick feeling in my tummy. I could have had a serious accident on that day.

The obsession ….

As my principal was becoming obsessed with punishing and victimizing me, I was becoming equally obsessed with him. He started to consume my whole life. If someone would ask me how I was doing or how things were at work, I would use it as an opportunity to off load and complain bitterly about how I was being treated and how mean the principal acted towards me. I didn't realize that he had taken over my whole life. He was consuming me, my energy, my thoughts, my feelings, and my well-being. It was affecting my personal life, so much so that my relationship with my husband and my children was adveresely affected. I would become moody and impatient at times as I was too self-absorbed with the situation at school. I had no energy to focus on anything extra on the home front for all those six years. My life at home was on hold. I needed to garner all the energy I had, to cope with the issues at school on a daily basis. I sacrificed my family life at the expense of coping with this relentless victimization. There were days when I just didn't want to get up and go to work. Yet I would just drag myself there because it was my job. I had no alternative plan and felt stuck. I was already in a rocky marriage and could not even think of resigning. I had to pay for the house, the car, the food…. I also felt compelled that it was my duty to be at school, my learners needed me. Every morning I would literally drag myself out of bed, and psych myself to get

ready to go to school but it was not easy. It was very, very difficult. I used to be unhappy all the time.

The breaking point…..

One day, I woke up and realized that I could not face another day at the school. I was emotionally and mentally drained and I was breaking down. I couldn't bear the pain any longer. I called my friend in the morning and told her I cannot come to school. I simply do not have the energy. I was completely drained and exhausted. I was a wreck! When my friend heard my sobbing, she recommended that I see a psychiatrist and get some help. I was helpless and she sensed it. She looked up a psychiatrist in the telephone book and gave me the number. I made the appointment and was put off work for close to ten days. After the ten days elapsed, I was not ready mentally or physically to return to school but had no choice. My leave forms were sent to school so the principal was aware when I was returning. On the morning of the day I was to return to school, I received a threatening phone call, from a strange woman, saying that if I returned to school, I would regret it. I was still physically and emotionally weak and this call added further to the stress I was feeling. My life was now in danger. Who would believe me if I told them yet I nevertheless had to return to school.

As soon as I arrived at school, being very vulnerable and weak, I was called into a meeting, with the SGB members and senior management. The principal had briefed the SGB members while I was on leave. In the meeting I was accused being an unfit teacher, who was not putting the learners first, having taken so many days off school and I was questioned about what plans I had in place to make up the lost time. I did not expect this kind of response on the day of getting back to school. By now I felt that this was going too far and I had to find a way to get help from someone. This was becoming a difficult battle to fight and I felt ill equipped to deal with the situation. While I was aware that I was being victimized, all my efforts to bring the principal to account for his actions were being blocked and he simply continued day after day finding something new to attack me with.

I had to think of another plan…

It suddenly dawned upon me that I should resign from the teacher union I was registered with and register with another union. This process was a long one, as I had to complete the paperwork and submit all the documentation. Eventually I was ready to approach the new union with my case and presented my dossier. The new union representative was appalled at

all my grievances and promised to take up the matter in earnest. He was very forceful with the SEM and was emphatic that this matter be resolved. A meeting was held with me, the SEM, my principal, his union representative and my union representative. It was a long drawn meeting with the principal denying the grievances I had lodged. There was no resolution taken at that meeting, however, my union representative decided that he was not going to let the matter rest but was going to pursue it further even if it meant taking it to the highest level. I did not hear from my union representative again but gradually saw a shift in the principal's attitude. It was clear that something happened at that level; he was either called in and spoken to or reprimanded. I am not sure what happened but he backed off from me. I started to feel more relaxed at school and was able to get on with my work as a normal teacher. I felt relieved and could be myself again. I felt the stress slowly dissipating from my whole being. I became happier within myself and started enjoying coming to work again. My relationship with the principal is by no means normal. I have the space to at least greet him and with time I could exchange a word or two but that was as far as I could go. 'Too much water had gone under the bridge' and I could not be overly friendly.

Releasing the baggage…

I was holding on to the dossier as if it was a weapon that I could not let go of. It was almost as if I needed it to somewhat protect me. I made a decision one day that I should destroy it so that could move on from this experience. I needed to leave the past behind and move forward with more freedom. It was a symbolic act that released me from my pain, anguish and fear.

On the negative side……

The prolonged stress over the years caused me to be diagnosed with high blood pressure and diabetes and I am on chronic medication for both. I have also lost time with my family by focusing all my energy and effort in struggling with this battle at school. I have been unfair to my children for not being there for them as I should. I continued to live in an unhappy marriage because I simply did not have the energy to fight two battles at the same time.

On the positive side……

I have changed since then. I have grown in 'leaps and bounds'. As I reflect on the whole experience, I need to thank my principal for taking me out of my comfort zone. This experience turned me from a naïve, gullible, emotionally weak, vulnerable and insecure teacher to a self-assured, assertive and confident teacher. I am no more a helpless victim. I do

not need to be part of a clique. I stand firm in what I believe and state my case in a logical way. I have become a self-confident teacher who has developed more self-respect and I have earned the respect of my principal and other colleagues at the school. I have become a better teacher, far better I think. I still do my work meticulously, it's become a habit. I love my job and teach with more passion now. I feel liberated and empowered! I won the battle in more ways than one and I am proud of who I am now.

4.5   JULIA'S STORY

'When making changes, changes everything'

From Head of Department to acting principal…

When I first started teaching I was forced to move from school to school due to the implementation of the policy of rationalization and redeployment. I was at my first school only for a short time and I was then redeployed to another school. Unfortunately for me I was only there for two years and was declared in excess again and had to move on to yet another school. So this was my third school within a short time span. While I was at this school, there was a vacancy for a Head of Department in the Foundation Phase[9] and I had applied for the post. I was successful and was promoted as a Head of Department. Things were progressing very smoothly. I enjoyed a good relationship with the principal and we worked well together. About five years later the principal had decided to resign and there was a vacancy at the school. Since filling a post takes time, the SEM together with the SGB had a meeting and approached me to act as a principal until the vacant post was filled.

I thereafter moved on to becoming an acting principal. While I was in the post I realized that there were many areas in the school that needed improvement so I began implementing strategies for school improvement. My intention was to make the school run smoothly and fully functional like other schools in the area. As soon as I started instituting some changes staff members began resenting this and I sensed that they had a dislike for me.

The staff called the shots…I was not shortlisted

Nevertheless, as soon as the post of the principal was advertised, I applied for the position. After some time the shortlisting process had started by the members of the SGB. When the shortlisting was done I was realized that I wasn't shortlisted, so I decided to consult one of the members of the governing body to enquire whether the shortlisting process had taken place. He told me that the shortlisting process was completed. I was surprised and asked him why I was not informed. He told me that the staff was simply not in favour of me getting this position and his advice to me was that it will be in my best interest not to become the principal of this school. Even though I knew I was not shortlisted for the position, I had to

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[9] In South Africa the Foundation phase refers to Grade R to Grade 3

continue in my acting position until the end of the year when the interview process had started.

Facing up to the reality…

The interview process took place and the following year the new principal was to resume duty. I couldn't bear to return to school. I knew that I had to hand over to the new principal and the staff will mock me that I did not get the position and I couldn't bear this ridicule. So I decided not to return to school at the beginning of the year. After a while of being at home, I realized that this couldn't go on forever, I had to face up to what had happened and decided to return to school. When I returned to school, I gave the new principal an opportunity to speak to the staff about my position. She did not do this but instead portrayed a negative attitude towards me. It was apparent that the teachers were now on her side and whenever I said anything they would say, "We do not know anything ask the principal."

I had to return to being a Head of Department. This was proving to be very difficult as the teachers in my department did not want to interact with me regarding any of the professional matters. As time progressed the principal began taking on my role and was liasing with the teachers regarding matters that I as a Head of Department should be handling. I was not given any circulars for meetings and would hear of meetings attended by Heads of Department from others schools. They would ask me why I do not attend the meetings anymore. I realized that I was not being given the circulars by the principal. All this information was being withheld from me. The whole year went by in this manner and life for me was becoming unbearable. I realized more and more that I couldn't continue working here. It was always tense and I was unhappy.

I was thinking that the only way out was to try to get a transfer out of the school. I could get a single transfer or a cross transfer. In the case of a cross transfer, another Head of Department must be prepared to swop schools with me. This I thought was unlikely to happen as the school was far away from the city and I doubted anyone would want to swop. In the case of a single transfer, I needed to apply to a school which has a vacancy and this was not always easy, especially if no one knows you. The next option was to resign. This was too risky for me given my commitments. I had children to look after; I was still paying a bond for my home and paying for my car. At the same time I realized that remaining at the school was really difficult and I couldn't continue.

Paying the price for venting my anger…

As the days progressed I was becoming more and more frustrated. I was still feeling a lot of anger. One day I decided to approach the principal. She told me, "I know that you are scared, you are scared of me because I took your post, which is why you are acting like this. That is why you are so sour." I said, "I am not sour, I am doing my duties as a Head of Department and I am not even scared of you. You know very well what you did to get the post..." After this exchange between the principal and myself she was very bitter towards me and our relationship deteriorated. She would park her car near the office, walk in and totally avoid me. There were no meetings so we were not in contact with each other.

Isolation and alienation…

School management meetings ceased to take place as the principal used that as a strategy not to engage with me. I now only had a voice at staff meetings. However, if I mentioned something the principal would simply say, "That matter was not for discussion." Besides not to be acknowledged as a Head of Department, I was being isolated. I started to feel a sense of rejection. I felt that even the SGB did not recognize me or my worth. I was not regarded as part of management any more. The governing body would meet with the school management but I was excluded from the meetings. I felt like an outcast.

This isolation however, allowed me to spend more time in the classroom as a teacher. I spent quality time with my learners. There were no interruptions. I was not disturbed for any meetings and was fully engaged with my learners. We sang and danced and I began bonding more closely with them. I enjoyed being with them and they became my only companions at school. I was being comforted by them. I was enjoying my teaching as I could be more focussed. I could give them homework knowing that I would have time the next day to check it and allow them to complete their corrections. In the past, time was at a premium because of my duties as a Head of Department. I was always interrupted, taken out of my class for meetings, discussions and so on. During their meal times, I spent time dishing out their meals and I supervised them washing their plates. At times while I was busy teaching I would hear the siren and when I would ask the teacher next door, she would say, "It's netball training," and I would know nothing about it. I would simply just sit in my class. During this time there would be a meeting which I was not invited to. I would sit alone in my class and try to keep busy preparing for the next day or doing some marking. All this made me dislike my job, I did not like the way I was being treated. I was feeling so alone. Usually when we go to the

administrator's office to sign the time book in the morning we would chat and exchange a few pleasantries. Now if I did chat to someone the next day the principal would accuse me of saying something to someone.

Day by day things began to get worse. I could sense that the principal and staff were setting the learners as well as the parents up against me. When I did the morning assembly, it was practice to give the learners a moral lesson. I sensed a change in the learners' attitude towards me. I would watch and observe their reactions. They did not take me seriously anymore or have much respect for me.

I could see that this was also spreading to the parents as well. One day a parent approached me and enquired why I was not teaching the learners in Grade One in English. She seemed annoyed and angry. At that time there was no English first additional language offered in the Foundation Phase. The Department of Education advised that learners should be taught in their home language until they enter Grade Four but they could be introduced to it in Grade Three just as a language but not for assessment[10].This parent accused me of not teaching English in Grade One. She reported to me that one of my colleagues had told her that I was not teaching the learners English in Grade One and she was not sure why I was following this practice. I explained to the parent that when we had a meeting with the SGB and the parents, they agreed that in Grade R, Grade One and Grade Two learners should be taught strictly in the home language, which is IsiZulu and when they are in Grade Three, it can be introduced gradually. When I explained everything to the parent and showed her the Language Policy document, she then understood and told me that it was a certain teacher who brought it to her attention that I did not want to teach the children English. I began to realize that my colleagues also were trying to set the parents up against me. I felt that since I was already portrayed as being an ineffective principal, they were also trying to tarnish my image as a teacher.

My learners were also becoming victims and were being affected as well. When I was not at school, learners would tell me that the principal and some teachers were ill-treating them. They would say, "Shut up!" Don't make a noise, your teacher is not here, don't think we are

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[10] Language Policy has now changed, English is the language of instruction in the Foundation Phase.

your class teacher." I felt upset that they were getting caught in the issues that I was having at school and were being treated poorly because of me.

Trying to reach out and make amends….

I did make attempts to reach out to the principal one day when she came into my classroom, on another matter. I used the opportunity to make amends and suggested that we should work together. She reacted with suspicion and retorted that she doesn't understand where I was coming from. Eventually I realized that I could not continue at the school. She was not prepared to work with me or recognize me as a Head of Department nor could she develop me in any way. I had to find a way of getting out of the school. I was thinking that if nothing else works out, the last option was to resign. I had to move out. Life was becoming unbearable for me.

I was a perceived as a threat …I knew why

The principal saw me as threat for many reasons. Firstly, I was acting in that position before and even the SEM acknowledged that I was doing a good job. The principal was never in a management position before and has no experience whatsoever in management. She was a level one teacher and had now become promoted to principal. Moreover, I had nineteen years of experience and she had only eight years of experience. She had just a teaching diploma while I was busy with my Masters in Education Degree. Principals and teachers from the neighbouring schools learnt of the situation and advised the principal that if she wanted to manage that school effectively, she needed to take me closer to her because I knew the school very well. I could see that this was unlikely to happen.

Feeling consoled…

During this period I was busy with my Masters in Education Degree at the university. Even for this I was being mocked. My colleagues will say, "Ohhh, Julia is the learned one, but a Masters degree is not important, experience is important." While I was at lectures my fellow students had come to know what I was experiencing. I could not help telling them about it since I was so badly affected by it. They were my support structure and in our group we were like brothers and sisters. My pillar of strength though was my lecturer. I went to her one day and poured my heart out. She downloaded some literature and pointed out to me that my situation was not a new phenomenon. She said that this was happening internationally and my situation was not unique. She made me understand that it was not me as a person that they

disliked; it was just that I was posing as a threat. She advised that I move out of the school and leave them alone in their own territory. This really consoled me as I realized that this was not personal. By then I was already beating myself up thinking about why I was portraying myself in such a way that I was so hated by everyone. It was affecting my self-esteem and my self-confidence. I was feeling like a failure.

One day we had to make a presentation in class about ourselves using a collage. My collage had four pictures, one was a bee, the other was a woman crying, the other, a group of friends having tea and the last picture depicted a person reading. I explained how I saw myself as a bee, always busy with my work and dedicated. I am a like a workaholic. As for the woman crying, I explained how I was feeling at that time. I was a broken person who was very unhappy. I said that I am crying also because my personality was somehow at stake, because I know myself. I am a very charismatic and happy person, but I was being affected by things around me. As for the picture of the friends enjoying tea, I explained how I was a very outgoing person who liked to be around people. I was a jolly someone who liked to laugh and have fun. The last picture was about a person reading. I explained how I loved reading and being professionally developed. I liked learning new ideas and new skills and therefore always encouraged teachers to study. So really, my personality and my way of working as well as my perceptions about teaching were not in sync with the others at my school. I therefore needed to leave one way or another.

Department of education needs to take responsibility…

My feeling is that the Department of Education is contributing to these problems. They have given the governing bodies at the schools the power to choose the principals. The teacher unions who sit in during the interview process have their own candidates in mind. They work closely with the governing bodies. There is bribery and corruption taking place. If a person wants the post they give bribes and they get the post. In this instance I had nineteen years of experience and the new principal only had eight years of experience with no management experience. I think the department of education has to deploy a task team to monitor this. They need to ensure that those who get these positions really qualify for it. This has not happened only in my case but in many other cases which is what teachers are complaining about. When the new person comes on board problems begin because the person lacks experience and that is the problem we are facing with our education system.

My escape…

The situation that I faced at the school continued for the whole year and thereafter I got my release. One of my lecturers told me about a position at the university and encouraged me to apply. I got the position and to me it was the 'gateway to heaven.' I don't think that everyone going through my situation would have got this break and I consider myself very fortunate, really. I feel I am now where I can learn and grow. I feel acknowledged and recognized. I am still teaching but at another level. I am now an early childhood development lecturer and I often draw on my examples from being a teacher in the Foundation Phase to make my classes more effective. I feel that this is where I belong. I am glad I left the others in the territory where they belong.

4.6 PRITHA'S STORY

'I was jilted just a week before my wedding'

The wedding plans…

I grew up as a Hindu, but when I was old enough to decide which religion I wanted to belong to, I changed to become a Muslim. I was in a relationship with a teacher who is also a Muslim. We were planning to get married at the end of the year when we both were on school holidays and family members were on leave. During our recent courtship my fiancée and I were spending a lot of time together. I was staying over at his home during weekends and during family functions. The family was very good to me particularly because they considered me as a 'revert'[11] and it was regarded as a great blessing to have someone who has become a Muslim to join the family. They were always attentive to my needs and went to great lengths to ensure that I was comfortable. I was enjoying more attention than they were giving to their own daughter.

During the first term school break, I spent almost two weeks at my fiancée's home because of a family function. At the end of the two weeks when it was time for me to return home, my fiancée suggested that we should get married sooner. When this was discussed with his parents, his mother particularly was not in favour of the idea of such short notice for a wedding and it was decided that more time was needed for the planning.

My mother, who is a single parent, was invited to a family meeting to discuss the wedding plans. When we arrived at their home, to our surprise we noticed that their wider family members were also present. My fiancée, who picked me up, was also shocked to see such a large gathering and so much food prepared. I realized that it was a Muslim tradition but we were most unprepared for this. We had come directly from a fishing trip. After much contestation about the date, it was agreed that the wedding will be on the 18th of May. It was suggested that we have a small wedding but I was against this because the people who I was planning to invite were not so much my family members but the staff from my school, the staff from my mother's school (she also was a teacher), and high level members of the teacher union to which I belonged. Although I was still a young teacher, I held a senior

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[11]Many Muslims prefer to use the term 'revert' instead of 'convert'. 'Revert' is the return to a "former condition or belief". See http://islam.about.com/od/converts/g/revert_gt

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position in the union. I felt a hall would be an appropriate venue. I was then told by the family that if I wanted the wedding at a hall, I had to book one myself and pay for it. My mother had taken a loan to meet these costs. I found a suitable hall and invited my fiancée's family to view it. They seemed happy and I confirmed the booking and paid the deposit.

In the interim, my fiancée who did not have a permanent teaching post held a temporary position at a school about four hours away from home. He was therefore not around for three weeks before the wedding. I had to liase with his family on my own and had to cope with lots of issues and stresses regarding the booking of the hall and my wedding dress. After I had paid the deposit for the hall, I was asked to change the venue. I refused as I had given the family an opportunity to view it prior to making the booking. All this was causing tension.

After much negotiation from my end through the union, my fiancée returned to a teaching post nearer home. It was a relief as I did not have to cope with the family dynamics on my own. A week before the wedding I began to feel unwell and realized I was pregnant. We decided to keep it between my fiancée and myself.

No one was going to stop me from attending the union meeting…

It was decided that the Nikka[12] will be conducted on the Friday before the wedding. I was told that it was not necessary for me to attend; only a family representative should attend. I was happy with this arrangement because a very important regional union meeting was taking place on Thursday and Friday, during that same weekend and delegates from all over the country were attending. I realized that I could still attend. I personally did not see any problem with this because the wedding was at eight in the evening on Saturday and I would have plenty of time to be ready.

It was a week before the wedding when my fiancée's father called early one morning. He informed my mum that I should not be attending the union meeting during the week of the wedding. I did not return his call because I wanted to attend. To me attending the meeting was not negotiable. I wanted to go and I had to go. A while later my fiancée called to say that according to the Islamic custom, it was not proper for me to attend the union meeting, especially that it was on the day of the Nikka, in fact I shouldn't be attending any function

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[12] Nikka is a traditional Muslim marriage contracting with both families

during this time. My fiancée was totally against me attending the union meeting and his family accused me of not conducting myself as a proper Muslim woman. They could not understand how I could attend the union meeting just before my wedding. To me this meeting was more important than my wedding and I was not prepared to miss it. This started huge arguments between my fiancée and I and he gave me an ultimatum that if I wanted to attend the union meeting the wedding was off. At this stage the family did not know that I was pregnant and my fiancée explained to me that if we didn't get married our child will be born as an illegitimate child. From the conversations, my mum realized that I was pregnant and was concerned that this was causing too much stress.

Breaking the news…

It was week before the wedding and I felt that the family needed to know that I was pregnant. I thought this may change things. I asked my fiancée to tell his parents but he refused. I decided to do it myself. I decided to go to his father's workplace to tell him as I did not want to go to their home. His father called me and informed me to meet at their house. I was so desperate to have a representative from a mosque to accompany me so that I would be clear about the Islamic customs but that did not materialize. Anyway, I went to the meeting without any representation. Again, many family members were in attendance and his father stated that I had four options to choose from. Firstly, I could abort the baby, secondly, I could have the baby and give it up for adoption, thirdly, I could have the baby and bring the child up on my own or lastly, I could give the baby over to them and they would raise the child. Before I could respond my fiancée told the family that he had discussed the option of an abortion with me and I refused. He told them that I had decided that I was keeping my child. After much debates and disagreements, I reiterated that I was keeping my child and left the meeting.

The wedding was off…

On the Wednesday before the wedding I sent an email to my guests informing them that the wedding was off. I felt really embarrassed to do this, particularly to tell the union members, especially that I have a very high reputation in the union. It came as shock to everyone that this happened to me. Fortunately for me I am small built and my pregnancy was not showing at that stage. This was a huge relief for me. I had to cancel the wedding venue and lost the deposit.

The union's support…

I went to the union meeting as planned. At the meeting I explained to everyone what had happened and how I was told by my fiancée and his family that I could not attend the meeting. I told them that the meeting was more important to me than the wedding so I made my decision to attend the meeting. I told them also that my fiancée said that the wedding was off and if I wanted any support I should get it from the union. They all assured me that they will support me, even if I needed financial support they can all contribute. They explained that there are more than sixty thousand union members in the country and if each one contributed one rand, I will have enough money to bring up my child alone. They assured me that they will support me even during the birth of the baby even if it meant a bus load of them coming on the day I gave birth. They would all wear their t- shirts and will be there at my side. They said I should not fear anything.

…he let me walk in shame!

I waited for the day of the Nikka to see if there was any response but nothing happened. I waited for the Saturday of the wedding and still nothing happened. So on the Sunday I sent a message to my fiancée that I wanted nothing to do with him and that I will be living on my own. After a while of having no contact, my ex-fiancée contacted me to ask me if he could still be the father of the child even though our relationship was over. I spoke to my mother and we agreed that he could. He had come with me for a few of the doctor's appointments and was seeing the growing baby. I could not understand how he could see the baby and still not feel anything. To me this baby was planned. We wanted to have a baby. We decided on a name earlier on in our relationship. At the last appointment with the doctor he approached me and told me that he would like us to have a Nikka. I refused saying that he had an opportunity and he ruined it. I had begged him during the time of the wedding that we go ahead with the Nikka but he refused. To me it was too late for that now.

I have lost all feelings I had for him and I am over with this relationship and I won't go back on that. I feel that he allowed me to walk in this world in shame and I cannot bear that, let alone want to marry him. This incident has brought shame not only to me but to my whole family. Indian people refer to someone who is pregnant before marriage as being "spoilt." Yet it is not like that, this baby was planned, we were going to get married but he left me five days before my wedding. This was not my fault and it is not as if I was pregnant and was

trying to have a wedding. This really annoyed me. I could not explain this to everyone because they would be thinking that my fiancée left me because I was pregnant.

To me this incident ruined my good reputation. Although I came from a single parent home, all of us at home are doing well. Usually when children are from single parent homes there are issues, but in our case we proved everyone wrong, especially my wider family members. This incident now was going to bring a lot of gossip. My sister and I had our degrees and I was studying further completing my Honours Degree. We were driving decent cars and we are independent. To my wider family members degrees were not important, being married and being well settled was more important. We were the only girls in the family who went up to tertiary level and this incident has marred our image.

Returning to school on that Monday…

When I went to school after the weekend, I continued as normal as if nothing affected me. I taught the entire day. The only time I cried was when I told my Grade Ten leaners about the incident because they knew I was getting married that Saturday. They asked me about the wedding and I had to tell them the truth. I also had to tell them that I was pregnant, because these are high school children and I was going to start showing soon, so I couldn't hide this from them. When I told them what happened I broke down in class. I felt so emotional more especially because I was supposed to be their role model. I always wanted to live my life to be a good role model for the children; after all I am their teacher. It just happened that another person's decision was now affecting my life that I am no longer a good role model to my learners. Yet the irony is that my learners who were pregnant, their boyfriends who made them pregnant were still with them. I waited until I was twenty five years; carved a career yet this happened to me. How can I now tell them that what they are doing is wrong? This is what made me really break down. I never cried at any other time.

They were very comforting and kind to me and even offered to help wherever they could. The boys were very angry; they wanted to assault my fiancée. They asked me for his address and said that they will sort him out for me. They had already met him because he had come to school to see me once. Since he is a teacher he greeted them and then spoke to me. He was formally dressed and looked very professional. They couldn't believe that he could do this to me. I have a very close relationship with my students and they were very disappointed and hurt that I had to go through this pain. My students are mostly Coloureds and Africans yet I

relate to them better than I would relate to Indian students. Not long ago I was sent overseas as a youth ambassador representing the union. I went as an Indian representative but when I returned I told everyone that I do not consider myself an Indian anymore. I am a South African. I developed a new identity and this was a huge shift for me.

The teachers at my school were shocked that I could be strong. I was laughing and joking as normal. I never took leave or stayed away from school during this period. I think it is because I am resilient. I am on Facebook and my friends overseas knew I was getting married and were all waiting for the wedding pictures. I had no pictures to post on Facebook. I had to inbox them telling them that there was no wedding. That was very difficult for me to do.

This incident has just shattered me…

During this period all my memories of my relationship as well as dreams for the future were destroyed. I trusted my fiancée and we did so much together. I felt so let down. Everything took a new perspective for me, right down to the fact that I did not want this child to be a girl. I wanted a boy. I was devastated when I found out that the baby was a girl. I was depressed for a whole day. I felt that no matter how I raise my child someone will destroy her life for no reason. My point is, I went ahead and studied and do not want to be controlled by others. In that case, I should have finished school, and just got married and just been a subservient wife. I became a career person and I am independent, does this not count for anything?

I see the children I teach differently…

I love being a teacher. I always want to do my best. When I went to this school I asked for my classroom to be re-painted to create a better teaching environment. The school refused, so I decided to buy the paint and painted it myself. I painted the walls and the door blue. When you enter my class, it is totally different from the outside. I bought my own charts and all the things that were necessary to teach effectively. I even bought my own textbooks because the school did not have a variety of textbooks that I could use for lesson planning. I bought additional stationery so that the children who didn't have any could use them. While I organized all this, there was still a lot that I was not aware of about the children. This incident has brought to light different dimensions.

I now think about my learners who are pregnant and who continue with their schooling. We as teachers don't support them in anyway. We don't check if they have a special needs or

how they are coping. Presently, I am getting sick at school, I feel frequently hungry, I need to go to the toilet often, yet the pregnant girls do not get any special preference. If I did not go through this experience, I would never have understood what our girls go through at school. My fiancée left me and I am so distraught. It has made me think about the girls who are pregnant who are going through a similiar situation. They have to deliver their babies and come back to school. I wondered how they were coping with their emotional issues and how they coped with their schoolwork. During this period I feel that my concentration levels are affected and I am going through so many changes. I am wondering about how these learners can be treated as normal children yet they are not normal, they are going through a lot.

The day I told my learners about my story, they opened up and told me about the most horrific problems that they were facing at home. While they consoled me that I will cope as a single mother, they told me all about their problems. I realized that I am not teaching ordinary children. It was a rude awakening for me. I realized that my teaching strategies were not correct. I realized that there is so much behind their smiles. It is the same smile I am putting on. I realized that as teachers we scold the learners and punish them, not realizing what they are going through. Some of my learners fall asleep in class and now I realize that there may be a reason for this. In the past I did not give this much thought. Now it has made me think twice and question why this may be happening to them. It is easy to say, "Oh, these children are so naughty, they misbehave….it is so frustrating." Yet we do not understand what they are going through. All these things started to open up my teaching.

I have changed the way I do things, especially how I make my worksheets. I also realized that I ask the learners to write notes and summarize from the textbook. It may be little things but I realized that they may not get a chance to read the textbook at home, considering what they are going through. I cannot use the strategy of 'you read and come and tell me about it tomorrow.' I have also relooked at the way I set the examination papers. I worry about what kind of questions I ask. I realize that the issues they are going through are huge. Sometimes we have prescribed answers but their thinking is different and it needs to be accommodated. All this has changed how I am as a teacher.

4.7 PRALENE'S STORY

'My stroke broke me …..my learners made me whole again'

Bearing it...quietly

I was going through a period of prolonged stress from coping with an unhappy marriage. I came from a very traditional Indian home and I was taught that whatever problems one experiences in a marriage should be endured. Also, it was the duty of the wife to keep the family together no matter what the circumstances. I did not discuss my marital problems with anyone from the outside, not even my doctor, my close friends or my wider family. The stress I guess began to take its toll on me and I started suffering from severe headaches. It was at this time that I went to the doctor. He pointed out to me that my blood pressure was very high and put me on medication. I took the medication and thought that I will be fine.

The thought of a serious illness never crossed my mind…

One Monday, while I was at school, I began to feel very ill and could not cope. I went to my Head of Department and informed her that I felt very ill and I needed to go home. When she looked at me she told me that my eyes were red and I needed to see the doctor. She asked me whether I could drive home. I assured her that I will be fine. As I drove on the highway, I noticed something peculiar with the car in front of me. I saw the car filled with electrical wires and it was short circuiting. I wondered why it was not affecting my car, but I thought that perhaps my car was low so I was not feeling the impact. I debated whether I should warn the driver as I thought the car would burst into flames at any moment. I then passed the car and as I drove on I began to feel the road leaving me. I was confused as to what was going on. I wondered whether it was me because I was not feeling well. I panicked and thought I needed to get to the doctor as quickly as I could. When I got to the doctor's rooms, the doctor examined me and again he told me that my blood pressure was very high. He gave me an injection and some medication to calm me down and asked me to go home and rest. I went home and rested for the afternoon. That night I felt very restless. My jaws were tightening; I was breaking into sweats and was experiencing epileptic fits. My dog was sleeping in his basket alongside my bed and was constantly getting me up. He was trying to pull me out of bed and I think he was perhaps, trying to make me snap out of the fits. This continued until the morning. I did not know what was happening. There were no thoughts that I was seriously ill.

When my daughter woke up, I told her that I did not feel too well and I think I needed to go back to the doctor. She noticed that I fell twice as I tried to walk. She asked me what was happening and I told her that I think there was water on the floor just to shrug her off. She checked and told me that there was no water. She became concerned and told me that something was wrong as my speech was slurred as well. She suggested that she would accompany me to the doctor. I assured her that once I take a shower I will be fine. While my daughter took a shower, I did something very dangerous when I think of it now. At that time I did not know what I was doing. Without telling my daughter, I got into my car and drove off as if on my way to the doctor.

I woke up… a different person

I was found at the trauma unit of the hospital where I collapsed and went into a coma. I heard from others that my car was found parked at the parking lot with a lot of shopping done for a birthday party. There was a cake and lots of sweets and chocolates as if I was preparing for someone's party. When I came into the hospital I had apparently handed two thousand seven hundred rands to a nurse asking her to pay my electricity bill. When I collapsed, a nurse recognized me as someone who visits her neighbour and quickly telephoned my relative and told her what had happened. My relatives were shocked and decided to contact my children. My then husband and children came rushing to the hospital. I did not know anything at that stage but could hear from my subconscious mind that people were talking and I could also hear crying. It was my family who were at my bedside. They were very concerned about whether I would come out of the coma or not. When my aunt felt my legs, they felt cold and she informed the family. They thought I was going to die and were very troubled. Fortunately, I came out of the coma two days later but I had endured a stroke on the left hand side of my body. I could not walk, I could not talk, my sight was affected and worse of all my face was completely disfigured on the left side. It looked half white and half black because I have a light complexion. I was not aware of this until a week later because my children refused for me to be shown a mirror. It was ironic because at school I was nick named the 'make-up queen' because I always took care of myself, and was very particular about my physical appearance.

My persistence to return to school…

I became agitated in hospital; I felt I was just lying there without much happening. I wanted to be discharged and return home where I could recuperate in more comfortable

surroundings. My doctor had to eventually agree to a forced discharge and decided to treat me from home. While I was resting at home, I realized that if I just continued the way I was, I was going to degenerate into a 'cabbage' and was going to die. I was tired of just being confined to my bedroom day after day. I was not used to that kind of life. Everyday all I saw in front of me was my cream built in cupboards. Although my daughter took me out of bed now and then, I was still very frustrated. As the days passed, I was becoming more and more restless. I began to long to be back to school with my learners. I was very insistent on returning to school. My daughter thought that was a ridiculous idea. She pointed out to me that I am just a number in the Department of Education and if anything happens to me it will be a loss to the family since finding a replacement for me will be easy. I nevertheless continued to nag my doctor that I wanted to return to work.

It was the end of the school term and the teachers were having a get together at a friend's house. Since I was always the chief organizer of all social functions at school, the staff could not bear to go without me. The secretary called my daughter and asked her to bring me to school and they would take me to the function. My daughter agreed very reluctantly and left me with one of my close friends at school and explained to her that she was totally responsible for my well-being. I was happy to get out of bed. My colleagues helped me to the car and we all went to the party. I sat around while everyone enjoyed the party and chatted with some of my friends. I felt good to be out and around my colleagues again. This outing created a greater urge in me to want to return to school.

The unexpected welcome…

I begged my doctor to sanction my return to school in the new term. He kept delaying the decision and eventually relented after I agreed to rest at home for an additional week. I was pleased with that so after a week I made plans to return to school. I hired a driver with a van so that he could drive me closer to my classroom up a grassy patch because I was at the top block of the school. When I arrived, I was helped to my classroom as I was still using a walking frame and could not walk unaided. When I got to my classroom, I experienced a great surprise. All the learners from my Grade R class burst into a scream of joy and excitement. I did not expect that. The happiness and joy that I felt was unbelievable. I felt needed and loved and I realized that I was doing something right as a teacher. I felt something happening to me at that moment! I then looked around my class and absorbed the surroundings. It looked familiar and bright. I recognized all the charts and aids that I had

made. Again I felt something happening within me. I started remembering again. It was amazing! It felt so right for me to be there.

The entire management team was there, quite disturbed that I could return to school in this state. I could not speak well, I could not walk properly and I looked so 'beaten up'. They explained that I was taking a huge risk and was also putting them in a difficult position. The management team felt that I was in no position to be back at work. They were anxious to leave me alone with the learners. The learners sensed that the management team was reluctant for me to remain. One little boy cried out aloud, pleading, "Please don't take my teacher away, I want my teacher, leave her here." The management team looked stunned, not knowing what to do.

All I wanted at that stage was to be left alone with my learners. I have a reputation of getting on well with the school community, and at the moment of my utmost need, a parent who brought in her Grade R child to school offered to remain with me. She offered further to come in everyday and assist me with the learners. Thereafter she helped me daily to get from the vehicle to my classroom. We both started working well together. I showed her what activities to prepare for the day and guided her in implementing them. I offered her some remuneration as I felt so appreciative of her generosity in offering to be my assistant.

In the meantime, there was no replacement teacher sent to the school. The then acting principal was terrified to have a teacher at school who could not walk and who could not speak properly. The school management requested that the SEM who was responsible for the school to intervene and discuss the situation. He came to the school a month later. When he arrived he was shocked that I had continued to come to school in this condition. He immediately stated that I was to be put on leave for three months at least. I refused saying that I want to be at school with my learners. As a compromise he said I should rest and heal at home for at least a month. I told him that I do not want even another day at home. He stressed that I was coming to school at my own risk. I assured him that I understood that very well. He left realizing that I was adamant about remaining at school.

My learners…. my therapists
By now the parent assistant began to understand me and what I was saying after spending time with me in the classroom. Even if I spoke and someone did not understand, she would

explain. I started walking with my walking frame daily along the school block as exercise. My speech was still slurred and I was finding it difficult to pronounce certain words. I continued with my teaching and did everything that I could possibly do. One day all my learners were seated on a carpet and I was doing an activity with them. A little boy seated in front of me realized that I was struggling to say the word 'green.' He spontaneously took over the role of the teacher and began doing exactly what I would do when I taught them. He started to teach me how to pronounce the word. He said, "Mam, look at me, this is how you need to shape your mouth." He encouraged me to imitate him. I dropped my role as a teacher and took on the role of a learner and began to learn how to pronounce the word. It was just amazing how this happened and I will never forget it. Every day as I taught my learners I began to become rehabilitated. The learners were superb. They did not judge me but embraced me and were ever willing to jump up to help and support in whatever ways they could. If I was a few minutes late in the mornings they will not let go of their parents for fear that I may not come to school. When I would arrive they would be so relieved and happy. They somewhat felt safe with me.

There's no escape from society's judging…

It was not easy coping with my changed physical state. Wherever I went people would gossip and I would sometimes overhear it. Even the older learners at school were talking that I was badly beaten up by my husband and that is why I was looking like that. One of my colleagues who is the Head of Department in the senior phase was upset and intervened in the matter. I told her, let it be, they are only judging by what they see on the outside and they did not know any better. Similarly, when I went anywhere in public people would stare and talk about what they think had happened to me. I learnt to cope with all that. When I went to the dermatologist about my face, he advised me to leave it alone. He told me that they were blood clots which will go away eventually, although he could empathize how I felt about being in public.

I won the battle…I was honoured

As days and months passed, the clots started to slowly disappear and one day I woke up and they were all gone. After about six months, I began to walk without an aid and my speech returned almost to normal. I still find difficulty with pronouncing some words, especially when I am under pressure. My school organized a special award function for me. They invited the SEM and I was awarded the 'Top Teacher Award' of Tygerville Primary

School[13]. It was the first time that such an award was presented at my school. I have a huge trophy to remember this day. We are a very poor school located in a disadvantaged community. I know that organizing all this would not have been easy. I was so touched and felt so honoured by this gesture.

Even my doctor confessed that he has never met someone as determined and positive as I was to return to school. He said I displayed the will to fight back and to survive. My daughters recall that I was forceful and obstinate about returning to school. One day we had a school functionality visit by officials from the Department of Education. The subject advisor was surprised to see me holding onto my walking frame and teaching my learners. She said, "Oh my God! I didn't know that a teacher comes to school like this." I continued with the lesson and she left. She enquired from the principal and she was told the whole story. She was taken aback and said, "Well, I admire that teacher."

Just to let you know…

The teacher assistant that was with me became inspired to become a Grade R teacher. I assisted her in finding a college and supported her with her studies. I am happy to report that she is now a qualified Grade R teacher and is teaching at present.

I will stop at nothing to do my best as a teacher…

When I look back, returning to my learners healed me completely. I would not have been able to do this any other way. They gave me all the love and support that I needed to heal. I received occupational therapy and physiotherapy in my classroom from being with my learners. I could not believe that the children loved me so much, because I am a disciplinarian and am very firm about the discipline.

My colleagues were incredible. They supported me throughout my journey to healing. We are a family at school. We may have our little differences but we are a very close unit. I feel that I owe a lot to my learners, my colleagues and the community. I teach in a very poor community and will do everything I can to uplift them. I am never absent from school even if I am unwell. Whatever activity the school embarks on, I am there in full support even if it not my duty. I owe my life to the school and feel ever indebted to the community. I have acquired

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[13] Pseudonym

the drive and motivation to go the extra mile. I love my learners and being at school makes me happy. I have learnt that teaching is not a job for me, it is a calling. I was destined to be a teacher; it was in the grand plan of my life.

4.8   SAIYEN'S STORY

'My fatal motor accident'

It altered the way I conceived myself and it changed the way others looked at me…
I was a young teacher, only twenty four and in the prime of my life. I was returning home from working on a community project in an informal settlement when I woke up thinking I was in my bed but wondered why I was so awkward. I caught sight of someone knocking on my window asking if I was all right. I realized I was in an accident, a serious one. The 'jaws of life' had to release me from my badly mangled car.

During the first few hours in hospital, I was in excruciating pain as I underwent x- rays. A few days later the doctor broke the news to me. I will never walk or work again. I had endured a spinal injury and was a paraplegic. At that stage I did not understand fully what all this meant. The first few months in hospital were the most trying as I came to terms with the loss of the lower part of my body. I felt totally disconnected with it. The doctors initially suggested that they would operate on the spinal column. They would insert metal pins which they called 'Harrington rods', to stabilize the spinal column and then discharge me. They told me that with this procedure I would never walk again. I was fortunate that a consultant who had visited me suggested to the doctors that they take a more conservative approach and let me recuperate on my own. This was a very agonizing journey, the pain was extensive and I had to be sedated most of the time with very strong drugs. I was lying on my back all the time, I could not move, or turn in bed. I could not eat or drink and I was fed by the nursing staff and family members. This went on for many months.

Initial acceptance of my fate….
The doctors suggested that because I will never be able to walk, I will need institutional care and I would probably have be sent to an institution, like the Aryan Benevolent Homes where I would spend the rest of my life. I thought that since the doctors and specialists were experts in their field, they knew best and that I should accept this as my fate. I felt upset, angry and

depressed. I was a very active person who enjoyed outdoor activities and sport. I played squash, was jogging regularly and was planning to run the comrades marathon soon. I was already in a steady relationship and marriage was on the horizon. I had to now accept this changed state of being.

The miracle…

On Christmas day, just three weeks later, a miraculous event occurred. My little toe moved. I became excited as I felt that something was connecting again. When I told the doctor, he smiled amusingly saying that those were phantom movements and I should not pay attention to them. I told my physiotherapist about what happened and she told me that if my toe really moved then I can get the others to move as well. She said she was willing to work with me if I was up to it. I thereafter spent most of my waking hours at the physiotherapy department and would return to my bed exhausted on a daily basis. It was very hard work; literally pushing myself to get my body to do what I was told was impossible.

The five hours of physiotherapy a day was paying off. I was beginning to move my feet and legs after tremendous effort. This was the turning point for me. Just attempting to move my legs a few steps took the effort of a person running a hundred kilometre marathon. I persevered nevertheless, with faith that I could do it. Intuitively I knew that my little toe moving was a sign that I could walk, but the rest was up to me. I drew my strength from my own positive disposition, which I think was inherent in me and most of all from my faith that God would come through for me. Fortunately for me I was introduced to spirituality by my parents from a very young age. I had read a lot of spiritual literature by then, listened to music and discourses by my spiritual guru, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I think my will and strength to fight back was acquired largely from my confidence that there was a higher source that I could rely on.

Life in hospital…

I settled into life at the hospital. I enjoyed the tremendous support I received from family and friends. My family visited me twice a day. My dad was very encouraging, he would bring articles to hospital about people who triumphed against adversity and read them to me. My friends would visit often, though initially they did not know what to say, but when they saw me smiling and making light banter they would relax and realize that only my physical state had changed. Members from the spiritual organization to which I belonged were always there

and willing to assist in whatever way they could. The hospital was fairly close to my school so the teaching staff from school visited me regularly together with former and present students. My principal assured me that my position as a school counselor will still be there when I was ready to return. Subject advisors from the Department of Education also visited me. All this helped to keep me positive and hopeful. It gave me the strength to keep fighting back.

The nursing staff at the hospital was fantastic. I remember reading a book on a glass plate above my bed and would ask one of them to turn the page as they moved around. They would so readily oblige. On the down side, some people who visited me would respond negatively on seeing me and hearing about what had happened. They would click their tongues and show pity on me. Some would ask me if I was married and say how lucky I was that this happened while I was still single. Sadly, visits by my girlfriend to the hospital became less frequent and the 'writing was on the wall.' At this stage I was too busy trying to get my life back on track so I did not spend too much time dwelling on the negatives aspects.

Life after hospital…

After seven long months in hospital I was discharged and was able to walk on crutches very tentatively. I was still not confident and had to continue with physiotherapy three times a week. My home was not accessible for a person on crutches or a wheelchair, so I had to literally crawl up a few stairs to enter. When I felt a bit stronger, I one day asked my dad to drive me to school to assess whether I could walk to my office which was about two hundred metres from the car park. It turned out to be a huge ordeal, with lots of pain and effort. What would take a normal person one minute took me fifteen agonizing minutes.

Quitting work was not an option as the policy with the Department of Education was that a teacher needed to be in the profession for at least ten years to be medically boarded. I did not meet that criterion. Moreover, I could not see myself not working at such a young age. Mentally, I was still fairly strong although I had an altered physical state.

Returning to school…trial and triumphs

At the beginning of the fourth term, I made an effort to return to school and the principal advised that adjusting was going to be difficult, so he would ask the substitute teacher to remain and share my workload. As much as I appreciated his understanding and care I

gathered that he sensed that I would not return in the new term. I was walking very awkwardly with my crutches, I had lost a lot of weight and I was still physically weak.

The first week of being back at school proved to be very difficult and challenging. I had almost thrown in the towel. It was too exhausting. I would get home in the afternoon and just sleep all through the night to the next morning. Walking to my office from the car park was my first hurdle. To add to that the school was not accessible for a disabled person. Moreover, being a guidance counsellor required me to work very closely with the principal and the principal's office was up a flight of two sets of stairs. So I had to negotiate those stairs whenever he needed to discuss a case with me. The other problem was that the telephone was in the secretary's office so it was really a challenge for me to get there to make or take calls. Another challenge was going to the staff room during break took lots of effort and time. By the time I reached the staffroom, the break was over. I then realized that it was best to have my sandwiches alone in my office.

I found that at the beginning, I was very nervous about the way my students would look at me and how they would respond, but I was fortunate that they did not really see the disability or the awkward way that I walked with the crutches. During the breaks when I was sitting alone in my office and having my sandwiches, they would pop by and chat with me. They were always on hand to assist whenever I needed help whether it was tying my shoelaces, carrying my bag, taking messages or running errands. Members of staff were also very helpful and supportive. One of them offered to pick me up from home daily, took me to school and brought me back home in the afternoon. They would open doors for me and assist with the physical aspects that challenged me. All the support I received at school gave me the space to re-enter into the role that I had played previously. As the days went by, I became stronger and stronger. I became more confident walking with my crutches and even climbed up the stairs quicker.

My rejuvenation…

Before I knew it, it was the summer holidays and my family had arranged for me to go on pilgrimage to India. I was to meet my spiritual guru, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Being in his presence was very comforting, it inspired me and left me feeling stronger and more powerful. I had a good spiritual encounter with him and had received his blessings. When I arrived back home, I felt energized and I decided to re-register for my Honours degree which I had

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abandoned because of the accident. I had to also acquire a driver's license to drive a specially modified vehicle. I bought a new car and started driving again. I think driving again gave me a lot of hope and it fulfilled the gap that I was experiencing previously, especially with regard to my independence.

Settling in to work again…

I slowly re-entered into my role as a teacher-counsellor. I had to however change my teaching strategies because I could not walk around the class because I could not stand for long periods. I had to learn new ways of being effective in the classroom and contrary to what the pedagogical experts would say about sitting and teaching, I found new ways to continue being effective as a teacher. I went to great lengths to plan stimulating and exciting lessons so there was little opportunity for students to get bored or to get up to mischief. They also recognized that I was pretty firm in the way I spoke to them when they went out of line, they respected that and I did not have a single experience in the classroom that challenged me as a teacher. Fortunately my role as a school counselor did not require any changes since I was seated most of the time and my disability did not feature in any way.

It was not long before I stepped into a leadership role initiating many programmes at the school. This not only contributed to the students' social and personal development but also brought in fun and enjoyment. The subject advisors from the Department of Education would visit the school and they were impressed with the programmes that I was organizing. I must also say that after my first year of returning to school, the principal had recognized that little had changed; the only thing that changed was the speed in which I walked. I was at the top of my game with my teaching and counselling. I was initiating large scale programmes that added to the positive culture of the school. When I look back I think I worked a lot harder at school than I did before the accident. Apart from enjoying my job immensely, I think part of my drive was always to prove that I was productive and whole again.

Life outdoors…with a difference

As I found more energy, I spent my weekends with many community upliftment activities in the informal settlements again. I became more aware of the needs of the physically challenged and initiated a club to cater for the social and sporting needs of people with disabilities. I got team together and organized activities during weekends. I threw myself into sport for the disabled and enjoyed wheelchair basketball and table tennis. This gave me a lot

of fulfillment. Here again, I seem to push myself even harder. I think it was the drive to feel recognized, not necessarily by other people but by myself as a person who could still achieve.

Pain instructs …hence my instruction…

Life was just never the same again! I had taken so many things for granted in the past. I could walk and run around freely without effort. During all those months in hospital I missed seeing the sun rising, birds flying and taking a hot bath in a tub. I had come to appreciate life more significantly and came to enjoy the simple things that give so much joy. My whole outlook to life had changed. I am far more sensitive to the pain and struggles of others but at the same time I have learnt that its pain and struggles that define our character. I believe I was given a second chance, not only for myself but for what I can do to make a difference in the lives of others. You teach what you are and who you are! So I guess what and who I have become and the lessons I have learnt will undoubtedly pass through to my students. I am very mindful though not to preach to them but rather find innovative and creative ways of bringing these learnings to them.

4.9   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter portrayed the six stories of the participants derived through narrative analysis which required writing up the story from the interview transcriptions into a coherent account. The stories were presented in themes. Chapter Five and Chapter Six present the data analysis that was conducted using content analysis and discourse analysis.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS: TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided an interpretive representation of the participants' stories derived through narrative analysis in which data elements were organized into a coherent account. Chapter Five and Chapter Six provides an exposition of the data analysis derived from content analysis and discourse analysis. The data analysis comprises of individual scenario analysis of the six participants. This chapter presents an analysis of three participants (Venetia, Romy and Julia) whose critical incidents emanated from workplace influences. These participants experienced mostly negative influences from the socio-cultural environment during their critical incidents. Chapter Six presents the analysis of the remaining three participants (Pritha, Pralene and Saiyen). Pritha's critical incident was triggered by influences in the socio-cultural/policy contexts and personal contexts. She experienced both positive and negative influences from the socio-cultural environment. Pralene's and Saiyen's critical incident emanated from the personal cluster of influence. It was evident that these two participants experienced mostly positive influences from their interactions with the context in which they were immersed during the critical incident. While the two data analysis chapters have been separated they should be read as a holistic, integrated unit.

The analysis process as was reflected in Chapter Three was guided by the research question, theoretical framework and literature around teachers' lives. The critical question asked in the study is: How did the teachers respond to the critical incident in their teaching lives and why? The social-psychological framework of emotion that was used to frame the study was derived from Lazarus's (1991) cognitive theory of emotions and Day's (2011) work on the different clusters of influences that come to bear on teachers' lives. Literature on teachers' lives was drawn from various sources but the work of Kelchtermans (2009a, 2011) and Nias (1989, 1999) are prominent. Kelchtermans's (2009a) concepts of self-image, self-esteem and task perception derived from the personal interpretive framework that was included in the theoretical framework of the study was relevant in understanding teachers' responses to the critical incident. Teachers' self-image, self-esteem and task perception were affected either positively or negatively depending on teachers' appraisal of the different events they encountered. In addition to this, Kelchtermans's (2011) work on teacher vulnerability

resulting from threats to teachers' desired workplace conditions was useful in exploring how they responded when these conditions were at stake. Nias's (1989) research in England with primary school teachers offered personal accounts of the lived experiences of teachers as they engaged with their work. The literature was appropriate to explore how teachers in the study engaged with their lives and work and why they responded the way they did. Nias's (1999) views on teachers' moral purposes shed light on teachers' perspective of commitment, their values and beliefs as well as their identity and personal cares as teachers.

For the purpose of the analysis, each scenario was organized into themes that addressed either how the teachers' responded to the critical incident or why they responded the way they did. The themes varied in each scenario depending on the lived experiences of each participant as they interacted with the socio-cultural environment in which they were immersed. At the end of each scenario analysis, is a table representing a summary of the participants' responses to the critical incident. This highlights the responses that emerged from the three clusters of influences, namely, the socio-cultural/policy influences, the workplace influences and the personal influences as the participants lived through the critical incident. The table further depicts the negative and positive influences that emerged from these three clusters of influences. The participants' responses reflected their feelings and emotions as they responded to the different influences that came to bear on them. At the end of the two data analysis chapters is a synopsis of the key findings.

In the subsections that follow is the scenario analysis of Venetia, Romy and Julia (Refer to Table 2 for a description of the sample). The analysis presents their responses as they experienced the critical incident.

5.2 Scenario 1: Venetia – 'Feeling mentally and emotionally sick'

Figure 3: Retrieved from: https://www.google.co.za/search?q=depression+images

5.2.1 Powerless against violent learner

Managing the classroom is one of the professional responsibilities of a teacher and managing their classroom effectively is one of the professional goals that are crucial to teachers (Chang & Davies, 2011). Venetia's critical incident highlighted how a learner violently attacked another learner in the classroom after an altercation during the break. This came as a shock to Venetia as it was not something she had anticipated happening in the classroom. She said:

> *…this learner just walked into the class and he (Dilane) rose from his seat and gave the child a slap. The child was bleeding so profusely. I was so worried, that the parents would blame me for the incident, so I called him to the front, got learners to see to the boy, and then I asked him what had happened, but I was really angry with him.*

> *… he told me that during the break that this boy had a fight with him, so I asked him, "So how could you retaliate, when the boy comes in, you know that there usually teachers on duty, if someone interferes with you, you were supposed to report to the teacher on duty, you not allowed to just attack another child," I tried to talk to him but he was very arrogant about it, he said, "He must repay," in Zulu it's called, 'Peya', he said, "I must repay him, he hurt me, I will hurt him."*

When Venetia had tried to intervene, the aggressor showed disrespect to her, indicating almost that he was justified in what he had done. It would seem that the boy had internalized revenge as part of his culture. He was empathic that he had to *"repay him."* His quest for

revenge is evident when he said: *"He hurt me, I will hurt him."* It was apparent that Venetia had lost control of the situation since the aggressor will not listen to her. His display of arrogance shows that he usurped power away from her and rendered her powerless to act. Her helplessness and loss of control of the situation was evident when she said: *"I was so worried that the parents would blame me for the incident, the child was bleeding so profusely."* This indicates that she was feeling some level of anxiety. Lazarus (1991) suggests that when a person experiences anxiety there is an anticipation of an uncertain threat. In this instance Venetia feared that the injured boy's parents would hold her responsible for the injury that the boy sustained especially that it seemed serious. Her emotional response was further heightened by the fact that she perceived that this incident could have been avoided had the aggressor acted more responsibly and that he had some measure of control of the offending action (Lazarus, 1991). This was apparent when she stated to the boy that there were teachers on duty who could have intervened on his behalf and the matter could have been attended to. Venetia was apportioning blame to the aggressor for the incident.

The violent behaviour displayed by the learner was clearly incongruent with her classroom management goals, which is to maintain order and discipline in her classroom; hence the strong negative emotional response. She said: *"I was really angry with him."* Venetia's expression of anger illustrates that she had appraised the incident as being goal relevant since the incident involved learners and there was an act of violence on another child. Venetia's judgement of the incident as goal incongruent explains the strong negative emotion of anger that she experienced. The anger would have resulted from her feeling demeaned as a result of suffering damage to her ego-identity which happens whether the person recognises this either consciously or unconsciously (Lazarus, 1991). The incident happened in full view of other learners and she herself would have questioned whether she was being a 'proper teacher' (Kelchtermans, 1996), especially when the aggressor showed lack of respect and discounted her as the one who was in charge. His display of arrogance towards her and the challenge of her authority as a teacher would have undermined her. Venetia's evaluation of her low coping potential was apparent when she said: *"I tried to talk to him but he was arrogant about it."* It was apparent that her ability to eliminate the harm or threat was weakened when the boy acted with defiance. This encounter could have left Venetia feeling less worthy and she could have endured erosion to her self-image and self-esteem as a teacher which ultimately affects a teacher's professional identity (Kelchtermans, 2009a). It could have affected her own

perception of herself as a teacher as well as how other learners in the class would have perceived her.

5.2.2 Frustration at gaining access to management

Efforts to address the matter of a learner's violent behaviour through the procedure in the school policy failed as a result of lack of co-operation from the school management. Venetia followed the guidelines outlined in the school policy with respect to handling learner misbehaviour and completed the necessary documents to call in the aggressor's parents. The problem arose when she failed to get the Head of Department to sign the letter before she handed it to the learner.

Her frustration was evident when she said: *"The secretary refused for me to see the Head of Department, they were too busy doing some administrative work I think it was to do with Annual National Assessments, ...I sent messages three times to say this is urgent, because this boy in my class has injured another child, I need to see his parents. I was totally angry; they treated it like a minor issue. Somehow the letter did not go off."*

The secretary's refusal to allow Venetia to consult with the Heads of Department and being told that they were busy with administrative work, in spite of her explaining the urgency of the situation was a frustrating experience for her, especially that she says: *"I sent messages three times to say this is urgent."* It was evident that Venetia was of the belief that escalating the matter and addressing it with the parent was the proper action to take and was appraised as goal relevant by her. Unfortunately, Venetia's goals and beliefs were not compatible with the prevailing goals, norms and values at the school (Slaakvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Teachers are most comfortable when they teach in congruence with their own educational beliefs and values, which Slaakvik and Skaalvik (2011) call value consonance. Value dissonance, according to Slaakvik and Skaalvik (2011) results in a barrier to the teacher teaching in accordance with their own beliefs and values and leads to a feeling of not working as a team, not fitting in or not belonging. There is evidence of goal incongruence between Venetia's desire to address the matter through the proper channels at the school and the response of the management. This incongruence was becoming a barrier to Venetia doing her job effectively as a teacher and led to her feeling powerless to act. This powerlessness would have led to her vulnerability as a teacher (Kelchtermans, 2011). The non co-operation by the management

would have fuelled the feelings of anger already experienced by her especially if she perceived the achievement of her own classroom management goals as being obstructed by management. Nias (1989) contends that lack of co-operation and communication from the administration at the school evokes anger in teachers when they feel that effectiveness in their own teaching is obstructed by other people who are not fulfilling their responsibilities.

Venetia's intention was clearly to enlist the parent's support to counsel the learner regarding his violent behaviour and restore her goal of maintaining an orderly classroom. However, she may have been driven by a desperate urge to restore her respect and dignity as a teacher which was already at stake from the incident in the classroom, as well as repairing the harm she may have endured to her professional identity.

5.2.3 Anxiety attack: Stressful encounter with parent

Having failed to get the support of management in signing the letter to send to the parent for a meeting, Venetia's determination and persistence in achieving her goal of addressing the matter with the parent was evident when she seized alternate opportunities to meet the parent to address the matter. That afternoon she identified Dilane's sister outside the school gate and explained that she needed to consult with her parent urgently regarding his schoolwork and his behaviour. Kelchtermans (2011) is of the view that teachers will engage in intentional actions and strategies to regain the recognition of themselves by others. One of the reasons for Venetia's persistence to have the matter escalated to the parent may have arisen from her need to gain back her recognition as a teacher from her learners which she may have perceived to have been compromised as result of her having lost control of the situation in the classroom.

While Venetia did succeed in getting the parent to school for a meeting, she did not achieve her desired outcomes. The parent began to blame her for her son's poor behaviour and performance at school. This progressed further to the parent becoming aggressive and confrontational towards her. Venetia's desire to help the child improve his behaviour so that he could make better progress at school was thwarted by the parent's reaction. The more Venetia expressed her desire to finding common solutions the more irate the parent became. The parent shifted the blame to Venetia, levelled accusations against her and a threat of violence was looming. Venetia describes the parent's reaction and blaming stance:

"You are calling me for Dilane's marks; it's a bit late now in May to call me for his marks". She said, "I blame you for this child being in this way". She won't hear, she won't listen to me telling her that I need to speak to her about his progress and his behaviour, but more his behaviour, than his progress, because I felt that is the behaviour changed the progress would be better. She said, "I blame you for these marks", I told her, "Please don't talk to me like this."

She started screaming, she wanted to hit me. I was so afraid for my life; she was so much bigger built than me. The two Heads of Department had to stop her. By this time I was crying because I was so upset that it was not going the way it was supposed to go, and that we were going to get nothing out of this, and I can see this lady wants to hit me.... and all I wanted to do was to help this child.

It is evident that the parent shifted the focus from the learner's violent behaviour to learner performance. In shifting the focus, Venetia was blamed for neglecting to call the parent earlier with regard to his poor performance. The parent's persistence on this line of engagement was making Venetia more and more vulnerable. There was incongruence between Venetia's goal of finding solutions to the problem and the parent's reaction towards her. Venetia's response to the situation was one of anxiety which was evident when she became emotionally upset and began crying. The anxiety she endured was as a result of feeling that she may be assaulted by the parent, something she never anticipated. She said: *"I was so afraid for my life."* Lazarus (1991) contends that when anxiety is experienced, the uncertainty is around not knowing what will happen and obviates any idea by the person of what to do and how to prevent or ameliorate the situation. In Venetia's case the parent's reaction was totally unexpected and she seemed helpless and defenceless in trying to contain the situation.

She sensed that the meeting was not going according to how she had envisaged and the goal that she wanted to achieve was being thwarted by the unexpected reaction of the parent. Venetia's emotional breakdown portrays that what she experienced was not just mild uneasiness but an anxiety attack. This is in line with Lazarus's (1991) view that if the structures that are endangered are very pertinent or central to the person's identity it will result in a full blown anxiety attack and personal crisis. Kelchtermans (2011) posits that teachers want to be recognised as being a 'proper teacher' (p. 77) with respect to their

technical skills and competence and their moral integrity. It is a crucial part of the professional self and receiving social recognition from parents contributes to this. In Venetia's case, the parent's reaction was disrupting and endangering her perception of what it was to be a 'proper teacher'. Her goal was towards finding solutions with the parent but instead the parent blamed her for *"the child being that way."* Yet, according to Venetia, all she wanted to do was to *"help this child."* She was finding difficulty in interpreting the encounter. Goal incongruence was evident in the conflict between what Venetia was hoping to achieve and the parent's reaction leading to her experiencing the anxiety attack. Venetia's emotional breakdown was also indicative that her coping potential was weak; she said, *"We were going to get nothing out of this."* She realized that nothing constructive was going to arise out of the meeting.

Venetia had become vulnerable yet again, firstly, being powerless facing a violent and defiant learner and now the stressful encounter with the difficult and aggressive parent. Kelchtermans (2011) highlights that one of the reasons for tensions with parents is disagreement over goals at schools and when parents do not act from a commonly held vision of what good education entails which may have been the case here. While Venetia wanted to involve the parent to work together to improve the behaviour and progress of the child, the parent perceived her to be the problem and began verbally attacking her. Furthermore, a valued workplace condition of social recognition was being threatened (Kelchtermans, 2011) when the parent would not acknowledge any of her suggestions and displayed disrespect and disregard for the efforts she was making towards finding solutions. She was being portrayed as the perpetrator and the parent assumed a more powerful position, rendering her powerless in the presence of the learner. Her heightened level of anxiety and emotional trauma was indicative of her vulnerability as a teacher. Day and Gu (2010) highlighted that teachers become disenchanted when they have to cope with difficult learner behaviour and do not enjoy the support and trust from the parents.

5.2.4 Unjustified criticisms regarding professional conduct

After Venetia's disturbing encounter with the irate parent who displayed threats to assault her, the school management team, called her in the following day and accused her of acting in an unprofessional manner. She explained:

…they came to the conclusion that I acted unprofessionally, by crying and screaming at her (the parent) to stop condoning her child... I was supposed to be calm and quiet when she was shouting at me, because she wanted to hit me, she wanted to attack me, and they say I shouted at her and acted unprofessionally. I felt broken; nobody could understand how I felt. You feel inadequate as a teacher. I was quiet angry with the way things were handled.

Venetia was requested to sign a letter acknowledging their conclusions regarding her unprofessional conduct. She was being held responsible by the school leadership for the outcome of the incident with the parent. She viewed the accusations levelled against her as unjustified criticism. Venetia would have appraised this encounter as goal relevant since it was an attack on her self-image and self-esteem as a teacher. Venetia's response was one of anger because it was apparent that she was attempting to protect her ego-identity when she said: *"I was supposed to be calm and quiet when she was shouting at me."* She defends herself by questioning how she was expected to remain calm when the parent was being abusive towards her. What upset her was that she was being blamed and accused of lacking professionalism. This attack on her professional conduct had a devastating effect on her. She *"felt broken"* and *"inadequate as a teacher."*

An interesting observation is that Venetia's principal was notably absent during her altercation with the parent. She was initially alone with the parent and when strong tensions arose during the meeting the Heads of Department intervened. Blasé and Blasé (2002) found that when principals fail to support teachers during conflicts with parents and blame them for the problems without fully investigating the issue, they feel mistreated, especially when they are issued written reprimands as in the case of Venetia.

Attacks on her professional abilities continued during the investigation of the incident conducted by SACE. Evidence was provided by the principal that Venetia had acted unprofessionally when writing reports on learners previously. This was highlighted as one of her transgressions that were recorded in a file without her knowledge. Venetia again perceived this to be attacking her professional abilities and her professional self. She explained the context:

Years before I had written the facts that this child is a 'law onto himself' and he was hurting everyone in the school because he's out of the class, according to

everyone (management), I should not have written that, I was too harsh in saying that, yet this child will be found with alcohol, he used to steal, he used to hit children, this was a grade six child. They showed that to the man from SACE and made it look like I am unprofessional in the way I write school reports. Yet they the management always sign the reports, why didn't they tell me then, now they are quick to blame the teacher. You are never good enough. I was very angry at this.

It would seem that the school management was building a case against Venetia regarding her professional abilities and conduct. This was apparent when she said: *"The management always sign the reports, why didn't they tell me then, now they are quick to blame the teacher."* The stance taken by the management angered Venetia. She did not view this as a transgression and thought that she was justified in her evaluation and conclusion about the learner's behaviour. Based on these encounters Venetia was being portrayed as being an 'unprofessional' teacher and not being *"good enough"*. There is evidence of a blame discourse by the school management. Firstly, it was her conduct during the meeting with the parent that was criticized and thereafter further infractions were highlighted by bringing out past reports to the SACE representative. Kelchtermans (2011) is of the view that judgements about teachers' professional competence that relies too heavily on the visible part of their job is limited in assessing their professional competence when compared to their full range of responsibilities and is experienced by teachers as unjust. Although Venetia felt that she was justified in what she had written, this attack on her professional abilities would have an adverse effect on her self-image and self-esteem since the school management is an important source of social recognition for her as a teacher. She said: *"You are never good enough,"* which indicates that Venetia was feeling inadequate as a teacher. It would have created doubts in her about her being a 'proper teacher' that will ultimately influence her feeling at ease with her job and her well-being, which Kelchtermans (2009a) contends happens when teachers' self-esteem is threatened.

5.2.5 Humiliation by taunting learners

Despite the fact that Venetia made several attempts to get management and the parent to support her in finding a common solution for the learner's violent behaviour in class, she had failed. In fact she had to undergo an investigation by SACE for acting unprofessionally in the

way she handled the entire incident. The learner was present when the parent verbally attacked her, admonished her and blamed her for the child's poor results and behaviour. She had to endure the taunting of the learner in her class for the rest of the year. She explained:

> *I was sick, I was stressed, I was on tenterhooks, especially, because this boy laughed and teased me, and will not do any work in class.*

Venetia had to endure the learner's verbal intimidation and abuse until the end of the year. She was in distress and her powerlessness turned her to prayer as the last resort in seeking solace and comfort. She said: *"I prayed for the end of the year to come, for him to leave the school because he got more than arrogant."* Venetia's difficulties in coping is consistent with Chang and Davies (2011) who asserts that overt hostility or aggression aimed at teachers may be one of the most challenging relationship issues teachers can endure. During previous failed attempts she may have endured harm to her professional identity having been humiliated by the parent and accused by management for acting unprofessionally. Yet again, Venetia endured attacks to her professional identity by the learner who continued to torment her in class with the knowledge that she was powerless to discipline him for his actions that she clearly perceived as misconduct.

Provocation to her dignity as a teacher had spread to the entire school. She said: *The rumour had spread in the school that his mother had hit me, so other children in the school, when teachers used to try and teach, even the Head of Department was once told, "Don't think you won't be like Mrs V." The Head of Department gave a parent letter to the child, the child made it into an aeroplane, and threw it back at the Head of Department and said, "I won't give the letter to my mother, I'll call my mother to come and hit you like how Mrs V got hit." They actually used those words.*

The entire school was of the impression that the parent had assaulted Mrs. V. When Venetia stated that *"they actually used those words, I'll call my mother to come and hit you like how Mrs V got hit,"* it is evident they she felt indignity and demeaned as a teacher. Kelchtermans (2011) posits that sharing good relations with pupils is one of the desired workplace conditions of teachers and views poor interpersonal relationships with pupils as a source of teacher vulnerability. For Venetia, a highly valued workplace condition, which is to enjoy the respect of her learners which contributes to a teacher's positive self-image and self-esteem,

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was being threatened. Venetia would have appraised this incident as goal relevant since it affected her self- and social esteem adversely.

Having been humiliated as a teacher would have evoked greater feelings of anger, a stronger feeling of vulnerability and further harm to her identity as a teacher. She viewed the lack of support from management and the parent to be blamed for the situation she found herself in. She said: *"Management will not hear my side of the story at that school, only what the child or the parent says, is of paramount importance, there are no two sides of the story."* She added that the parent was not prepared to recognize her intentions. She said: *"I begged her. I said, please, you and I must work together towards this."* To her, had the management acted differently, perhaps, her dignity and respect as a teacher would not have been at stake.

Feeling powerless in front of a taunting student would have also evoked feelings of shame for Venetia. She would have felt that she was unable to live up to the ideals of being a 'proper teacher' (Kelchtermans, 2011), one who is respected by her learners and is able to manage the classroom effectively. Kelchtermans (2011) posits that teachers strive to establish and maintain these aspects of their job as it contributes to their self-esteem as teachers. She was also awaiting the outcome of the investigation by SACE and was feeling extreme anxiety not knowing what to expect. She said: *"I was on tenterhooks"*. All these emotions together led her to feeling *"stressed and sick."* Venetia's feelings were consistent with Chang and Davies's (2011) view that aggressive behaviour from learners may cause teachers to feel anger, become fearful and may feel powerless. Venetia's powerlessness was evident in that any kind of intervention from her side, which would have been perceived as negative, would have been detrimental to her since she was awaiting the result of the investigation by SACE. Moreover, the lack of support from the management and the parent had already heightened her vulnerability as a teacher. The compounding effects from all segments, that is, the learners, the parent, the school management and the escalation of the matter to an external body, like SACE is indicative that Venetia had become a lone person backed up against a wall.

5.2.6 Ideologically offensive principles and values

Venetia had both ethical and moral concerns about the way the school management, particularly the principal handled matters during her critical incident. These matters were of

concern to Venetia because she would have appraised them as goal relevant, especially that it involved moral values. After the encounter with the parent at school, Venetia had met the parent again quite co-incidentally during the school holidays in town while she went shopping. Although there was no verbal exchange, the parent sent in a letter to school levelling several accusations against her. The letter was sent to SACE by the principal. What concerned Venetia was that she was not given an opportunity to present her version to the school leadership before the letter was sent to SACE. She gleaned this information when she studied the letter. She reported:

> *At the bottom of the letter I got from SACE, evidence of the parent's letter showed, Mr Gumede's[14] (principal) signature on it and it was faxed to SACE, and it was faxed right back to me. The proof shows that it did not go via the parent. It went via my school. So I was sold by my own school. I have been mentally and emotionally sick, knowing that the management did not hear my side of the story.*

Venetia was also concerned about the principal's response during the visit with the representative from SACE. Certain school records were tampered with and minutes were amended so that the school was not shown in poor light. It was made to appear as if violent incidents do not take place at the school. In Venetia's view the management had acted unethically. All the incidents of Dilane's misdeamours and abuse of teachers were removed. She described the 'clean-up' that ensued at the school:

> *When the principal found out that SACE is coming to do interviews, all those minute books were destroyed. Pages where things that were written had to be torn out, all secretaries had to rewrite minutes, to make it look like these issues were never discussed, and there's nothing wrong with the school. Where the school would have been implicated in discipline problems and issues, all those minute books went missing. The school was cleaned up in preparation for this interview. I felt really disappointed, let down. I thought what has this education system come to, we are supposed to teach good morals...*

Venetia talked of another instance when the school wanted her to allocate marks to pass Dilane in spite of the fact that he had failed. Again it is evident that she was not comfortable with undertaking actions that she felt were morally wrong.

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[14] Pseudonym

> *His (Dilane's) marks did not improve and they (management) said that I must*
> *pass him. I said that I cannot do that and he was condoned. Because I was not*
> *going to give him marks that he didn't deserve, so he was condoned.*

It is evident that the values and principles fostered at the school were incongruent with the values and beliefs held by Venetia. This incongruence had a tremendous impact on her well-being and causing great emotional pain. She said: *"I have been mentally and emotionally sick."* Venetia's response is in accordance with Nias's (1989) findings that when there was a conflict between teachers' values and principles and that of the school, they disliked that part of their work, especially when they found that certain dominant values at the school were "ideologically offensive" (p. 108). In the case of Venetia she highlighted issues where the values of transparency, honesty and integrity were being compromised at her school and was deeply affected by it. When SACE had faxed the letter to her she was surprised to find the parent's allegations were endorsed by the principal yet she was not aware of this, neither was she given the opportunity to put forward her version of the incident.

The overt and deliberate 'clean up' of records by the school to paint a different picture to SACE regarding her incident and other discipline issues at the school were perceived by her as unethical. She viewed their acts as going contrary to what she perceived the school should be teaching, which is good moral behaviour. She felt *"really disappointed, let down."* When she was asked to allocate marks for the learner to pass, she stood her ground and said: *"I cannot do that."* This went against her task perception which is her deeply held beliefs of what constitutes good education and doing justice to their learners (Kelchtermans, 2009a). Similiarly, Day and Gu (2010) found that when teachers experienced conflict with their educational values and those of the school leadership, it affected their level of motivation and commitment. Although Venetia was already feeling uncertainty and anxiety about the outcome of the investigation, she was not prepared to transgress her moral beliefs. This act illustrates how strongly she felt about upholding her moral imperative as a teacher. When teachers act consistently with their moral values and beliefs they feel good about themselves as teachers (Nias, 1999) and this enhances their self-image and self-esteem (Kelchtermans, 2009a). Doing what was right for Venetia was important and she exercised her decision even in spite of the difficult circumstances she faced at that time.

5.2.7 Statutory vulnerability

Venetia felt that the result of the investigation may have dire consequences for her. Her main concern was a personal one. She said:

> *It was the most critical, because I really thought I would be charged or lose my*
>
> *job or something like that.*

When Venetia used the words *"most critical"* it was apparent that of all the concerns she faced during this time, the personal consequences, were most crucial for her. Being found guilty and the threat of losing her job were going to have a devastating effect on her. The level of anxiety she experienced during the investigation was being provoked by a very real and deep underlying personal interest. Venetia appraisal of goal relevance was linked to the fear she felt regarding injury to her 'self', harm to her reputation and loss of her job. During this period Venetia faced the uncertainty of not knowing what to expect as the outcome. She found herself at the mercy of others whose decisions she had no control over and faced "a kind of formal, statutory vulnerability" (Kelchtermans, 2011, p. 68). Almost a year had passed since the investigation and she said: *"I have never received a reply to date. So I really wonder about our Education system and where it's going. Yet when I asked the man (from SACE) he promised me I would receive the outcome through the school"*. Venetia is of the view that the school did receive the letter. When she approached the principal regarding the letter, he said*: "Mam, that was a small incident, don't worry about it, it was nothing serious." "They put me through trauma for a year; the following year you tell me it was a small incident."* Even after a year had passed Venetia still had fear that the letter may incriminate her. She said: *"I rather let it go I feel... or maybe it's out of fear, I just hope it never comes back to bite me, but it was so traumatic."*

Venetia's fear and insecurity was arising from her personal concern for her job and reputation. There was no closure of the incident for her since she did not receive the outcome. Kelchtermans (2011) contends that when teachers do not have control over important workplace conditions and are not given reasons and explanations, they feel vulnerable and it affects them personally and emotionally. It was apparent that Venetia had to endure the emotional pain and anxiety arising from the incident for an entire year, and she seems to still endure residual fear that she may be implicated in some way.

5.2.8   Shift from being enthusiastic to disillusionment

- **Loss of confidence and sadness**

Venetia reflects on the drive and passion she had in wanting to make a difference at the school. She says:

> *Yes, the once dynamic, passionate me has become disillusioned, she has lost confidence, become angry. I have come too far from what I was. This incident has killed me… it killed me, it killed my spirit. If I have to call parents for discipline problems, why must I call them, to get abused again, I will not send a letter because I am so afraid of this happening again. I can't make any changes here, because I am broken, I am too scared to write that letter again and call for a parent.*

> *As I am saying, I had this pompous idea that, it's a calling for me to be there, not realizing that I am killing myself, it's too traumatic for me. It's made me lose confidence, as I said it's made me think, what am I here for, why did I chose this career and yet there are days that I love this job so much.*

> *I was passionate, dynamic, and ready to change the world, competitive, wanting the children to achieve highly. I think it's because again I grew up in a rural area, and I know that there is the maximum that can be achieved, and that anybody can achieve it and again just from my upbringing and the wisdom of my parents that it doesn't matter that you can be a farmer, but you can achieve, it doesn't matter who you are, you can still achieve greatly. I wanted to make them achievers, go getters, now I am sad.… (In tears)*

The critical incident had caused Venetia to become despondent and lack confidence as a teacher. The outcome of the incident traumatized her to such an extent that she was terrified to make efforts to address learners' issues with parents for fear of being abused again. Her drive and commitment of wanting to do her best as a teacher that stems from her personal biography is thwarted by the incident she experienced. When Venetia said that the incident had *"killed her"* it is evident that all the passion and enthusiasm that she had as a teacher had been thwarted. However, what is clear is that she still loves teaching. This is evident when she said: *"Yet there are days that I love this job so much."* She wants to make a difference in learners' lives and she believes that all learners can achieve irrespective of their background.

This comes from her "subjective educational theory" which Kelchtermans (2009a, p. 40) views as teachers' personal knowledge and beliefs about education that they use when they perform their work. This belief that Venetia holds is based on her own experience as a learner. She grew up in a rural area and has made a success of her life and wanted the same for her learners.

Venetia responded with sadness since the impact of the incident had *"killed her"* meaning the spirit she had within her of making a difference and taking her learners to new heights has died. Venetia experienced sadness because of the incongruence between her own beliefs and the philosophy of the school. She felt unsupported in pursuing her beliefs. Lazarus (1991) views sadness as experiencing an "irrevocable loss" (p. 122) whether or not it can be dealt with. While sadness is usually linked to a loss of someone loved, it is also associated with a "failure of a central life value or role" (Lazarus, 1991, p. 247). In Venetia's case she had to let go of her belief that that she could play a role in making a difference to the learners' lives because what she experienced was *"too traumatic,"* she felt broken and could not risk being abused again. She experienced difficulty dealing with the loss since she still loves teaching. Venetia's sadness also stems from her failure to be able to pursue her role of making her learners *"achievers and go getters."* Lazarus (1991) adds that sadness involves "resignation rather than struggle" and signifies a movement towards "acceptance of and disengagement from a lost commitment" (p. 247). Venetia's move towards acceptance and disengagement of wanting to make a difference in her learners' lives is evident when she says: *"I had this pompous idea that, it's a calling for me to be there."* Her statement is verbalized in the past tense already signifying her resignation and disengagement.

- **Struggle to accept doing something morally reprehensible**

Before the critical incident Venetia persevered in trying to follow her passion and made efforts to influence and make a difference wherever she could. After the incident she realized that without support she cannot make any changes at the school. She said:

> *I have changed, in that I know that I can't do a thing alone. I have got to just go*
> *with the flow till I find a niche, where there will be a team that I can work with*
> *and there will be co-operation. I would say that a democratic management team,*
> *that has as we say this vision, that knows what we are here for, that knows the*
> *value of education, that knows that it's not just about money or status.*

But in this situation, there is nothing that I can change, though I still try and rebel and want things to change but I have reached a stage within myself, that there is no way I can change anything. I can just do a little, even though I feel guilty and that a little is not enough. I constantly counsel myself, do your little, try, do it in your small place, but I must get over thinking that I can change anything, I can't, in that school. .

Yes, as you can see it drives me to tears, I am feeling that, that's not what I started off as a teacher and it's making me change and to think that minimum is good enough, it really disillusioned me... so it's very difficult. It's actually made me regress, to say bare minimum. Not maximum, minimum. I am looking for the first opportunity to leave, first opportunity I will be gone because, I will die of frustration and depression if I continue longer.

It has dawned upon Venetia that for change to occur at the school, there has to be a democratic management team with a clear vision. She realized that alone she cannot make changes and therefore her coping potential was weak. Even though she has realized this, she cannot reconcile the fact that she has to resort to doing the minimum as a teacher. She feels overcome with guilt, which according to Lazarus (1991) is experienced when a person feels that he/she is transgressing their moral imperative. In other words, the person perceives that they are doing something "morally deficient" (Lazarus, 1991, p. 240). This is exemplified by these words by Venetia: *"I can just do a little, even though I feel guilty and that a little is not enough."* Her emotional turmoil stems from the fact that she has to compromise her standards as a teacher yet she is not comfortable doing this. The situation at the school seems to be dictating that Venetia settles for less, which is, doing the bare minimum as a teacher. Inherent in Venetia's account is a deep struggle of acceptance of this state of 'being' teacher. While she is aware that the situation won not change, and that she has *"to just go with the flow,"* morally she finds it reprehensible. Venetia has become totally disillusioned and feels that she has no other option but to leave the school. She says: *"I have changed, in that I know that I can't do a thing alone."* Venetia's feelings are consistent with teachers in Nias's (1989) research who pointed out that they wanted to work in a school which had whole school aims and policies being implemented through team efforts, otherwise individual efforts are wasted. Teachers chose to leave the school in search of a school that was achieving a purpose. Venetia says that in the absence of a vision, teamwork and co-operation nothing can be

achieved at the school. As an individual teacher she cannot make a difference, especially in the absence of support. Her guilt is consuming her and she is looking out for the first opportunity to leave. She views her future expectancy at the school as negative as she has no hope that the situation will change for the better. A once passionate, dynamic and enthusiastic teacher has lost her desire to fulfil her dreams of making a difference in children's lives, yet cannot reconcile the shift she feels forced to make.

Table 3: Summary of Venetia's response to critical incident

Clusters of influences	Negative influences	Positive influences	Response
Socio-cultural/policy influences	• Conflict between school values and personal values, beliefs and ethics • No response from SACE about result of investigation • Ideals/beliefs as a teacher threatened	None	Mentally and emotionally sick Disappointed/let down Anxiety, fear, (waiting for outcome and fear of implications) Guilt (failure to live up to the ideals as a teacher) Sadness (loss of ideals as teacher)
Workplace influences	• Learner behaviour- violent, aggressive, arrogant, defiant, taunting, lack of respect • Lack of organizational support- obstructive process, attack on professional conduct and abilities, unjust criticism, blame • Poor parental support- difficult, aggressive, threat of violence, blame	None	Powerless Anger (challenge to authority, feeling demeaned) Stressed Anger (obstructing goal, attack on teacher identity) Loss of confidence Disillusionment Anxiety attack (fear for life) Emotional breakdown
Personal influences	• Job security threatened • Reputation threatened	None	Fear, anxiety, insecurity Fear, anxiety

5.3 Scenario 2: Romy – 'Mentally and physically, my spirit was like broken down'

Figure 4: Retrieved from: https://www.google.co.za/search?q=depression+images

5.3.1 Responses to principal bullying

- **Public humiliation**

During her critical incident, Romy experienced ongoing instances of harassment and victimization by her principal that she documented and prepared into a dossier. The harassment was triggered by Romy's decision to align herself with her colleague over a difference of opinion with the principal. She thereafter became a target of the principal's ongoing harassment. She described his actions:

> *He (principal) used every opportunity that he came across to victimize and harass, be it in a meeting, staff meeting, if you have to voice your opinion then you were just shut down, I was ridiculed and then he had a way of getting more of the educators on his side, so you had this whole clique together with him and you are in the minority and whatever he said he had support.*

Romy experienced persistent harassment from the principal and found that she was not given the space to contribute or deliberate in meetings. She was openly belittled, bullied and

humiliated, in the presence of her colleagues who seemed to support the principal. The harassment displayed by the principal is in accordance with what Adams (1997a) refers to as workplace bullying that is aimed at demeaning and downgrading a person through cruel acts and harsh words which in time will undermine a persons' self-confidence and self-esteem. Romy felt that he had support from the other teachers and she was *"in the minority"* almost as if she found herself in a position where she couldn't defend herself. This is in line with Einarsen and Skogstad's (1996) view that bullying amounts to harassment, badgering and freezing out a person repeatedly and the person confronted with the situation has difficulties defending him/herself. The principal seemed extremely authoritarian, preoccupied with the intent to dominate and oppress her. Romy faced public humiliation where the principal's mistreatment took the form of public criticism and humiliation in meetings. She was being excluded from making contributions and expressing her views and when she said she was being *"shut down"* it was as if it was a deliberate strategy to devalue her and make her feel worthless. De Wet (2014) observed that verbal abuse was one of the most common strategies used by principals to bully teachers. Having a whole group of teachers on the principal's side further reinforced the principal's domination and intensified her mistreatment. Her colleagues' public display of support for the principal indicates that they may be the favoured group and are using this opportunity to show their allegiance to the principal. This is in accordance with Blasé and Blasé's (2002) view that when principals practiced favouritism, the favoured teachers supported abusive principals either directly or indirectly.

- **Feeling controlled and restricted**

Romy perceived that she was being treated differently to the other teachers. Whenever she approached the principal for leave for personal or professional reasons, it would be denied. The principal's actions towards Romy were punitive and had a devastating effect on her well-being. She lamented:

> *…if I wanted to go off to a union meeting, I was not allowed to go. He would straight away, tell me, "No, you can't go." There was no pastoral care, what so ever towards me, so he just never made life easy. He was just, just so difficult. On a daily basis, he would find some way, to harass or victimize and somehow in his position, he would be able to do things and get away with it.*

Her principal displayed an attitude and behaviour that epitomised favouritism that Blasé and Blasé (2002) describes as a situation whereby some individuals were favoured whereas others

were punished or neglected by the principals. His immediate refusal to allow Romy to attend union meetings illustrates his mistreatment towards her. Romy found the situation difficult to bear and said that *"he just never made life easy"* which is consistent with Strandmark and Hallberg's (2007) view that victims of unfair treatment felt controlled, restricted and experienced real malice. When Romy stated that *'there was no pastoral care, what so ever towards me,"* it is evident that she felt that there was lack of compassion and empathy towards her. When this kind of behaviour continues for a long period it can have a devastating effect on teachers, especially the psychological effects which include depression, stress, mood swings, sleep deprivation and feelings of embarrassment, shame, guilt, and low self-esteem (Blasé & Blasé, 2002). Romy was already experiencing the effects when she said: *"I was very, very depressed, highly for all those years. I cannot even remember how many years it went on for."* It is evident that the harassment continued for many years and is line with de Wet's (2010) observation that persistence was one of the characteristics displayed by the principals who bullied teachers. The frequency of the acts of bullying by the principal was what made Romy feel that: *"He just never made life easy."*

- **Under surveillance - apprehensive and stressed**

Romy felt that she was under scrutiny and endured constant surveillance by the principal and was never relaxed in her classroom. She explained:

> *I would be always on my guard, because the principal will walk past the classroom and you had to prove to him, that you were an upbeat teacher, I couldn't be found sitting at the table, or chatting to someone, that would become such a big thing, it will be mentioned in the staff meeting, names were not mentioned but you would just know who he was talking about.*

Romy experienced the covert monitoring by the principal as being very stressful and this was putting undue pressure on her. She said: *"It was such a big stress, always proving that I am doing my job, more than 100% you could say, so that he must not find a fault. It was never ever a relaxed atmosphere at school."*

Romy's experience is in accordance with Benefield (2004) who noted that excessive monitoring was one of the actions of principals who bullied teachers. Romy described how any actions that were observed by the principal as not acceptable to him were mentioned in the staff meeting. Romy knew who he was referring to, since she was the one who was being

targeted. This is in accordance with Blasé and Blasé's (2002) findings that principals resorted to spying by ominously situating themselves in strategic positions in the school to monitor teachers whom they bullied. Romy said: *"I was very uptight and just watching all the time."* Romy was never relaxed in her classroom since she was always on guard scanning the environment checking for when the principal might appear. The principal's surveillance strategy has similarities to the panoptic mechanism described by Foucault (1977). The Panopticon ensured that the inmates of prisons were watched constantly without seeing the observer and faced the risk of being surprised and endured the anxiety of being observed. Foucault (1977) used this metaphor to highlight the use of disciplinary power through observation in hierarchical structures like schools, hospitals and factories in the modern era. The principal in this case was exercising his power over Romy in a similar way. He could observe Romy whenever he chose but she was unaware of when she was being observed. As a result she was always vigilant and had to be at her best at all times. She felt restricted in her personal space and it was as if the principal had control over her, including what she was doing and where she was. Strandmark and Hallberg's (2007) observed that this kind of behaviour was perceived as damaging the targeted person's integrity.

- **Moral integrity challenged**

Romy remembers how when she returned to school after having a mental breakdown which was the result of the persistent acts of bullying over a period of time, she was summoned to the office to explain how she was going to make up for the days she was on sick leave and was accused of being an unfit teacher who did not put the learners' interest first. She was granted two weeks leave by the psychiatrist. She recalls:

> *I broke down, I cried, I was uncontrollable, I was in no fit state to go to school. When I did go back to school, I was actually forced to go back, I was not ready, the principal had somehow got the governing body on his side, to say that I am an unfit teacher, I had taken all these days off, I was not putting the learners first, how am I going to catch up work. I was called into the office, by the deputy principal and the principal. So now I got back to school and there was the senior management together with the governing body against me. So it was even more to handle.*

The principal had mobilised the support of the governing body and together with the senior management she was confronted about her absence from school. She had to now endure

harassment from a group of individuals who were ganging up against her. She felt the pressure mounting up on her and expressed that *"it was even more to handle."* Romy was experiencing what Leymann (1990, p. 119) referred to as "mobbing" to describe hostile behaviour, intimidation, harassment and unethical communication by many persons mainly directed towards one individual. The actions usually have a common denominator, a desire "to get you" or to punish (p. 121). In Romy's case, it is evident that this was a strategy to exert added pressure on her while she was still very vulnerable. She said: *"I was actually forced to go back, I was not ready."* Kelchtermans (2009a) contends that when teachers' performance at work is questioned, the teachers' self-esteem is threatened. In this instance, Romy was being accused of being an unfit teacher who stays away from school without considering the welfare of her learners. Here Romy's task perception was in question, which is, was she doing a good job as a teacher (Kelchtermans, 2009) and conducting herself as a 'proper teacher' (Kelchtermans, 2011), yet she feels that she always considers her learners needs and says: *"It's my duty to be there to serve the learners."* Romy's moral integrity as a person and a professional were brought into question by the school management and the governing body. This would have affected her emotionally and caused her vulnerability as a teacher. Kelchtermans (2009a) contends that comments from those working in the school are important to teachers and constitute a vital source of social recognition for teachers which influence their self-esteem. The attack on Romy's professionalism by members of senior management as well the governing body of the school who are a vital source of social recognition for her would have threatened her self-esteem as a teacher.

The treatment she received from the principal and the situation that prevailed at the school was contrary to what Romy desired. She explains:

> *To me I think that as a teacher, you need to be happy at your workplace, you spend so much of time there, your colleagues become your family, because in a day you are spending more time with them than with your family, and to be unhappy for so many years was just not good for me, so much so that I started disliking my job, and that was not what I intended. When I decided to become a teacher, I had accepted that this was what my job is now and I had to give off my best. But there are times that I was not in the right frame of mind.*

It is evident that the persistent harassment, bullying and mobbing was having detrimental effects on Romy. She was ridiculed in the presence of her colleagues, experienced unfair

treatment as a teacher, was accused of being an unfit teacher and felt constantly watched by the principal who victimized and punished her. The list of instances of abuse and harassment according to Romy were too exhaustive that she had to have them documented into a dossier. Romy appraised these instances as goal relevant since it affected her personally and emotionally. The emotional trauma that caused Romy to endure a nervous breakdown would have stemmed from experiencing strong negative emotions. These negative emotions would have been evoked from Romy's appraisal of the encounters as goal incongruent. Being demeaned and downgraded by the principal constantly would have led to feelings of anger since her self-image, self-esteem and task perception were at stake. These issues according to Kelchtermans (2009a) are crucial to teachers' professional self-understanding, that is, the way they perceive themselves as teachers.

Romy also recognized the principal as the source of her depression and unhappiness, especially that she felt he could have acted differently and shown some sign of resolving issues instead of relentlessly harassing her. She reported: *"He was such a vindictive person, for some reason, he was just not able to forgive."* Romy also experienced intense anxiety when she felt that she was constantly watched by the principal. According to Lazarus (1991) during anxiety, the person experiences "uncertain existential threat" (p. 235) and in Romy's case the uncertainty was not knowing when he was going to walk past her class and how he was going to respond. Romy would have experienced shame when she was ridiculed and humiliated by the principal in the presence of her colleagues during staff meetings, especially feeling 'shut down' when she wanted to voice her opinion on matters discussed. Shame is experienced when a person feels that they have failed to live up to an ideal image of themselves, especially in the eyes of those whose opinion matters to them (Lazarus, 1991). Kelchtermans (2009a) argues that when the response from the principal and colleagues are negative teachers feel the negative impact on their self-image and self-esteem and will experience the emotion of shame.

5.3.2   Continuing against the odds: Moral values and a sense of vocation

During the critical incident, Romy was highly emotionally disturbed and was struggling to keep herself motivated. There were times when she simply lacked the drive and enthusiasm to go to school. In spite of the adverse conditions at the workplace, her moral duty and sense of vocation propelled her to persist with her job.

Romy describes how difficult it was to get herself to school each day:

There were days when I just didn't want to get up, and even go to school and I would just drag myself there because I would say, you know what, I chose this career, I chose to become a teacher, and it's my duty to be there to serve the learners. So I had to get up in the morning and get myself psyched up to go to school but it was not easy, it was very, very difficult. I used to be unhappy all the time.

It is evident that Romy viewed teaching as a calling and was committed to fulfil her responsibilities in spite of the challenges she faced. Romy displayed a "missionary zeal" and considered teaching as a vocation, (Nias, 1999, p. 224) that made her feel that it was her duty to be at school and serve her learners. In spite of the emotional trauma she endured her sense of what was important and worthwhile motivated her to continue which is what Nias (1999) observed as a driving force in teachers. In spite of the sometimes insurmountable difficulties Romy faced with pressure from all quarters, that is, from the principal, members of management, colleagues and the SGB, her moral obligation drove her to school each day. She said: *"I had to get up in the morning and get myself psyched up to go to school."* This is in accordance with Hansen's (2001) view that when teachers see themselves as moral agents, their attitude and outlook enables them to persevere in the face of challenges. Moreover, teachers' moral passion enhances their individuality (Hansen, 2001) and depicts their sense of self (Nias, 1989).

Kelchtermans (2009a) contends that teachers are always evaluating themselves about how they are doing their job and whether they are being 'proper teachers' which affects their self-esteem. In Romy's case honouring her responsibilities was a way of reinforcing her belief that she was a 'proper teacher' and this would have enhanced both her self-esteem and task perception. Even though Romy was accused by the school management and governing body that she was an unfit teacher when she returned to school after enduring a mental breakdown she knew that she was not transgressing her moral duty and therefore would not have experienced feelings of guilt. Romy stated that *"it was very, very difficult, I used to be unhappy all the time,"* yet she psyched herself to go to school each day. Romy's display of perseverance is in accordance with Day and Gu (2010) who point out that having a strong sense of vocation promotes resilience in teachers. In spite of Romy suffering severe harassment and emotional disturbances she said: *"I would just drag myself there, I chose to*

become a teacher, and it's my duty to be there to serve the learners," highlighting her moral duty.

5.3.3   Personal consequences

- **Stress related illnesses**

Romy attributes her ill health to the high stress levels she endured as a result of the prolonged period of harassment by the principal. She was humiliated in the presence of her colleagues in staff meetings; she was denied leave to attend meetings or to attend to personal matters and she was being constantly monitored through surveillance mechanisms adopted by the principal. She was called to account in the presence of management members and SGB members as to how she planned to make up the lost time when she was on sick leave. Romy reported that the instances of harassment were too many to mention and was documented in a dosier that she used to escalate the matter to the departmental officials and the teacher union representatives. She explained:

> *Over the years with all the stress that I had taken on, I have been diagnosed with*
> *high blood pressure and diabetes and I am on chronic medication for both.*

Peltzer et al. (2009) found high blood pressure and diabetes to be the most prevalent stress related conditions among teachers in South African schools. It was further found that these stress related illnesses were linked to lack of job satisfaction. To Romy, the stress she endured over the years was responsible for her chronic health condition and lack of job satisfaction which was evident when she said; *"I started disliking my job."*

- **Feeling trapped in the job and in the marriage**

While Romy would have readily opted to leave her job during the stressful period at work, she had no choice but to stay. She points out why:

> *Well, my job is my bread and butter, so it was not like I could get up one morning*
> *and say, I want to quit, I want to leave, I want to resign, although I very much*
> *would have wanted to, but the thing is I needed my job, so I stuck in there and it*
> *was such a hopeless situation.*

Her livelihood depended on her job, so she had no other options available. Similiarly, Troman and Wood (2009) found that when teachers went through stressful periods at work, they had thoughts of leaving but the financial implications "loomed large" (p. 121). When

Romy expresses that she felt *"stuck in there,"* it is evident that she felt a sense of hopelessness, of having no control over the situation and feeling trapped. This would have led to increased vulnerability as a teacher, especially that she felt there was no way out.

In Romy's case, she was challenged with two influences, one emanating from the workplace and the other from the personal context. She was coping with the persistent harassment by the principal at school as well as relationship issues. Romy was forced to continue with unsolved issues in her marriage because she simply did not have any energy to attend to them. She lamented:

> *At that time, I was a mother with two young children and a difficult husband as well, so I couldn't make that a big thing as well and then there would have been two different issues to deal with. So I had to put all my energy into being strong at school with the principal, sort of getting up every day and going to school, and whatever other issues I had had to be pushed into the background. So I had to make those kinds of sacrifices.*

Issues at school were too consuming, leaving Romy with no energy to attend to issues in her personal life. To Romy, it wasn't a choice, it was a sacrifice. According to Day (2011) when one or more influences dominate, teachers' ability to cope would be dependent on the time it would take to resolve the issues (short term, medium or long term) and their individual biographies, which includes their emotional resilience and vulnerability to stress. It is also dependent on their physical health, their values and aspirations, personal and professional support and their sense of agency. It is evident that Romy's challenges at school were continuing over a long term, she experienced severe depression, was already experiencing chronic health problems, was being alienated at school and she was struggling to get her complaints heard by officials in the department and the union. She was not getting much support professionally and personally. Day (2011) outlined the different choices and strategies that teachers may exercise to cope when two or more influences come to bear on them. One of the strategies adopted by teachers was subjugating one or more influence to accommodate the needs of the other. In Romy's case, she made a sacrifice of subjugating one, that is, her personal issues to accommodate the needs of the other, her workplace issues. She put all her energy in coping with the persistent harassment at school and sacrificed her personal happiness.

5.3.4 Displaying agency - a different pathway

While Romy made several attempts to take up the matter of harassment with the departmental officials and the union, she did not succeed. She explained why:

> *I tried avenues before, trying to contact the SEMs and all that but it didn't work, so it was tough.., his position as a principal, it was sort of like, nobody questions the principal, if a teacher had to complain, it was somehow, as if the teacher is always wrong, teachers didn't have a voice, and in my view it was as though, he had all the protection. If a complaint went to them (the Department of Education), I don't know how much of it they would take seriously, but nothing came off it. He had a strong position in the union as well; it just went on deaf years.*

Romy felt that the principal succeeded in convincing the departmental officials and the union that he was not to blame and that as a teacher she felt powerless and helpless. Romy would have been vulnerable especially as she felt she had no power or control over the matter. Every time a complaint was lodged, it was subverted and Romy felt that the principal's strong position in the union could have been attributed to this. Similar to the feelings of Romy, Hoel (2013, p. 72) reported that a survey by one of the biggest trade unions in the United Kingdom found that employees felt that 'bullies get away with it' and reflect employee mistrust in the effectiveness of internal processes associated in handling cases of bullying. Romy also felt that the principal portrayed an image that *"the teacher is always wrong."* Adams (1997b) offers an explanation for why bullies portray the subordinates as being wrong. The author highlighted that they are likely to possess a 'Jekyll and Hyde' character and the tyrannical side experienced by the subordinates becomes transformed when they interact with others, especially their superiors.

After enduring a mental breakdown, Romy became desperate and realized that following the usual channels to address the matter were proving unsuccessful and decided that she had to do something different. She then resigned from the union she belonged to and joined another union. She asserts:

> *I can honestly say that it was because of this new union who decided to take up the matter. It did take a long time, but they did take up the matter and they persevered, and it did go up to the highest level. The new union representative*

was very forceful with the SEM and he wanted the matter to be sorted out. He had a way of talking to her and getting her to meet with the other officials concerned. We had a meeting together with the SEM, with the union, with the principal, and then the matter was taken further up. Somehow, I don't know what happened at that level, I don't know till this day what transpired because we were not called in but my principal sort of backed off.

He was also very guarded after that, so it did make a difference. Whatever the union did to intervene it did make a difference. We would never to this day be the best of friends but at least we are cordial to each other now, we are able to greet each other and even have a short conversation.

It is evident that the display of agency by Romy was what prompted her to change her affiliation to another union. Romy's agentic actions are in accordance with Giddens's (2013) notion that intentions are a necessary condition for agency. Together with intention, two conditions need to be prevalent, the person needs to be capable of acting out their intentions and have the power to intervene in the situation. Romy's actions were manifested in what Giddens (2013) refers to as taking a different approach to make a difference in the existing state of affairs. She realized that her previous attempts were failing and new avenues of recourse had to be sought. She took action to resign from her union and join a new union and was able to convince the new union representative that her case was valid. The new union representative was determined to have the matter addressed as soon as he realized her case had merit and he was assertive with the departmental officials who previously did not act decisively. With the new union, the issues that created the stumbling blocks she faced previously were neutralized. This proved to be a turning point for Romy. If she did not take the decision to find an alternative route to address the matter, she probably would have had no relief from the harassment that was already having pernicious effects on her well-being. This illustrates that Romy had strong coping potential. She thought of different possibilities that could change the situation and eliminate the harm that she was experiencing and acted on it. For Romy, the future expectancy was viewed as positive, since she observed changes in the principal's attitude towards her and that the relationship was not as hostile and tense. When Romy stated that she could have a short conversation with the principal, it illustrated that the relationship was improving although she was quick to add that, *"we would never to this day be the best of friends."*

5.3.5 Moving out of the comfort zone

When Romy reflects on the critical incident she has this to say:

> *But in hindsight now, when I look back I really had to get back out of that comfort zone of mine and I had to stand up for myself, I had to show him that he could not trample all over me, and that I had to build up the strength and courage to face up to him, and sort of stand up to him now, and tell him that this is unfair and…. it was a slow process, but I managed to do that..*

> *I feel now, I would not let anyone take advantage of me, no matter what their position is, I know right from wrong and when I feel I am right I am able to stand up to someone and say this is it, this is what I feel, and this is why I feel this is right. I am able to say it. Now I can stand up in a staff meeting and not be afraid that principal would say something to shut me down or ridicule me, I can stand up now and say it. And he is very guarded because he knows that I won't just accept anything from him. He is guarded at times because he knows that I will say it like it is. He knows that he can say a lot of things to other staff members and he can get away with it, even though he is wrong, and he knows that he cannot do it with me, because I am strong enough now and able to tell him that this is wrong.*

Romy reflects on how her growth from the incident has influenced how she conducts her personal relationships with family and friends:

> *My relationships towards friends, even family members, who would try to put me down or sort of treat me as a doormat, I have decided I am not accepting any of those.*

> *So if it meant standing up to a friend, I would stand up to a friend. If it means standing up to a family member and standing my ground and stating my case, I would do it. So much so that I think, now I have reached a stage where, I am not afraid, I am not afraid of anyone.*

In spite of Romy enduring years of emotional and mental badgering by the principal, her efforts to take the matter up through alternative means paid off and she became empowered as a teacher. She is now able to stand up for herself, has become more courageous and more

self-confident. Previously she succumbed to the principal's ridicule and victimization for fear that he was more authoritative because of his position. Now her confidence has allowed her to make inputs in meetings and not feel intimidated by the principal. It is evident that her efforts to take up the matter of workplace bullying and being successful had resulted in the principal realizing that she could not be taken advantage of. Romy's lessons in assertiveness have also spilled over into her personal life. She is able to stand her ground when she feels she is right and not be intimidated by anyone. Romy explains a shift in her personality; she grew from a disempowered teacher to a self-assured and assertive teacher. In Romy's case the critical incident that 'broke her down, built her up' through her display of agency as a teacher.

Table 4: Summary of Romy's response to critical incident

Clusters of influences	Negative influences	Positive influences	Response
Socio-cultural/policy influences	• Lack of support from teacher union • Lack of departmental support • Accused of being an unfit teacher and moral integrity questioned	• Strong sense of vocation and moral duty • Change of union-support from new union	Powerless Helpless Powerless Stress Perseverance in face of challenges Display of agency

Workplace influences	• Leadership effects: bullying, harassment, victimization, no pastoral care, treated differently from other teachers, constant monitoring, accused of being an unfit teacher • Colleagues ganging up with principal		Stress Depression Anxiety Shame (public humiliation) Apprehension Controlled and restricted Mental breakdown Alienation
Personal influences	• Ill health • Pressure to hold on to job • Relationship issues in marriage		Physical manifestation of stress Feeling trapped Sacrificed personal needs for professional needs

5.4   Scenario 3: Julia – 'I was just isolated, an outsider'

Figure 5: Retrieved from: https://www.google.co.za/search?q=isolated+images

5.4.1   Workplace conditions threatened

- **Lack of acknowledgement as Head of Department**

Julia's critical incident was triggered when she had to step down from an acting principal position at her school when a new appointment was made. She perceived the new appointment as being unfair. She couldn't reconcile how the new incumbent who was a level one teacher with no management experience could get the post as principal.

As tensions mounted at the school, Julia found that the principal assumed her duties as a Head of Department and she was relegated to being a full time class teacher with no management duties. Julia felt that she was not being acknowledged as a Head of Department and was unable to execute her duties effectively. She avers:

> *…as a Head of Department, I was somehow being overridden because what the principal used to do was even something that was related to the curriculum, you will find that the principal was taking over. The principal was performing those duties so I was just ending up like an ornament. Because they did not want to involve me in any matters to do with school management, it affected me in terms of the development as a Head of Department and as a member of the school management team. I was realizing that I am no longer being acknowledged, secondly I was no longer performing my duties the way I should.*

Julia had many years of experience as a Foundation Phase Head of Department yet the principal who had no management experience was taking on her role as Head of Department. Julia described herself feeling like an *"ornament,"* having the title of Head of Department but not performing any duties. The actions of the principal would have made Julia feel de-valued especially that she was unable to express her professional knowledge and expertise (Strandmark & Hallberg, 2007) which would have affected her self-image and self-esteem (Kelchtermans, 2009a).

Julia's task perception was also at stake here. Task perception, according to Kelchtermans (2009a) constitutes the teacher's idea of what tasks and duties need to be fulfilled in order to do a good job. In Julia's case, she felt that she was not performing her duties as a Head of Department as per her role function and was just a class teacher. Kelchtermans (2009a) argues that when teachers feel their task perception is affected then their moral integrity as professionals is called into question and this leads to their vulnerability. It is evident that Julia's "desired workplace condition" (Kelchtermans, 2011, p. 70) of fulfilling her role as a Head of Department was threatened. She was also not collaborating and working with teachers in her department and was not developing and guiding them. When Julia did speak to the teachers in her department about some professional matters they would not engage with her. She said: *"They were talking to me under general but if we had to discuss something related to our duties they would say, no!"* It is evident that Julia was losing control over the situation and was feeling powerless to restore an important workplace condition which is to continue her duties as a Head of Department. This rejection from the teachers in her department would have increased Julia's feeling of vulnerability. Social recognition by the principal and colleagues constitutes a "highly valued, non-material, social workplace condition" which teachers work hard to establish and maintain (Kelchtermans, 2011, p. 77) but in Julia's case this had come under threat. The lack of acknowledgement of being a Head of Department and feeling de-valued by both the principal and the teachers would have affected Julia's ego-identity. It would have made her feel demeaned and would have resulted in feelings of anger. She reported that it was *"the identity that was what was affected. More affected, being a member of the school management team."*

- **Isolated by exclusion from staff meetings**

There were instances when changes were made to the timetable and Julia was unaware of why adjustments were instituted. Meetings were scheduled during that time and she was not notified or invited.

> *You will find that the bell will just ring, when I am asking why the bell is ringing, they (other teachers) would say, "No, no, because we are having netball training," so my learners will go out and I'll be left not doing anything. So she (principal) was not going to invite me to the meetings and at the same time there were no learners to teach.*

Julia's isolation was apparent when she was the only teacher excluded from the meeting and found herself 'at a loose end' not knowing what to do with herself. Benefield (2004) found that teachers felt bullied by management when they were excluded from meetings and classes or tasks were changed without notification. In Julia's case she had no clue that there was a change from normal class teaching to netball training and was quite surprised to hear that a meeting was scheduled. Being informed by other teachers that there was a staff meeting would have further reinforced her feeling of isolation. Kelchtermans (2011, p. 70) contends that attending staff meetings is a desired workplace condition of teachers that forms part of the "organizational and social interests" at the school. In Julia's case, this desired workplace condition was threatened as she was excluded from meetings. Julia's absence at the meeting would have been noticed by all her colleagues and would have sent a signal that she was excluded. Julia's need for social recognition as a teacher was threatened which would have affected her self-esteem and would have been a source of her vulnerability as a teacher which would have inadvertently harmed her professional self. Lazarus (1991) argues that when the person's ego-identity is affected negatively, anger is experienced. In Julia's case the principal's actions would have made her feel demeaned and devalued. Julia would have appraised the threat to her workplace conditions as goal relevant. Both fulfilling her role as a Head of Department and attending meetings is an important part of her job.

5.4.2 Goal to develop professionally being thwarted

Julia also found that her desire to develop herself professionally was being obstructed by the principal. She was not given circulars to attend meetings called for Heads of Department in the district and was losing touch with the latest developments and requirements. She was

unable to access information needed to function effectively as a Head of Department and her opportunities to network with other Heads of Department were being impeded. She asserts:

> *…at times you find that I will hear from other Foundation Phase Heads of Department from other schools saying, "Julia you didn't attend the meeting, there was a cluster meeting for Heads of Department why did you not come?" I would tell them, "I didn't know anything about that. No one told me about the meeting." I couldn't get hold of the first-hand information. It was affecting me professionally, in terms of professional development. It was frustrating me.*

Julia experienced the withholding of circulars regarding professional development meetings by the principal as frustrating; especially because she liked learning new ideas and developing her skills. She said: *"I like to have professional development sessions."* Julia's desire to develop professionally is in line with the findings of the VITAE study by Day et al. (2007) which revealed that teachers across all professional life phases found that continuing professional development had a positive influence on their level of effectiveness, motivation, their sense of self-efficacy, commitment and ultimately has a positive influence on their professional identity. By not attending the cluster meetings, Julia would have lost the opportunity to discuss and learn from other Heads of Department in the Foundation Phase. Moonsamy (2011) highlighted the value teachers placed on learning in cluster meetings, especially sharing of ideas, collaboration and developing new and innovative ways of working. Julia's opportunities for engaging in collaborative learning networks outside her school, which most teachers value (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005), were lost. For Julia, these lost opportunities further signified a feeling of isolation. De Wet (2014) noted that teachers felt bullied by principals who resorted to the withholding of departmental circulars and important information from them. Teachers perceived this as tactics to set them up for failure.

Attending professional development sessions is of relevance to Julia since she enjoys continuous learning. Lazarus (1991) stressed that the more relevant the incident, the stronger the emotional response. There is evidence of goal incongruence between Julia's desire to develop herself professionally and the principal's actions of denying her access to professional development and networking meetings. Since Julia experienced goal incongruence, she would have experienced a negative emotional response (Lazarus, 1991). Lazarus (1991) contends that when blame is apportioned to another person, anger is

experienced. The principal's actions were thwarting her desire to fulfil her professional development goal which would have evoked anger in Julia, since the harm or loss is blamed on the principal.

5.4.3 Belittled by learners from other grades

Julia felt that the mistreatment of her by the principal was spreading to the learners. Julia reported how the response of the learners towards her was having a detrimental effect on her well-being. She reported:

> *It was affecting me big time. It was affecting me a lot because even if you are there, let's say there is morning assembly, then you give learners that kind of a moral lesson, you will see that even if you can speak, you are just doing nothing, because learners already know that you are a nothing. I am speaking of learners from other grades.*

By observing the learners' reaction to her presenting the moral lesson, Julia knew that they had lost respect for her and regarded her as a *"nothing."* This statement from Julia points to the fact that her self-image and self-esteem would have been severely eroded. By observing the body language of the learners, Julia sensed their passive aggression towards her and gauged their perception of her. Kelchtermans (2009a) posits that learners are one of the most important sources of feedback and recognition for teachers. When teachers feel recognized and acknowledged by learners it enhances their self-esteem. When Julia perceived that the learners regarded her as *"a nothing"* it would have evoked feelings of vulnerability as a Head of Department.

Spilt et al. (2011) assert that teachers attach great value to their personal relationships with their learners and disrespectful, distant, and alienated relationships can exert a threat not only to the professional but also to their personal well-being. Julia expressed how affected she was as a result of perceiving the relationship with the learners as negative. She said: *"It was affecting me big time."* Spilt et al. (2011) further argued that teachers seek positive relationships with their learners because of their basic psychological need for relatedness. In Julia's case although the learners were not from her class, she felt deeply affected since attaining this need was being threatened. She would have experienced the response of the learners as belittling and therefore concluded that they felt she was a *'nothing."* Julia would have also felt that she had failed to live up to her ideals as a Head of Department and this

would have evoked feelings of shame (Lazarus, 1991). Lazarus (1991) contends that when a person's ego-identity is adversely affected it results in feelings of anger, especially when blame is apportioned to someone else. In this instance, Julia was apportioning blame to the principal and her colleagues. She summed it up by saying:

> *Yes, it was something which was obvious to everyone. As I am telling you, even the parents knew that I am not a good teacher, which is what they knew about me, because of the influences, they were receiving from the principal and my colleagues, so I felt that though it is affecting me personally, it was also affecting me professionally.*

Julia perceived that the stance adopted by the principal and her colleagues to portray her as lacking competence was a ploy to isolate her further.

5.4.4   Out casting and exclusion

Julia's feeling of isolation was also spreading to the parents. She avers:

> *I also felt bad that even the governing body, the parents, they didn't recognize me. They didn't recognize that I am one of school management team member. Even if they come to the principal they would speak to the principal and have some SGB meetings without inviting me. So I was just an outcast.*

Again Julia felt that she was not being recognised as a Head of Department by the parent component of the school. Julia's exclusion from the governing body meetings made her feel that she did not belong there and the pain she felt was expressed when she said: *"So I was just an outcast."* Here again her social recognition from the parents was being withdrawn which would have affected her self-esteem negatively and this would have resulted in her feeling of vulnerability as a management member. It was common practice at the school to invite the management members to governing body meetings; her exclusion indicates again that her desired workplace condition, which was to be part of the governing body meetings, was threatened.

Julia felt that her alienation was spreading to the wider parents at the school as well. She recalled being confronted by a parent for not teaching English to the learners.

What happened during that time was we had three learning areas, Literacy, Life skills and Numeracy. Normally what happened was that the Department of Education, was advising that learners should be taught in their home language only in the Foundation Phase until such time when they are in grade 4, they can have English as a medium of instruction but in Grade 3 it can be introduced just as a language but not for assessment.

Then this parent accused me of not teaching English because she had spoken to one of my colleagues and she told her, "You know what, that Grade 1 mam is not teaching learners English and we don't know why." That parent was so cross but when I explained everything to her and I took out the Language policy document, she was then pleased with everything and said, "No mam, the only thing was that mam, so and so came and told me that you don't want to teach our children English."

De Wet's (2014) study of teacher bullying in South African schools observed that teachers were bullied at the workplace through bullying by "proxy" (p. 9). This happens when other stakeholders like parents begin to bully teachers through negative influences from the school. Fortunately for Julia the parent confronted her and she was able to correct the perception of the parent and restore her credibility by referring the parent to the policy document. She seemed to have handled the situation in a professional manner and the parent seemed satisfied with the explanation. For Julia though this was a confirmation that there was intent by the principal and her colleagues to discredit her and portray her in a poor light. She confirmed this by saying:

Yes, they were trying to outcast me as much as they can; they were trying to alienate me from the parents as well. So the parents can say, "Oh! That's a good for nothing person, because she even failed to be the principal, she failed the school, so now she is also failing to be a teacher."

Julia's repeated reference to herself as a *"nothing"* and a failure points to the perception she had of herself as a result of the actions of the principal and her colleagues to alienate her. Her self-image would have been severely eroded which would have ultimately affected her professional identity. Julia's response reflects that she had lost something of "professional value" (Kelchtermans, 2011, p. 69), her recognition as a Head of Department. Added to this her ability and competence as a teacher were also threatened.

5.4.5 Moral drive through affective empathy

Facing the challenges at work was not easy for Julia. There were days when she thought of not going to school but the well-being of her learners was uppermost on her mind. This is what she said:

> *Even when I felt like not going to work, I said, "Oh, for those learners sake I have to go." In such a way that some of my learners told me that the principal and my other colleagues, were ill-treating them when I was not at work. They would say, "Oh, Shut up!" "Don't make a noise, your mam is not here, don't think we are your class teacher."*

Julia's drive to be at school was motivated by her need to protect her learners, knowing that if she was not there they would be mistreated. She said: *"Yes, they were victims. They were going to become victims, just because they are my learners."* Julia listened to her learners' concerns and needs and although she faced immense challenges at work, her moral responsibility towards her learners prompted her to put aside her own needs and protect their well-being. Julia's response is in accordance with Noddings's (2012) view that good teachers will be attentive and listen to the expressed needs of their learners and respond accordingly. Julia expressed a deep caring for her learners and adopted what Hoffman (2001) calls "affective empathy" where she felt for them and did not want them to become victims of mistreatment because of her issues with the principal and her colleagues. When Julia said: *"They were going to become victims, just because they are my learners,"* it is almost as if she felt a "moral answerability" (Nias, 1999, p. 226) to them and felt obliged to protect and care for them. The only way she could do this was to ensure that she was at school. Kelchtermans (2009a) asserts that teachers question how well they are doing their jobs. To Julia, going to school in spite of the challenges she faced to protect her learners from abuse would have made her feel that what she was doing was what a 'proper teacher' (Kelchtermans, 2009a) would do. Had Julia not fulfilled her moral obligation towards her learners, she may have experienced guilt knowing that they were going to be victimised because of her.

5.4.6 Feeling 'pushed out' – exploring alternatives

Julia realized that the situation was becoming untenable and that she needed to leave the school. She described the various options she explored:

I was thinking of getting a transfer. But it's very hard in the Department of Education to get a transfer, because its either you get a single transfer or you get a cross transfer. But for the school where I was working I don't think that there was anyone who was going to be interested to cross with me because the school was so far away, so I don't think that anyone would take that risk. Secondly, with the single transfer you have to know which school has a post and you must know someone there, so that if you apply you can be sure that you will get that post. Thirdly, I was thinking of resigning. I didn't know what would happen if I took the risk. I was thinking of resigning, I was thinking of my kids, I was thinking of whatever I had to take care of, my home, the bond, the car and everything. I was thinking of all those expenses that I have. Really at times I told myself, no, this is too much. Almost everyone was against me.

The two transfer options that Julia explored seemed complicated and were not easy to process. The option of resigning had financial implications for her and she perceived it as a risk. She had many financial commitments and responsibilities to consider. Similar to Romy, she felt she couldn't cope with the stressful situation at school yet she did not have a feasible option that she thought was workable for her situation. When Julia expressed that she felt that everyone was against her, it seems she felt inclined to look at alternatives. It was as if she felt that she was being 'pushed out' or forced to leave the school.

5.4.7   Character at stake and personality 'blocked'

Julia recounted her experiences during a collage presentation that she made at university to illustrate how the situation at school was affecting her. She said:

There was this time we were having a session with Dr Rose[15] (lecturer at university). She asked us to do a collage, whereby you have pictures, which tells other people who you are. The first picture I had was a bee. I just said that I am somehow like a bee. I am a busy bee, all the time I work. All the time I work collecting honey because that's what I believe in. You have to be dedicated; you have to be a workaholic, in order to gain something. I then had another picture, with a women crying. Dr Rose asked me why you are having this one. I said, "I am crying because my character is somehow at stake, because I know myself, I

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[15] Pseudonym

know that I am a very charismatic person, but somehow I am being affected by things around me. It was somehow blocking my personality, the person I am, because even when I had some suggestions I couldn't voice them out." Because they will say, "Haa, Julia, the learned one, the one who is doing Masters." That is what they labelled me as. It was hindering my progress, really.

So I had another picture with a school girl reading. I said I like reading. I like reading most of the time, that is why, after all that happened I never gave up on reading. Another picture was me and my friends having some tea, I said to her, "You know what I am a very jolly person, I like to be around people, I like to have some people to help and I like going out. I like to laugh and all those things."

At school, it was totally different; it was not tallying at all. It was totally different in such a way that Dr Rose said to me, "Do you what Julia, people don't ill treat you because they are aiming to do that, but they are ill-treating you because they realize that you are not one of them. You are not one of them, you are in a place where you don't belong, so you have to leave them in their own territory and move on."

Throughout the discussion of the collage, Julia referred to how the situation at school was affecting her personally. This is indicative of her appraisal of the situation as goal relevant. Julia felt that what she was experiencing at school was contrary to her personality and character. She was a jolly person who liked to be around people; however, at school she was being isolated and excluded. While she liked learning and improving herself professionally, she was being mocked at school. She was emotionally affected because it was *"blocking her personality" and "hindering her progress."* When Julia said that the situation at school was different and not in accordance with her ideals, there was evidence of goal incongruence. It was confirmed by her lecturer that she was in a place where she did not fit in and the best option was to move on. It is evident that Julia felt sadness when she chose the picture of a women crying. Lazarus (1991) contends that sadness denotes resignation rather than struggle for the lost ego involvement. In Julia's case her self- and social esteem were at stake because of the alienation, exclusion and isolation. Her ideals as a teacher were in conflict with the situation at school. She liked working hard and improving herself professionally but was being mocked by her colleagues. The well-being of her learners was at stake and she had to

protect them from abuse from the principal and her colleagues. Julia was encouraged to move towards acceptance since nothing could be changed to improve the situation and that she needed to move on. The future expectancy at the school was negative, since Julia herself recounted what she was advised by her lecturer: *"You are not one of them, you are in a place where you don't belong, so you have to leave them in their own territory and move on."* Nias (1989) found that when teachers found conflict between their individual principles and those of the school they felt that this was one of the reasons to drive them out.

Julia did try to approach the principal with regard to her relationship with her but it did not yield positive results. Julia recounted the conversation:

> *"Do you know what mam, maybe you are having a wrong image about me, let me tell you who I am." I then spoke to her and told her, then she says, "But I don't know that, where are you taking that from, where is that coming from?", I said, "No, no, no, mam, I am just telling you that if you want to speak to me, I am not a difficult person, if you want to know something, you are free to speak to me, not that I am a person that you have to alienate or a person who is somehow jealous of your position and all those things". She says, "No! I don't know where you take that from".*

From the conversation, it is apparent that Julia's coping potential was weak. She tried to make an effort to build and negotiate a more cordial relationship with the principal but realized that the principal was not ready to move forward in re-building the relationship. The situation seemed hopeless.

Table 5: Summary of Julia's response to critical incident

Clusters of influences	Negative influences	Positive influences	Response
Socio-cultural/policy influences	• Professional development obstructed • Ideals/beliefs as teacher threatened	 • Moral duty to learners	Anger (feeling isolated) Sadness Affective empathy
Workplace influence	• Unable to fulfil Head of Department • Excluded from meetings • Lack of respect from learners • Lack of recognition and trust from parents	None	Anger (feeling devalued/ rejected) Anger (feeling excluded/demeaned/devalued) Anger (feeling belittled) Shame (failure to live up to ideals of being a proper Head of Department) Feeling alienated
Personal influence	• Pressure to explore options to transfer to another school or resign	None	Feeling pushed out of school

5.5 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The analysis of the three participant scenarios was outlined in this chapter. Each was presented according to the relevant themes specifically highlighting how each participant responded to the critical incident and why they responded the way they did. Whilst all three critical incidents emanated from the workplace influence, other influences were triggered during the experience of the critical incident. Overall the participants experienced mostly negative feelings and emotions. A synopsis will be presented on all six scenarios at the end of Chapter Six. Chapter Six presents the analysis of the additional three scenarios of Pritha, Pralene and Saiyen.

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS: TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented an elucidation of the data analysis of the three scenarios (Venetia, Romy and Julia) whose critical incidents emerged from the workplace influence. This chapter presents the analysis of the three remaining scenarios of Pritha, Pralene and Saiyen (Refer to Table 2 for a description of the sample). Pritha's critical incident was triggered by the socio-cultural/policy influence as well as the personal influence. Both Pralene's and Saiyen's critical incidents were triggered by personal influences. The research question, theoretical framework and literature around teachers' lives guided the analysis process. The critical question that directed the study was: How did the teachers respond to the critical incident in their teaching lives and why? The data analysis was conducted using the lens of the social-psychological framework of emotion derived from the cognitive theory of emotions (Lazarus,1991) and the three different clusters of influences that come to bear on teachers' lives (Day, 2011). Themes for each scenario varied depending on the nature of the critical incident and the participant's responses. At the end of each scenario analysis is a table depicting the different influences that came to bear on the teachers and highlights their responses. The final section of the chapter highlights the key findings that emerged from the data analysis.

6.2 Scenario 4: Pritha - 'Every thought I had about how life was going to be, it was shattered completely'

Figure 6: Retrieved from: https://www.google.co.za/search?q=life+shattered+images

6.2.1 Prioritized union meeting over wedding

In the critical incident experienced by Pritha, she found her desire to pursue her professional goal of attending an important regional union meeting contested by her fiancée and father-in-law. Her wedding was scheduled for the 18 May and the union meeting was on the 16 and 17 of May. Her fiancée and father-in-law insisted that as a Muslim bride-to-be according to the Islamic tradition she should not attend any function before the wedding. Pritha had an important position in the union and was a youth representative who had attended international conferences and appraised the meeting as goal relevant. She said: *"I was not prepared not to go to the meeting, it was a regional meeting and delegates from all over were coming. So anyway, under no circumstances was I not going to that meeting, I was going, I was going.…"* Pritha's desire to attend the meeting was so strong that she said: *"I rather not get married than missing the meeting."* The relevance of the union meeting to Pritha was evident when she said that she was not prepared to miss it even if it clashed with the pre-nuptial arrangements of her wedding. There was goal incongruence between Pritha's desire to attend the meeting and the response of both her fiancée and father-in-law. This created tensions and arguments since she was adamant to attend irrespective of their views. She reported:

> So we had a big fight, argument, his father said that I don't know what it is to be
> a Muslim woman….. My fiancée put his foot down and was getting angry with me

and we were fighting and fighting….. Then he said that he didn't want to marry
me after that, he didn't take my calls and things.

Pritha would not compromise on her need to attend the union meeting and her fiancée and father-in-law thought that she was being unreasonable. Her desire to attend was so strong that she went ahead and thought that her fiancée would relent and still go ahead with the wedding but he did not. According to Lazarus (1991) when there is goal incongruence and when blame is apportioned to another person then the emotion of anger is experienced (Lazarus, 1991). Pritha felt that her fiancée and father-in-law were thwarting the attainment of her professional goal that she perceived as more important than her personal goal of marriage. Lazarus (1991) contends that when there is frustration that a goal cannot be attained, the person perceives a slight or harm to their identity. The disagreements caused tensions and arguments exemplifying the high levels of anger that was evoked.

In spite of the pleas by her fiancée to forego the meeting, her strong compulsion to attend reveals that her presence at the meeting was enhancing her professional identity in a substantial way. She said: *"I have a very high reputation in the union in terms of staff and things like that."* Kelchtermans (2009a, p. 39) argues that there may be "critical persons" in a teacher's life whose feedback the teacher may consider more relevant and valuable than others. This will be a vital source of their social recognition and will affect their self-esteem. In Pritha's case, the senior membership of the union were critical persons in her professional life and her attending the meeting was an important event in building her self-esteem. Pritha was already pregnant at that time and ran the risk of being a single mum, yet she viewed her attendance at the union meeting as more important to her at that time. She made a judgement and exercised her choice.

Similiar to Romy, Pritha faced pressure from two clusters of influences, the socio-cultural/policy cluster in which the union meeting is located and the personal cluster of influence in which her marriage is located. However, in Pritha's case she made a conscious choice to prioritize one over the other. Yet in spite of having made a choice to attend the union meeting and risking a cancelled wedding, she was still hopeful that she could do both. She did not receive the support of her fiancée and his family in this regard. While Pritha stated that she coped with the cancelled wedding with support from her family and did not take any time off work, she expressed strong emotions of anger towards her fiancée and

blamed him for everything that she had to face and endure thereafter. She said: *"He left me five days before my wedding. It wasn't my fault. It was pissing me off because I couldn't go and explain that to everybody."* Day (2011) posits that instabilities caused by the different influences or a combination of influences "creates stresses in the emotional fabric of teacher identity" (p. 47). Teachers are required to be resilient and supported during these times so that positive identities can be built and sustained.

6.2.2 Feeling reassured with union support

Pritha explained to the union members at the meeting that her wedding was cancelled because she prioritized the meeting. She reported:

> *When I went to the union meeting I told them that my boyfriend and father-in-law stopped me from attending. They said, "Don't worry we will take care of you." I told them the meeting was more important to me than the wedding so I decided to come. I told them that my boyfriend said that the wedding was off and if I needed anything I should go to the union. They told me not to worry, they will support me, and even if I needed financial support they can sort it out. They said there are more than sixty thousand union members in the country and if each one contributed even one rand, I will have enough money to bring up my child alone. They assured me that they will support me even during the birth of the baby even if it meant a bus load of them coming on the day I gave birth they will be at my side, not to worry. They will all wear their t-shirts and will be there at my side. They said I have nothing to fear.*

When Pritha told the union members that the meeting was more important to her than the wedding, there is evidence yet again of the importance and relevance of the meeting to her well-being. Being a part of the youth component of the union was enhancing her ego-identity in a substantial way. She appraised it as goal relevant and therefore when she was asked not to attend she became angry and agitated. Pritha was given reassurance by the union members that she was not alone and that they will be her support structure. They went to great lengths to make her feel at ease and assured her that they would stand by her.

6.2.3 Failure to live up to the ideal of being a role model

Pritha found that during her critical incident one of the most emotionally challenging episodes was informing her learners that she was pregnant. This episode was appraised by Pritha as goal incongruent since she always wanted to be a role model to her learners and this incident went contrary to that moral belief that she held. She felt that as an unwed pregnant teacher, she was not a good example to the high school learners that she taught. She always advised her learners regarding this and her current situation went contrary to the advice that she offered them. She explains what transpired at school when she told her learners:

> *I taught the whole day at school, it never affected me at all at school, except the one time I did cry was when I was telling my grade 10s what had happened because they knew I was getting married on Saturday, these are high school kids, I had to tell them the truth and I had to also tell them I was pregnant, how am I going to hide that and they know there's no wedding and if know I am pregnant that will be a big issue, so I told them and when I told them, I obviously broke down because I was supposed to be their role model, in fact I live my life to be a role model for children because I am a teacher that's the way I live my life…*

To Pritha, being a good role model to her learners was an important part of her job as a teacher. Kelchtermans (2009a) refers to this as a teacher's task perception which reflects what the teacher thinks constitutes his/her job as a teacher. In her own personal way she saw it as her job description. She said: *"I live my life to be a role model for children because I am a teacher."* Pritha viewed acting as a role model to her learners was part of being a 'proper teacher' (Kelchtermans, 2009a) and she felt that the situation she was in was in conflict with that ideal. Nias (1996) contends that teachers experience positive self-esteem when they feel that their actions are consistent with their beliefs and values. When teachers perceive that their actions are running counter to their values, they do not feel good about themselves. In Pritha's case, she felt that her situation went against the ideals that she encouraged her learners to work towards and this would have affected her self-image and self-esteem. Pritha's perception of herself as a teacher and what she thought her learners would think of her were called into question. Her professional identity was at stake and this according to Kelchtermans (2011) causes teachers to become vulnerable. Her feelings were further exemplified when she said:

…and another person is dictating my life, his decision is now dictating my life in a sense that I am no longer a role model, because we tell them to have a degree, get married and have a job, so how can I tell them that what they are doing is wrong, so that made me breakdown, I think that was the only time I cried was that time, as I said that I am a teacher all the time, I think that, that affected me more than the fact that he left me as a single parent, the fact that I have to go and tell my children that this is what happened, it really, really damaged me.

Pritha blamed her fiancée for the situation in which she found herself. Pritha's outwardly directed anger was evident when she said that *"his decision is now dictating my life in a sense that I am no longer a role model."* Together with anger, Pritha would have experienced shame for having failed to live up to her own ideals as a teacher which is evident when she said: *"I am no longer a role model."* According to Lazarus (1991) shame stems from feeling that one has failed to live up to one's ego ideals. It is evident that Pritha was deeply affected by the impact of the loss she endured in failing to live up to her desire to be a role model to her learners. She said, *"That made me breakdown, I think that was the only time I cried was that time."*

6.2.4   Stigmatized by society

For Pritha, the decision that her fiancée made to cancel the wedding, knowing that she was pregnant, was unacceptable to her. She felt that it affected the well-being of the rest of her family. She explains why:

I feel he allowed me to walk in this world in shame, and that I can't accept and not only me but my mother, my sisters, my brothers, because everyone knows that this has happened to me now. You know Indian people have this idea that 'she is spoilt' it's so annoying because I planned this baby, I was going to get married, he left me five days before my wedding. It wasn't my fault; I didn't fall pregnant to get married. It was pissing me off because I couldn't go and explain that to everybody, the thing is oh there she fell pregnant now and this guy doesn't want to marry her. This was so annoying to me and because... and months and months are going by and I am going through things alone pregnancy wise, having to explain to people that he left me days before my wedding.

It was evident that Pritha felt stigmatized by society for her pregnancy and being jilted just before the wedding added to the disgrace she felt. She perceived that this incident brought dishonour to her whole family. She felt the need to justify that she did in fact plan on having a baby and therefore cannot be labelled by society as having fallen pregnant unintentionally by being irresponsible or reckless. She also wanted to dispel the notion that she may have fallen pregnant to lure the boy into marriage which she thought was the way society may perceive it. Pritha was emphatic that the situation in which she found herself was her fiancée's fault, since he didn't agree to go ahead with the wedding. Pritha was consumed with shame and anger, shame from having failed to live up to society's ideals regarding pregnancy and anger from believing that her fiancée was responsible for her situation. Her anger was evident when she said: *"this was so annoying to me"* and *"it was pissing me off."* Consistent with the feelings of Pritha, Ellison (2003) observed how unwed pregnant mothers felt the social stigma from society that threatened not only themselves but the social standing of their family. They felt that it was all about the shame it brought. Pritha struggled to reconcile the cultural ideals and norms in society and her lived experience of the pregnancy.

6.2.5 Being teacher from a new perspective

Pritha's experience of the critical incident made her reflect on many aspects of being a teacher. She developed new insights which she would otherwise not have considered.

- **Shifting the gaze to the pregnant girls**

Pritha views the plight of the pregnant teenage girls at her school differently. She explains:

> *Being pregnant now made me think about the pregnant teenage girls in school, we don't support them, we don't check if they are fine, I am getting sick at work, I am feeling hungry, I need to pee and all that. These children don't have any special preferences. If I was not in this situation, I won't have known that they go through this. These girls might have morning sickness, I don't know, we just treat them like normal children, we don't realize that they actually going through something physically. My fiancée left me and I am so emotionally distraught. They may be from single parent homes or both parents are not there, they are also going through the emotional trauma, and how do I expect them to pass the exams as a teacher, because now I am put into that situation and realize that my*

concentration is a little off. I am thinking how can I teach them as normal
children when they are not normal children, it makes me wonder.

Being an unwed pregnant mother, made Pritha consider the teenage girls at school who are pregnant and continue with their schooling until the child is born. Mdletshe (2013) reported that teenage pregnancies have reached alarming rates in schools in Kwa Zulu Natal. The number of teenage pregnancies at schools recorded in 2010 was 13725 and in 2011 there were 10595 teenage girls who were pregnant while at school. In the past Pritha paid no attention to the teenage girls who were pregnant at school. She did not consider their needs, nor did she understand what they went through. Experiencing the pregnancy alone without the support of her fiancée made her consider the challenges and difficulties the pregnant girls may be facing. She experienced many of the physical effects of the pregnancy and wondered how the girls coped without any special concessions. They were expected to be *"normal"* and fulfil all the demands of being a learner at school. Pritha's realization is in line with Chigona and Chetty's (2008) findings that teachers did not empathize with pregnant teenage girls and teen mothers and expected them to behave and perform as any other learner in class.

- **Seeing the learners through a different set of lenses**

When Pritha told the learners about her situation, she was amazed at what she heard from them about their own lives. This is what was revealed:

When I told the children what happened to me, on that day, a whole host of
children started to tell me the horrific problems that they are facing at home, in a
way to tell me that I will be ok, I will be a good single mother, I will be strong
and my child will be fine. They tried to tell me don't stress, because who you are,
your child won't go through what we go through and they told me what they go
through, and then I sat and looked at myself and my children and realized that I
am not teaching normal children, my teaching is not correct. The same smiley
face that I put on, is the same smiley face they put on, because they are children
they are playing, joking, and laughing and sometimes we get angry with them, we
scream at them, we fight with them, we give them a hiding, and not realizing
what's going on behind the scenes. Children fall asleep in class, it made me look
at it twice, I now ask myself, why were they not sleeping at home, why are they
sleeping in school, there are times they are sick, there are times they don't eat,

this started to open up my teaching. This really changed the lenses in which I see the children.

Pritha realized that many of her learners were experiencing immense difficulties at home. It dawned upon her that she did not know or understand her learners. She reflected on how as teachers they reprimand and admonish the learners for not doing their work yet they have no clue what they go through at home. She identified with them in that just as she came to school trying to act 'normal' with so much going on in her life, they were doing the same. She realized that there may be reasons why learners fall asleep in class, become sick and do not have proper meals at home. Pritha's knowing of her learners resulted from her telling them her story which resulted in self-disclosure from the learners which was spontaneous in a quest to console her about her situation. It seems apparent that when Pritha became vulnerable and shared her challenges with them, they displayed empathetic understanding by sharing their stories with her. They felt safe to open up and revealed their challenges which she otherwise would not have known. Zardeckaite-Matulaitiene and Paluckaite (2013) contend that teachers' self-disclosure contributes to creating reciprocity between the teacher and student where students feel self-confident, accepted and free to talk. Tucker (2012) however warns that it could disorientate students if it is not related to the content of the subject.

6.2.6 New awareness, new strategies

Pritha realized that some of her teaching and assessment strategies needed revision. She highlighted why some strategies she was implementing were inappropriate for her learners given the new insights she had gained about their lives. She explained:

In terms of how I made the worksheets and I realize that we make them write notes in class and that is not a very good thing, I need to summarise. I realized that giving them the textbook and asking them to summarise is not a good thing, although these are small things, because they might not get a chance to read the textbook and make notes at home considering what they told me they are going through, so I can't use this strategy of 'you read and come and tell me tomorrow.' It's changing my teaching strategies as well as the way I set the papers, I worry about the children, the paper must have certain questions that are easy, certain questions can be difficult. How do I introduce critical thinking to

them, their thinking is not that of a child, they are thinking about things that are
way bigger than it supposed to be. What I may have in my mind as a teacher, they
are way different because of what they are going through.

From the stories she heard about the learners' lives, Pritha realized that she was using certain strategies that were clearly not working. She began to consider new ways of approaching her teaching so as to cater for their needs and become more inclusive in her approach. It is evident that she is reflecting as a teacher and changing her teaching and assessment strategies to suit the needs of her learners. Previously, in the absence of these insights she felt that she had certain expectations and these may have been unreasonable. She was trying to get learners to implement high order skills like critical thinking but she discovered that their thinking is grounded in their day to day problems and issues. It is apparent that Pritha got to know and understand her learners more from listening to their experiences. Amin (2008) concluded that teachers' knowing may be dangerous and may have several repercussions and be detrimental to the learners. The author argued that the knowing may be partial and incomplete, it may complicate learners' lives in unintended ways, may reproduce gender and class oppression and teachers are not skilled to change the socio-political landscape. In the case of Pritha, her 'knowing' of her learners arose through self-disclosure by the learners themselves as a result of her own vulnerability and sharing her story with them. She did not hear the stories through secondary sources. Pritha considered her 'knowing' of the learners as an 'eye opener' and perceived it as an opportunity to transform her teaching and assessment so that she could teach and assess taking into consideration their backgrounds and challenges.

Table 6: Summary of Pritha's response to critical incident

Clusters of influences	Negative influences	Positive influences	Response
Socio-cultural/policy influences	• Obstructing attending of union meeting • Failure of being a role model to learners • Social stigma from being pregnant before marriage		Anger (blamed fiancée and father-in-law) Shame (Failure to live up to the ideal of being a role model) Emotional breakdown Shame (Failure to live up to the ideal of society in respect of pregnancy and marriage)
		• Union support	Feeling reassured
Workplace influence	None	• Support from learners	Feeling consoled by learners' empathy
Personal influence	• Cancelled wedding	None	Anger (blamed fiancée and father-in-law)

6.3 Scenario 5: Pralene – 'I convinced my mind that if I go back to school I will heal'

Figure 7: Retrieved from: https://www.google.co.za/search?q=healing+images

6.3.1 Learners as the impetus for healing

- **Enhanced self-image and self-esteem through learners' response**

Pralene endured a stroke due to high blood pressure emanating from a stressful marriage. After being discharged from the hospital, she refused to stay at home to recuperate and allow herself time for rehabilitation. She was determined to go back to school which was against the wishes and advice of her doctor and children. She was convinced that going back to work was going to facilitate her healing. After the stroke she had suffered from memory loss, she could not walk unaided, she could not speak clearly, her sight was affected and her face was disfigured with blood clots on the entire left side. When Pralene first entered her class of pre-schoolers, she was shocked at the response of her learners. She describes her experience:

You wouldn't believe when they took me into the classroom, when I entered, the children in the class started screaming with excitement, that Mam was back! When the children screamed, that for me was a shock, and I couldn't believe that the children loved me so much; because I am also a disciplinarian...they still love me. ....something happened to me. ....and seeing the familiar things that I had done in my classroom and this was my room, I started remembering again and I wanted to be there.

In spite of Pralene being left disabled after the stroke, the learners in her class were overjoyed to have their teacher back. After the stroke Pralene was devastated when she looked at herself in the mirror. She said: *"It shocked me and I couldn't believe that I looked like that."* Her

self-image and self-esteem was adversely affected. Yet when she entered her classroom the response she received was not what she had envisaged. The positive response from her learners overwhelmed her. She explained the impact of their response on her:

> *That made me feel so wanted, I was loved and you know what, that I was doing something right here. That told me that you were doing a fantastic job and that is why these children love you and they want you back, and they didn't want anyone, they wanted their Mam. I remember clearly this little boy said, "I want my Mam, don't take my Mam away, leave my Mam here".*

This encounter was appraised as goal relevant by Pralene since it made her feel valued, worthy and loved. She realized that she was appreciated by her learners, and their response illustrated that they acknowledged and recognized her efforts as a teacher. It enhanced both her personal self and her professional identity. This is consistent with Kelchtermans's (2009a) assertion that recognition from learners for a teacher results in enhanced self-image and self-esteem. For Pralene this recognition made her feel she was doing a good job as a teacher and confirmed that she was a 'proper teacher' (Kelchtermans, 2009a). Pralene would have appraised the response of the learners as goal congruent, since it was in line with what she desired. It facilitated her personal goal of returning to work but more than that it enhanced her sense of well-being. The learners' response overwhelmed her and evoked emotions of joy and happiness in her. According to Lazarus (1991) happiness and joy arise when we feel we have gained or are gaining what we desire. It is a feeling that is evoked when we think we are making reasonable progress towards the realization of our goals. The positive response evoked such joy that she said, *"I started remembering again and wanted to be there."*

For Pralene, the positive emotions had already facilitated her healing. Her memory was being restored and she started remembering again. According to Fredrickson (2001) positive emotions allow a person to flourish not only in the present, pleasant moment but in the long term as well. It was not surprising that after this initial positive encounter with the learners, Pralene healed significantly from her stroke. Pralene's experience of healing and sense of well-being is supported by Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory which suggests that positive emotions are vehicles for individual growth and social connections. It helps to build people's personal and social resources and transforms their lives. It enhances their sense of emotional well-being and builds their psychological resilience. For Pralene, it was the

catalyst for the dramatic healing she experienced. It was the impetus she needed to remain positive and fight back. When she was asked by the SEM to take at least one month of leave she said, *"I told him that I don't even want one more day."*

- **Switching of roles from teacher to learner**

Much of Pralene's healing and rehabilitation took place in the classroom. Her learners taught her to speak again and by being physically active at school she was able to regain her strength to walk again. Within a short time she had made a miraculous recovery. She described how it occurred:

> *I healed in school, I got my cure here, I didn't need to go for any therapy, I got it all from the classroom from the learners, they were helping me, keeping me alert, on my toes, I used to get up with the calipers and do activities.*

> *I could not speak, I used to sit with the learners and show them the pictures. I used to open my mouth but words won't come out. I struggled and struggled and after some time I could say about three words only. Eventually, I could put a sentence together. I healed miraculously and it was my learners that helped me to speak again. They used to sit and teach me how to say the words. They would tell me, "Mam you must make your mouth like this to say 'green'," and I used to learn every day from them and I got my speech back.*

The positive emotions together with the unconditional positive regard and support that Pralene received from her learners made her resilient and increased her sense of self-efficacy. One's self efficacy is influenced by one's actions and conditions in the environment (Bandura, 2006; Schunk & Meece, 2006) and determines how environmental opportunities and impediments are perceived (Bandura, 2006). Pralene was convinced that returning to her classroom will facilitate the achievement of her goal of healing and the spontaneous support she received from her learners facilitated this process. This was indicative of Pralene's coping potential, she was confident that the school was going to be her rehabilitation centre. Again there was goal congruence between what Pralene desired and the learners' response. She consciously shifted her role from being a teacher to a learner and seized all the opportunities of support for learning to speak again. She said: *"I became a little child and I said I am going to become one of them, and I am going to learn from them."*

The unconditional love and support Pralene received from her learners was suggestive of a relationship of mutual trust, caring and sharing that existed between the teacher and her learners. Pianta (1999) observed that teachers who were most comfortable in their relationship with their learners were more sensitive to the quality of their interactions with their learners. These teachers seem to foster and endorse values of emotional support, unconditional acceptance, reciprocity, mutuality and predictable routines. The consequences of positive interaction between Pralene and her learners helped her to restore her personal and professional self and she was able to regain her dignity as a teacher.

6.3.2   Feeling recognised and supported by leadership

After Pralene's recovery she was recognised by her school for the efforts she made in returning to school in spite of being disabled from the stroke and persevering against all odds. Although the school was severely disadvantaged financially, the school leadership made efforts to award Pralene with a trophy for her courage and perseverance. This was indicative of a supportive school culture and leadership that recognizes teachers' efforts.

> *I did receive the Best Teacher Award, there was a function at school and the new SEM was invited, the grade seven learners presented me with the award. This was done in school, in house. Yes, Tygerville Top Teacher Award. I have a big trophy. This is the first time something like this was done at school, giving such an award. I was very touched.*

Pralene did not expect such a gesture from the school and was surprised when the function was organised. Day (2010) found that leadership support and positive school cultures were found to be contributing influences that enabled teachers to gain intellectual and emotional strength in the face of setbacks and challenges. The leadership in Pralene's school allowed her the space to remain at school in spite of their initial trepidation that she would not cope. The special effort made by the school to celebrate her achievement is indicative of the school leadership's support in recognising her achievement. Pralene's school fits the profile of a school with a positive school culture where teachers are willing to take risks and where rituals are held to celebrate achievements and success (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

The gesture by the school would have enhanced Pralene's self-worth as a teacher which is supported by Flores and Day (2006) who found that supportive and encouraging leadership

contributed to teachers' positive identity. Similarly, Day and Gu (2007) found that support and recognition from school leadership contributed towards teachers' growing efficacy, increased levels of motivation and enhanced teacher identity. When Pralene said: *"I was very touched"* having received The Best Teacher Award; it indicated that it was an emotionally uplifting experience for her. Pralene's positive feelings indicate that the event was appraised as goal relevant and goal congruent. Kelchtermans (2009a) contends that when teachers receive recognition from their school, it enhances their self-image and self-esteem and generates a sense of fulfilment which promotes their well-being. For Pralene, this event would have evoked positive emotions of joy and happiness especially that it signified that she had gained what she had desired, that is, returning to work and being healed. She would have also felt a sense of pride when she received the trophy for The Best Teacher Award. According to Lazarus (1991) pride is not only a positive or uplifting emotion but an emotion that is experienced when there is enhancement to one's ego-identity, especially one's self worth.

6.3.3 Support from colleagues - extending her family

Pralene's healing and reorientation back at school was also facilitated by her colleagues. She described the collegiality that prevailed at her school and how the staff expedited her healing. She said:

> *My colleagues were very supportive, they rallied around, they supported me, and*
> *we are a really close family here at Tygerville. We have our in house fighting, we*
> *disagree about a lot of things but we are still a family. I owe my colleagues here*
> *so much because in my most difficult times they stood by me.*

Pralene enjoyed the support of her colleagues and acknowledged their helpfulness by rallying around her during her time of need. Pralene's reference to her staff as a family is indicative of the emotional bonds that prevail at the school. Her perception of her school as a family indicates that she felt a sense of belonging and her use of the word *"we"* four times in the extract above highlights this. However, she was quick to add that this is not a glorified picture of the absence of conflict. Hargreaves (2001) drew on de Lima's work (2001) and argues that strong personal bonds may come in the way of professional growth and limits alternative thinking and ideas. The author adds that having strong emotional bonds and the ability to differ intellectually, is an exception rather than a norm in schools. In Pralene's school it is

evident that a healthy balance is being maintained, they disagree yet still care about each other "as persons rather than practitioners" (Nias, 1989, p. 79).

Pralene's relationship with her colleagues went beyond the school. When the staff had planned a get together during her sick leave she was not forgotten. She described the lengths the staff went to in integrating her back to a sense of normality.

> *The secretary phoned home, it was the end of term and the secretary said, "Ok bring her for a few hours we will take her out." My daughter brought me very reluctantly though, left me here with my very close friend at school, and told her, "I am leaving my Mummy with you and you are totally responsible while she is going out with you'll." The teachers put me into the car and took me to a friend's house, where they sat and partied while I sat with them. The friends spoke to me and all that. I wanted to be out of the home, I felt that if I stayed in bed longer I would have become a cabbage; my illness would have taken over.*

The actions of staff indicate that friendships at the school were "more active and intense personal engagements" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 513) and the teachers shared a deep level of closeness. The notion of being part of a family is also apparent here when she explained how the teachers helped her to the car and took her to the party venue. This is similar to what close family members would do for each other.

Pralene recalled when senior learners at the school mocked her because of her disfigured face, how a colleague came to her defence. She reported:

> *There were pupils in the school, our grade sevens, two girls spoke and said, "You know I think her husband gave her a good hiding and that is why her face is like that" and my colleague had to sort them out. She was upset about what they said and I said, "Leave them they are only saying what they see, it's ok." She said, "No, it won't do any good for you." I said, "Fine, I am learning to deal with all this."*

Again, the response of her colleague indicates an attitude of protection and care for her well-being. This spirit seems to go beyond friendships to more of member of a 'family.' The kind of relationship that exits in Pralene's school, is similar to the one described by Achinstein (2002) where familial like ties are shared between staff members that create a sense of

community. Hargreaves (2001) found close emotional bonds among colleagues that were experienced by Pralene as "special and exceptional" (p. 516) and were not enjoyed by many teachers. The response of her colleagues was consistent with what Pralene desired; she wanted to be re-integrated into the school. There is evidence of goal congruence, since their gestures of care, empathy, kindness and compassion would have facilitated her goal of healing. Kelchtermans (2009a) is of the view that social recognition from colleagues positively influences a teacher's self-esteem. In the case of Pralene, the response from her colleagues would have enhanced her self-esteem and would have contributed positively to her well-being as a teacher, especially that she was already feeling 'beaten down' by the after effects of the stroke.

6.3.4 Reciprocal support: Parent and teacher

On the day that Pralene returned to school prematurely, the school leadership was concerned that a teacher who has just endured a stroke insisted on being in the classroom teaching. Pralene describes how a parent spontaneously agreed to become her teacher aid.

> *This parent came up and said, "I'll help Mam," because I have a very good relationship with the community here and I get on very well with them. She offered and said, "I will come and help her, if Mam has a problem."*

The parent displayed commitment by reporting to school daily to assist with all the classroom duties. It is evident that Pralene's healthy relationship with the parents and the community paid off. The parent's on the spot decision to become her teacher aid was indicative of this. Since the school was located in a disadvantaged community and faced serious financial constraints the parent volunteered in spite of knowing that she will not be reimbursed. Pralene sat at the table during the initial period and coached the parent. Kalin and Šteh (2010) notes that healthy interpersonal relationships with parents require a high level of professionalism from teachers as it is still a question of whether teachers are willing to accept parents as partners. Pralene seemed to have gained credibility and respect from the parent community as a teacher. Moreover, she did not feel threatened to accept the parent's offer to assist. In fact, the parents offer was congruent with her goal of being at school and continuing her job as a teacher. A harmonious relationship ensued between the teacher and parent and this played an important role in Pralene's healing and restoring her sense of well-being as a teacher.

This spontaneous pairing of parent and teacher had far reaching positive implications for them both. Pralene explained what transpired thereafter.

I felt that she was sacrificing; I will pay her to come and help me because this was a very poor community and gave her something from my side just to come and help me. She appreciated what I gave her and I appreciated everything she did, and I would like to say that from there she now became a Grade R educator because she learnt from me. I helped her to even get into a college and study.

Reciprocal benefits emerged from the relationship that Pralene shared with the parent. Pralene was healed and her personal and professional self was restored. The parent earned some money for the assistance she rendered but more than that she became a qualified teacher herself, having been inspired by her experience as a teacher assistant to Pralene.

6.3.5 Total commitment and renewed dedication to teaching

For Pralene, she feels that she owes her healing to the school, her learners, her colleagues and the community and will be ever indebted to them. She reflects on how this has changed her as a teacher. She says:

This experience made me appreciate my learners more, I love my job, I learnt that life is short and when you can do things do it. My learners were so unselfish when they shared with me and helped me and that is why now I will do anything. I have become this person, even if it is not my duty in school I will be there, my hands are there, I will assist, I always want to do things for other people, I want to help other people, and as a teacher also I have learnt to feel other people's pain, because my pain taught me something that there is people going through even worse than what you are going through. Yes, what I went through was critical, but there's worse, I learnt to support others and it made me a better teacher. I have also learnt that it can happen to anybody, anytime.

I look at life very differently now. I love school; I will come to school every day, even if I am sick as a dog I will be at school. As I sit here, for this year I have not been absent once, I haven't stayed away a single day, yet I had pneumonia, I had wheezing but I have been in school, because I feel that I owe these children so much, I owe the community so much, I owe my colleagues here so much because

in my most difficult times they stood by me. My colleagues here, and my learners in school they were my support base. Yes, my children are my world, I love them. They have been a pillar of strength. Most of all, Tygerville Primary is my home, my family.

I am now more positive than I was, I look at life differently. I don't take life for granted. As a teacher I feel more motivated. To me now teaching is not just a job, I have learnt that, it is my calling. That's what God wanted me to do. I don't see myself in any other job or profession.

Pralene is ever grateful to the entire school community for the support she received that facilitated her complete healing from the stroke. Pralene's increased commitment is evident in that she now goes beyond her call of duty at school and will not absent herself even if she is ill. She views teaching as a calling and not a job. Her future expectancy regarding her situation was positive. Her motivation levels have increased and she has become more dedicated to her work. She sees the school as her second home and feels part of a family. Her experience has made her more receptive to the pain of others, making her more sensitive and supportive. She has developed a more positive outlook to life and feels that she is a better teacher.

Table 7: Summary of Pralene's response to critical incident

Clusters of influences	Negative influences	Positive influences	Response
Socio-cultural/policy influences	None	• Views teaching as a calling/vocation	Total dedication, increased commitment and motivation
Workplace influence	None	• Positive reaction from learners • Learner support in rehabilitation • Support from colleagues • Support and recognition from leadership • Support from parent	Feeling loved, wanted and valued Indebted to learners, school and community Sense of belonging, being part of an extended family Joy and happiness (healed and continuing with teaching) Pride - increased self-worth Appreciation and gratitude
Personal influence	• Marital problems • Illness - stroke	None	Stress Strong desire to return to work, convinced that healing will occur

6.4 Scenario 6: Saiyen – 'I had decided, I will make a fight of this…and this was my fate'

Figure 8: Retrieved from: https://www.google.co.za/search?q=healing+images

6.4.1 Struggle to renegotiate identity

Saiyen was a young teacher, a very active, athletic individual when he met with a serious motor accident that left him physically challenged. He became a paraplegic. He explained how he struggled to come to terms with his altered physical state and circumstances.

> *Prior to 2 December, I was an able bodied person, with complete body functions ability to run, walk, perfect health and I was in my first year in my studies in my Bachelor of Education programme to qualify as a school counsellor, I was already dating someone and I think that in a space of a few years that could have led to a marriage and when the accident occurred, I was suddenly called a person with a disability and I was called a paraplegic, even harsher terms were used like,"you are a cripple," people look at you in terms of your physical appearance and the way you walk, not realizing that there is an alert and active mind behind that body.*

Saiyen struggled to make sense of his altered state of being that was derived from the changes in his physical capabilities, his personal relationships and the way others perceived him. Yet, to him, mentally nothing had changed; he still possessed an alert and active mind. Saiyen talks of himself as the 'before' and 'after' highlighting how life had changed so dramatically for him and recounts aspects of his former self to indicate how confident and positive he felt about his life prior to his accident. The lack of recognition by society for him as a person and

their judgement of him on a purely physical level was difficult to cope with. Like Saiyen's experience, participant paraplegics in a study by O'Connor, Young and Saul (2004) struggled with not being seen beyond the physical disability. He was labelled as a person with a disability, a paraplegic, and a cripple. Similarly, Watson (2002, p. 515) found that disabled participants refused to be "othered" because of their impairment.

Saiyen explained how his self-worth and self-esteem were adversely affected as a result of his physical limitations and the way society perceived him.

> *I think it was both external and internal. It was partially the way others saw me because there would be people that would sympathize and click their tongue and say how sorry they were instead of expressing empathy and make you feel depressed, they didn't validate your being, others that were completely insensitive, to a point of almost being negative.*

> *I think it did affect the way I looked at myself because I could not reach certain objects physically at a certain height, I couldn't carry things, I did have a sense of not being able to do things and my self- worth would have been at question. I was conscious of the way I walked, I was conscious especially if I was in a shopping mall, I could see my reflection in the windows or if I was in a lift with a mirror, I would reflect on this strange person standing in front. I think that would have affected my self-esteem. On an emotional level, it was very trying because of the inability to do things, because of the pain that I experienced, there was a lot of frustration and a lot of anger and sometimes because I was not able to process that altered state inside because I didn't go in for counselling or any kind of psychological interventions.*

Saiyen endured negative effects to his self-esteem that stemmed from both internal and external factors. Internally, he felt his loss of independence which promoted feelings of lack of self-worth. O'Connor et al. (2004) concur that seemingly ordinary activities became difficult to negotiate and dependence on others made paraplegics feel vulnerable and emerged as having a devastating impact on their sense of self. Saiyen's feelings of low self-worth were confirmed by Blanes, Carmagnani and Ferreria (2009) who highlighted the negative effects they had on their quality of life and self-esteem.

On another level, it was as if his mental self was not accepting of the new physical self. Saiyen struggled to incorporate the disabled aspects of the self into his total self (Yoshida, 1993). When he looked at the reflection of himself in mirrors in malls he suddenly noticed a strange person. It was almost as if he was separate from his body, "a self away from the body" (Watson, 2002, p. 515). O'Connor et al. (2004) highlighted the continuing struggle paraplegics encounter with the complex interplay between "internal perceptions and the external productions" (p. 210). He seemed to have felt disconnected to his physical body since mentally he saw himself as a normal person. While Saiyen struggled with his own internal processing of his altered physical state, the response he received from the public weighed heavily on him. He suddenly transitioned from being a perfectly healthy person to someone who was perceived as pitiful. Saiyen had difficulty accepting this, to him his identity was not embodied (Watson, 2002). He perceived the responses of people as *"negative"* and *"insensitive,"* challenging their perception of him. It is evident that Saiyen had appraised society's perception of him as goal incongruent. The negative response of people towards him, made him feel depressed. While he wanted people to accept him for who he was and not judge him by his disability, he was labelled and felt "othered" (Watson, 2002, p. 515). The immense frustration and anger experienced by him would have resulted from the harm he endured to his ego-identity, especially his self- and social esteem.

6.4.2   Positive thinking as a stimulus to move beyond paralysis

While recovering in hospital, Saiyen was slowly made to understand that the paralysis was not going to allow him to return to work again and he was advised to seek admission at an institution for the disabled. He explained how there was a shift in his thinking from his initial acceptance:

> *The initial days when I listened to the doctors and the physiotherapists, the other medical attendants that visited me, when they gave me the prognosis, I had to come to accept that I was paralyzed and that my life had changed significantly and that this was my fate and that I would probably be sent to an institution, which the doctors had suggested I would spend the rest of my life in. So those were the initial thoughts and feelings. I had also come to accept initially that that this was it.*

But then after a while, I also went through my own processing mechanisms. I was then 25 years old and realized that I couldn't be retired so early in my career. I had to go out there and work. I decided that this was who I was and I would make the best of what has happened to me, and that I would go on with my life…

While there was an acceptance of the initial loss that stemmed from his physical limitations and capabilities, Saiyen shifted his thinking that was initially aligned to the advice of the medical team of moving into an institution for the disabled, to deciding to make efforts to return to work.

When asked what prompted and facilitated his decision especially that the odds were stacked against him, Saiyen reported that:

…my own inner resilience, I had earlier been a very positive upbeat person, I was quite widely read, I was a school counsellor because I realized that I had a strong mind and that I could influence others and make a difference in their lives, I was always teaching and preaching positive thoughts, so I was also aware from a theoretical perspective the way our thoughts affect our being and the way one looks at life, I always surrounded myself with positive impressions, I am reminded now, in my office, I had a poster on a board that said "attitude determines altitude." I realized that I could become a success and triumph over this adversity. I think, largely again my inner psychological makeup of never being a quitter, I have always been someone that persevered and tried and worked… I think a lot of this came from me.

Yoshida (1993) found that the paraplegic participants experienced different processes in reconstructing their lives. These include loss, sustainment, integration, continuity and development of self. For Saiyen, loss of his physical capabilities was linked to the loss of "core and peripheral aspects" (Yoshida, 1993, p. 231) that he possessed prior to the accident. Yoshida (1993) highlights that the loss is experienced through everyday activities and there is continuous acceptance of the injury. Saiyen's acceptance of the loss of his bodily functions was evident when he said: *"I decided that this was who I was and I would make the best of what has happened to me, and that I would go on with my life…"* Sustaining the non-disabled self for Yoshida (1993) was maintaining aspects of the "core and peripheral aspects" (p. 231) after the injury. This includes aspects of the person's pre-injury self. In Saiyen's case, he

sustained his positive attitude, the knowledge he gained from being an avid reader, his ability to motivate others and the positive impressions he had accumulated over his pre injury life. Saiyen also explained that he had a strong psychological dimension of *"never being a quitter."* All these parts of the pre injury self, enabled Saiyen to persevere to return to teaching. It contributed to his *"own inner resilience."*

6.4.3 Drawing on spiritual resources

After his rehabilitation, Saiyen began walking very tentatively on crutches. When he returned to school he found it immensely challenging. In spite of his positive thinking and strong psychological make-up, he found himself succumbing to his physical limitations. He explained:

> *The first week as I said when I went back to school, I almost wanted to quit because I would come back from school exhausted from 3 to 8 o' clock I would just sleep, have something light to eat and go back to sleep again and wake up the next morning still extremely tired, because every hundred metres I walked it was equivalent of running a comrades marathon. So it was very easy for me in the first week to quit.*

Saiyen described how he drew on his spiritual dimension when all else failed him in trying to persevere with his job:

> *I think spirituality was the bigger guiding factor. Prior to the accident, I was drawn towards the teachings of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba (spiritual guru) and I had read extensively around his teachings and experiences of other followers and I learnt that in Him I had a resource that was going to see me through these difficult times. That I think was the turning point in my journey. Inwardly I was praying very strongly because already at that age I had made a major shift in my life style, in my spiritual path, I had become a vegetarian and I was spending almost every weekend offering services to the needy and the destitute. So that inner strength from God and worship fortified my resilience.*

> *I think I probably reached the equivalent of second wind, in an athlete when you are extremely fatigued after a little while your second wind kicks in and you are able to run in. I think second wind came from my intense faith in God and that I*

would succeed. So that drove me on and on and on and in spite of what the medical prognosis was, which was extremely bleak, God would come through in a different way for me, so that inspired me.

Saiyen's spiritual beliefs and resources came to him as a second wind, a term used as a metaphor for continuing with renewed energy past one's prime. Walsh (2009) views spirituality as involving a person's transcendental beliefs and practices. He adds that during a crisis people turn to their spiritual resources to gain strength and meaning. When there was nothing left to sustain his energy to fight back, Saiyen turned to prayer and belief in a supreme being and gained a sense of confidence that he will succeed. It is evident that he displayed continuity of the non-disabled self by carrying through and intensifying the "core and peripheral aspects" (Yoshida, 1993, p. 231) of the non-disabled self, in this instance his spirituality, in reconstructing his life. He regards this as a *"turning point in his journey,"* where he gained strength, inspiration and greater resilience, in spite of the medical prognosis which was very bleak. In a study by Hernandez, Gangsei and Engstrom (2007) with therapists treating victims of political violence, they found that some victims relied on spiritual resources to cope and their spirituality played a valuable role in them overcoming adversity. Walsh (2008) agrees that like Saiyen, people's spiritual beliefs influence the way they cope with adversity and for many prayer generates a sense of hope. O'Connor et al. (2004) found that paraplegic participants reported that hope was all they had and holding on was the most challenging. Saiyen's reason for hope was to gain strength physically to continue with his work as a teacher. He showed good coping potential in that he was positive and confident that his situation will improve. He said: *"So I always lived in hope and was forward looking and forward thinking."* While for most paraplegics holding on to hope was difficult, Saiyen's spiritual resources were a huge enabling factor and he reported how it helped him to triumph:

Instead of taking fifteen minutes from the office to the staffroom, it now took me about seven and a half minutes almost half the time, and I was gaining confidence as I walked with the crutches.

Lazarus (1991) views hope as a yearning or wish for relief from a negative situation or the desire for a positive outcome when the odds do not favour it. It serves as an antidote to despair and helps sustain constructive efforts. Saiyen's spiritual resources provided a sense of hope to persevere although he knew medically he was attempting what doctors said was not possible.

6.4.4 Feeling affirmed, validated and accepted through circles of support

Saiyen had an incredible support system both while he was still in hospital as well as when he returned to school. Post and Leeuwen (2012) highlighted that social support for people with spinal cord injury conveys that you are loved, valued, cared for, and have a sense of belonging. All this helped to enhance Saiyen's self-image and self-esteem.

Support while at hospital

- *Family support*

> *Family was very good, my mum and dad and my sisters used to visit me regularly, my mum and dad twice a day, it was quite an ordeal for them as well, and then as I said my father was always positive. I remember he would bring articles to the hospital ward and read them to me, and showed me how different people had overcome adversity.*

Saiyen had unwavering support from his family during his post injury period while he was in hospital. It was evident that his father contributed to his positive impressions in his life prior to the accident and continued thereafter fostering in him strength and hope. Yoshida (1993) highlighted that family support post injury helped paraplegics in connecting to the world that is familiar and most importantly to who they are as people.

- *Friend's support*

> *I had a lot of close friends that visited and reassured me and comforted me, and showed that in spite of my altered physical being, that they still recognized the old friend that was in that disabled body. So that was affirming.*

> *A friend of mine, who was already a paraplegic came to hospital and shared techniques with me how to cope with this new found physical state and he told me that cars could be modified for people who couldn't use their legs to drive, so I was keen.*

Support, reassurance and comfort from friends helped Saiyen restore his self-image and self-esteem that was threatened after his accident. They recognised him for who he was, unlike strangers who perceived him through his disability. O'Connor et al. (2004) highlighted how important it was for paraplegics to be seen beyond their injury. He also received

informational support and advice from a friend regarding opportunities and possibilities for the reconstruction of his life. This induced hope and enthusiasm in him. Yoshida (1993) observed that this kind of support was necessary and found that paraplegics expressed immense frustration of not talking to people who were well adjusted while they were in hospital.

Workplace support while still in hospital

- *__Learners' support__ - I must also add that I had numerous former learners as well as current learners who visited me as well.*

- *__Staff support__ - I think that I was also fortunate that members of staff at school, fortunately the school was not too far away, it was just about three kilometres away from the hospital so they would come in on a regular basis and visit, initially there was this awkward silence, they didn't know what to say, but when they saw the smile on my face and the light banter that I would make they realized that nothing had really changed except that fact that he may not walk again.*

- *__Management support__ - My principal was really supportive and he told me, "Listen we are not applying for your post to be filled by anyone on a permanent basis, we will have a temporary person to fill in, until you are feeling stronger and better to come back."*

- *__Departmental officials' support__ - Some of the subject advisors from psychological services also visited as I was a guidance counsellor and I had that reassurance that I was in a community of support that valued me and that gave me the motivation to return to teaching as soon as possible.*

The support Saiyen received from his school community while he was in hospital was very reassuring. He felt a sense of recognition that he was a teacher that was valued and that he belonged to a community that cared. Keltchermans (2011) highlighted the teacher's need for social recognition and emphasized its importance in enhancing their self-esteem. In Saiyen's

case, this would have helped immensely in restoring his eroded self-esteem, especially after the accident. The support from the school community would have been a source of encouragement for him to return to work. He was reassured that he was still a valuable member of staff who has a contribution to make.

Support at school

- **_Learners' support_** - *I found that at the beginning, I was very nervous about the way my learners will look at me and how they would respond, but I was very fortunate that they didn't really see the disability or the awkward that I walked with the crutches. During the breaks when I was sitting in my office and having my sandwiches, they would pop by and chat with me and we would talk and whenever I needed help whether it was tying my shoelaces or anything, they were always on hand to assist, carry my bag, take messages, run errands and stuff like that. I think the learners also significantly played a big role…*

- **_Staff support_** - *The staff were extremely supportive, they gave me the space to re-enter into the role that I had played previously and when I organised major activities they were always on hand to ensure that it was successful and was of tremendous assistance in taking care of the physical aspects that I was not able to do so. Someone used to come and pick me up from home, drop me off at school, come back and leave me at home in the afternoons, whenever I needed extra help people were there to help me.*

- **_Management support_**- *At the beginning of the fourth term, I made an effort to go back to school and the principal said, "As much as you are back its going to be difficult, we still have the person who is substituting for you and we will ask her to remain so that you could share your workload with her and we can gradually phase you in and we will see how things go."*

When Saiyen returned to work, the continued support he received was significant and encouraging. Similar to Pralene, the learners accepted him unconditionally. They were spontaneous in assisting wherever they could and did not stigmatize him for his disability. His colleagues and the management showed compassion and understanding and were ever

obliging to assist. When exploring the emotional dynamics of relationships teachers shared with their colleagues, Hargreaves (2001) found that close supportive relationships among teachers emerged in times of personal crisis. It is evident; however, that Saiyen did well in finding a balance between relying on others for help and maintaining personal control which many paraplegics struggle with (O'Connor et al., 2004). He continued with his responsibilities at school and accepted help from colleagues especially for the physical aspects of his work. Prior to the accident, Saiyen seemed to have been a teacher who made an impression with regard to his abilities and positive personality which helped in the way he was re-integrated into his workplace. His principal was very accommodating and even Saiyen himself was a bit perplexed. He reported:

> *In fact when I did ask him about it later, he said, that he had recognized my worth prior to that and knowing the kind of person that I was, he believed that I won't give up without giving it my best shot.*

All the support Saiyen received while he was in hospital and when he returned to school was congruent with his desire to return to work and to gain a semblance of normality in his life. These were his thoughts about the support he received at school:

> *I felt affirmed, validated, accepted and it was a feeling of being one with the others. The support gave me hope that I could grow and continue; it reinforced and grew the positive spirit that I felt inside me.*

The affirmation, validation and acceptance that Saiyen experienced would have enhanced his self- and social esteem. For Saiyen, the future expectancy was positive and like Pralene he also achieved his desired personal goal of returning to work. Lazarus (1991) contends that when there is goal congruence, positive emotions are evoked. All the positive feelings he experienced from the support he received evoked in him a sense of hope that he will grow in strength and helped reinforce the *"positive spirit"* he had nestled within him. Saiyen's response is consistent with Fredrickson (2001) who argues that positive emotions build people's enduring personal resources on various levels, including their physical, social, intellectual and psychological dimensions.

6.4.5 Transferring learnings and insights to the classroom

Saiyen's experience was life changing and his learning took on a new trajectory. As a teacher/school counsellor he felt obliged to transfer these insights to his learners. He describes his life lessons and how they impacted his roles both as a teacher and school counsellor. He avers:

> *I would say that my outlook to life was enhanced, things that I took for granted, I now appreciated. Seven months of lying in a hospital bed, not being able to see the sunrise, not able to see a bird, not to see flowers on trees, sunshine, seeing a rising moon, those things made me realize and appreciate life more significantly. I took good health, mobility, our physical well-being for granted. I never knew before what paraplegia was, I didn't know what a person with a disability looked like, I didn't know how they felt, this gave me a greater empathy and insight into the lives of people who have life altering experiences such as a motor accident. I became more acutely aware of the sanctity of human life and the purpose of human life and that it shouldn't be wasted and fretted away on trivialities because life is so fragile and that it could change in a split second, so I wanted to share and give my learners those opportunities without preaching it.*

> *I was a lot more passionate about some of the things, fortunately I was teaching Guidance which is now called Life Orientation, which gave me the space to shape the learners and get them thinking around their own purpose in life, philosophy of life, looking at positive social and personal behaviours, as well as career choices. So I think I would have brought to the classroom a different perspective and a much more profound and meaningful approach than previously. I used experiential learning activities; I would play music, do group work, conduct practical demonstrations, making them watch a video clip, stimulate growth and debate in this way with the learners.*

Saiyen explained how it enhanced his work as a school counsellor:

> *It gave me insights into areas that were previously obscured to me. I didn't undergo a personal psychological trauma, although mine was more a physical one, I could still empathize with my learners with personal relationship difficulties with their peers or family members or whatever their challenges were, I could empathize more significantly.*

Saiyen learnt that he should not take life for granted and realized how within a split second his life had changed completely. He developed an appreciation for the simple things in life, things that he had not paid attention to before this experience. His motor accident gave him a new found understanding for people who experience life altering experiences. His learnings transformed his lessons significantly and they took on a different perspective and meaning. He realized that the best way to transfer these insights to his learners was not through preaching but through the use of experiential activities. The significant development of his ability to be empathic enhanced his skills as a school counsellor and he was able to work more constructively with his learners' issues and problems.

Table 8: Summary of Saiyen's response to critical incident

Clusters of influences	Negative influences	Positive influences	Response
Socio-cultural/policy influences	None	• Departmental support	Feeling valued
Workplace influence	None	• Unconditional acceptance and support from learners • Helpful and obliging colleagues • Support and recognition from leadership	Feeling supported, affirmed, validated and accepted
Personal influence	• Serious motor accident resulting in paraplegia		Anger and frustration to accept disability (internal and external factors)

		• Family support • Support from friends	Hope (Staying positive, feeling reassured, comforted, affirmed)
		• Spiritual resources	Hope and inner strength to fight back
		• Personal attributes – inner resources	Positive mind set, inner resilience

6.5   CONCLUDING COMMENTS ON DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis revealed that the teachers' responses to the critical incident were influenced by how they appraised their interactions with the environment in which they worked and lived. The results concur with Lazarus's theory of cognitive appraisal (Lazarus, 1991) that as a person interacts with the environment; the appraisal process takes place through the evaluation of how the person's ego-identity engages with the influences within the environment. If one or more aspects of the person's ego involvements (broader goals) located within the ego-identity are affected in some way the encounter will be evaluated as goal relevant. Lazarus (1991) contends that for an appraisal of goal relevance the event or encounter has to involve personal cares or something personal has to be at stake. In other words, some aspect of the ego-identity (broader goals) is affected. For example, if a person's self- and social esteem are affected in some way; there will be goal relevance since they will evoke either a positive or negative emotion. With regard to the teachers in the study, there was appraisal of goal relevance since all encounters involved issues of personal concern and resulted in emotional responses whether they were positive or negative.

If during an encounter between a person's ego-identity and the socio-cultural environment, one or more of the ego involvements, for example, self- and social esteem or moral values are adversely affected, the encounter will be appraised as goal incongruent. This will result in negative emotions since it is thwarting the achievement of their goals. If on the other hand, the encounter between a person's ego-identity and the socio-cultural environment facilitates the attainment of their goals, it will be appraised as goal congruent. This will result in

positive emotions which mean that one or more of the ego involvements were enhanced (Lazarus, 1991).

In the case of Venetia, while the critical incident was triggered from the workplace influence, which was a stressful encounter with a learner, negative influences arose from all three clusters of influences which are workplace influences, socio-cultural/policy influences and personal influences (Day, 2011) (See Table 3) as the critical incident unfolded. No positive influences were noted. As Venetia interacted with the environment she appraised the encounters as goal incongruent which led to negative emotional responses. In her case, many of the ego-involvements (broader goals) were affected adversely. She endured harm to her self- and social esteem, there was loss and failure to live up to her ideals as a teacher, there was conflict with her moral values and those of the school and her achievement of personal and professional goals were threatened. She experienced anger, anxiety, fear, sadness and guilt. This resulted in her experiencing an emotional breakdown from the stress. She endured feelings of vulnerability, loss of confidence and disillusionment.

Similar to Venetia, Romy's critical incident was triggered by a workplace influence. In Romy's case it was related to workplace bullying by the principal and she endured persistent acts of harassment. Like Venetia, she experienced negative influences from all three clusters of influences (See Table 4). Romy, however experienced two positive influences that arose from the socio-cultural/policy cluster of influence, which was her strong sense of vocation and her display of agency. As a result of Romy's appraisal of most of the encounters as goal incongruent, she endured adverse effects to her self- and social esteem. Her moral integrity as a teacher was questioned and her personal and professional goals were threatened. While Romy did not label her emotions specifically, harm to her self-image and self-esteem would have led to feelings of anger, since it meant harm to her ego-identity and blame was apportioned to the principal. She experienced anxiety from the constant monitoring and shame from the public humiliation she faced. In Romy's case there were a series of negative encounters that became chronic. All the negative emotions she experienced resulted in a mental breakdown which arose from the enormous stress and depression. She endured feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, alienation, vulnerability and ill health during the critical incident.

Similar to Venetia and Romy, Julia's critical incident was triggered from a workplace influence. She was overlooked for the position of school principal and tensions arose between Julia and the new incumbent. Julia also experienced negative influences from all three clusters of influences (See Table 5). The only positive influence noted was from the socio-cultural/policy influence which was her moral duty to her learners. As a result of Julia's appraisal of the events she experienced as mostly goal incongruent, her self- and social esteem were harmed, her ideals and beliefs as a teacher were threatened and her personal and professional goals were thwarted. She experienced feelings of anger, sadness and shame. Her anger arose from feeling devalued, belittled, rejected, alienated and isolated. She experienced shame from having failed to live up to her ideals as a Head of Department and sadness from feeling a sense of loss in achieving her ideals as a teacher and Head of Department. All these negative emotions made her feel like she was being pushed out of the school.

In the case of Pritha, her critical incident was triggered by two competing influences which arose from the socio-cultural/policy and personal clusters of influence (See Table 6). She appraised the influence from the personal cluster, which was pressure not to attend any functions during the pre-nuptial period as incongruent to her professional goal of attending the union meeting and therefore experienced negative emotions. She also appraised her situation as an unwed pregnant mother as incongruent to her goal of being a role model to her learners. The appraisal of goal incongruence brought harm to her self- and social esteem. She experienced failure in living up to her ideals as a teacher and her personal and professional goals were threatened. She experienced feelings of anger and shame. Positive influences arose from the workplace cluster of influence and socio-cultural cluster of influence, which were support from learners and support from the union. She felt consoled by the learners' empathy and reassured with the support from the union. Negative influences arose from the personal cluster of influence and from the socio-cultural/policy cluster of influence. From the personal cluster of influence she had to endure the pressure to forgo the union meeting and suffer the effects of a cancelled wedding which evoked anger in her. From the socio-cultural/policy cluster of influence, she had to cope with stigma from society for being an unwed pregnant mother and failure to live up to her ideal of being a role model to her learners which brought feelings of shame. Pritha, however, did not experience any negative influences from the workplace cluster of influence.

Pralene's critical incident was triggered by the personal cluster of influence when she suffered a serious stroke, but all three clusters of influences were affected (See Table 7). Pralene experienced negative influences from the personal cluster of influence which was marital problems and the stroke due to the stressful marriage. There were no positive influences from the personal cluster of influence. Pralene experienced positive influences from two clusters of influence, that is the socio-cultural/policy cluster and the workplace cluster of influence. From the socio-cultural/policy cluster of influence she felt strongly that teaching was a calling and a vocation. The positive influences from the workplace cluster of influence were the tremendous support from learners, colleagues, leadership and parents. She appraised the encounters she experienced as goal congruent, hence she experienced positive emotions. Her self- and social esteem were enhanced, her ideals as a teacher were heightened and her personal and professional goals were attained. Her strong desire to return to school and be healed was realized. She experienced feelings of being loved, accepted, and valued and felt a sense of belonging at school. She was indebted to the entire school community and expressed gratitude and appreciation. She in turn has re-dedicated herself to teaching with increased commitment and motivation.

Similar to Pralene, Saiyen's critical incident was triggered by a personal influence (See Table 8) which was a serious motor accident which resulted in him becoming a paraplegic. Initially there was goal incongruence between Saiyen's desire of being whole and society's perception of him as a disabled person. There was also incongruence between his desire to be normal and independent and his altered physical condition. This affected his self- and social esteem and he experienced anger and frustration. However, positive influences emerged from all three clusters of influence (See Table 8). He received social support from multiple avenues during his critical incident. This came forth from subject advisors from the Department of Education, from learners, colleagues, school leadership, family and friends. He also drew support from spiritual and personal resources. Support from spiritual resources evoked a sense of hope in Saiyen and from his personal attributes he drew positivity and resilience. This was appraised by Saiyen as goal congruent which enhanced his self- and social esteem which was initially eroded. He had achieved his goal of being rehabilitated and returning to work. He felt valued, supported, affirmed, validated and accepted. This evoked in him feelings of hope and inner strength to fight back and eventually thrive at school.

While the socio-cultural/policy cluster of influence included the influence of policy on teachers' lives, none of the teachers experienced any influences emanating directly from policy issues. In other words, none of the teachers' critical incidents were triggered by policy issues, like a heavy workload due to curriculum changes or the influence of redeployment due to the rationalization and redeployment policy.

The nature of the critical incident experienced by the participants depended on the kind of interactions they encountered with the context in which they worked and lived. Venetia's encounters were perceived as violent, overt and aggressive. Romy and Julia experienced events that characterized more subtle, covert and insidious actions. Venetia, Romy and Julia became vulnerable from the negative influences they experienced. In the case of Pritha, the critical incident was linked to choice and decision making. Whilst she exercised her choice, she faced the negative consequences of her decision. Pralene and Saiyen's critical incidents were of a physical nature that led to physical limitations and negative emotional effects. Yet, in both cases, they emerged physically and emotionally stronger.

6.6   CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided an exposition of data analysis of three participant scenarios, Pritha, Pralene and Saiyen, which brought to a close the data analysis of the six participants. The chapter provided an outline of the analysis of the three scenarios by the use of themes to explain how the participants responded to the critical incident and why they responded the way they did. The table at the end of each scenario analysis provided a representation of the different influences that affected the teachers' lives and depicted their responses. The chapter ended with concluding comments on the data analysis of all six participant scenarios. Chapter Seven presents the findings and emerging insights of the study.

CHAPTER 7

EMERGING FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter provides an overview of the emerging insights, the thesis of the study, the study limitations, contributions of the study and its implications. One of the insights revealed that there were 'enablers' that promoted teacher resilience and 'dis-enablers' that eroded teacher resilience during the critical incident. It emerged that although all the teachers in the study evaluated the events that triggered the critical incidents as negative, some teachers emerged as positive and resilient while others became negative and vulnerable. Another insight highlighted the interconnectedness of the teachers' personal and professional lives and the final insight outlined how critical incidents transformed teachers' practice. The thesis that emerged from the study was that, *critical incidents in teachers' lives affected the teacher's spirit.* A model (See Figure 9) represents how teachers were either inspirited or dispirited by the experience of the critical incident.

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of critical incidents in teachers' lives, in particular to explore how teachers responded to these incidents and why they responded the way they did. In examining how teachers responded to the critical incidents, the study explored how teachers interacted with the socio-cultural environment in which they were immersed. This was exemplified by the use of life history methodology which focused on teachers' lives within their respective contexts. Since the study was interested in teachers' responses to the critical incidents in their lives, the social-psychological framework derived from the work of Lazarus (1991) and Day (2011) was used as a lens to explore the teacher-environment interaction and how teachers appraised the different encounters they experienced. As teachers interacted with the context in which they worked, the situational demands influenced certain components of their ego-identity and the appraisal process resulted in certain emotional reactions. It brought to light what teachers had at stake in their encounters with the socio-cultural context in which they worked and lived, how they interpreted events and how harm, threats and challenges were coped with. The theoretical framework was useful in highlighting the contextual influences as well as understanding how teachers responded emotionally to the different events through the appraisal process.

The literature review revealed that teachers' lives are dynamic as teachers interact with the socio-cultural environment. The critical incidents served as a useful exploratory tool to reveal the influence of potential stressful factors in teachers' lives. The review revealed further broad influences that impact teachers' lives, namely, personal, pupils, practice settings and policy influences (Day & Gu, 2010). It also highlighted the link between critical incidents, teachers' identity and the emotional aspect of their lives.

The multiple approaches used for data analysis exemplified how teachers responded to the critical incidents and revealed the complexities in teachers' lives. While teachers were impacted by one influence, for example a workplace influence, it triggered other influences that came to bear on teachers' lives. This gave rise to different emotional responses that were either negative or positive depending on how teachers appraised the events that occurred. The work of Kelchtermans (2009) on the personal interpretive framework which included the concepts of self-image, self-esteem and task perception was useful to interpret the data especially with respect to how these were affected as teachers interacted with the different influences from the environment. In addition, Kelchtermans's (2011) work on teacher vulnerability arising from threats to their desired workplace conditions helped to understand how teachers' responded when certain desired conditions came under threat in the workplace. Nias's (1989) research with teachers' talking about their personal experiences shed light on how teachers' engaged with their everyday teaching lives, how it impacted the teacher self, and how teachers responded to the different influences they experienced. It highlighted their personal concerns and feelings. This was useful to understand how the teachers in the study approached their teaching lives and how they responded to the different influences that they experienced. The authors' work on the moral purposes of teachers (Nias, 1999) was useful to understand teachers' commitment to their work and why they approached their work the way they did.

The section below outlines the emerging insights and is divided into two subsections. The first subsection will outline the 'enablers' that enhanced teacher resilience and the following subsection will describe the 'dis-enablers' that led to eroded resilience and vulnerability.

7.2 'ENABLERS' THAT ENHANCED TEACHER RESILIENCE

It is argued that social support, spiritual resources, teachers' moral duty, teacher agency, positive emotions and positive school cultures enabled teachers' ability to remain resilient in spite of the challenges and setbacks they faced during the experience of the critical incident. It was these 'enablers' that contributed to teachers being inspirited by the critical incident.

7.2.1 Social support

Hawdon, Räsänen, Oksanen and Ryan (2012) assert that while social solidarity is a necessary form of support during a person's everyday life, it plays a crucial role in enhancing a person's well-being while experiencing critical incidents in their lives. This was evident in the lives of teachers in the study who attributed social support as a key factor that promoted their sense of well-being and recovery. The social support that teachers received stemmed from various avenues. It arose from sources within the environment in which they live and work as well as from the wider structures. Support was received from learners, colleagues, school leadership, parents, family and friends as well as from the teacher union and the Department of Education. The benefit of social support was especially relevant for teachers in the study where the stressful event emerged from personal influences. Walsh (2007) contends that strong connections and social support counteract feelings of helplessness and insecurity experienced by victims and promotes resilience. It encourages hope, provides a platform for the exchange of information and inspires efforts for recovery. The teachers highlighted that the social support received by them made them feel validated, affirmed, accepted and evoked a sense of belonging when their self-esteem was weakened by the critical incident.

Stone, Cross, Purvis and Young (2003) confirm the value of social support in enhancing self-concept and self-esteem and highlighted that it evoked positive feelings and moods and promoted a greater feeling of belonging. They add that it insulates individuals from the potential hazards of the crisis and enhances coping mechanisms. Day and Gu (2010) coined the term relational resilience to acknowledge that teachers can cope with adversity through their membership of communities of practice within schools. Teachers share relationships with learners, other teachers, parents and school leadership and trusting relationships is a vital source of building teachers' resilient qualities and sense of belonging within the school community. For one of the teachers in the study, the social support she received from the school made her totally committed to giving back to the school community. This kind of

appreciation of social support offered by the school was also observed by McIntyre (2010). The author noted that teachers strengthened their ties and feelings of attachment to the school thereby increasing their dedication and commitment. It is evident in the study that the social support received by the teachers not only enabled them to triumph over their adversity but also made them indebted to the school community.

7.2.2 Spiritual resources

One of the interesting insights from the study was the strong dependence by one of the participants on spiritual resources to enhance resilience. Stone et al. (2003) pointed out that the role of religious beliefs and participation in spiritual resources for support in times of crisis has not been given much attention in research. They emphasize that spiritual beliefs or faith can sustain a person in difficult times. It offers a framework to gain understanding of the situation and for evaluating the stressful event. A teacher in the study relied on his spiritual resources to provide him with hope and strength to fight back even though the odds were stacked against him. He resorted to prayer and believed that firm faith in God will guide him through the difficult and challenging times. Walsh (2004) asserts that transcendental cultural and spiritual practices and values can provide meaning and purpose during periods of crisis. For the teacher, he believed he gained inner strength from God that fortified his resilience. Walsh (2007) confirmed that for many experiencing catastrophic events, prayer and meditative practices can provide strength and support. Prayer was also mentioned by another teacher as a means of coping with a stressful situation with a taunting learner.

7.2.3 Moral duty and a sense of vocation

Viewing teaching as a vocation and fulfilling their moral duty towards their learners was what prompted some of the teachers in the study to continue going to work, in spite of the insurmountable challenges they faced. Even though they endured severe emotional strain due to pressures at school, their motivation to continue stemmed from their moral obligation to their learners. Bullough and Hall-Kenyon (2012) assert that it is the teachers' call to teach that keeps pushing them to achieve their goals even in the face of considerable pressures from learners, other teachers, parents and school leadership. They conclude that this is likely to be a source of teacher resilience. For some of the teachers in the study it was evident that their moral duty to their learners and their sense of vocation were the drivers that helped them

continue even though conditions at work deteriorated. Day et al. (2007) highlighted that teachers' internal values of a desire to serve is what fuelled teachers' abilities to gain emotional strength and resilience to meet the challenges prevalent in their work environments. It provided them with resources from which they could draw strength to manage the stressful work and life events. The teachers in the study highlighted that their moral duty to their learners was what motivated them to wake up each morning and literally 'drag' themselves to work. The teachers' motivation derived from their moral obligation to their learners, concur with Hansen's (2001) view that when teachers act as moral agents they are able to persist in the face of challenges. In coping with the pressure of strong opposing forces against them, the teachers' sense of vocation became an important professional asset in enhancing their resilience (Gu & Day, 2007).

7.2.4 Exercising agency through self-efficacy beliefs

Bandura (2009) argues that "among the mechanisms of self-influence, none is more focal or pervading than belief of personal efficacy" (Bandura, 2009, p. 179). He argues further that it is self-efficacy that promotes human agency. The teachers in the study who triumphed in spite of overwhelming challenges acted in accordance with Bandura's (2009) view that if people do not have the belief that they can produce the desired results and curtail the undesired ones by their actions they will have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. The teachers displayed a strong belief that they could succeed and acted with determination against all odds. In spite of opposing views of others, in some cases even health professionals, the teachers were confident that they could heal and continue with their work. The teachers actions were motivated by their strong belief that they could overcome the obstacles and setbacks and did not give up their efforts to forge ahead to reach their goals. This strong belief in their capabilities was the driving force that enabled their ability to overcome their physical limitations and impediments.

Whilst some of the teachers displayed personal agency, one teacher exercised agency through proxy (Bandura, 2000). This happens when people who do not have direct control over situations in their social environments or institutions, seek well-being through the exercising of proxy agency (Bandura, 2000). The teacher enlisted the assistance of the teacher union and when the initial efforts failed the teacher changed membership to another union. Bandura (2000) points out that by engaging in agency through proxy, people will enlist the support of

others who they think have the necessary expertise or power to act on their behalf to achieve their desired goal. The teacher's self-efficacy was evident when an alternative union was sought in an effort to resolve the issues she faced at the school. The teacher realized that all personal efforts to resolve the issue had failed and turned to union support. All the teachers who persevered in the face of their setbacks displayed strong commitment to their goals and put in tremendous efforts to achieving them. The two teachers, who endured personal setbacks, adopted a positive and optimistic outlook and harnessed all opportunities and support from their social environments. Gu and Day (2007) contend that a strong sense of self-efficacy promotes teacher resilience as was evident with the teachers in the study who emerged stronger from their frustrations, adversities and challenges.

7.2.5 Positive emotions

Positive emotions, such as hope, joy and happiness that were experienced by the teachers promoted a measure of resilience. This was evoked when they experienced goal congruence, that is, their goal attainment was supported by the social environment. One of the teachers experienced positive emotions from relying on spiritual resources such as spiritual practices and beliefs. Fredrickson (2001) pointed out that positive emotions play a role in developing an individual's personal resources which include social, physical, intellectual and psychological resources. The author added that these personal resources are durable and have the ability to outlast the transient emotional phases during which they were acquired, making it possible to draw on them at other times and during different emotional states when they are needed (Fredrickson, 2004). Positive emotions therefore, argues Fredrickson (2004) have the ability to transform lives, build creativity and health and enhance resilience. This was consistent with the teachers in the study who experienced positive emotions, especially after a traumatic event. It served as a catalyst to regain their strength and health, rebuild their lives and emerge stronger.

7.2.6 Positive school culture

For the teachers in the study who rose above their personal challenges and setbacks, one of the striking observations was that they received incredible support from the entire school community. It is evident that their schools were characterized by a positive school culture that enhanced their resilience. Peterson and Deal (1998) contend that school culture informs

how people work together, face the challenges and solve their problems. It is an informal set of norms, expectations and values that shape people's thinking, feeling and actions. While schools with positive school cultures have certain distinguishing characteristics, certain key features were especially prevalent in the schools where these teachers taught. There was a shared ethos of care and concern, which prevailed among the entire school community, including learners, teachers, leadership and parents. There was strong collegiality among the staff, supportive leadership, and rituals to celebrate achievements and accomplishments (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

When the teachers returned to school still vulnerable and weak from their physical health challenges, they were supported in various ways at the school. One of the teachers received additional support by having an existing substitute teacher remain to slowly reintegrate himself into his role again. The other was recognized for returning to school against all odds at a function especially organized to celebrate her achievement and recognize her efforts. Their colleagues at the school embraced them with care and were ever obliging in their support. One of the teachers felt that her school was an extended family where she felt a sense of belonging. All these gestures by their schools played a significant role in developing and nurturing their self-image and self-esteem. Day and Gu (2010) found that positive school cultures, together with supportive leadership, staff collegiality and good teacher-pupil relationships contributed towards the teachers' ability to gain emotional and intellectual strength in the face of challenges, and through this they were able to sustain their sense of commitment and continue teaching with passion.

7.3   'DIS-ENABLERS' THAT ERODED TEACHER RESILIENCE

It is argued that the inability to fulfil their personal goals and ideals, poor and unsupportive leadership and school violence caused teachers to become vulnerable and eroded their ability to be resilient. These were the 'dis-enablers' that contributed to teachers being dispirited during the critical incident.

7.3.1   Teachers' inability to fulfil their personal goals and ideals

It is evident in the study that when teachers failed to live up to their own personal goals, ideals, values and beliefs they experienced negative emotions and became stressed. Teachers

experienced sadness, guilt and shame when they could not translate their beliefs and ideals into reality. One of the teachers who could not live up to the ideal of being a role model to her learners because of personal circumstances felt deeply affected by the impact of this failure which led to an emotional breakdown. It evoked in her shame for having failed to live up to her ideal as a teacher. Nias (2006) argues that teachers' personal and professional selves are inextricably linked and that teachers invest their personal sense of identity in their teaching lives. Teaching is an arena in which teachers enact and propagate their values and beliefs. It is through their teaching that teachers find opportunities to translate into action their own values and beliefs in respect to what they perceive as important and worthwhile. When this is threatened, teachers responded with strong negative emotions (Nias, 2006).

Similarly, another teacher who had a belief in wanting to make a difference in the lives of the children particularly those who came from disadvantaged backgrounds found that in the absence of a democratic management team with a clear vision and purpose she was unable to achieve her personal belief and goal of wanting to make a difference. She viewed the lack of a supportive management team as an obstacle that led to abandoning her beliefs. The teacher could not reconcile this and this resulted in feelings of guilt from settling for less than she desired. When the teacher realized that she had to ultimately abandon her beliefs, she endured a deep sense of sadness from the loss of her personal belief and goal. Another teacher felt that her ideals of being hardworking, dedicated and wanting to develop herself professionally were contrary to the situation that prevailed at the school. She reported that it affected her character and personality and she felt alienated and isolated. It was evident that when teachers were unable to translate their beliefs, goals and values into action it affected them adversely evoking negative emotions. This caused them to become vulnerable and eroded their resilience. They felt that there was no point in continuing at the school if their personal beliefs and goals were thwarted.

Nias (2006) pointed out that teachers go to great lengths to protect their individual sense of identity and "any perceived attack on it is experienced as threatening and painful" (p. 225). When teachers experience pressure from meso or macro structures to act in ways that are contrary to their values, it impacts their identity and they feel stressed. The betrayal of deeply held values that cause feelings of guilt and loss of self-esteem can be emotionally damaging to teachers (Nias, 2006) and can easily escalate into them "hitting the wall" (p. 236) as was the case with some of the teachers in the study. The negative emotions experienced by the

teachers caused them to become vulnerable and eroded their ability to be resilient. Conflict between teachers' personal values and beliefs and its adverse effects were observed by Day et al. (2007) when teachers felt they had to implement aspects of the performativity agenda that went counter to their own personal philosophy. It resulted in teachers feeling the negative impact on their morale and motivation. Kelchtermans (2011) highlighted that moral conflict when making decisions during teaching leads to threats to being a 'proper teacher' and arouses strong emotional reactions that contributes to teachers' feeling a sense of vulnerability.

7.3.2   Ineffective school leadership

One of the striking effects on teacher vulnerability and eroded resilience stemmed from poor and unsupportive leadership experienced by some of the teachers. Teachers felt unsupported when principals failed or obstructed them from pursuing their professional goals. Teachers appraised this as goal incongruent which led to teachers experiencing negative emotions. When teachers experienced powerlessness in pursuing their desired goals they felt vulnerable. Nias (1989) pointed out that lack of co-operation and support from school administration evoked negative feelings in teachers especially when they perceived that their own effectiveness is being compromised by others who fail to do their jobs.

Workplace bullying emerged as having a devastating impact on teachers' sense of well-being. Principals resorted to victimization and harassment instead of resolving conflict and communicating effectively to address issues that arose. Persistent harassment caused teachers to endure anger, humiliation, shame, apprehension, anxiety and alienation which led to stress and depression. Teachers felt demeaned, devalued, rejected and excluded which ultimately had adverse effects on their self-image and self-esteem. One teacher suffered a mental breakdown from the stress endured over many years. This resulted in physical manifestations of the emotional trauma which was chronic illnesses. It was evident that workplace bullying was a "manifestation of relational powerlessness" (de Wet, 2014, p. 7) whereby the principal being more powerful exerted power over the teachers. The narratives revealed that the principals were the main perpetrators and targeted those with lesser status than themselves (Post level 1 and 2 educators). Smeed, Kimber, Millwater & Ehrich (2006) highlighted that exerting power over teachers is a micro political strategy used by principals since central to micro-politics is the use and/or abuse of power. Micro-politics relates to politics internal to

the organizations (Smeed et al., 2006) and involve strategies that "individuals and/or groups seek, to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests" (Hoyle, 1982, p. 88). It was evident in the study that power exerted over teachers through micro-politics by the principals resulted in destructive relationships resulting in debilitating effects on teachers. Workplace bullying is one of the strategies used to exert power over teachers (Smeed et al., 2009). Blasé and Blasé (2002) distinguished three levels of principal mistreatment that involved moderately aggressive behaviours, more direct escalating aggression and direct severely aggressive behaviours. The teachers in the study experienced all three levels of mistreatment which ranged from teacher isolation, public humiliation, constant monitoring, verbal abuse, denying opportunities and the issuing of unwarranted reprimands.

Kelchtermans (2011) asserts that micro-politics also involves pursuing interests which can be thought of in terms of desired workplace conditions. By principals exerting power over teachers they posed threats and thwarted teacher's desired workplace conditions such as attendance of meetings, attendance of professional development workshops and fulfilling their professional roles, like being a Head of Department. Besides feeling a lack of recognition for their sense of professionalism, teachers felt excluded, isolated, demeaned and devalued when their workplace conditions were threatened or lost. Kelchtermans (2011) contends that when teachers feel a sense of powerlessness in their micro-political struggles about their desired workplace conditions they feel vulnerable. It was apparent that poor and unsupportive leadership caused teacher vulnerability resulting in eroded resilience.

7.3.3 School violence

Violence in school was one of the reasons why a teacher experienced a critical incident that had far reaching implications. Mncube and Harber (2013) highlighted that violence is a serious problem in South African schools. Leoshut (2008) observed that incidents of violence are becoming more serious in nature, escalating from bullying to more serious forms of violence. Burton (2007) noted that while learners at school are in many instances the main perpetrators of violence, teachers become the victims. Evidence from the data in the study revealed that serious learner on learner violence leaves teachers shocked and out of depth in their management strategies especially if the perpetrators display arrogance and defiance towards them. Burton (2008) argued that many teachers display lack of skills in managing violence in schools, a situation that has been exacerbated by the banning of corporal

punishment without proper alternative discipline measures in place. This view was confirmed in a recent study on school violence by Mncube and Harber (2013) who emphasized that teachers need training on why corporal punishment was ineffective and what constructive alternatives can be implemented. Moreover, Burton (2008) added that teachers are of the view that learners see no compulsion to behave responsibly in the classroom. Ward (2007) argues that learners who perform poorly at school and have low academic achievements are more likely to become involved in violent behaviours as was evident in the study. An important observation in the National Schools Violence Study (Burton, 2008) was that more than fifty percent of teachers in both primary and secondary schools felt unsafe at schools while teaching. These findings highlight the vulnerability of teachers in South African schools.

An interesting observation in this study was that the parent of the perpetrator of the violence in the classroom was equally violent and aggressive, threatening to assault the teacher. This led to the teacher having an anxiety attack and enduring an emotional breakdown. The teacher felt defenceless and helpless and could not cope with the aggressive attitude of the parent. Ward (2007) asserts that in families where violence is a norm, children regard violence as an accepted way to handle conflict. Burton (2008) found that there was a symbiotic relationship between what happens at learners' homes and at school. The author further added that there appears to be "widespread 'banalisation' and normalisation of violence" in South African communities (p. 75). Du Plessis's (2008) study on violence in South African schools noted that teachers responded to school violence with extreme emotions and experienced high stress levels. Teachers reported feeling alone and unsupported by school management and the Department of Education. Burton (2008) is of the view that a large measure of responsibility should be placed on school management in ensuring effective discipline and controls at schools. It was evident in the study that the lack of support from school management contributed to a teacher's stressful encounter with a violent incident at school.

Du Plessis (2008) described teachers as "suffering, disabled victims of violence" (p. 71) who felt helplessness, hurt, trauma and disillusionment. The teacher in the study displayed similar emotions, feeling powerless, angry, stressed and fearing for her life. The teacher's disillusionment arose from realizing that the school did not have clear goals and a vision for school improvement and managing serious discipline problems that prevailed at the school. It

emerged that the repercussions of the violent incident in the classroom was instrumental in the teacher's vulnerability and eroded resilience.

The insights outlined above revealed that teacher resilience was influenced by factors within and external to the teacher. Resilience was either enhanced or eroded as the teachers interacted with the socio-cultural environment. The teachers' ability to be resilient or not was dependent on how they responded to the influences within the environment at different times during the critical incident and the social and organizational support they received. Their sense of self-efficacy, their ability to be agentic and their beliefs, moral values and goals determined how they responded. The teachers appraised the relevance of the events and whether it was congruenct or incongruent to their goals which determined their emotional responses. When teachers experienced positive emotions their resilience was enhanced and when they experienced negative emotions they felt vulnerable which eroded their resilience. Day et al. (2007) pointed out that the VITAE research provides evidence that resilience is a dynamic construct which is influenced by the environmental, workplace and personal contexts in teachers' lives.

The next two sections discuss the two additional insights that emerged from the study. They outline the interconnectedness between teachers' personal and professional lives and how the critical incidents experienced by teachers transformed their teaching practice.

7.4 INTERCONNECTEDNESS BETWEEN TEACHERS' PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES

It was evident in the study that teachers' lives, both personal and professional are interconnected. Teachers' personal values, beliefs, aspirations and goals influenced the way teachers enacted their jobs. When this was threatened, teachers became disillusioned and lost their motivation and energy to continue with their work with passion and enthusiasm. In a case where a teacher wanted to make a difference in the lives of children especially fulfilling a desire to change their lives for the better, it was found that failure to accomplish this caused a feeling of sadness and loss that affected the teacher's work, her sense of effectiveness and motivation. This is in accordance with an observation highlighted by Day and Gu (2009) where a teacher's inability to fulfil her personal aspiration of making a difference in the lives of children caused her to lose her commitment and caused ill health. In another case, in this

study, a teacher's personal philosophy of working hard and wanting to develop professionally was thwarted at the workplace leaving the teacher feeling demotivated and alienated. This caused the teacher to fell pressured to leave the school. Kelchtermans (2009a) pointed out that through their task perception, teachers embrace their deeply held beliefs about education and their moral responsibilities towards their learners and question how they are performing as teachers.

Another observation was that it was the teachers' beliefs and moral values that motivated them to continue irrespective of the insurmountable negative pressures from the workplace. Teachers believed that teaching was a calling and perceived it as a vocation. It became a driving force in enhancing their resilience and persevering irrespective of the negative pressures they faced. Nias (1996) observed that teachers' desire to fulfil their personal beliefs and values makes them feel good, especially when they are doing what is consistent with their beliefs. Another issue that emerged was that negative influences at school affected a teacher's personal health. The teacher suffered from chronic stress related diseases which were attributed to negative influences from her workplace over a prolonged period. In one instance, a teacher found that overwhelming pressures from the workplace consumed her energies to such an extent that she had no time to invest in important personal issues which were subsequently neglected. This according to the teacher had far reaching implications for her personal happiness and she perceived it as causing her to sacrifice her personal needs. Negative influences at the workplace posed threats to a teacher's personal reputation and job security which resulted in fear and anxiety.

On the other hand, when teachers experienced life altering incidents in their personal lives, they found that it was at their workplace that they received incredible social support that served as an impetus for their rehabilitation and resuming a life with a semblance of normality. Here it is a case of the professional contexts enhancing their personal lives. This contributed to their enhanced self-image and self-esteem through the positive emotions they experienced. The links between teachers' personal and professional lives were illustrated through the teachers' portraits in the VITAE project that highlighted that the personal and professional components of teachers' lives are closely linked and impact each other in multifarious ways (Day et al., 2007). Earlier research by Nias (1989) illustrates the links between teachers' personal and professional lives by exploring how the "self as person" (p. 32) is so inextricably involved in teaching.

7.5   CRITICAL INCIDENTS TRANSFORMING PRACTICE

Through the experience of the critical incident some of the teachers transformed their teaching practices. One of the teachers realized that some of her teaching and assessment strategies needed revision. She changed her strategies to accommodate the needs of the learners. It was only through the events of the critical incident did this awareness emerge. Another teacher who experienced a life changing incident adopted a new outlook to life. He transferred these learnings into the classroom. Life lessons such as 'not taking life for granted', 'life is fragile' and 'an appreciation for the sanctity and purpose of human life' were integrated into Guidance lessons through experiential teaching strategies. The teacher used practical demonstrations, music, group work and videos to engage learners in healthy and lively discussions. As a school counsellor, the new insights were incorporated in the counselling sessions. The teacher became more empathetic and understanding of learners' social, personal and emotional problems having experienced a life altering event in his own life. This is consistent with Palmer's (1998) view that "the intersection of the diverse forces" (p. 13) that make up a teacher's life becomes an essential part of their teaching.

The next section will outline how the thesis of the study emerged. There will be a discussion of a model depicting how the teacher was either dispirited or inspirited by the critical incident.

7.6   CRITICAL INCIDENTS: THE CATALYST THAT DISPIRITED OR INSPIRITED THE TEACHER

While there is little written about spirituality in education and the spirit of the teacher, what emerged from the study was the teacher's spirit was affected either positively or negatively as they experienced the critical incident. Three of the participants alluded to their spirit being affected while they recounted their experiences of the critical incident. Examples are reflected below:

Mentally and physically my spirit was like broken down (Romy)

This incident has killed me… it killed me, it killed my spirit (Venetia)

It reinforced and grew the positive spirit that I felt inside me (Saiyen)

Palmer (1998) asserts that "we teach who we are" (p. 2) and that teaching emerges from a person's inwardness. In exploring the inner landscape of teachers' lives he highlighted three important elements, namely, the intellectual, the emotional and the spiritual. The author argued that intellect, emotion and spirit depend on each other for wholeness and are interwoven in the self and therefore in teaching. No matter how important the methods and strategies used in teaching, insights into what is happening within the teacher as they teach cannot be ignored. The inner terrain is as crucial in teaching as it is in our living (Palmer, 1989).

In trying to understand the spirit of the teacher, the concept of spirituality and spirituality in the workplace were explored. A review of literature on these aspects provided insights and understanding on the concept of spirit, spirituality and how spirituality is expressed in the workplace. The notion of spirit was drawn from Scott (1994) and perspectives on spirituality and spirituality in the workplace were derived from the work of Fry (2003), Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003), Karakas (2010), Lips-Wiersma (2002), Mitrolf and Denton (1999), Neck and Milliman (1994) and Pfeffer (2003). It was through engagement in the academic scholarship around spirit, spirituality and spirituality in the workplace that the notion of teachers' feeling inspirited or dispirited emerged.

Krishnakumar and Neck (2002) point out that there is a growing interest in spirituality in the corporate world and people are enquiring about what this means for their work and workplace (Mitrolf & Denton, 1999). Karakas (2010) notes that there are more than seventy definitions of spirituality in the workplace but there is no widely accepted definition. The author observed that spirituality is described as an "idiosyncratic, multifaceted, elusive concept" (p. 7). According to Scott (1994) spirit is the "vital principle or animating force within living beings, that which constitutes one's unseen intangible being, the real sense or significance of something" (p. 64). Spirituality is viewed by Mitrolf and Denton (1999) as the "basic feeling of being connected with one's self, others and the entire universe" (p. 83). They regarded interconnectedness as a key feature. Neck and Milliman (1994) add that spirituality is about living a life of meaning and living in accordance with this meaning and one's deeply held beliefs. It is important to distinguish between spirituality and religion. Spirituality involves a relationship with a higher power or being that influences how one functions in the world. From spirituality, a person derives meaning in life and feels a sense of interconnectedness

with others. It is much broader than religion that involves prescribed tenets, dogmas and doctrines (Fry, 2003).

Pfeffer (2003) in his work on spirituality in the workplace identifies aspects that people seek while at work. He contends that people seek work that is interesting, meaningful and purposeful. They look for opportunities for learning and development. People seek positive relationships with their co-workers and have a desire to live an integrated life so that harmony exists between their work roles and other roles and with their essential nature as human beings. Fry (2003) adds that workplace spirituality depicts a sense of calling and a need for social connection which is made up of interwoven cultural and personal values. Calling, according to Fry (2003) is an aspect of transcendence that involves how one makes a difference in the lives of others and being of service to them. When individuals feel their expression of calling is fulfilled they derive purpose and meaning in their life. Those who feel their job is a calling believe it is of value to the wider society and they feel proud to be associated with it. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) contend that value congruence is an important aspect to spirituality in the workplace and the greater the value congruence the more employees will experience transcendence in relation to their work, resulting in a greater sense of joy, completeness and connection.

Lips-Wiersma (2002) found that spirituality influences an individual's "career purpose, meaning making and coherence" (p. 497). Four purposes of spirituality were noted, "developing and becoming self", 'unity with others', 'expressing self' and 'serving others" (p. 514). Some noteworthy observations were made in how individuals expressed their spirituality. Integrity emerged as important to individuals where they maintained a distinct self even if under pressure to conform to organizational values and culture. Individuals showed a desire to serve others even though their jobs were not service oriented. Relationships were viewed more than just participatory tools but were linked to the meaning it brought to their work. Work was viewed not only as influencing achievements but how meaningful it was to the individual.

From the literature reviewed (Fry, 2003; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003; Karakas, 2010; Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Mitrolf & Denton, 1999; Neck & Milliman, 1994; Pfeffer, 2003; Scott, 1994) the following insights were gleaned about spirit and spirituality and how spirituality is expressed in the workplace. Spirit seems to speak of a power or force within a person (Scott,

1994) that has a need to feel connected with itself, others and everything around them (Mitrolf & Denton, 1999). Through their spirituality people seek purpose in their work, they desire harmony with others with whom they work and seek meaningful work that allows them to grow and develop (Fry, 2003; Neck & Milliman, 1994; Pfeffer, 2003). A person's values and beliefs are crucial in their spirituality and value congruence at work brings joy and fulfilment (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Displaying integrity in decision making and a desire to live an integrated life where there is coherence between one's work roles and one's own nature of being human is important (Lips-Wiersma, 2002; Pfeffer, 2003). Spirituality in the workplace exemplifies a sense of calling, making a difference in the lives of others that brings purpose and meaning in a person's life (Fry, 2003; Lips-Wiersma, 2002).

It emerged in the study (See Figure 9) that by the teachers' interaction with the socio-cultural environment (learners, colleagues, school leadership, parents, Department of Education, union, SACE, family, friends) in which they worked and lived they were impacted by various influences during the critical incident. These influences emerged from the workplace context, the personal context and the socio-cultural/policy context (Day, 2011). As teachers interacted with these influences during the critical incident, several events were appraised by the teachers through their self- and social esteem, their personal and professional goals, their values and beliefs and the meanings that these influences had on their lives. All these aspects or broader goals are considered by Lazarus (1991) as an integral part of their ego-identity. During the appraisal process, events within the critical incident were either appraised as congruent or incongruent to their goals. It was evident that when the appraisal was mostly goal incongruent, the teacher experienced negative emotions that led to their spirit being affected adversely leaving them feeling dispirited. However, when they experienced mostly goal congruence they experienced positive emotions and felt inspirited (See Figure 9 below).
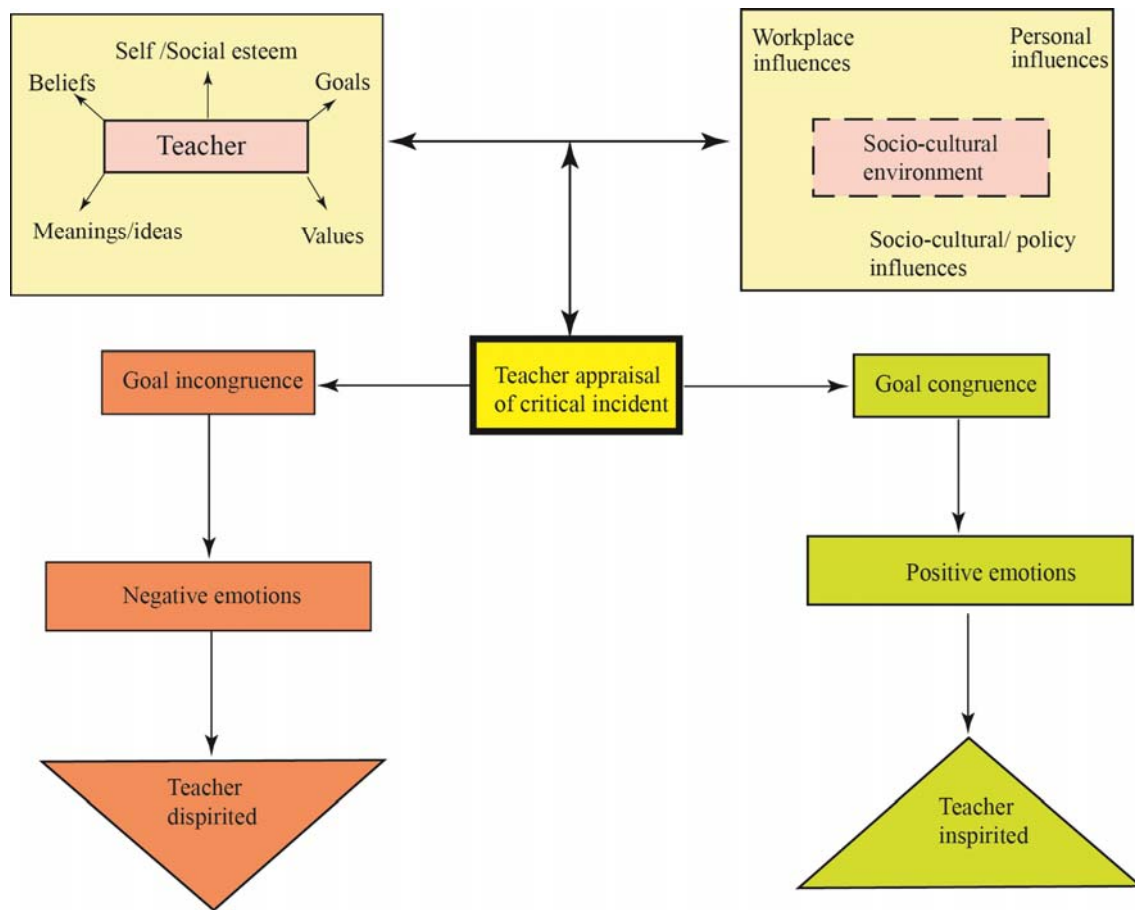
Figure 9: Teachers' inspirited or dispirited through critical incidents

It was evident that when their professional goals were thwarted, strong negative emotions were experienced, for example, if their professional development goals were obstructed or when they could not fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively they were adversely affected. Another observation was when teachers' personal values and beliefs were in conflict with those of the organization, there was an appraisal of incongruence resulting in negative emotions. Teachers struggled with their feelings when the issue of integrity was in question. A teacher became mentally and emotionally sick. Giacalone and Jurkiewicz (2003) highlighted the importance of value congruence in relation to transcendence in work.

When teachers did not enjoy cordial and harmonious relationships with learners, colleagues, school leadership and parents, they felt alienated and bereft. Harmonious relationships with those in the work community were observed as an important aspect of uplifting the spirit in the workplace (Pleffer, 2003). When teachers felt victimized, harassed, ridiculed and belittled by either the school leadership or learners it affected their spirit leaving them feeling

humiliated, ashamed, anxious, stressed and depressed. When teachers felt that their relationships with their colleagues were strained or relations with parents were estranged they felt alienated and dejected. Teachers had a desire for social recognition from those with whom they interacted and if this was threatened they felt disconnected which resulted in them feeling dispirited.

Teachers had their own ideals and beliefs about what they desired to achieve at their workplace. Some had their own personal goals of wanting to make a difference in the lives of the children and wanting to be an instrument in changing the circumstances of lives especially for the less fortunate. This was viewed as an important aspect of the expression of spirituality at the workplace. When this was obstructed or circumstances did not permit the achievement of these goals teachers felt sadness and guilt. A teacher exemplified this by saying: *"I wanted to make them achievers, go getters, now I am sad."* This is indicative of the deep seated desires of wanting to contribute to something worthwhile, something meaningful in the workplace (Lips- Wiersma, 2003) which is an expression of spirituality.

An interesting observation was the way teachers enacted their sense of vocation or calling. This was regarded by teachers as crucial and they went to great lengths to maintain this aspect in spite of the overwhelming challenges they experienced in the workplace. This aspect of their work was not compromised again depicting their desire to express their spirituality and derive purpose and meaning from their work. A teacher said: *"I chose to become a teacher, and it's my duty to be there to serve the learners."* This is consistent with Fry (2003) who asserts that by fulfilling their sense of vocation, individuals feel a social connection with their jobs; they feel they are doing something of value and feel good about it.

It was apparent that when teachers felt that they could not derive meaning and purpose at work, when they could not develop and grow professionally, when they did not enjoy harmonious relationships at work and could not fulfil their ideals and beliefs as teachers, they felt a disconnect between themselves and their work. This caused their spirit to be adversely affected. They became disenchanted, disillusioned, felt alienated and dispirited. Some became so depressed that they felt there was no future in the school and had to leave in search of a school where they could feel more connected to their work. One expressed the enormity of the impact on her and said: *"I will die of frustration and depression if I continue longer."*

However, there were teachers who felt deeply connected to their colleagues, learners, parents and school management through the social support they received from the school community when they endured personal setbacks. They felt validated, affirmed and experienced a sense of belonging. As a result they experienced mostly positive emotions of hope, joy and happiness. They felt inspired and uplifted and gained inner strength to continue. This had a deep and profound effect on their spirit. One of the teachers became strongly altruistic, wanting to give more to the school community and perceived her job as a calling. She said: *"To me now teaching is my calling. That's what God wanted me to do."* She became benevolent, unselfish and deeply committed to her job. Fry (2003) asserts that hope, faith and altruistic love provides the impetus for strong intrinsic motivation because it resonates with the higher order needs of individuals. Another teacher became apperceptive and developed a greater understanding and empathy for the learners' life situations. This evoked a deeper awareness and sensitivity to the learners' needs. She said: *"This really changed the lenses in which I see the children."* Another became philosophical and felt a deep sense of awakening. He reflected on life, its meaning and purpose which brought new awareness to him and shaped his teaching. He reported: *"I would say that my outlook to life was enhanced, things that I took for granted, I now appreciated."* These transformations speak to the teachers' spirituality and how the teachers' spirit was affected positively, resulting in them becoming inspirited and bringing these expressions to the workplace.

The thesis that emerged from the study was that *critical incidents in teachers' lives affected the teacher's spirit.* When teachers through the appraisal process experienced mostly goal incongruence, it evoked negative emotions leaving them feeling dispirited. On the other hand, when teachers appraised the events as mostly goal congruent, they felt positive emotions leaving them feeling inspirited. This feeling of being dispirited or inspirited may not be a permanent state. As situations or circumstances in the socio-cultural environment change, as well as changes occur within the teacher, so will the results of the appraisal process. The critical incident in this study was used as a 'snapshot event' in the teacher's life.

7.7   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A small sample of six participants was used to explore how teachers responded to the critical incidents in their teaching lives. While efforts were made to source participants with a variety of critical incidents, a different sample may yield different responses depending on the

critical incident, the teachers' personal attributes, the contexts in which they work and live and how they would respond to the different events and issues that emerge. The chosen sample, however, was used to provide a rich understanding of the issues that come to bear on teachers' lives. The intention of the study was not to generalize but to understand what incidents teachers deem as critical and how and why teachers responded to the different influences they encountered within their socio-cultural environment.

Another limitation was that while all participants agreed to follow-up interviews, after the first interview some of the participants displayed reluctance to engage in the second interview. Some stated that they recounted the entire incident and felt that a telephonic follow-up interview can be used to clarify isssues. Time constraints were cited by others as an inhibiting factor. Teachers alluded to work pressures and being overly committed due to the recent curriculum reforms particularly with assessment. They did however agree to telephonic follow-up interviews which were conducted. Although most of the relevant data was gathered during the first interview and the second interview was needed mostly for clarification purposes, the telephonic follow-up interview could have compromised the overall depth and richness of the data produced with respect to some of the participants.

7.8   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings of the study point to the influence of school leadership as being central to creating positive school cultures. It is when teachers feel supported and acknowledged that they thrive in their work environments. Schools need principals who work towards a vision involving the entire school community, who respond appropriately to the challenges and conflict at schools, who foster harmonious relationships and display moral leadership. Effective school leadership is linked to teacher morale and well-being.

During critical incidents teachers need personal and professional support to cope with the challenges they face. Schultze and Steyn (2007) noted that relevant interventions and programmes need to be in place to support teachers in South African schools to develop coping skills during times of stress. In the absence of such support systems, teachers may lose their motivation and commitment for teaching, become physically or psychologically ill and may resort to exiting the profession altogether. This has implications for teacher wellness and teacher retention.

While there has been an increase in interest in the area of teacher emotion in recent years, further research is needed on teacher emotions and their impact on teachers' lives. While workplace spirituality research is prolific in the corporate sector, more research is needed in education among teachers and school leadership. Further research is needed to confirm that spirituality is an important element in the workplace for teachers and how teachers enact their spirituality.

Two theoretical contributions emerged from the study. Firstly, a conceptual model to frame the study was derived from the work of Lazarus (1991) and Day (2011) (see Chapter Two Figure 1). Whilst Lazarus's (1991) framework on the cognitive appraisal theory of emotions was a useful starting point, it lacked the contextual elements which are integral in teachers' lives. The inclusion of Day's (2011) work on the different influences that affect teachers' lives provided a more integrative and holistic model to understand how teachers responded to the critical incidents in their lives. The model provided insights into how teachers through the different aspects of their ego-identity responded to the influences in their socio-cultural environment, how their appraised the events and what kind of emotional responses were evoked.

Another theoretical contribution was the model that was derived from the findings of the study depicting how teachers were either inspirited or dispirited having experienced the critical incident (See Figure 9). The model proposes that teachers expressed their spirituality in the workplace as they engaged with the critical incidents.

In closing…..
We are living in defining times in educational history where the world in which teachers do their work is changing profoundly (Hargreaves, 2003). Teachers' lives are filled with complexities and contradictions with an intersection of forces converging in their lives, making it fluid and dynamic. They find themselves in a new era with ever increasing demands and new challenges.

Through a closer examination of critical incidents in teachers' lives, the study has drawn attention to the teacher's spirit and its expression in the workplace. Teachers participate in their work as whole persons though their physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. Teachers seek meaning and purpose in their work. Relationships with whom they

work are important and their personal beliefs and values are enacted in the workplace. The teacher's spirit must be nurtured in schools so that they can participate more fully and positively, thereby increasing their commitment and productivity.

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APPENDIX 1: CONVERSATION GUIDE

Prompts

1. Tell me about the critical incident you experienced?
2. Who or what triggered the critical incident? Why?
3. Identify key people who were involved in this experience with you (e.g. principal, school management team, departmental officials, SGB members, teachers, parents, students, lecturers, your family members). Explain the role they played, either positively and/or negatively in this incident? What was happening around you? How did you feel? How did this impact on you?
4. Was the experience positive, uplifting, motivating or was it difficult or tense. What were you thinking? What emotions were you feeling? Did you feel valued or devalued? Why? (Check at different points in the interview)
5. Explain the issues or problems that you thought were relevant to you?
6. Describe details that allow us to see where you were and what was at hand.
7. Were you supported while you experienced the critical incident, describe the support you received.
8. What would you say was the turning point for you? Tell me about it.
9. Is the situation resolved? Why?
10. What implications does this incident have for you as a teacher in the future?

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT LETTER WITH INFORMED CONSENT

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

To: Teacher Participants

Research title: Critical incidents in teachers' lives: shaping teachers' being

I am currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. My details are as follows:

Full Name and Surname	Rubandhree Naicker
Student Number	202525247
Discipline	Teacher Development
School	Education and Development
Faculty	Education
Campus	Edgewood
Existing Qualification	UDE, BA, FDE (Educ Manag), ACE (Isizulu), ABET, B.EDUC, M.ED
Proposed Qualification for Project	Doctor of Philosophy
Contact details	031-4011133 cell: 0832273250
Email	ruban@newagestrategies.co.za
Name of Supervisors	Professor Labby Ramrathan and Professor Reshma Sookrajh

I hereby seek consent for you to be one of my participants in my research project which explores critical incidents in teachers' lives and how it shapes their teacher being. There are many teachers who are experiencing challenges as result of the educational reforms and the contextual realities of teaching in schools in South Africa and are feeling frustrated, confused and stressed. There are also teachers who in spite of the challenges feel motivated and enthusiastic about teaching.

As teachers experience different circumstances, situations and events in their teaching career it alters and shifts who they are as teachers and may cause them to make certain decisions. When teachers attach significance and meaning to a particular situation or event it may serve as a turning point in the life of the teacher, and is regarded as a critical incident. This study focuses on the critical incidents in teachers' lives and examines how the experience of the critical incident shapes their teacher being.

Data will be produced using interviews. The interviews will be conversation style and relatively unstructured. There will be at least two interviews conducted at a place that is convenient to you. The interviews will be audio recorded using a digital recorder.

The data will be stored in a secure place during the data production. Upon submission of the thesis, data will be stored at the School of Education, University of Kwa- Zulu Natal, for a period of five years after which it will be disposed of.

Your participation in the study will be voluntary and your identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms. You are free to withdraw from the research project at any time should you wish to do so. All other ethical considerations governing research will be strictly adhered to by the researcher.

Yours faithfully

_____   _____

R. Naicker   Date

Declaration of Consent

I hereby consent to participate in the research project.

Signature of participant: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

12 October 2012

Mrs Rubandhree Naicker 202525247
School of Education and Development
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Naicker

Protocol reference number: HSS/1043/012D
Project title: Critical incidents in teachers' lives: shaping teachers' being

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

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 school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor Professor P Ramrathan
cc co supervisor Professor R Soorkrajh
cc Academic leader Dr D Davids
cc School Admin. Mrs S Naicker

INSPIRING GREATNESS

APPENDIX 4: EMAIL FROM PARTICIPANT

From: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ [mailto:▮▮▮▮▮@gmail.com]
Sent: 18 October 2013 08:01 PM
To: Ruban Naicker
Subject: Re:▮▮▮▮▮ story

Dear Ruban
You did an excellent job. You expressed way better than I ever could. you hit the nail on the head.
It was a healing process just reading it. This is because you told it exceptionally well. I don't mind
any fictitious name you use. My prayer is that God helps you and guides you with the rest of your
studies and any time you need my assistance just send an email.
Thank you friend for all your advice and support in all of life's trials
God bless
▮▮▮▮▮

On Fri, Oct 18, 2013 at 2:48 PM, Ruban Naicker < ruban@newagestrategies.co.za> wrote:
Hi▮▮▮▮▮

Here is the story. Please let me know what name you would like me to use. Name and Surname
please. If there is anything you want changed, let me know . Send it back on this email address, this
is the one I use for work. My personal one is ruban.naicker@gmail.com

Have a great weekend!
Ruban

No virus found in this message.
Checked by AVG - www.avg.com
Version: 2013.0.3408 / Virus Database: 3222/6760 - Release Date: 10/17/13

APPENDIX 5: TURNITIN REPORT

Turnitin Originality Report

CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN TEACHERS LIVES: UNDERSTANDING TEACHER BE-ING by Rubandhree Naicker

From PhD first full draft - Part 1 (Moodle 29598892) (TEPD Research Support (Moodle 9002623))

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Angela Bryan & Associates

6 La Vigna
Plantations
47 Shongweni Road
Hillcrest

`

Date : 17 November 2014

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that the PhD Thesis titled: 'Critical incidents in teachers' lives: Understanding

teacher be-ing.' written by Rubandhree Naicker has been edited by me for language.

Please contact me should you require any further information.

Kind Regards

Angela Bryan

angelakirbybryan@gmail.com
0832983312