

**The experiences of history educators in  
facilitating oral history projects in the  
Further Education and Training Phase**

**by**

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**A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education of the University  
of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters in History Education**

**December 2015**

## DECLARATION

The work presented in this thesis is my own original efforts and I have not plagiarised the work of anyone else in completing the requirements for it. Where use has been made of the work of others, it has been duly acknowledged. Further, I declare that this dissertation has not been submitted in any form to another university. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has certified ethical clearance.

SHOBANA SINGH

## SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

“As the candidate’s supervisor, I agree to the submission of this dissertation.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Johan Wassermann', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

PROF JOHAN WASSERMANN

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my most precious grand-daughter Arushi Ramgoolam who was tragically called to rest on the 18 January 2014 in a motor car accident at the tender age of one year and four months.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To the God of my understanding for granting me the strength to complete this dissertation.

The work presented in this thesis was made possible only with the guidance of my advisor, Professor Johan Wassermann. I thank him for his support and encouragement throughout my graduate studies. He has taught me not only about conducting thorough research but also about many other intangibles that are necessary to succeed in this field. This journey was made possible through your encouragement and guidance throughout.

I thank the history educators for readily agreeing to be interviewed on the topic and for providing their students' completed projects to me, this valuable information has allowed me to complete my dissertation.

To my family and friends for their support, words of encouragement and for providing me with the space to complete my work.

To the OHASA executive team for their encouragement and motivation and for providing the opportunity to write and present papers at a national level.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study focuses on the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). Whereby the voices of senior history educators as well as by the viewing of the learners completed projects provide further insight into the experiences of facilitating the oral history projects with their learners.

To understand the educators' experiences in facilitating the oral history project I used qualitative research methodology. This included the use of convenience sampling, semi-structured interviews and project analysis of the learners' work. The project analysis followed using the method of coding.

My research has revealed that educators themselves had prior knowledge and experiences of oral history that impacted on their facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners. The experiences of educators in the facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners has been positive and challenging, yet despite the challenges educators were successful in the facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners.

The findings reveal that there is a need for educators to be provided with a clear conceptual understanding of what oral history is, secondly to get educators to understand as to why this aspect was included in the curriculum, thirdly there has to be a link between the training of educators and professional support by the Department of Basic Education and Training (DoE/DoBET) in the facilitating of the oral history projects with the learners, fourthly educators need to understand that there is no fixed way to get learners involved in oral history as this would also depend on their enthusiasm, training, experiences and interest, fifthly the choice of topics and finding suitable participants who learners could interview were also a challenge, lastly there are technological challenges that both educators and learners had to contend with.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

Although oral history has been undertaken by academics and historians previously it was not until 2002 that the oral history aspect had been included in the South African school history curriculum. Educators had been forced to implement the oral history component of their history teaching as part of the curriculum. The main reason behind including oral history in the curriculum was that there were many events that occurred during the apartheid era that had not been included in the history annals of South Africa. This was the case because most of the ordinary people's voices in South Africa had been suppressed by the apartheid regime. In this dissertation I will research the experiences of history educators in facilitating oral history projects with their learners. I believe that the educators have many experiences, either challenges or successes, which they could share in undertaking such projects with their learners. These could be helpful in creating some understanding about how history educators engage with oral history in Further Education and Training (FET) phase history classrooms.

At the outset of my study I want to state that oral history as an academic endeavour, that forms part of the field of history, is complex. The pedagogy of undertaking oral history was previously used mainly by historians and journalists who are thoroughly trained in this regard. However, the educator who had to follow the curriculum is faced with challenges in facilitating oral history projects with their learners.

In this chapter I will provide the background and context to my study. Thereafter I will discuss the rationale and motivation for my study of oral history, and then I will explain the purpose and focus of my study. My research questions will subsequently be

outlined. Next I will explain the methodology and theoretical framework for my study and lastly I will provide the outline of my dissertation.

## **1.2 Background and Context**

Oral history has been undertaken since time immemorial. The term oral can be defined as the spoken word that is passed on from one person or community to another, while history is the study of the past. Oral history includes testimonies, stories, folk tales, oral poetry, oral literature, oral traditions, oral performances and reflections of the past that are gathered through interviews. Frequently the history of the marginalised and oppressed is gathered through the use of oral history. In the recent past all history came only from books yet it was indirectly elicited from someone who had experienced or witnessed the past.

Various concepts of oral history have been formulated. I have chosen for this introductory section to use internet sources that explain the concept of oral history as they are quickly and easily accessible and clearly explained when compared to using literature. According to one popular source: "Oral history is information of historical or sociological importance obtained usually by tape-recorded interviews with persons whose experiences and memories are representative or whose lives have been of special significance" ([www.factmonster.com](http://www.factmonster.com)). Another has it that "It is an account of something passed down by word of mouth from one generation to another" ([www.webster-dictionary.org](http://www.webster-dictionary.org)). A third states that, "oral history is the collection and study of historical information from people's personal memories" ([www.askoxford.com](http://www.askoxford.com)). All three of these regular internet sources provide us with a variety of meanings as to what oral history is. These conceptualisations are similar in that they all speak of voices of people and personal memories that are recorded through the interview process. Oral history, it can be argued, is based on what people remember of the past in which their experiences play a significant role. Equally important is that oral history is passed on by word of mouth from one generation to another. This concept is similar to oral traditions,

as traditions are passed on by word of mouth from one generation to the next. In all of this memory is significant.

Oral history is also very personal as it requires that one reflects on one's experiences of the past. Usually an interviewee and interviewer in an interview situation are involved. The interviewer chooses a topic or aspect that he or she would be researching, he/she then chooses an appropriate interviewee and follows accepted oral history methodology in order to undertake the interview. The approach of the interviewer is more a dialogic one, where open-ended questions are presented to the interviewee in order to elicit a story or to gain evidence. Consequently, oral history is based on interviewees who bring with them different perspectives on people's experiences.

From an academic perspective, oral history led me to the work of Thompson (1978: p78). He states "Oral history is a history built around people. It thrusts life into history itself and it widens its scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders, but also from the unknown majority of people." Given that oral history is built around people, I would argue that it is social history which can review any aspect of a person's life or a community's history. It broadens the scope of history as it is no longer confined to textbooks or stories inscribed in books or narrow academic history. On these grounds one can clearly state that oral history is history from below, of the ordinary person and not necessarily an important one.

Consequently, oral history has provided a platform for ordinary people to have their stories recorded. People are the narrators of their own stories, as interviewees allow the interviewer to reflect on their own life experiences and to share their stories. Thus, the recording of oral history is the recording of personal testimonies. In the current century life history; self-report; the biography of people; narratives which are personal as well as testimonies, have all emerged as fields of study. In all of this, memory is very important: "Memory in these discussions is visibly both an individual and a collective possession, so to speak; it is shared, transmitted, expressed, in various and complicated ways" (Hodgkin & Redstone, 2005: p23). All this would imply that there is another person who

inspires and frames the story who is the interviewer who has a purpose that has inspired him/her to do so. The narrator is inspired to recall events of the past, to jog his/her memory and record the stories. When a question is asked of an interviewee, the interviewee will narrate his/her story: "Certainly narrative is an important component of oral history, along with description, explanation, and self-reflection" (Yow, 2005: p15). An important fact is that persons respond by reflecting and explaining their memory of that time period. This may be subjective and as historians one can cross reference to match other sources so as to determine the trustworthiness of the interview.

There is value in oral history both internationally and locally as not all people are educated or have the time and money to have their stories recorded. "Oral history research thus becomes crucial to obtaining a picture of the total society because the viewpoints of the non-elite who do not leave memoirs or have biographers are presented" (Yow, 2005: p11). Stories of ordinary people and also the famous can therefore be recorded through the use of oral history. Oral history testimonies thus help us to understand what was important to people who had lived through the period being studied. It can also help us understand more clearly the historical sources written on different aspects in that period or the topic under study.

Since the 1980s oral history had been used as an important method for documenting the experiences of those who had been oppressed under the apartheid government in South Africa. Many people who did not have the opportunity to talk about their experiences, have had an opportunity to speak of their experiences through oral interviews. The Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), for example, has been recording and preserving oral history since 1994 at the National Archives and Record Services of South Africa. The DAC in various provinces has also trained teams to go and implement field research and to conduct interviews. Universities also have research sections on oral history records of our past, such as the University of Cape Town that houses the People's History Project and the University of KwaZulu-Natal that carries out various oral history projects related to memory of, for example AIDS victims. The DAC also has the National Register of oral sources (NARROS) programme where oral recordings and

social history are kept and made accessible to other historians wishing to carry out research. The outcome of these projects is that many people who were not afforded the opportunity to talk about their experiences, have an opportunity to speak through oral history interviews. Segments of human experiences that had never been recorded as a result were captured. In South Africa there were no documented histories, for example, of the families broken by apartheid. Children are consequently not able to complete a family tree as their family members have not left behind any documents. It is through the use of oral history that people may recover their roots. In the view of Yow: "It is through oral history that the dimensions of life within a community are illuminated" (2005: p12). People can find out about their family and know how their families lived in that time period by using oral history.

The use of oral history consequently helps us to understand what happened in that time period and also why and how it happened. In the view of Jeffrey and Edwall: "Oral history is a connecting value which moves in all sorts of different directions. It connects the old and the young, the academic world and the world outside, but more specifically it allows us to make connections in the interpretation of history; for example, between different places, or different spheres, or different phases of life" (1994: p11).

The pinnacle of oral history in the South African context was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to examine the National Party government's tactics that were used to suppress resistance to apartheid. Although the aim of the TRC was look into the gross human rights violations and discover the truth that had taken place under apartheid and to bring about reconciliation, consequently the TRC was able to gather oral history that is important in our understanding how people suffered under the apartheid system and in so doing it has helped to shape the lives of people in South Africa. Through the TRC a vast amount of primary documents on South Africa's apartheid history during the period 1960 to 1994 has been documented. However, critics argued that oral history used by the TRC was unreliable and grossly inaccurate, in this case: "Their assumption proved to be highly inaccurate as perpetrators confirmed the most outrageous stories and affirmed the reliability of oral

history” (Ritchie, 2003: p120). This reveals that oral history is also about listening to both sides of a story since the case of the TRC does reveal that oral testimonies can be bias. Oral stories can also be influenced by nostalgia and may be romanticised at times as oral testimony should be verified using other sources of evidence.

In South Africa the origin of oral history for education is fairly new. Oral research was not emphasised in the past as there were few South Africans who had been trained in oral history methodology. One of the first training manuals in South Africa was written by Witz (1988). His book, *Write your own history* focussed on carrying out community oral history projects in which, amongst others, workers, students and rural youth participated in using oral history to capture the history of their communities. By involving the local community it helped to counter the imbalances created by the apartheid system whereby the archival records were created by those who have the power to generate documents on what they deemed important. This oral history project was highly successful in that it set the stage for oral history to filter into schools.

South Africa, since the fall of apartheid has seen changes in the curriculum in terms of oral history. This was only possible when the African National Congress (ANC) came into power in 1994. It was against this background that a new curriculum was implemented in 1997, this being Curriculum 2005 (C2005). C2005 meant that there would be a democratic ideology in terms of the curriculum, unlike the previous system of separate education that disadvantaged different race groups. The ANC government placed emphasis on equality and focussed on human rights issues and that all histories were important. The Outcomes Based Education (OBE) adopted incorporated a new pedagogy, which meant learners would be learning by constructing their own knowledge rather than being spoon fed by the educators, largely based on constructivism. This new curriculum and new pedagogy aimed to ensure transformation in South African education. It is against this backdrop that the ex-Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, launched the South African Oral History Project in August 2001. The objective of this project was to encourage the recording of oral histories by learners. The emphasis of undertaking oral history projects was on learner-centeredness and skills-based active

participation within the study of history. The South African population consists of different race groups and different cultures, some of which had been deprived of their basic human rights under the apartheid government, and it is through oral history at school that some groups may be able to find their identities and their histories. It is through oral history that stories of the ordinary citizens can be uncovered and documented. In the view of Oelofse and Du Bruyn: “Social history has benefited immensely from the ability of oral history to throw light on certain topics” (2002: p154) like the forgotten stories of people marginalised under apartheid.

In 2002 a report was compiled on behalf of the South African Historical Association regarding the outcomes of South African history projects. The outcome of the conference gave rise to the question: “How do we approach the use of oral history?” (Oelofse & Du Bruyn, 2002: p14). History needed to shift from not just knowing things but learning through doing. In terms of education, the only way that learners could do this was through investigation, researching, debating and interpreting history through neglected histories in their own environment. A learner centred approach was to be emphasised at schools, so the approach to history teaching and learning was to change to become learner centred to meet this vision.

Since the above developments oral history has been incorporated into the history curriculum. The new Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAPS) was implemented in 2012 in grade 11 and in 2013 in grade 12. The CAPS document has included a heritage project and the document clearly states that there should be an oral component. Since the CAPS curriculum had been implemented there seems to be some misunderstanding among educators in that their interpretation is that only heritage projects have to be undertaken by learners. Educators are still unclear if the oral aspect must be included in the heritage project as it is not clearly enunciated in the CAPS document (DoBET, 2011). In fact, the heritage project can make more meaning through oral interviews as learners may be able to appreciate a different perspective of history.



The CAPS document provides guidelines on the steps to follow in setting up a heritage project. This is followed by what I consider an important definition “What is heritage?” The word ‘heritage’ can be used in different ways. One use of the word emphasises our heritage as human beings and concerns human origins in Africa. Another use of the word relates to the ways in which people remember the past, through heritage sites, museums, through the construction of monuments and memorials and in families and communities (oral history). Some suggest that heritage is everything handed down to us from the past. In defining the use of the term heritage the word “oral history” emerges but there is not much emphasis on oral history (DoBET, 2011). However, the gist of the curriculum is that oral history is embedded in the heritage component. No emphasis is placed on the oral interview methodology, but it must be assumed that all educators have the knowledge of facilitating oral history projects with their learners and therefore no methodology and clarity is given to the educators on how to undertake the oral history heritage project.

The expectations according to the CAPS document are that the projects should be finished by the end of the second term in all three grades in the FET phase (DoBET, 2011). One has to consider the work involved in undertaking a project of such a nature by a learner as there are time frames to which they have to adhere. The weighting of marks of the oral history heritage project in grades 10, 11 and 12 carries 20% of the continuous assessment marks. Oral history projects are thus heavily weighted in terms of marks.

Annual oral history competitions are held outside of the formal curriculum. The Department of Education (DoE), and now the Department of Basic Education (DoBET) nationally involve learners in all nine provinces to participate in the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History project. In doing so the DoBET recognises the importance of oral history in South African schools by funding these competitions. Educators and learners are invited to participate firstly in oral history competitions in their provinces. Thereafter the winners are selected to take part in the national oral history competition. The Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) co-hosts the above mentioned competition. This

association was formed twelve years ago and saw a need for undertaking Oral History Conferences in South Africa. People from all provinces prepare papers on a variety of topics within a theme, they then send in a proposal and thereafter some papers are accepted and people are invited to present their papers. Their experiences and stories are captured in the form of their papers presented at the conferences. Thus the need to share stories finds its importance in today's society.

It is not only the DoBET that places emphasis on oral history in South Africa but also the DAC. An oral history conference is also held annually in different provinces and this is funded partly by the DAC. Oral history work has also been undertaken by the Department of Rural development and Land reform as 2013 was the centenary of the 1913 Land Act. It was felt that there was a need to record the stories of those people who were deprived of their land. In each of the nine provinces unemployed people were trained in undertaking oral history and they went out in their communities to record the stories of people who were forcefully removed.

Oral history has, against the background and context as outlined, filtered into school history and learners are using this method to research the past. History educators thus had been undertaking oral history projects, as part of the history curriculum, with their learners over a period of time. Simultaneously government departments are seeing oral history as a means of recording the undocumented social history of the country. It is against this background that I have decided to undertake my dissertation.

### **1.3 Rationale and Motivation**

The South African context is unique to the rest of the world. Having read of the undertaking of oral history internationally and having experienced the undertaking personally in South Africa, I find that there is a unique South African way of undertaking oral history due to the past inequalities of apartheid. In this regard I find personal histories intriguing as they allow people to speak from their hearts. In different situations

people react differently, therefore the same incident may be interpreted differently. Their personal views and opinions are open to further interrogation by historians.

My interest in the topic also stems from my own participation and experience of participating in the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral history project at national level. My research on aspects of oral history and my writings are another factor in creating this interest in the topic as it has allowed me to participate in conferences around the country. I have participated in the OHASA in Mpumalanga, North West, Free State and Northern Cape. The papers that I have presented have been published by the University of South Africa (UNISA) Press. I also participated in the South African History teachers' conference in 2013 on oral history. These opportunities have allowed me to share my experiences as well as learn from others who are experts in the field. I had been elected onto the executive committee of OHASA in 2012 which is involved in research and development. I have been involved in the initiation of training programmes on oral history as well as the training of 50 unemployed youth in KwaZulu-Natal. These youth had been selected by the Department of Land Restitution who found it necessary to document stories as the year 2013 was the centenary of the 1913 Land Act that had affected the lives of the majority of people in the country. The youth that I had trained had the opportunity to present their research at the OHASA conference in Kimberly in 2013 which gave me a sense of pride.

As a history educator at secondary school level I find that oral history gives learners the opportunity to act as researchers, inquire and acquire new knowledge, learn respect and tolerance, listen attentively, organise time, plan, ask relevant questions, write reports and gain the necessary skills that will help them in life. Skills are learnt through practice and by learners undertaking the oral history research and are thus able to develop numerous skills. I am undertaking this dissertation as it will allow me to develop a further understanding of the facilitation of oral history in the classroom by educators who are experienced in this aspect.

Due to the curriculum changes oral history has been included in the curriculum and, I hope to understand the methodological approaches and various other aspects such as the educator's choice of topics in undertaking the oral history with their learners.

I selected this topic as I want to view the experiences of the educator in facilitating oral history in the classroom as educators have individual ways of approaching the facilitating of oral history projects with their learners, which may be due to their own training and experiences. Although there have been previous studies undertaken on similar topics of oral history my study does not aim to repeat the aspects disclosed in the dissertations produced. Bearing in mind that there have been previous studies on this topic, I want to view how and why these educators were successful in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners and, if not successful, then why not, and how they had overcome the problems that they experienced, as this may assist educators to prepare plan and facilitate the oral history aspect in their classrooms. Educators may have also experienced undertaking oral history projects themselves and their experiences may guide other educators in future.

#### **1.4 Purpose and Focus**

The purpose of this study is firstly to understand the experiences of educators in guiding their learners in undertaking the oral history projects. Secondly, I want to research how educators experience oral history projects, and why they experience oral history in the way they do by looking at their training, experiences, interests and their views on the curriculum. Thirdly, I want to determine why educators experience the facilitation of oral history projects the way they do.

I intend to focus on the educators' experiences in terms of carrying out the oral history projects with the learners. Curriculum 2005 brought about a change in the curriculum which required that educators undertake the oral history projects in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. The unpacking of the learning outcome was done

at workshops. History educators began to engage learners on various topics using a variety of methods and topics.

## **1.5 Research questions**

Based on the focus of my study I will be answering the following research questions:

1. What were the experiences of history educators in preparing learners to conduct oral history projects till completion?
2. Why did history educators experience the preparation process the way they did?

## **1.6 Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

My research is based on the experiences of history educators in encouraging learners to undertake oral history projects in the FET phase. Therefore, educators' experiences are under scrutiny in my study. Thus the school of thought that underpins my study is social relations and experiences of educators, as it is the educators' voices that would reflect on and reveal their experiences and understanding of conducting oral history. This study is theoretically framed as "social history" (Thompson, 2000: p23), meaning allowing space for voices from below, in the case of this study the voices of the educators. This is congruent with accepted theories of oral history which aims at giving voice to the voiceless.

I assumed a qualitative methodological approach as, "A qualitative study is a study presented largely in language and is about the meaning constructed from the language that presents the data" (Henning, 2004: p31). Since I listened to and looked at the experiences of educators in undertaking oral history with their learners in the FET phase my study elicited data from the spoken words of the educators and the written words of the learners that provided a "thick description" and a "thick explanation" (Henning, 2004: p142). I used an interpretive paradigm since I collected data from different people

through semi-structured individual interviews and textual analysis with the aim of understanding their different educational experiences. Qualitative studies differ from quantitative studies, consequently this study will not be looking at figures but rather the thoughts, experiences and methods used by educators in undertaking oral history with their learners. It is also about the educators' ways of thinking and their experiences that may play out in terms of implementing the oral history projects which may differ from educator to educator.

I primarily used semi-structured interviews as they allowed educators to tell the stories of their experiences in undertaking oral history with their learners in the FET phase. Using semi-structured interviews can in itself be viewed as a form of oral history, so in effect this study is also the oral history of the experiences of educators overseeing learners doing oral history projects. Interviewing educators who have undertaken projects with their learners provided a version of their experiences. It is only through interviews that a conversation can be directed to elicit the rich and thick experiences of history educators. Semi-structured interviews allow for two way communication, a conversational atmosphere is created and allows for interaction in terms of questions being posed and answers being given. Semi-structured interviews also allow for flexibility, and I can gain insight into specific issues by asking probing questions (Cannell & Kahn, 1968). The strengths of using semi-structured interviews are to allow the educator to talk freely on experiences. However, I tried to steer clear of generic utterances where I could lead interviewees towards answers that I wanted to hear by being cautious of my own thoughts on oral history. During the research process, I attempted to remain focussed on allowing the interviewee space and did not try to exercise excessive authority in terms of gaining insight into the educators' experiences.

I analysed the data by dividing it into small units of meaning, I then systematically named them as per unit of study, and thereafter I grouped them together in categories that contained a code. These codes may be semantically related. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998: pp120-121) "... open coding may be done line by line, which is time consuming but most generative especially at the beginning of the research as this would

allow for categories to be generated quickly.” I did a line by line analysis depending on my responses from the interviewees, and also made notes that assisted and guided me towards the categories and properties that emerged.

I also carried out a project text analysis since, “Interpretative researchers encourage varieties of data and different sources and analysis methods in order to strive for validity” (Henning, 2004: p20). I requested a set of three projects from each of the four educators whom I have interviewed. These projects consisted of the best project, one that was rated average and one that received low marks. The purpose of this was to ensure consistency in what was explained in the interview by the educator and the projects that were carried out by the learner. By requesting the three projects, I viewed what the learners had done under the guidance of the educators, how it was done and why it was done the way it was. This assisted me in understanding the text as per the interview data as well as where it originated and I followed this through to the analysis and interpretation processes. The projects of the learners were treated with the utmost care with full ethical implications in mind.

The above was necessary since a single method may never adequately capture the educator’s experience in undertaking oral history; therefore I see trustworthiness as a method of cross validation that will provide richer and more comprehensive data. Secondly, to use different data sources on the same topic helped me to complete a more comprehensive panorama (where accounts complement each other), and thirdly it allowed me to discover the structures, if any, beneath the surface.

## **1.7 Dissertation outline**

In Chapter one I explained the background and context to my study. Thereafter I explained my rationale and motivation for doing the study. Next I discussed the purpose and focus of my study and my research questions. This was followed by the methodological and theoretical framework of my study. This is significant as the above

would guide me in terms of my dissertation. The chapter was then synthesised in the conclusion.

Chapter two dealt with the literature review. This is important as there are many international and local researchers and writers who undertake and use the oral history methodology. There are previous dissertations, papers, articles, and books, written on oral history. I looked at the spread of oral history in South Africa, the clarification of oral history, pedagogy and memory. The literature review was necessary to provide an insight into the studies that have already taken place on oral history and education. It also provided me with a niche for my study and the theoretical framework I adopted.

In Chapter three I discuss the research design and methodology. I explained my paradigm, approach, ontological and epistemological assumptions, issues of sampling method and the ethics to which I have adhered. This latter aspect is important as it will guide my research and methodology in undertaking the oral history project. In this chapter I also outline my research methods and how I recorded my study.

In Chapter four I analyse the data. I analysed the interviews and the learners' work. After having done the analysis by means of open-coding the themes that emerged were used to record the chapter and conclusions were drawn as they relate especially to the first research question.

In Chapter five I reviewed the findings found in Chapter four and carried out a second level of analysis by comparing it to the literature. In the process the findings were discussed in detail, compared to the literature and answers were proposed to the research questions posed. I also reflected on the limitations of my study, its contribution to scholarly work on education and oral history and my personal and professional growth by dint of the study. Finally I drew the study to a close with my concluding comments.

## **1.8 Conclusion**



In this chapter, which is the introduction to my study, I provided the background- and context to my study. Thereafter I discussed the rationale and motivation for my study, I explained the purpose and focus of my study, my research question were outlined, I explained the methodology and theoretical framework for my study and lastly I provided the outline of my dissertation. I have in so doing provided a route map in terms of what I will be doing in this dissertation. In the next chapter I will be presenting my literature review.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will look at a selection of literature appropriate to the topic of oral history and its relation to education. Firstly, I will provide a background to the literature that I have chosen in the context of my topic. Thereafter, I will clarify the concept and nature of oral history as explained by different historians and authors in authority on oral history. Then I will review the pedagogy of oral history by analysing and contrasting international methodology in undertaking oral history as compared to South African methodology. Next I will look at how oral history has filtered into the school curriculum and the reasons given for its inclusion both internationally and locally. Lastly I will identify the gaps that exist in the literature which will provide a need for my study on educators' experiences in overseeing oral history projects.

#### **2.2 Conceptualising my literature review**

There is a wide range of written literature on oral history. I have chosen literature that is relevant to oral history as it relates to the focus of my study. These include, amongst others, books, journal articles, documents, reviews and papers on oral history. Some of the books and articles are "evergreens" and "thought leaders" in the field of oral history. They have accumulated vast knowledge on the undertaking on oral history. The identified literature was discussed and compared in terms of work done internationally and locally on oral history and education.

There is a definite purpose to this literature review as it aims to provide a deeper understanding of the background to oral history, the existing views as well as current interpretations and developments in the field. The literature review that was carried out

is therefore an integral part of the research process as it is through doing this that I provide a thorough background of the knowledge and what other historians have contributed and their understanding of the oral history processes.

There may be certain limitations as I was not able to cover all the literature in my study on oral history but only that which I deemed to be pertinent during the search processes. Oral history, furthermore, is not just used in historical studies but also in other fields of work which generated their own literature. Simultaneously the literature and media on the topic are constantly growing as new works in the field of oral history are being published at a fast pace. It is thus not possible to review all literature.

### **2.3 Clarification of the nature of oral history**

Oral tradition is stories that have been passed down from older members of the family and community. These are significant as they educate the new generations on the culture and values as well as uniting people. In the view of Witz: “Oral tradition helps us to recover a major part of our history that can easily be lost because it is not written down” (Witz, 1988: p40). In the past when people were not literate it was through word of mouth that people were educated. This was about ways of living and experiences that were relayed to each other through word of mouth. This practice still continues, “... historical information continues to circulate by word of mouth, in African societies in particular” (Dennis, 2008: p2). Many African societies were unable to document events but these remained with traditional elders and authorised storytellers. The value of oral tradition must be noted as it is imperative to understand that oral sources are valuable although they differ from oral testimony.

Oral testimony differs from oral tradition in that oral testimonies are obtained through interviews between the interviewer and interviewee. A topic is chosen and through an interview with relevant questions being posed to the interviewee, data is gathered. The oral testimonies are planned and have a pedagogy that needs to be understood by the interviewer/ historian carrying out the research. Communities, individuals and groups

have experiences and these experiences may be captured through oral history research. These experiences may be either positive or negative in nature but they are significant to the person who is relating their story and to the one listening.

Consequently oral history can be described as: “A conversation is an exchange of information, but it is a relationship. Two people or more enter into communication” (Dennis, 2000: p3). There is significance in the emphasis on communication as new information is gathered through the use of conversation on a specific event or happening and this serves to trigger the interviewee to recall events from their memories. Through conversation interviewers can make their research a success since “an oral history interview’s success hinges on questions that are neutrally framed, open-ended, and asked one at a time” (Quinlan, 2011: p30). Questions that are posed should be simple and easy to understand, focus on the topic and be framed in a manner so that the answers are not directed as to what the interviewer wants but rather to allow the interviewees to tell their stories by questions being open-ended. The spoken words give a new insight into the events that occurred. These spoken words were primary sources that played an important role in documenting the stories of people who had lived them. These are personal accounts of what happened, that impact on both the interviewee and interviewer alike thus making oral history significant in giving us a deeper understanding of what had transpired during that period. These memories are attached to emotions and feelings that may be either positive or negative.

For example, in South Africa different groups of people have been oppressed and have suffered trauma but others may not have shared these experiences and feelings. It is through oral history that these may be shared and documented. This is reiterated by Finca Bongani, commissioner of the TRC, when he recalls: “Until we revive those memories and learn to bless them, we will be robbed of our full story, and of the celebration of who we are as a people and as a nation” (Finca, 1999: p12). Oral history also, “... facilitates the grieving process. The interview situation gives people who share their memories the opportunity to deal with unfinished business” (Dennis, 2000: p3). Furthermore, many ordinary people’s history has not been recorded due to the

oppression and segregated schooling system that left them without a voice. Through the use of oral interviews one can record their past.

Oral history is not a stand-alone body and there is a link between written records and oral sources as mentioned by Vanek: “Oral history should not be seen as the opposite of written sources in archives but two sides of the same coin. A coin, to be valid, needs to be minted on both sides. Similarly, history should include both facts of events and occurrences as well as personal experiences that lived through these events” (2004: p37). Oral history is not looking for the opposite of written records, instead it is looking at building on the evidence captured in written format. The John Foster Dulles Oral History project noted the value of oral history: “Oral history ... is not meant to serve as a substitute for the documentary record. It does in fact supplement the record by producing some information not hitherto documented. But more important, it can provide guidelines to assist the historian through the jungle of data that confronts him” (Sharpless, 2011: p31). Oral history should be used in conjunction with written sources as it supplements the documented evidence and broadens the documented evidence.

Thus oral history as previously explained, is a deliberate attempt to capture a story of an event or happening through the use of a conversation between interviewer and interviewee. It is through this method that one can document undocumented histories. One such case study is the work undertaken by the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory work at the University of KwaZulu-Natal which dealt with the recording life stories and histories of those affected by HIV/AIDS ([www.ukzn.ac.za/sorat/sinomlando/index.html](http://www.ukzn.ac.za/sorat/sinomlando/index.html)). Another example of oral history is *Indians verses Russians*. “A new book provides a glimpse into what happened during those years via the vehicle of oral history. *Indians versus Russians- An oral history of political violence in Nxamala (1987 to 1993)* by Philippe Denis, Radikobo Ntisimane and Thomas Cannell, hones in on the violence that took place on the edge of Pietermaritzburg” (Coan, 2011: p9). The ordinary people who had contributed to the book through the interviews stated that they felt proud and happy to be contributors to

this book, they also explained how they had moved on with their lives and were able to live together as a community.

In conclusion, oral history is oral testimonies that are significant in recording our histories. Oral testimonies are recorded through interviews that are conducted between interviewer and interviewee in a communication process. This provides researchers with a person's experiences and feelings of the event that could in turn support the written document and may differ from the documented records as it also provides a personal account of what happened.

## **2.4 The spread of oral history in South Africa and internationally**

Oral history became popular in the 1940's when Allen Nevins, an American journalist, who became a historian, created the first oral history archive in 1948 to preserve oral history as discussed in a chapter in the *Handbook of Oral History*. This was followed by Starr who continued the work of Nevins. Numerous oral history projects were carried out in the process such as those of American soldiers, veterans of the forest products industry and many more. Nevins worked on the alternatives to the documented history and created an alternative methodology of documenting history (Ritchie, 2011: p3).

In order to understand societies and the experiences of ordinary people's lives, in time it became instrumental to get to know of peoples' experiences. This unfolded with people beginning to listen to other people's stories through discussions of personal accounts in different ways. As explained by Ritchie, "the United States started with a 'top down' focus on political, economic, and cultural elites, European oral historians were rooted in social and cultural history, and allied with political movements on the left. They re-examined history from the 'bottom up', intended to include the voices of those previously excluded from national narratives" (Ritchie, 2011: p4). All over the Western world oral historians found that many stories, history of the ordinary citizens have not been recorded, they thus turned to the ordinary people to record their histories. This led to the recording of the non-elite voices that have a history to share.

The spread of oral history in Canada was not only recognised as history of society but was also used in court. In 1997 the Supreme Court in Canada in the Delgamukvu vs. British Columbia trial, ruled that oral history was just as important as written testimony. Of oral histories it is said "... that they are tangential to ultimate purpose of the fact-finding pieces of the trial the determination of historical truth" ([http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/delgamuukw\\_v\\_British\\_Columbia](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/delgamuukw_v_British_Columbia)). Thus oral history transcends just serving the purpose of recording untold stories but is legitimate legal evidence since it was accepted by the state to prove ownership of the land by the Red Indians.

In Britain in 1966 the British founded the History Workshop at the trade union sponsored Ruskin College, on the belief that history should be a collaboration of the efforts of researchers, archivists, curators, local historians, and the do it yourself enthusiast (Ritchie, 2011: p5). Later the Oral History Society in Britain was founded in 1973 by Paul Thompson. However, there are many other records of oral history projects that were also undertaken previously as "Oral historians collected the recollections of soldiers and anti-war protestors, women in the war industries, holocaust survivors, civil rights demonstrators, political refugees, immigrants, and those grappling with sexual identity" (Ritchie, 2011: p5).

Most of the international oral history initiatives were funded by their governments. These governments found a need to document the histories through carrying out oral interviews and documenting the voices of ordinary people who had experienced such things as the effects of the great depression, natural disasters, public events and many other projects including the TRC in South Africa.

In South Africa there had not been much literature available on oral history that was produced by local historians before the 1970s. Previously much of the documented information was left to those in power under apartheid who seemed to have little knowledge of indigenous people on the African continent. The purpose of documenting

oral history information is questionable, since much of what we read is a biased account of history with hidden agendas to protect the people who were in power from gross human rights violations due to the apartheid laws. This can be supported with what Kallaway, (1997) stated, "One of the issues that had to be confronted and dealt with was the way in which the apartheid education system presented history as being a grand narrative of 'big' men. In this sense, the historical record for generations was heavily based and characterised by a Eurocentric perspective. As a result, the history of ordinary people and people of colour was falsely interpreted, went unrecorded, or was silenced altogether" (Wahlberg, 2008: p3).

Documentation and written histories were the work of the elite who could read and write during the early years in South Africa. History has seen people in power oppress those who may be considered illiterate to them. However, these so called illiterate people could remember the events as they had memories of exactly what happened. In the words of Calculasure, "Enlightenment allows for a reconstruction of the past in ways that speak of identity of the present. It insists on fidelity to the facts as best they can be recovered and understood, while not only acknowledging the agency we bring to the making of history but also critically analysing how our legacy has been used to fashion an understanding of who we are" (1999: p77). In South Africa we have a rich legacy that must be analysed and understood if we are to move ahead socially and economically as citizens of one country.

Some of the earliest oral history projects in South Africa were the social history of communities which was recorded in projects such as those undertaken by Witz in the early years during apartheid. Witz (1988) in his book *Write your own history*, wrote on training Black people to conduct oral history within their communities. This project was set up by South African Children's History Education Trust (SACHED) an educational organisation that aimed to counter the imbalances and historical silences created by the apartheid education system. It had to transfer skills and resources in such a way that organisations, communities and individuals were empowered to take ownership of their



projects. This was a valuable exercise that was later seen as important as those voices of the people were history that was not previously recorded.

This is especially the case since in South Africa we have people who have witnessed atrocities and heroism, but there are limited records of such events anywhere that were documented for the future generation to know what has happened in that era. As argued by Yow, “Oral history research may also reveal the actions of individuals who have no one to witness for history their heroism or provide for future generations the evidence of their tragedy” (2005: p14). An example of this in South African heritage was the TRC hearings where victims came forward to tell their stories of the gross human rights violations that took place under apartheid. At present we look back at the TRC hearings as this history documented life under apartheid that was not captured by official documents. The value of oral history during the transformation period from apartheid to democracy has allowed for those untold, undocumented stories to emerge.

The school curriculum in South Africa began to be debated from the late 1980's, as transformation was required due to political changes. The South African government saw the need for South Africans to begin recording their own histories. Their idea was to begin at school level, to teach the skill of learners recording their own histories through research in their own communities. Historians such as Witz began to train people within the local communities to carry out oral history which soon filtered into schools. The methodology of oral history dove - tailed with the outcomes based approach that was introduced into the education system.

The introduction of oral history projects into the curriculum was due to the lack of the recording of the histories of the oppressed people in South Africa. During the colonial and post-colonial periods the majority of the people in South Africa were disadvantaged and their stories were not told officially but only in a traditional manner by word of mouth. This means of storytelling ensured that the valuable traditions and customs were not lost by the indigenous people in the country. Black communities were closely knit in that they lived within extended families either as tribes or in kingdoms, so a child of one

belonged to all. Valuing these thoughts older members of the groups would gather younger ones together and tell them stories. In this way their histories, values, traditions and customs were not lost as they were passed down to the younger people in their community (Ntsimane, 2011)

Subsequently the National Curriculum Statements (NCS), Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) and the new Continuous Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) documents have all created a space for oral history. In this, oral history does not focus on change but rather on history. It is used as a way of building skills and breaking down the gap between generations. Since the introduction of oral history in the FET phase it has built on a variety of skills that have come to empower learners and educators alike and prepare them for tertiary education. In the process the complex issues that affect people in some way or another are passed on. As a result, “In memories of extremely emotion-laden events such as traumas, there may be intrusive, persistent recalling ...” (Yow, 2005: 46). In South Africa due to our painful apartheid history that has caused people pain and trauma, this aspect of recalling and telling of the pain that individuals or communities may have experienced are shared histories that can now be researched via the oral history projects. As such the continuous need to record the voices of people as they experience changes over time due to different events and happenings are being fulfilled while some healing can also take place. For example, the year 2014 sees the 20<sup>th</sup> year of democracy in South Africa and people have stories to tell - the “born frees” speak of their views of their experiences of democracy, older people speak of the good and bad of their experiences of transformation and there is always a story to be told by the ordinary people as well as the elite. The oral component provides fresh insight into that happening as it is spoken by the person who has experienced it.

The various stages of development of oral history in South Africa have been theorised by Wells. She identified different phases of oral history in South Africa, where there was a shifting of awareness, focus and attention. Wells refers to this as “... a simple chronology of stages in the evolution of post- apartheid uses of the past in South Africa to date, which can also be seen as different stages in nation building” (Wells, 2008:

p27). She goes on to explain the five stages, Anti-apartheid past, Reconciliation phase, Reconstruction phase, African renaissance phase and Democratisation phase. It is within these five phases that we place topics on which oral history in schools focuses.

There is significant interest that has arisen in conducting oral history and recording the voices of those who have not been recorded in South Africa similar to that elsewhere in the world. However, we do face challenges such as the entry of oral history at school level is accompanied by the fact that most history educators were not adequately trained in undertaking the oral history projects as some of the educators themselves did not have any experience in undertaking oral history projects.

## **2.5 The pedagogy of undertaking oral history**

In order to get the story, as explained above, the interviewer would have conducted in-depth research on the topic and carefully planned questions that are open-ended in nature to elicit an account from the interviewee. Firstly, topics are chosen by the researchers, historian or scholar according to their interest and field of study. The identification of a suitable topic as the focus of study is important and it must be clearly defined (Ritchie, 1995). Most oral historians have identified social, economic and political issues as focus areas of topic as they were able to find gaps and inconsistencies in the existing documentation. This identification of a niche aids in making the research become specific and directed towards the topic. Suitable topics differ from country to country and within towns and cities. Topics also focus on events and natural disasters that occurred in an area. This too gives a deeper understanding of the event through oral history.

Research has to be conducted on the topic by the interviewer before conducting the interview as it will provide an in-depth understanding of the topic. In the words of Morrissey, "I tell them a truism about oral history: the more the interviewer-you-knows before an interview, the more you will learn in the interview" (Morrissey, 2006: p175). In order to gain a clear understanding of the topic and what is already recorded it becomes

imperative to conduct extensive research that will build on the knowledge and understanding of the topic before beginning with the interview.

Some topics may not be easy to research as there may be no documented sources that are available to researchers. Research from documented notes, books and other records provide a useful background to understand the purpose of one's study (Wells, 2008).

In order to select interviewees that are suitable it must be noted that they should have witnessed or experienced the events pertaining to the topic. Researchers will most certainly try to find suitable interviewees on the topic. The person chosen would have had first-hand experiences on the topic. Gaining access to participants poses a huge challenge as there might not be many people who have had first-hand accounts, experiences nor are there many people who have witnessed the event. Secondly some people do not want to share or talk of the happenings due to reasons of tribal customs, personal reasons as well as political reasons.

The carefully planned interview would lend itself to a discussion that would lead to gaining insight into an aspect or topic thus resulting in a story. There is a deliberate discussion between interviewer and interviewee. The dialogue is on a specific topic, happening or experience. There is a planned and deliberate interview that would eventually discover a story about a specific topic area, as the pedagogy used would lead to recording the story of a person or event.

The interviews need to be systematic. Interviews are planned, ordered and structured and would allow interviewees to speak more freely on the topic on which the oral history is being carried out. Historians have written guidelines on doing oral history some of which are obtainable via web sites, books and audio visual material.

There are numerous strengths to interviews if well planned and executed as per plan, however conducting oral history interviews may be problematic for unskilled and

untrained persons, who have had no practice as such. This is especially the case since interviewing has different stages that include setting up the interview, making time to do the interview, taking along equipment and most importantly gaining informed consent to use the interview (Ritchie, 2003).

In the pedagogy of oral history interviewing techniques that are used to obtain information from the interviewee are very important. According to Sharpless in the *Handbook of Oral History* a “systematic attempt to obtain from the lips and papers of living Americans who had lived significant lives, a fuller record of their political, economic and cultural lives of the last sixty years” calls for clear interviewing techniques (2011:p21). There are other issues that must be considered when analysing the interview such as body language and tone of voice. The interviewer must also be sensitive to the interviewee by avoiding long questions that are double barrelled and complex. Notice must also be taken of sensitive questions that may make the interviewee feel uncomfortable. These aspects pertain to the complexities that may arise in undertaking the oral these includes clarity in terms of interviewing skills, understanding body language and tone of voice, being sensitive while undertaking an interview and avoiding double barrelled complex questions.

In preparing for the dialogue the interviewer has to ensure that she is well equipped to do the interview. This means that she has the necessary tape recorder, paper and pen, be able to take notes during the interview, know how to listen attentively and ask questions spontaneously, as well as notice body language and emotions of the person who is interviewed. However, some educators who have been undertaking oral history with their learners believe that oral history skills are specialised journalistic skills and feel that the learners are too young to be undertaking the oral history interviews.

The interviewee must also be able to discern the nature of stories as stories are told sequentially or not. “Individual testimony incorporates different aspects of experience at any moment, and these moments can be arranged chronologically to reveal development” (Yow, 2005: p13). As people begin to tell their stories they are informing

the interviewer of their experiences in a way that they have experienced it so that it would be understood. It is through the interview that the interviewer makes meaning of the spoken words.

After the interview had been captured the analysis should be carried out and the summary of the data analysed as well as the drawing up of a report in terms of the research topic. Most of the steps involved in carrying out the oral history projects seem to be simple, however one has to be wary of the fact that the pedagogy of carrying out oral history projects by learners needs support and guidance throughout by their educators.

Ethical issues must also be taken into consideration as all interviews belong to the person who is telling the story. In order to use the information for whatever purpose informed consent is important. At the outset the purpose and the unfolding of the research topic and aspects under discussion should be clarified as well as the right of the interviewee to withdraw whenever he/she wishes. Frequently it is impossible to compensate the interviewee financially for the interview due to lack of funds or this is merely a voluntary research or school project. Participants in the interview must also be notified of signing of the copyright release form before the conclusion of the interview. In this the interviewees must be informed that they will be asked to sign a copyright release form at the conclusion of the interview (Shopes, 2006: p138).

In South Africa, Philippe Denis has drawn up an ethical code on conducting oral history which is in-keeping with that of international countries. The route map is similar in methodology as elsewhere but as South Africans we have mixed cultures and ways of life and, there may be some differences in the approach to oral history. As stated by Dennis (2008) in some African communities there are gatekeepers, whereby strict protocol must be followed in order to gain consent from, chiefs or leaders. Consequently, "When conducting an oral history project in local community for example a tribal area in South Africa oral history practitioners should always keep in mind that the ownership of the stories that they collect will always be contested. The implication is

that they should respect the limitations imposed by the interviewees for the use of their stories” (Dennis, 2008: p68). The diversity of stories that are unwritten should be noted as cultures differ among communities as do their unwritten rules.

Contextual factors differ from country to country from city to city and, from one community to another making it difficult to use the same approach to oral history methodology. Indigenous knowledge of Africa is different from other parts of the world. There may be necessary protocols in terms of who to approach first when one wants to do an interview. Certain communities have rules that have to be followed and it is only when one understands these rules that one can communicate better in that community. At times communities do not share stories with outsiders as they do not trust them so the problem of gaining access to information remains with those communities. Patriarchal communities will not for example allow females to be interviewed alone with a male doing the interview. There are different factors that pose challenges when undertaking interviews.

The analysis of the data obtained usually poses a huge challenge as it requires interpretation. The spoken words are then listened to by the interviewer who makes meaning of them in relation to the topic. A written report is then drawn up after the information is evaluated against other documents so that the interviewer gets a clearer picture of what exactly happened. The research is then analysed and a report with a conclusion and reflection is drawn from such an undertaking. This is structured into paragraphs and concludes the project. However, some people opt to present their findings in the form of a display or a presentation.

The storage of records is another challenge in the pedagogy of conducting oral history interviews. Every day, new interviews are done and they take up space, whether written or recorded. Most archives do store oral history. In South Africa we have the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa based in Pretoria that keep a section for oral history. The recorded interviews can be labelled and stored for use by historians and other researchers.

## 2.6 Memory and validity

Memory is linked to remembering events and how they unfolded. This includes the remembering of names of people, the events that took place and places as well as time. Memory in itself is about the way in which people remember events and happenings. “When people situate themselves in the landscape they invariably mention a series of places that may initially appear unrelated. It is in the context of an individual’s life that such landscapes and places that acquire meaning, contributing to their personal narratives and sense of self” (Veale & Shilling, 2004: p.16)

People remember both good and bad things that they may have experienced. In the view of Yow: “... memories of extremely emotion-laden events such as traumas, there may be intrusive, persistent recalling” (2005: p46). People who had experienced severe grief and persistent violence may not want to forget their experience due to the traumatic nature of events while other people may not want to recall traumatic events as they would want to forget about the incident. The memory of events differs from person to person.

The question that most historians ask relates to the validity of memory and recollection of past events. It must be understood that all history has its bias, since someone has written it from his/her own perspective, he/she had their own intention when writing out his/her history. The person who has written his/her history did have those experiences and they are regarded as valid. The written histories may have incorrect information however most is valid and true. Similarly oral historians have found the oral accounts are mostly accurate and that the inaccurate aspects do not necessarily negate the entire memory since memory is selective.

Human beings are able to remember as well as forget aspects of the past. People remember exactly what they want to remember. Hayes discusses the work of Wolf



Sachs in relation to the obviousness of claims of memory of human practices of remembering, forgetting and repression. In his article in the book *Orality, Memory & Past*, Hayes does a psychoanalytic study of Sachs' book *Black Hamlet*. In this book Sachs' dialogue with Chavafambira is about his life as an African in South Africa. In the analysis done by Hayes he explains that "Talking to people about their pasts reveals the richness and contradictoriness of the intersection of personal and social history" (Hayes, 2000: p36). When people talk about their lives they remember what they want to remember either good or bad experiences. Secondly they choose to forget some things as they may have been hurtful or disturbing if they recalled the incident. Thirdly they choose not to talk about certain events due to some reason that may be personal. Hayes (2000) explains memory as the act of remembering, forgetting and repressing events which may be apparent in all interviews conducted.

There are many complex issues related to memory that must be remembered when an interviewer is undertaking an oral history project. The interviewee is as much a story teller as the interviewer and each has their memory on which to draw. However, their stories and memories must be kept separate as each one has his/her own account. Therefore it is important that at some point the interviewer steps back and looks at the data gathered from the interviews and the memories that spawned it.

The oral historian must also consider that whatever is uncovered should be accepted as the truth from the interviewer and can be later verified by using other sources. "What is needed is an understanding of oral history not so much as an exercise in fact finding but as an interpretative exercise, as the narrator compresses years of living into a few hours of talk, selecting, consciously, what to say and how to say it" (What is oral history? <http://history.matters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/interpret.html>). There are many stories told that are truths of a person's experiences.

As South Africans we have documents although some of them may be considered biased that could be used to verify data that was collected through oral history in terms of dates and places of events.

## **2.7 The emergence of oral history in schools in other parts of the world and educators' experiences in this regard**

One of the popular oral history programmes carried out at school level in the USA is the “Foxfire” project. This project arose when an educator found that it was difficult to deliver content to his learners as they lacked interest, so he decided to get them interested in undertaking oral history by encouraging them to investigate and record the voices of ordinary people in their community. Elliot Wigginton gave them the autonomy to find suitable topics and go out researching and interviewing on the topic (Wigginton, 1986). When the learners returned to schools with the evidence, it was gathered and compiled into printed media. The Foxfire project had discovered vast amounts of historical evidence from the community by means of the oral history projects carried out by individual learners. This project is ongoing as it has gained popularity and is of value in educating the learners in various skills (Wigginton, 1986: p86).

There has been a wave of interest in the field of oral history at school level. This is explained by Whitman (2010) an educator in the USA. He explains the unique ability of oral history to motivate and transform the learning experience, as well as how educators can bring real world learning opportunities into their classrooms through using oral history. He has introduced high school students to “passive” oral history through encouraging his learners to read Terkel’s *My American Century*. He uses the book as support to gain learners’ interest and interpret events such as the Great Depression, World War II, or the Civil Rights Movement in America. In the process he has also succeeded in learners reading books such as *Bloods* and to engage deeply in oral history.

Whitman (2010) believes that the first step in preparing learners is through the use of passive or ready-made oral sources. He then moves onto what he calls “active” history where students become involved in questioning and listening. There are numerous web

sites that he uses in teaching and informing learners of the various oral history projects that are being undertaken in the USA and around the world. The value of oral history to him and his learners is arguably very strong as he states “oral history was an effective motivator when compared with traditional educational methodologies”. The study pointed out the strength of oral history as being the way in which students believed the method increased their participation and involvement in history. As (Whitman. 2010) stated oral history is understood as an improved method of developing learners’ skills. The learning process has also been explained as improving learners’ ability levels especially with the use of Gardiner’s “multiple intelligences” and Bloom’s Taxonomy to guide the work done.

The work done by the organisations such as Foxfire and individual educators such as Whitman have led to numerous educators’ guides relating to oral history being produced internationally. This includes *Talking Gumbo: A teacher’s guide to using Oral History in the classroom* (Williams, 1998). The book outlines positive results of undertaking oral history with learners, whereby learners become self-motivated and gain many skills that are useful.

As emphasised by most historians and educators the value of oral history as well as the freedom and autonomy that learners may enjoy in undertaking oral history as a learning opportunity is important. The oral aspect at school level allows both learners and educators freedom to choose whatever topic, to go out researching wherever, to interview and gather information freely and, analyse and write their reports. It allows learners to become experts in their field of research. A snap shot of the period in time is provided by the learners as they become the writers of history.

## **2.8 The growth of Oral History in South Africa and in South African schools**

In South Africa there have been early attempts to introduce oral history notably *Write your own History* by Leslie Witz. The aim of the project “was to encourage people to

write history themselves” (Witz, 1988: p7). According to Witz it taught the readers how to begin the research and collect information. It discusses different ways of writing and presenting history. The activities included developing history writing skills such as the drawing of chronological tables, interpreting photographs and evaluating evidence. These skills are valuable ones that historians need to gain in writing social history from below.

The transformation of the curriculum after the demise of apartheid led to a change in curriculum and OBE was introduced. In South Africa there is a gap in documented evidence. A skewed recollection of the past had been recorded, as it was only the elite who had recorded their history. Kader Asmal the then Minister of Education who had a fondness for history looked at this aspect with a team of historians and the usefulness of introducing such an aspect into the history curriculum. Historians like Oelofse and du Bruyn (2002) were drawn into looking at this aspect which they found to be useful. The oral history component fitted well into assessment standards and criteria.

The NCS and later the RNCS embraced the aspect of a compulsory oral history project as part of the curriculum covered thoroughly in the dissertation by Wahlberg (2008). However, the CAPS has now given less impetus to the oral history project and looks at the Heritage project with little guidance towards including the oral history component.

Other more recent oral history works include the booklet produced through the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. One such is *Forced removals: A case Study of Constantia: An Oral History guide for teachers*: and the other is *Pass Laws in Western Cape: Implementation and Resistance: An Oral History Guide for Teachers* (2004). The material was produced, amongst other reasons, to assist educators in guiding them through the process of facilitating oral history in the classroom although this was undertaken within the parameters of the history curricula. Both these projects may be accessible to educators via the internet ([www.ijr.org.za/publications/apartheidhistory.php](http://www.ijr.org.za/publications/apartheidhistory.php)). The booklets provide a positive response to both learners and educators. Learners met face-to-face with South Africans

who had experienced Pass Laws and forced removals and listened to the stories of the hardships that the interviewees had experienced. Interviews with Black Sash members revealed that those who were involved in the struggle against apartheid had provided learners with the sense of the struggle against complacency and prejudice faced by them. These were first-hand accounts of history that had never been recorded by learners themselves.

This booklet produced by the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation speaks of the following positive results by the educator in undertaking oral history projects such as;

- they make use of relevant knowledge in real-life contexts;
- use both primary and secondary sources of information;
- collect, analyse, evaluate and organise information;
- present critical and creative thinking within the context they are researching;
- present and analyse their findings in the form of an essay;
- present source material which can be used in a variety of other classroom activities, e.g. discussion and debate; radio or television presentations, documentaries, interviews; newspaper research and comparison, role play; creative writing and develop and further their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Comments made by interviewees were positive as they stated that they learnt to listen to people's stories, they stated that there were many things about apartheid they did not know for example, the sadness when you are being oppressed. This project inspired them to learn about South Africa's history. They learnt how to work in a group, collecting important data and conducting an interview. They enjoyed interacting with other people and the ideas they shared with each other but most of all the diversity - being in one place with people of different races was enlightening. All of these comments made by the interviewees who conducted the oral history research are positive in nature showing the tremendous value of oral history on numerous levels.

Other studies in South Africa on oral history in school include those of Dryden-Peterson and Siebörger of history classrooms in sixteen schools in Cape Town. This was an

ethnographic study where authors explored the degree of the use of testimony as a pedagogic tool (Dryden-Peterson and Siebörger, 2006: p394-403). Furthermore, a guide produced through the University of KwaZulu-Natal in collaboration with the KZN DoE produced through a workshop conducted with history educators provides simple examples and ideas for educators on conducting oral history with learners in the classroom (Wassermann, 2007).

The Sinomlando Centre is a research and community development programme that was founded by Philippe Denis who uses the oral history methodology and memory work as a methodology to recover silenced memories of communities. The meaning of Sinomlando is most apt as it means “we have a history”. Originally it was a theological study centre, but has expanded to include research and training into HIV/AIDs, gender issues and family history among other areas. The Memory Box programme began in 2000 with the intention of providing care to AIDs orphans. Histories of the families affected by HIV/Aids are recorded and stored indefinitely (Dennis, 2002).

In South Africa there are many societies focussing on oral history. One such organisation that I serve on as researcher is the Oral History Organisation of South Africa. Annual conferences are held in the nine different provinces in South Africa which, affords people in the different provinces, opportunities to participate in sharing their unrecorded histories. Recently all papers presented at the ten conferences have been published by Unisa Press. This has become available annually at the Oral History conferences.

The first *South African Oral History Journal* was published in 2013. This provides a platform for academics to record and publish their work (*South African Oral History Journal*, Unisa Press, 2013). There are two journals published annually. These journals can be purchased on line ([www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)).

Most literature on oral history in schools in South Africa has enforced the value and methodology of recovering and documenting the ignored histories of South Africans.

Historians Kros and Ulrich had conducted *History Workshop* with a group of academics at the University of Witwatersrand. Subsequently in a publication Kros and Ulrich discussed the issue of oral testimony and teaching in schools in relation to the work done in the *History Workshop* in the 1980s. The project was run in the Mpumalanga province via the Mpumalanga Department of Education. The training was aimed at empowering educators to undertake oral history relating truth and memory. The training encouraged the use of “life history interviews”. Learners were encouraged to conduct interviews with average people of their daily experiences, as opposed to stories of “big men”. Educators were able to see the benefits of undertaking oral history projects and of social history. However, it is stated that “teachers need much more support to achieve latent in the new curriculum” (Kros & Ulrich, 2008: p105).

The most recent study done on oral history in the Further Education and Training (FET) in selected KZN schools was undertaken by Wahlberg in 2008. The study aimed to determine the perceptions, opinions and experiences in the implementation of oral history in the FET phase in selected schools in KZN through the voices of subject advisors, history educators and former history learners. Wahlberg states that the “Department of Education (DoE) and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDOE) policy documents, are being carried out to the best of implementers’ abilities under difficulties that can be associated with a new curriculum, new methodologies, and a new content that has to be delivered in accordance with the NCS and Curriculum 2005” (Wahlberg, 2008: v.). The study undertaken gives extremely positive results of the way oral history is undertaken at schools in KZN.

## **2.9 Gaps that exists in oral history research**

The experiences of the educators in facilitating the oral history project is the focus of my study. My reading of the literature revealed that there are gaps in undertaking the oral history project. One is that the growth of oral history has taken place in South Africa and it needs to be popularised, secondly there are no major national department projects that have been undertaken since the TRC had travelled to all provinces in South Africa

and recorded the memories of the experiences of ordinary people who spoke of gross human rights violations that they had experienced during the apartheid era. Thirdly, the pedagogy of undertaking oral history is different in South Africa due to traditions and multicultural systems that coexist. Lastly the inclusion of oral history into the history curriculum and the changes in the curriculum since inception has been a top down approach. Thus educators are underprepared in terms of their skills in facilitating oral history. These are just some gaps based on my review of the literature.

Since the introduction of oral history into the history curriculum educators may or may not have received continued support to develop their skills in facilitating this aspect with their learners. The curriculum is demanding and oral history has its own pedagogy, and I thus have to ask: have the history educators been work-shopped and supported in this aspect? Ongoing support means help being provided continuously by the subject planners and subject advisors. Do educators get this support is a question that needs to be investigated.

The growth of oral history in South Africa is slow as not all historians view this aspect as reliable. Some believe it to be a postmodern method and do not trust this method of recording history as it comes from persons who not only talk of the past but also express their own feelings and emotions on events being discussed. However, oral history should not be discarded as something that is not valid as events did take place and should be recorded. The national government recognises the need to record previously marginalised voices yet they have no major schedule of projects that they wish to undertake. If they do start a government oral project there are many complications about funding and other issues that I have personally experienced through my work in such projects resulting in incomplete projects. This could be as a result of a lack of commitment and those in charge of such project are not able to see the value of oral history. Therefore it becomes important to know the value of oral history and how educators of history experience it.



Educators have experiences and these experiences do materialise in terms of their training of oral history and personal methodology used in undertaking the oral history projects. Educators had been undertaking the oral history projects with their learners and have found certain problems and solutions to these problems. Educators have also been able to put into practice their training and personal experiences and would have found different methods that have worked well in terms of the facilitation of history with their learners. My study will focus on the gaps that I find in terms of the educators' experiences and I will look at why these have occurred and how educators overcame such problems and difficulties.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

The hidden stories that had been previously discarded are now recorded by means of oral history. By recording the actual words spoken one is able to get a real perspective of what has happened. This also means that the person has the ability to write and document the story. The historical process of documenting social history becomes clear.

Oral interviews help in the healing process whereby the interviewees have an opportunity to tell their stories and the interviewer can document their stories. Interviewees have the opportunity to relive the incident or happening, recalling emotions and feelings. Thus a cathartic experience can be reflected on and provides some comfort to the interviewee.

There has been an interest in oral history by historians; archivists; journalists; anthropologists; ethnographers; folklorists and educators. The skills that are obtained through undertaking oral history are that one is actively engaging in learning through doing. In schools this is recognised as outcomes based education in South Africa as it focuses on learners attaining skills. Oral history is used to document alternative histories and provide a voice to people. The value of history has been seen over the years resulting in oral history organisations becoming part of global networking.

The significance of oral history is that it has the potential "... to 'give voice to the experience of previously marginalised groups and to recover the agency of ordinary people'" (Minkley & Rasool, 1998: p90). In South Africa the oppressive apartheid laws had marginalised the majority of the citizens and therefore it is of significance that these stories be recorded and it is through oral history that these stories may be recorded. Their view on oral history is similar to that of Oelofse and du Bruyn who state that"- "What is captured by oral history is a segment of human experience in the context of a remembered past, a dynamic present and an unknown, open-ended future" (2005: p101). The human segment of the past gives rise to a voice that is personal, it also personalises the memory of the event being recollected, and thus oral history has a social base that can be captured through interviews. In the past it was an elite group that had an opportunity to capture their histories but now through oral history there is a more democratic process that begins to include previously silenced voices.

Although the oral history component has been included in the curriculum, there remains gaps in terms of learners being too young to go out and conduct interviews with total strangers. Secondly they lack the skill of technology and have not been trained in dealing with emotional outbursts. There are gaps with the actual written curriculum and implementation of the curriculum at school level.

In order to be able to glean clear insight on the undertaking of oral history I interviewed seasoned educators who have had experiences in facilitating oral history projects with their learners. In the next chapter I present the research design and methodology I have followed in the process.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this study I am researching the experiences of educators in undertaking the oral history project with their learners as the aspect of oral history had been included in the curriculum after the demise of apartheid. In this chapter I will explain the research design and methodology I have employed to answer my research questions. In the process I will explain the paradigm of my study, the research approach that I used and I will also clarify my ontological and epistemological positions. Thereafter I will discuss the research sample and the ethical aspects of my study. In the second half of the chapter I will engage with the methodology adopted for my study. Subsequently I will discuss the research method employed and how the data analysis was done. Lastly I will view the methodological shortcomings of my dissertation and then conclude the chapter.

In this study I used a multiple method approach (semi structured interviews and document study) that allowed for in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation so that the data may be rich.

#### **3.2. Research design**

Oral history “refers to the process of conducting and recording interviews with people in order to elicit information from them about the past” (Abrams, 2010: p2). Oral history, where a story or narrative is told, is a process of interviewing a person on a topic and there are many processes involved in undertaking oral history projects. The curriculum needs had changed after the demise of the apartheid education system in terms of moving away from rote learning and note taking to an outcome based method where the

learner would be able to develop skills. In my estimation history educators have different experiences in undertaking oral history projects with their learners and I believe this to be important as the processes involved in undertaking the oral history project are complex and that educators have a lot of knowledge and experience that may be of benefit to others who wish to undertake the oral history projects with their learners.

Consequently I have chosen to use oral history methodology as my research design for this study as I assume educators who had been undertaking the oral history projects with their learners would be able to provide thick and rich data so that I may gain insight into the experiences of educators in terms of their experiences in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. For this I drew on Leavy: "Oral history is based in an oral tradition of transmitting knowledge. In essence, this method presupposes that individual actors have valuable knowledge to share on their life experiences" (Leavy, 2011: p11). Since the inclusion of oral history in the curriculum began after the demise of apartheid I assume that educators have experiences in undertaking oral history projects with their learners that would benefit other educators.

The process of undertaking such an oral history project with their learners is complex and therefore the processes that educators use will differ from school to school as educators differ and their preconceived knowledge, studies, training and workshops of undertaking oral history with their learners are not the same. These differences and challenges as well as strengths will provide rich data that will be of benefit to educators who would be undertaking the oral history projects with their learners in future. Simply put I will by adopting this research design give voice to the stories and experiences of the history teachers who participated in this project. The voices will be substantiated by an analysis of learners' oral history projects.

In undertaking my dissertation I worked as a social historian whereby I provide a platform to senior history educators who have been undertaking the oral history projects with their learners to tell their stories of their experiences. The educators should have knowledge and experience in undertaking the oral history projects with their learners as

they are senior educators teaching history in the FET phase preferably both male and female educators of different races within the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

I gathered my data through semi-structured interviews as this provided me with an in depth study of experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. The semi- structured interviews gave educators, “oral history style”, an opportunity to talk of their experiences in a natural setting through questions and discussions. The interview process allowed the educators to speak freely without manipulation. Therefore in terms of my research design I followed oral history procedures rules and gave the necessary consideration to conducting oral history interviews with the interviewees. I informed the interviewees of the topic and the purpose of my study and then secured consent to do the interviews with them. Thereafter the interviews were conducted and the projects analysed.

### **3.3 Paradigm**

In order to understand the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners in the FET phase I have chosen to undertake my study using the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm allowed me to gather experiential knowledge of the educators who had undertaken the oral history projects with their history learners. They have the experiences and I can acquire this through the process of interviewing them.

As I am searching for different perspectives to make meaning of the history educators' experiences in undertaking oral history projects with learners, I found the interpretivist paradigm to be the most suitable.

To elucidate, the main objective of interpretivism is to develop a greater understanding of how people, in the case of my study, history teachers, make meaning of contexts in which they live and work. Stevens, Schade, Chalk and Slevin (1993) offer three key points in explaining the interpretivist paradigm. Firstly, the knowledge that is produced

within the paradigm is done inductively and as a result, concepts and theories emerge from the interpretation of the phenomena. Secondly, the data collected from within this paradigm is to a large extent subjective. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) concur, noting that the interpretive paradigm is concerned with the individual and its central aim is to understand the subjective world of human experience. Lastly, research within this paradigm is carried out in the contexts in which phenomena occur, that is the research or analysis is carried out within the textbook where the phenomenon in question is found. Therefore, it can be seen that the interpretivist paradigm was chosen as it best suited the aims of this study in finding a deeper understanding of the experiences of history educators in facilitating oral history projects with their learners.

### **3.4 The qualitative research approach**

I decided on using the qualitative research approach as my study is based on in- depth and personal experiences rather than quantification. This research approach is different from a quantitative approach as it does not use figures in terms of numbers that would measure but rather data that is rich. This type of research relies on in-depth, rich data and the complexity of the facilitation of the oral history projects. There are variables that have influenced the outcome of such facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners. These variables would differ from individual to individual in this case each educator's unique experience, training and planning methods as well as instruction given to learners.

The educators whom I interviewed provide their experiences on undertaking the oral history projects with their learners. As such, "In a qualitative study the 'variables' are usually not controlled because it is exactly this freedom and natural development of action and representation that we wish to capture" (Henning, 2004: p1). I allowed the history educators to speak of their experience freely rather than placing restrictions on them as this allowed me to gather data on their experiences in undertaking the oral history projects with their learners. Similarly Cresswell argues that: "The logic that the qualitative researcher follows is inductive, from the ground up, rather than handed down

entirely from a theory or from the perspectives of the inquirer” (Creswell, 2007: p19). Since I will be interviewing educators on their experiences in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners, the study will be inductive and from the bottom up as this will allow me to gain an understanding that may or may not be theory.

This approach helps one to seek understanding of personal world settings. It is naturalistic in nature. According to Delport and Fouche (2010: p351) who clearly state “Various authors identify the length and narrative or descriptive nature of qualitative report as its most distinct characteristic.” Thus authors such as Neuman and Kreuger (2003: pp487-488), Neuman (2000: p473), Creswell (1998) and Erlandson et al. (1993) point out certain factors “that contribute to the length of the qualitative report, but that, in essence, also comprise its uniqueness.” Since I will study the experiences of educators on undertaking oral history in their schools, this being their natural environment, the focus is on what their interpretation is in terms of experiences on the topic. The experiences that I seek will be of educators’ personal experiences. By using a qualitative approach I understand that the data that I receive from educators in different schools will not be the same, there are similarities and differences that will emerge, so I understand that nothing is neutral nor would the experiences be the same. In using a qualitative research approach “we refer to ‘qualitative’ research, we are using the term that denotes the type of inquiry in which the qualities, the characteristics or the properties of a phenomenon are examined for better understanding and explanation” (Henning, 2004: p5).

Research methods differ in that the purpose of the research determines the research method. To research is to gather information on the topic or aspect under study. I undertook a qualitative approach in that I aimed at gathering first-hand accounts from educators on undertaking the oral history projects with their learners. Fortune and Reid (1999: p94) provide the following guidelines on the qualitative approach:

- The researcher attempts to gain a first-hand holistic understanding of phenomena of interest by means of a flexible strategy of problem formulation and data collection, shaped as the investigation proceeds.

- Methods such as participant observation and unstructured interviewing are used to acquire in-depth knowledge of how the persons involved construct their social world (the insider role).
- As more knowledge is gained, the research question may shift and the data collection methods may be adjusted accordingly. To do this, the investigator is constantly analysing data using formal logical procedures, although final analysis is ordinarily completed after the early, immersion, phase of the study.
- Qualitative methodology rests on the assumption that valid understanding can be gained through the accumulated knowledge acquired at first hand by a single researcher.

Qualitative research strives to view multiple realities of all participants. By multiple realities I understand that there are multiple truths that are provided by educators who I interviewed. The educators did not provide the same answers to the questions nor did they explain the exact same experience which also was unique to the qualitative study method. The educators experiences differed in that they had experienced many different challenges and their approaches and methodology in facilitation differed. The experiences of the educators provided multiple realities.

By using the qualitative research approach I purposefully hand picked the cases to be included in the sample for my specific purpose so therefore they would have to be senior history educators who would have had much experience in the subject. As stated, "In many cases purposive sampling is used in order to access 'knowledgeable people', i.e. those who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, access to networks, expertise or experience" (Ball, 1990: p225).

### **3.5 Research Sample**

I have chosen to use stratified convenient sampling by selecting participants for my research according to pre-selected criteria relevant to my research who are educators



who are experienced in teaching history and who teach history in the FET. The sample size that I envisaged was a minimum of four educators in KwaZulu-Natal. Although I would have liked to expand the number of my sample size, that would not be possible due to time constraints and the limitations placed on me by the length of a Master's degree. By using the above sample guide I had carefully drawn from the history educators a sample size that is workable in terms of their experience in undertaking the oral history and who are in close proximity to me to access as travelling and communication with them would become problematic.

My study required that I make contact with senior history educators who have had experience in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. I had been able to make contact with educators at cluster meetings and through friends who have been teaching history for many years. The educators were chosen through the methodology of convenient sampling that refers to their availability, proximity and willingness to participate in the study (MacMillan, 2007). The educators whom I selected are familiar with undertaking the oral history projects with their learners and have vast experience in this aspect of study.

I am aware, however that this may be a disadvantage since convenient sampling may not be representative of a larger group of history educators who have been facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. In trying to alleviate this I have tried, where possible, to choose participants representative of gender, race, age and socio-economic backgrounds from different schools in the province. This is in keeping with the convenient sampling method but allows for the voices and experience from an array of schools to be heard and documented. More importantly this is done to avoid generalising findings and to be aware of the varying educational contexts that exist (MacMillan, 2007).

Thus the convenient sampling method was in keeping with the rationale of my study, in terms of gaining different perspectives of the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners in the FET phase.

I had to make appointments with educators whom I wanted to interview, which included me having to phone schools to obtain the names of the educators who are teaching history in the FET phase. I thereafter had to go to schools and speak to the principals and inform them of my study and its purpose, request permission to gain consent to actually address the history educators in their schools personally in order to gain permission to interview them on my topic. I had visited eight schools and I did secure the co-operation of five educators for my study initially however one participant later decided to withdraw from my study. The number of participants is advantageous as this will allow for an in depth study to take place where I would be able to compare data received in terms of the educators' experiences. This is also congruent with my approach and paradigm as explained earlier.

Follow up calls were made to the history educators who had agreed to do the interview with me. I spoke personally to each of the educators who were pleased to make time to do the interview. The times and date as well as venue arrangements were made telephonically. Once I had completed the arrangement for the interviews, I drew up a schedule with the names of the educators, schools, dates of interviews and time. All interviews were conducted in educators' own time so as not to disrupt the teaching and learning of the students.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Before I embarked on my data collection I sought ethical clearance permission from UKZN (see Appendix A) as well as permission from the KZNDoe (see Appendix B). This was in accordance with the rules and regulations on obtaining permission to do research that involves close interaction and contact with people. As in all studies it is important to select appropriate participants whose experiences form the basis of the study undertaken. Since there is a need to undertake interviews ethical clearance requires that I obtain informed consent and that I explain the purpose and nature of my study. This is necessary in order to conform to an established professional practice of

conducting research (Bailey, 1982; Henning, 2004; Dennis, 2008). I ensured that all educators received a faxed letter through schools prior to the commencement of the meetings with them once they had agreed to do the interviews. I then met with them and explained the ethical clearance and spoke to them and set up the appointment for the interviews. The right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality was explained to participants. I also informed them that they had the right to leave this study at any point if they so wished. This was congruent with the ethical clearance policy of UKZN and the requirements of the KZNDoE.

All ethical forms were given to the participants to sign once they were explained to them. The value that the roles of the participants play in the research needs to be acknowledged. The necessity for ethical behaviour within the social science discipline of oral history has been discussed by Wahlberg (2008). The Oral History Society of South Africa has formulated a code of conduct for oral history practitioners that discusses necessary steps. These aspects on ethical clearance were explained to all participants as the participants must be informed of the processes and what the data will be used for. This process will also avoid future problems as in some cases where participant's later did make financial claims.

### **3.7. Research Methodology**

The research methodology that I have chosen to use is the case study method. "A 'case study' is therefore a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge" (Rule & John, 2011: p4). I will be investigating the case of the educators' experiences of facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. The case study method is most useful since I am focussing on individual educator's experiences and how and why they experience the facilitation of the oral history the way they do. Each educator that I interviewed, and whose projects I analysed, has their own methods, their training, and interpretation of undertaking the oral history projects as well as their experiences that impact on the facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners.

There are different aspects of a 'case study' that have been identified by Merriam (1998) within which I have been able to clearly place my study. Firstly it states that a 'unit' of a case study is identified as a case under investigation. The case that I am focussing on is the experiences of the educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. The study focuses on what the educators do, in terms of planning and executing the facilitation of the oral history project. This is a unique study as the educator will speak of his/her own experiences, and this may be further influenced by other aspects such as prior training on facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners, their planning and executing methods, their own experiences and influences, and successes and challenges experienced.

Secondly the case study involves a 'process'. There is a definite process in that I have identified a case which is the experiences of the educators. This places within the context of the experience of the educator within the classroom and the facilitation methods used as well as the influences of the past and present on the educators' facilitation of the oral history projects with learners. The process required me to identify specific educators who had the experience of facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. I had to interact closely with the educators and develop a trusting relationship so that I could gather information through the use of oral interviews on their experiences of undertaking the oral history projects with their learners. I then used a process to decode data and analyse the data so that I can make meaning then record and present my findings. The process in my case study is specific and focussed on my case.

Thirdly the product of my case study results in the production of this master's dissertation on the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. I will also discuss the outcome of the facilitation in the form of the completed projects of the learners as a product within my case study. I understand my product as my completed master's dissertation on the experiences of the educators in facilitating oral history with their learners.

Lastly my case study will follow a specific genre which has specified features such as its purpose, audience, language and structure. The purpose is specific in that it is focussed on experiences of educators facilitating oral history with their learners. The purpose is to provide an understanding of both the strengths and challenges experienced by educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners so that these experiences provide novices and other educators wishing to undertake oral history projects with their learners with further in-depth knowledge. Thus the target audience is academics. The study has an introduction, literature review, methodology chapter, findings and conclusion. The genre that I will use will focus on answering my question in terms of my study.

There are many benefits of my using the case study approach. I shall explain these benefits in terms of my study (Rule & John, 2011). Firstly the case study approach allowed me to gather an in depth understanding of the case under study by interviewing history educators with the experience of facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. It is therefore intensive in nature. The questions were open-ended and allowed me to gather as much data as I could on the topic. Secondly, a case study method is flexible in that it allowed me to use a variety of methods in gathering data. This is through oral interviews with the experienced educators who had been facilitating the oral history projects with their learners as well as the end product, which are the completed projects or any other documents that had assisted their facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners. Thirdly there is flexibility in the case study approach in that it can be used with other research approaches. The case under study is both a case study and an evaluation since it looks at the facilitation by the educator of the oral history project and evaluates the successes and challenges experienced by the educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. It examined the case under a particular lens but this is not only the case since the educators' life history can also overlap and the educators' experience in life and the training received also influences the methods used in facilitating the oral history projects with learners (Bassey, 1999: p63). "A case study evaluation of a programme, for example, might focus

on the extent to which the programme has achieved its objectives, the processes involved in delivery of the programme and the impact of the programme” (Rule & John, 2011: p12). This is certainly relevant to my study as I reviewed the methods and approaches of different educators in facilitating the oral history projects with learners. There is a particular uniqueness in each of the interviews.

The case study methodology has challenges. These include the identification of experienced educators who have facilitated oral history projects with their learners for a number of years. The method required clear undertaking of oral interviews, such as setting up appointments for interviews and gathering data that will be analysed. Sometimes educators were reluctant to participate since they were afraid that their weaknesses may be revealed, but through my clear explanation as to the purpose of my study I was able to persuade educators to participate.

In order to successfully carry out my research and undertake my case study I needed time. There never seemed to be enough time on hand for undertaking the task at hand which involved interviewing, sorting data, analysing and evaluating the data and recording my findings. There was much data that I had to analyse which I knew I had to complete through careful time management.

### **3.8 Research Methods**

The research methods that I adopted were semi structured interviews and textual analysis. I have chosen to use semi structured interviews so as to gather rich data on the educators’ experiences in the facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners.

#### **3.8.1 Semi structured individual interviews**

The method of oral history has been discussed in the previous chapter that has looked at the literature on undertaking oral history. During the interviews educators were allowed to speak on other aspects that had influenced their method in undertaking oral history with their learners. All answers received were accepted and treated with utmost respect since these were important to my study as they provided an in-depth view of their experiences. The oral history method has flaws as people tend to forget what happened over time, people are sometimes afraid to speak on aspects that may be sensitive to them; however the oral history method is the best method in this study as I look at the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners.

I used semi structured individual interviews that allowed me to generate data by asking questions that are open-ended and allowing the interviewee to speak. Semi-structured interviews “are defined as those organised around a particular interest, while allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth” (Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2010: p292). I have chosen to use the semi-structured interview method since I wanted to gather information on the educators’ experiences in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. This is the particular interest of my study as I focussed and planned questions to gather in depth information from the educators on their experiences on undertaking the oral history projects with their learners. Semi-structured interviews will provide some direction as to the information that I require on the experiences of the educator in facilitating the oral history projects, yet it did not state the information exactly as I perceive it for it allows educators to speak freely of their experiences in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners.

I chose to use semi-structured interviews which allowed me to ensure that the participants in the research played a stronger role in the interview as questions posed were open-ended. The questions were predetermined as a guide to the interview. Semi-structured interviews give the interviewer an opportunity to sometimes extend the questions so that they may be better understood by the interviewee. While the interviewee is speaking there are aspects that are unclear or need to be further

explained so the semi- structured interviews allows for probing when answers to the questions are unclear. The open-ended questions would allow the interviewee to speak of his experiences and thereby would provide in depth knowledge which could be curtailed by the use of only closed questions.

“One precise advantage of oral evidence is that it is interactive and one is not left alone, as with documentary evidence to divine its significance; the ‘source’ can reflect upon the content and offer interpretation as well as facts” (Lummis, 1987: p75). With semi-structured interviews, there is a clear purpose of conducting the interview to gather information on the topic that I have chosen through interviewing the educators on their experiences of facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. Furthermore, “All interviews are interactional events and interviewers are deeply and unavoidably implicated in creating meanings that ostensibly reside within participants” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995: p3). The interview results in a conversation whereby it allowed for the educator to communicate his experiences on the topic. “Interviews are social interactions in which meaning is necessarily negotiated between a number of selves” (Collins, 1998: pp3-5).

I have prepared a set of predetermined questions on my topic. However this was a mere guide rather than something that is prescribed. I have sequenced my questions so that they are logical from the broad to the more specific. At times I modified the questions and delved further so that I am able to gather data that I require. More sensitive questions were left till later in the interview as they may have caused some pain to the interviewees in answering these questions. I tried to cover the topic as thoroughly as possible so that I gather rich data from my participants.

I used open-ended questions “... to allow interviewees to volunteer their accounts, to speculate on matters, and to have enough time to include all of the material they think relevant to the subject” (Ritchie, 2003: p32). The interviewees needed to talk as much as possible on their experiences of the facilitation of oral history in their classrooms. In order to keep to the topic under discussion I prepared open-ended questions on the



topic. "... it is important to minimise the cross rate, or the amount of irrelevant information in the interview. The best strategy for minimising the cross rate is to prepare several open-ended questions before the interview" (Field & Morse, 1994: p66). Questions that I prepared were on the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners.

It became apparent that I had to use probing questions when answers needed clarification and further data was obtained through probing questions. While delving further into the topic it allowed interviewees to clarify aspects and to explain further about their experiences.

During my interviews I also noted what I observed in terms of the body language of the interviewee. This is often easy to overlook since one is concentrating on what the interviewee is saying rather than watching for non-verbal cues. "Body language may indicate nervousness about the interview and topics that make interviewees particularly uncomfortable may cause them to shift in their seats, drum their fingers on the table, and engage in other such noticeable behaviour" (Ritchie, 2003: p106). I was aware of the body language of my interviewees throughout my interviews with them.

The way people speak also tells more than what is said. By listening attentively I found that there were also non-verbal cues. Sometimes interviewees would begin to talk faster or louder than normal during the interview. This also displays their emotions. According to Ritchie, 2003, when people become emotional, they tend to talk faster or may raise their voices. Interviewees were sometimes very passionate about their learners' work and would talk faster in an excited manner, as explained in the paragraph that emotions can also be felt in the tone of speech of a person.

All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, no one other than the interviewee and myself were present, which ensured privacy of the interview. The questions posed were in line with my key questions in chapter one which helped me to generate rich data.

The data that was generated was rich as the method of using open-ended questions enabled educators to speak of their experiences. Although not all spoke for the same duration, they were able to provide the data in terms of the experiences and training on facilitating the oral history projects with their learners.

The challenges that I faced were that people do not talk in a sequential manner. People talk of one aspect and refer to other aspects, so sometimes I returned to the actual recording to follow the conversation and make sense of what was said. The process of decoding an interview is lengthy and I have to make time for this. There are large chunks of content that have to be decoded and this is time consuming.

### **3.8.2 Textual analysis of learners' projects**

The textual analysis that I have chosen to use is the analysis of completed oral history projects of the learners. The projects were provided by the teachers who I interviewed. These completed projects provided data on the instructional understanding and allowed me to view the outcome of the facilitation by the history educators.

Babbie and Moulton present a version of the usefulness of documents: "They serve as a touchstone for the evaluation of theories, hypotheses and assumptions" (Babbie & Moulton, 2001: p303). The study of the facilitation of the oral history projects by the educators provided the outcome of a completed project. It is with this in mind that I believe that the document analysis being the completed project would provide evidence of the success or limitations of the facilitation of the oral history project by the educator.

I requested the educators whom I interviewed to provide me with samples of the completed projects of their learners. The learners' work was then reviewed as per the instructions that were given by the educators to learners in terms of the outcome of the project.

There are both advantages and disadvantages of reviewing these documents as the selected documents that were given to me were chosen by the educators themselves so they could have chosen only the best ones. Secondly, history educators were reluctant to share the projects as they felt their shortcomings in terms of the facilitation of the oral history projects may be commented on. There are advantages in reviewing the completed oral history projects by the learners as this allowed me to view the learners skills that were developed by the educators, as well as other aspects such as topics chosen and methods used by the learners themselves in conjunction with the instruction by educators on undertaking the oral history projects.

### **3.9 Analysis of the data**

“Data analysis is also the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time consuming, creative and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not tidy. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data; it builds grounded theory” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999: p150). The data that I gathered was rich in nature and had to be categorised. Sometimes data was disordered in that people do not talk logically as they would if they were able to write sequentially so I would have to sort out data before analysing so that I could make meaning.

I then analysed the data that was collected from the interviews through open-coding. In doing this I looked for commonality in what was said by the interviewees, grouped them and organised the data that was analysed. While transcribing verbatim I was also able to see that history educators were either talking of their own training of oral history facilitation, or their experiences with facilitating the oral history projects, challenges that they experienced, successes and adaptations made by the educators in facilitation methods and choices of topic, These are but some of the themes and sub-themes that emerged in my data analysis. Coding and analysis is important in terms of presenting my findings in my dissertation.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) have explained open-coding as a form of grounded theory as “inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents.” That is it is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin 1990: p23). The grounded theory approach does not allow for a preconceived notion, instead the interviewer sought to understand the experiences of the interviewee and look for common patterns after a number of people’s interviews have been studied. This approach is a qualitative approach that views personal experiences, and may not be scientific in nature.

In the grounded theory method of analysis, data collection and theory generation are regarded as two parts of the same process (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). It is the initial data that is used to shape the continuing data collection. I used the grounded theory method as this helped me to increase the density and saturation of recurring categories, and any aspect that may be unexpected. I had used the grounded theory methodology to analyse the data. The grounded theory method “is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and the analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore the data collection, analysis and theory stand in a reciprocal relationship with one another. The researcher does not begin with a theory, then prove it; it rather he begins with an area of study, and what is relevant to that area is gradually allowed to emerge” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: p23). Multiple individuals are used in the research as their answers are collected until the information is “saturated”. This means that the categories that are coded become exhausted.

I have chosen to use the open-coding method to analyse the data. “Coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data” (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2010: p340). The data that I received from my participants needed to be broken down and understood and conceptualised into themes. They have common aspects that can be viewed so that I was able to make meaning of the data.

“Conceptualising the data becomes the first step in analysis. By breaking down and conceptualising means taking apart an observation, a sentence or a paragraph, and giving each discrete incident, idea or even a name, something that stands for or to represent a phenomenon. This is done by comparing incident with incident as we go along so that similar phenomena can be given the same name. Otherwise we would wind up with too many names that could result in confusion” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: p63). Since I have received much data that is similar and different on the same aspect I would use the method of open coding.

Analysis of data took place by using the open coding method. “Open coding is a part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorising of phenomena through close examination of data. Without this first step, the rest of the analysis and communication that follows could not take place” (De Vos, 2005: p341). These codes are developed from aspects under discussion during the interview. I used different coloured pens to mark the codes after transcribing the interview. This is time consuming but is beneficial to my understanding data from which different themes arose. The open coding method is time consuming and frequently, once transcribed, interviews had to be read through repeatedly.

Experiences of educators were multifaceted as, some educators would agree on certain aspects while others disagreed which shows that, educators provide different perspectives. I would have to step back periodically and think of what the participant is saying as the data was extensive and varied. The benefits of open coding are that it gives the researcher a chance to return to each interview and look for data that speaks to the same codes that he/she has identified in one interview. The grounded theory method speaks of exhausting the data in search of an in-depth understanding of the topic.

Another advantage of using open-ended coding is that it allows one to combine the various points that are similar that were received by the informants together so that it makes sense when analysed. Also the chronology of the ideas can be assimilated when

using open coding and the themes that emerge from the data can be categorised. I began by looking at the topic broadly but through using open coding I was able to zoom in on important themes and, specific aspects.

There are also challenges that I experienced despite my broad knowledge on facilitating the oral history projects with learners. It proved difficult to distance my own views, opinions and understanding when analysing the data.

### **3.10 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness relates to the value of trusting the information as being true and correct. According to Shenton (2004) the construct of the four criteria for considering research as trustworthy are: “To allow transferability, they provide sufficient detail of the fieldwork for a reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar and whether the findings can justifiably be applied to the other settings. The dependability criterion is difficult in qualitative work, although researchers should at least strive to enable a future investigator to repeat the study.” Finally, to achieve confirm ability, researchers must take steps to demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not their own predispositions. This should be comparable model to ensure trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

Since this is a qualitative study, I have gathered data that is rich from participants, who are educators who have experiences in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. I have familiarised myself with educators who are experienced in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. These educators have been informed that their participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time if they so wished. I have used purposive sampling since I wish to view the experiences of those educators who had been facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. There may be problems as some educators may not speak as much as others on their facilitation of the oral history projects.

I have used the oral history methodology as outlined earlier to conduct the interviews with participants. I had chosen five participants who had agreed earlier to participate, however one participant decided to withdraw so continued to use the four participants to provide the data using the same questions and extending in some cases to gain clarity on the topic under study. I believe that by using more than one participant I gained information that is similar and different, that overlaps in some ways and is totally different in other ways, hence increasing trustworthiness. Wherever a policy document or other aspect such as a subject head is mentioned I have tried to broaden my research to explain these aspects to ensure that the information is trustworthy.

The type of questions was open-ended thus allowing educators to speak and not to allow my own voice to overpower their voices. Thus the data is transcribed as received by participants during the interviews and then analysed using the grounded theory method. The themes that emerge are then analysed from the data that I received which are the, actual words spoken, hence this study is trustworthy.

Although as earlier mentioned the dependability is difficult in qualitative study, as the data that is received is original and the educators have their own experiences and own views that have emerged, however I do believe that the data and the research may be of value to others wishing to extend this study.

The trustworthiness is determined by confirm ability since this study can be confirmed by what was stated by the participants and that of original data received during interviews this can also be verified through the use of secondary sources since I would be looking at completed projects of the learners. I have tried not to allow my beliefs and assumptions to affect the outcome of the interviews. I used the in-depth method of data analysis and presentation to ensure trustworthiness.

### **3.11 Methodological shortcomings**

There are shortcomings in almost all research designs and methods. As previously explained interpretivism is a view that believes that the world and reality are not objective and external, but socially constructed and give meaning to people thus there are multiple realities in each interview conducted as each person's explanation of the reality of an event is unique to the person telling the story. The interpretivist design although suitable may generate too much data as interviews are open-ended and allows the interviewee to talk on the topic, therefore the decoding and analysis will be time consuming. The more interviews conducted the more time will be spent on the decoding and analysis of different interviews.

Secondly the choice of participants is another limitation as not all people involved in undertaking oral history with their learners could be included in this study, the selection was based on educators with whom I could easily contact and who had agreed to participate in the study.

Thirdly oral history in itself has limitations as the actual words spoken are regarded as being valid. There is also the limitation in interpretation of interviews that needs to be carefully understood before one conducts the interview as one should not let one's own voice on the knowledge of the topic to filter through above that of the person being interviewed. I have tried not to overshadow the voice of the interviewee so as not to pose a threat in terms of my knowledge on the topic as I am very passionate about oral history and have many stories to tell.

Interviews in themselves have limitations as all interviews have a purpose, which is to capture information on a topic from an interviewee. Semi-structured interviews can also provide limitations as the questions that I have phrased are only in terms of my study and do not include a broader knowledge that the participant has and would have liked to have included. This is a limitation as I will not be able to capture all that knowledge on the topic that the educator may have included in the interview.



Textual analysis has shortcomings since it is the text, the actual spoken words that were analysed. When a person speaks during the interview the text of the actual spoken words is recorded and not the emotions and expressions of the interviewee. The text when analysed on its own does not capture the emotions of a person. Additionally, the text may be complex to decode in terms of the vast amount of data received hence I have been cautious when analysing the data so that I do not omit analysing important data. Furthermore, the participant may not reveal all the problems experienced as they would not want to be viewed in a negative light. I therefore tried to ensure that my participants were familiar with and understood that they could remain anonymous if they wished not to be named. There are other minor shortcomings that I have worked around such as speaking clearly and rephrasing questions so that the interviewee would understand the questions posed.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

The focus of this chapter has been on the research design and methodology that I have used in my study. The structure, design and methods that I use have been discussed in great detail. The design of my research is congruent with the type of data that I have collected. In the next chapter I will present the analysis of the research data collected by means of my research methods.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will firstly investigate the experiences of educators in terms of facilitating the oral history project with their learners. Against this background, I will provide an analysis and the understanding of the experiences shared by the history educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners in the FET phase. My analysis is based on the semi-structured interviews conducted with history educators from schools around Kwa-Zulu Natal as well as the learner projects they have shared with me. I will present a detailed analysis of my findings as per the methodology explained in the previous chapter of what were their experiences of teachers in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners in the FET phase. This will be done in a thematic manner by simulating the oral history process. In so doing I will be answering the first of my research questions.

#### **4.2 History educators' interpretation of oral history**

In order for educators to facilitate the oral history project the history educators firstly reflected on their conceptualisation and understanding of what oral history is. Secondly, they looked at the purpose of the oral history aspect and tried to understand the reason why this was contained in the curriculum. Thirdly, the educators explained the nature of oral history in terms of the pedagogy, as they had realised that there were many steps that needed to be understood before facilitating the oral history project with their learners.

Participant A explained that oral history was based on historical evidence that is found outside textbooks and consists of interesting stories that people had to tell. Participant A

stated that this was done in the absence of traditional sources. This understanding was not entirely accurate as oral history is not just based on interesting stories that people had to tell; oral history can be verified by using other sources such as books and traditional written sources which could be used to strengthen the oral history research evidence.

Oral history is an educational process that involved certain steps as stated by Participant B. She viewed oral history as a process whereby learners identified interviewees on topics that seemed exciting to them. Participant B understood that there was definitely a procedure that had to be undertaken by the learners. However, in her view oral history was not just based on interesting stories, as there could be sad stories and, happy events to which people related. So she concluded that oral history topics varied.

The curriculum in the FET phase is vast and participant C viewed oral history as just a part of the curriculum that must be covered. Participants C and D understood the pedagogical steps used to undertake oral history. They also understood that oral history was the spoken aspect that required people to tell their stories.

All participants had some idea of what oral history is, however, their explanations differed. What was clear was that the history educators had not explained the purpose of undertaking oral history projects to their learners, and as a result this had not been clearly explained by any of the learners in their projects. The interviewees seemed to have evaded this question deliberately as they did not understand why this aspect was included in the curriculum. Nevertheless, all participants had been aware of the definite pedagogy and the various steps that had to be explained to their learners.

### **4.3 Training received by history educators in order to facilitate the oral history projects with their learners**

In order for the educators to facilitate the oral history projects they had to be trained prior to beginning the process of undertaking the projects with their learners. Educator training at tertiary level had been lacking since oral history was only introduced after the demise of apartheid. For the educator to successfully undertake oral history projects with their learners the educators' training was important and this was the duty of the local Department of Education.

All research participants were trained to facilitate the oral history projects with their learners. Participants had received training at workshops that were held by the Provincial Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal. The National Department of Education had trained facilitators (subject advisors) in each of the nine provinces to disseminate this aspect to history educators in the FET phase.

Participant B stated that she received an audio-visual cassette on how to undertake the oral history project with her learners. She stated that she has continued to use the cassette in her introductory lessons and that it was very helpful in getting her learners to understand the methodology of oral history. The audio-visual aid gave guidance on exactly what the learners needed to do in terms of conducting oral history. She also said that apart from the cassette, she was provided with very basic guidance on how learners needed to undertake the oral history projects.

Training was also provided by cluster heads. A cluster head is in charge of assisting and guiding history educators within close geographical proximity of each other, who were grouped together for this purpose. Cluster heads are senior educators who have had a vast amount of experience in that specific learning area. Participant C stated that at the time of the departmental training workshops on facilitating oral history, he had been away from teaching, so when he returned he sought assistance and guidance from his cluster head on managing oral history projects with his learners. He stated that

he had received enormous help from the cluster head who had continued to support him throughout the process. The cluster head had also shared resources that he had prepared in terms of topics and the logistical management of oral history projects.

External workshops have also provided guidance and assistance to history educators, as they were invited to workshops presented by professional and experienced persons who guided and supported educators. One such project was the Greater Edendale Development Initiative (GEDI) project. The project was a joint initiative between local schools and the local municipality. The learners were to carry out research on 'Forced removals in the Greater Edendale area' through the use of oral history. Participant D stated that he had taken advantage of that opportunity and that he had involved his learners in the project. He stated that he had received intensive training on facilitating oral history with his learners and that this training was carried out by an experienced history educator.

Training of educators had been formal in terms of the departmental workshops, and collegial in that there was cluster assistance and also by external organisations. The training had been both official and self-initiated. The formal training meant that it was coming from the top down (National Department to Provincial Department) and the oral history process had to begin with the learners. The informal training was cluster heads assisting as well as external organisations. Much of this shows that educators were willing to seek help on facilitating oral history with their learners.

The training of educators should be ongoing as educators need to have had some experience themselves in doing oral history. Although the educators said that they had received training, there are questions on support and guidance throughout that remained unanswered since educators did not receive any support when they implemented the oral history projects with their learners. The educators were expecting the support of their subject advisors and other officials who had conducted the workshops but there was no assistance and support forthcoming. As such there are

gaps in terms of training and support to educators when new aspects of oral history are introduced into the curriculum.

#### **4.4 Methods used by the history educators to facilitate the oral history projects**

The methods that were used by the history educators to facilitate the oral history projects differed, in that educators had their own understanding and had attended different workshops on the methodology of oral history as well as their own interests and facilitating styles. The methodology used in preparing to undertake the oral history projects was important and had to be explained by the history teachers who participated in this study to their learners. The pedagogy was intensively explained by each history teacher. All of them also provided instructions to their learners.

Different methods were used by the history educators in preparing their learners to undertake the oral history projects. One research participant (B) used an audio-visual digital presentation as an introduction to oral history. This presentation explained the various steps learners needed to employ in undertaking the oral history project. The audio-visual presentation gave guidance on choosing topics, drawing up questions, undertaking interviews and researching the topic. The teacher stated that she needed to explain further as the audio-visual was not sufficient guidance to the learners. Participant B stated that the audio-visual presentation provided learners with guidance on undertaking the interviews and provided examples of oral historians interviewing each other.

Other participants used the chalk and talk method, vigorously articulating the method that the learners needed to undertake when doing their oral history projects. Participants stated that it was sometimes difficult to explain all the steps on conducting oral history in a single lesson, so they explained the steps in stages and incorporated activities in between, such as practicing an interview between history educator and history learner or pairing learners to practice the interviewing process. This allowed

learners to do some practical activities. The type of activities that were staged in class included preparing questions, practicing interviews, and discussion on the steps in undertaking their oral history projects.

One of the research participants had drawn up worksheets that explained the steps that his learners needed to undertake in conducting their oral history projects. The worksheets were accompanied by time frames and due dates to which learners had to adhere. The worksheets were not difficult to follow by the learners, and the participant stated that he did not have to do a lot of explaining since the learners were requested to complete the worksheets, follow the instructions and adhere to due dates.

All the research participants had presented their learners with a plan on how they were to get their learners involved in undertaking the oral history project. However, their methodology differed and so did the way they presented their lessons on undertaking the oral history projects. Some educators engaged their learners in a dialogue rather than telling them what to do. Others gave learners top-down instructions and their learners just listened. One participant chose not to engage with learners but rather provided written directions so that he did not have to talk much.

The history teachers who participated in this study engaged in different types of instructions in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners and their methods clearly differed. The top down approach was adopted by the participant who gave written instruction, whilst another participant chose a more discursive approach that helped learners to understand the undertaking of the oral history project.

#### **4.5 Topics and direction provided by the history educators to learners in preparation for undertaking the oral history projects**

A topic is an aspect that is focussed on that requires information to be captured by the learner. Before the learners undertake the oral history project it is important that they

choose a suitable topic that is of interest to them. The educators dealt with this in various ways.

Participants spoke of the possible topics that learners could undertake for their oral history projects. A variety of topics were given to learners by all research participants, which included the following: Unsung heroes; Street name changes; Heritage sites; Important South African calendar holidays; Local people; Political happenings and Buildings in their towns. Topics that were chosen by the participants on behalf of their learners had to capture their attention to understand the importance of good topics and inspire learners to be enthusiastic in undertaking the oral history projects. Participants had been able to direct the process by providing what they deemed suitable topics to their learners.

Participants also differentiated topics into areas of their own town and they went even further by differentiating topics for different groups of people of different faiths within their community. One participant explained that:

“It is easier for a learner to conduct the interview with the pastor or priest whom they may be familiar with in their community.”

The learner would have benefitted by doing the oral history project in their local community. Participants wanted their learners to become aware of, for example, the buildings and the history that are prevalent in their own towns. This was explained as such by Participant B:

“They begin to look at things that they had seen there all the time in a different way.”

As a result it was hoped that learners would begin to question its existence and research its value.

Participants A and D gave a few topics to their learners. By giving them the topics they left little or no room for history learners to decide or choose a topic that is of interest to them. However, if they did not want to follow the topics provided they could choose their own. History educators then told learners to continue with their projects. These



participants said that they provided the learners with little support and guidance because the learners chose their own topic to do the projects.

All research participants had provided learners with topics (some with greater rigour than others) that were of interest within their own areas. This was due to sites being in their locality and the fact that they had some information that they could provide to their learners. They also believed their topics to be interesting to their learners. Participants had in some cases also thought of possible interviewees who their learners could interview on the topic as they recalled that their learners did experience problems in identifying suitable interviewees.

The history teachers who participated in this study have displayed three different methods in presenting and guiding learners in terms of choosing the topics. The first method used by participants was that of 'free choice', this allowed learners the autonomy to choose their own topics. The second method that was used by participants was of 'guiding' learners to choose a suitable topic that were deemed to be of interest to them. This method used by participants allowed them freedom to choose but also the learners had to take into consideration other aspects when choosing their topics. The third method used was that whereby participants were "giving topics" to their learners. In these cases the teacher gave learners the topic and told them what to do.

Participants provided the following reasons for the way in which they presented the topics to their learners. The method of "free choice" was to allow learners to choose the topics as the history educator stated that it was their project so they needed to take ownership by choosing their own topic. The second, that of "guiding" was to inform learners that there were choices and that they were free to choose but they also needed to take into consideration certain factors for a successful oral history project. Lastly in terms of "giving topics" one history educator stated that due to the large class sizes it was easier to give the learners topics on which they must carry out their project. This participant also stated that it was also for educational management purposes as by learners doing the same topic it was easier for the educator to monitor them.

The consequences of giving learners a topic are that they become reliant on the educator and they cannot continue without the support of the educator. When educators guide learners towards choosing a topic it meant the learners become independent thinkers and develop skills to make informed choices. They are motivated to do their work and to produce their oral history project on the topic that they have chosen. When learners are not allowed to choose it seemed, based on the projects analysed, they showed little interest and did not develop deep oral history skills.

#### **4.6 Drawing up of questions for the project**

In order for the learners to undertake their oral history projects they were instructed by the research participants to begin with a key question and thereafter work on sub-questions and other interview questions. A key question is fundamentally the topic or aspect that one is undertaking for the oral history project. The sub-questions are the questions on aspects of the topic, normally carried out in terms of documented information. The history educators had been trained to encourage learners to use open-ended questions for their interviews as this would allow the interviewee to speak to the topic and not just restrict them to one word answers.

The analysis of the data has revealed that some research participants informed learners that they needed to draw up their questions. Other participants, however, provided guidance as to how to draw up questions, while some participants also chose to provide history learners with the questions rather than have the learners draw up their own. The idea of history teachers participating in this study informing learners to draw up their questions allowed learners the opportunity to develop their questioning skills. However, the participants could have provided the necessary support for learners on drawing up open-ended questions. Participants who provided guidance had patience and tried to bring out the best in their learners in terms of developing interview questions. The guiding allowed for autonomy whereby learners were free to make mistakes and be corrected and to grow in the process.

Those participants who preferred to give the learners the questions are the educators who said that they “have it” so there is no need to waste time on drawing up research questions. The research participants who had given the questions to their learners also stated that the class sizes are large and that the curriculum was demanding so they saw no sense in wasting their time and waiting for the learners to draw up the interview questions. These participants also explained that language was an issue with regard to the second language learners not knowing how to phrase their questions. For some of the history educators most of their learners were second language speakers.

The consequences of just giving learners the questions and only informing learners what to do and not allowing learners to draw up questions leaves little room for the development of a key component of oral history skills. On the other hand, those learners who had been guided would have developed a skill in drawing up the questions for their interview. They could then take ownership of their work, and thus they would have been motivated to continue with their oral history projects. Additionally, when learners draw up their own questions they take ownership in understanding what type of information they are searching for in the oral history project. By allowing learners to draw up the questions themselves they are able to develop and feel more confident in their language and creative skills.

#### **4.7 The gathering of evidence by conducting research additional to the oral history project**

The expectation, as part of undertaking an oral history project, is that learners would gather additional evidence by researching and reading on the topic. This evidence may be found in books; on the internet; in magazines or any other available documented information. A few of the participants informed learners of the type of evidence that is required in their projects to support the oral history endeavour. This research would have had to include learners’ research in terms of the key question and the sub-questions that they wanted to ask.

Research participant A explained that there was little documented information available on the topic so this posed a problem. It must however be noted that since learners were doing oral history there would be little evidence if there was no previous interviews done by any other person on the topic. There was also, in the view of a number of the research participants, a problem of limited documented evidence on certain topics.

The history teachers who participated in the study also pointed out that libraries, media sources and archives were available in the urban area to their learners. Participant B consequently encouraged the learners to make use of these facilities. In just pointing out where the resources are without further instruction on how to access that information poses a problem to the learners. A bigger challenge was however faced by research participants from rural areas. In these areas they were few or limited facilities which housed useful evidence.

Researching is a skill that was required by the learners and participant B made that clear. However, he did not prepare his learners as to how to carry out the research in libraries, on the internet and in other places. Ideally learners should have been taught how to use the library, the internet, archives and other resources that may be at their disposal. Learners not having the knowledge and skills as to how to access the available evidence could have been frustrated which also served to undermine the eventual quality of the projects.

Inadequate research preparations of learners lead to problems in terms of the learners not being able to gather sufficient evidence to support their oral history projects. Sometimes learners could have omitted evidence if their research on the topic was not carried out thoroughly. Participants also explained that their learners expected all evidence to be neatly laid out for them to use. However, this was not so since learners needed to have researched their topics thoroughly. The learners also had to look for answers to their research questions that they had earlier prepared. Participants stated that the learners did not know how to go about locating and selecting evidence on their

topics and consequently some students would just “cut and paste” evidence randomly from the internet on the topic.

By participants just being allowed to continue with their research without clear guidance posed a problem to some of the learners. This was clearly revealed in the analysis of the final oral history projects. The data obtained clearly revealed a gap in terms of educators not being able to guide learners in using the resources on hand such as libraries, internet and other sources of information to gather sufficient evidence to support the oral history interviews.

#### **4.8 Oral history interviews**

Oral history requires that voices of people are obtained on the research topic. The interviewer would have to find suitable interviewees on the topic. The interviewer would have to set up the interview with the interviewee. The processes involved are complex and the participants had to prepare the learners as part of their duties as history educators.

The oral interviews had to be carried out by the learners. Learners had to identify at least two people whom they had to interview. As previously explained in this chapter this was frequently done for them by their history teachers. The reason for two interviews was for learners to attempt to obtain an unbiased story. Due to time constraints it was not always possible to conduct more than two interviews.

In doing the interviews the learners had to obtain informed consent from the interviewees. The learners had to meet suitable interviewees and organise appointments to conduct the interviews. During this meeting the interviewer (learner) and the interviewee (person being interviewed) would clarify anything that may seem unclear. The interviewer would explain the process and obtain informed consent. The next step was for the learners to schedule an appointment for the interviews and then to actually do their interviews.

The research participants approached the interviewing process differently. One research participant explained to the learners the processes required and stated clearly what was required of them in terms of finding suitable interviewees. Other participants chose to tell the learners who to go to in order to do their interviews, whilst another participant chose to give the learners options and allow them to choose who they would like to interview. In so doing it allowed the learners the freedom to approach and make contact with the interviewees and then to conduct the interview.

The process of explaining the steps required in the interview process demanded clear instruction. If the student is not given clear instruction it could lead them to find interviewees who would not be able to answer their questions. Oral history requires the voices of those who have experienced the incidents, people who were present at the time and people who have been affected by a certain happening in that period of time to be interviewed. Therefore, the careful identification of people in terms of the topic is a key component of the oral history interview process.

Participants indicated that they explained the need for the learners to take notes while interviewing. Short hand writing is a skill most learners have not done before and this posed a problem. Participants explained that they felt this was a difficult skill to teach their learners and felt that this was only being used by journalists. They also felt it is beyond the ability of their learners. Participant B, however, took time to teach the learners the skill of shorthand writing and got them to practise this skill in class.

The participants for the most part were in agreement that learners sometimes had to do their interview in their mother tongue language as their interviewees could not speak nor understand English. In some instances this meant that the learners changed their questions to their mother tongue before doing the interview. However, learners did experience problems when transcribing and translating the interview into English. Sometimes what was said in the interviewees' mother tongue language would have lost

its meaning when translated. Participants had asked learners to keep the actual words spoken without changing their meaning.

On occasions, the research participants revealed, learners had been turned away due to the way they approached the interviewee. The interviewees did not understand that they were dealing with learners who needed constant guidance. Learners are far too young and lack the skill of communicating effectively with adults, more especially strangers, since they need to get their permission to be interviewed by them. Some participants had viewed this aspect as being of importance, whilst other participants who had pointed the learners to the interviewees felt that their learners did not need training on how to approach their interviewees. In these instances the research participant set up the appointment and just pointed their history learners to the interviewee.

Conducting the interviews required time and careful preparation by the history learners. The interviewee had to make their time available, and consequently learners had to also take time to conduct the interviews. Although learners had been preparing their questions in order to do their interviews they needed to know more about interviewing and understanding their interviewee. Not all participants informed their learners of what to expect during the interview or how to deal with cathartic situations or about understanding the body language of the interviewee. These aspects should have been discussed in class in order to have prepared the learners to conduct the interview.

The analysis of the research data has brought forth different approaches used by history educators in preparing their learners to conduct the interview with the interviewees. Although there were different methods their aim was always to get their learners to conduct the interviews successfully with the interviewee. The focus and aim were well intentioned but if certain aspects were omitted such as how to communicate with adults that are strangers to you, then the evidence obtained from the interview would not be adequate.

## 4.9 Memory

Memory is what people remember of the incidents, happenings, the event or the period that the interviewer is researching. Different people remember different events in different ways. There is a psychological aspect that comes into being when an interview takes place. No two people being interviewed would have had exactly, the same experiences.

Participants have stated that learners have spoken of how their interviewees remembered and spoke of different events and happenings. Although two people were being interviewed on the same topic they had, at times, completely different memories of their experiences. The research participants stated that their learners had noticed that different people remembered the same event differently.

Participant D stated that interviewees found that older people took longer to recollect certain events. The interviewee stated that it was a long time ago and they could not recollect exactly what happened, so they just spoke vaguely of the event, sometimes they missed out or did not speak of the important information that their interviewees required for the project.

Some events that occurred a long time ago could not be easily recollected by people who had witnessed the event. This may be as the interviewee may have had negative experiences and therefore they may have chosen not to remember these events. Memory fades over time, so it becomes difficult to remember all the details. The older one becomes the more difficult it is to recollect all the information in great detail and negative and hurtful experiences may not be recalled. The psychological aspect of remembering and recalling of events is complex. Some participants stated that their



learners reported that interviewees remember events the way they wanted them to be, so sometimes it became difficult to determine if the evidence was indeed incorrect.

Participant C stated that it was difficult for his learners to handle the emotional outbursts of the interviewees. He stated clearly that he had not received any direction as to how to train his learners to deal with the emotional outbursts brought about by recalling past memories that were unsettling.

The data collected by means of my research methodology clearly revealed that there were different methods on how to get learners involved in interviewing and to elicit the important evidence required for the research. The learners gleaned from the psychological aspect of memory and its importance in undertaking the oral history project. The participants knew that the learners had to do two interviews in order to get a balanced account and corroborate information as explained above as people remember events differently. Additionally interviewees also forget things that may be important to the interviewer. All the participating history teachers agreed that oral history is linked to memory.

#### **4.10 Transcription and verification of oral history evidence**

After the interviews had been completed learners were required to transcribe the interview verbatim and in so doing capture the exact words spoken by the interviewees. In transcribing the exact words the learners also had to start making sense of what the interviewee had said. Transcribing requires good listening skills and time to listen to the recordings carefully. This was also time-consuming which learners reported to the research participants.

In guiding learners on how to transcribe the interviews some participants used examples in the classroom and explained the process. Others said this was not possible and they just explained how to transcribe as time would be wasted since the curriculum demands were great.

Transcription was difficult for second language learners, because, as one participant explained, they had not previously done this. The process of listening and transcribing requires that learners listen attentively, and then capture the actual words. Participants stated that learners experienced problems transcribing the interview from mother tongue to English in some instances.

An important point to note in terms of problems experienced in transcribing is that of when interviews are done in the mother tongue African language. The transcribing of this from mother tongue African language into English is time consuming and sometimes there are no substitute words for the African words into English words. Although learners are encouraged to do the interviews in whatever language the interviewee is comfortable, learners need to take into consideration the problems they might experience later on.

What has emerged from the data is that participants have expressed that due to most of their learners being second language learners the transcription process took a lot of time. Participants had stated the interviewing and recording was the work of journalists who had been trained thoroughly to do such work and that their learners were very young to undertake such activities. Therefore, some participants chose not to teach the process to their learners.

In terms of verification there were aspects that could not be verified, since memory sometimes fades so the dates of events as well as place and duration become unclear, vague and indeterminate. There were contrasting views and opinions amongst the research participants since two people may not have experienced the same event in the same way. Participant B got her learners to view this aspect in detail and was able to get learners to use this aspect later on, remembering that the evidence was sourced from two different individuals. Gaining a multi-perspective fits into the CAPS document, as oral history requires that other sources of evidence be used for verification.

Verification was possible only if the evidence received by the learner could be cross checked. In most cases the cross reference between what was said by the interviewees may be cross checked against each other. One has to understand that the spoken word is what matters as this is the interviewee's experience or encounter, and although verification is important this can only be possible if there is other material available on that topic.

#### **4.11 Addressing multiculturalism in the classroom and society while managing an oral history project**

Most classrooms are multicultural in that they include Black, White, Indian and Coloured learners. The learners who attended the schools in which the research participants taught were from different socio-economic backgrounds, communities and had different experiences. This comes into play when undertaking an oral history project. Although the history educators did not emphasise this aspect when facilitating oral history projects with their learners it emerged from the data analysis process.

Multiculturalism means the preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society as a state or nation. Since we are living in a democratic country one must be able to respect other people's traditions and culture. In South Africa, as in many countries where there was oppression by a minority group, the cultural values and traditional values have been less known to other race groups living side by side and the majority were made to feel that their traditions and values were less valuable than others who had been dominating them. Over time most of those who had been oppressed have lost some of their tradition and values. It is when learners have to do research and interviews on these topics that they find out their traditional roots and values and they also begin to understand other people's perspectives and views.

The research participants who I had interviewed had been indirectly accommodating the various cultures in their history classes. This was done through including various topics so as to come to some understanding of different cultures. Topics given to learners

included: Churches, Temples, Mosques in their community, traditional beliefs such as circumcision, reed dance ceremonies, festivals and many traditional celebrations. In encouraging their history learners to undertake such oral history research they had been able to better understand their own communities, the history around them, and they would also be able to compare them with other groups who lived in the same community.

The history teachers who participated in this study also prepared learners to address their societies in terms of sharing of information on these topics with them. According to the participants the idea of respecting other people's culture and traditions will only happen when the various races that are living side by side are able to know about and understand each other's culture, beliefs and customs. So by interviewing people of different races and cultures learners gained a closer view and a clearer picture on aspects of other people's traditions and values.

Racial identities and racial division are entrenched in South African apartheid history and it had been common practice to separate people and oppress certain groups of people. The participants stated that when their learners interviewed participants from different race groups about their lives during the apartheid era they gained insight into the suffering of the different race groups and thus learners changed their views about certain racial groups around them and society at large. As such the history classrooms of the participants were dynamic places where learners from a multi-cultural society, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual communities could come to an understanding in order to preserve identities, language and traditions.

The data analysis has also revealed that participants experienced different cultures and learners with different languages and social backgrounds coming together in the classroom. Participants have tried to create a space for all learners to approach the oral history projects in their unique ways. Subsequently the data analysis has also revealed that participants have not mentioned any aspect related to indigenous knowledge systems. This proved a major silence. There is thus a gap in terms of educators'

understanding of the indigenous knowledge system and oral history. The curriculum has created space in the oral history project to incorporate indigenous knowledge systems but this did not happen. There is thus a lack in understanding by the history educators in relating how indigenous knowledge systems fit into oral history. One can question the gap in the training of educators on this aspect.

#### **4.12 Experiences of the educator in terms of the impact of gender and race when facilitating oral history projects**

Gender issues are complex. The participants spoke of their learners going out and finding interviewees who were afraid to talk to them as they are not the same gender or they were afraid of the interviewee. The participants in the interviews also explained that their learners had experienced problems when they interview people of the opposite sex. They stated that sometimes they were afraid of being alone in the same room with the interviewee. Participants advised learners to sometimes go in pairs to do their interview. Female learners frequently face this type of problem and as stated by one participant males prefer to interview other males.

Participant C specified that sometimes participants experienced problems when interviewing people who were not the same race as them. She stated that Black learners could not easily secure interviews with Indians as they were suspicious that they would be robbed if they allowed the Black learner into their home. The participant stated that she sometimes assisted her learners in securing an interview with the interviewee.

An analysis of the data has revealed that the participants had listened to learners' problems in dealing with the issue of gender and race. Gender and race issues are common in all societies and although apartheid has ended there are still aspects of division in our society, and so trust must be built up to alleviate the fear of different race groups. The oral history projects might have contributed to this in a small way.

#### **4.13 Challenges in the process of facilitating oral history projects as experienced by the educators**

There were many challenges that had been expressed by the research participants. Firstly, participants questioned the inclusion of the oral history task in the curriculum as they felt that oral history was beyond the comprehension level of learners and this was more of teaching learners the processes of journalism. One participant stated that learners had not developed the skills needed to do oral history so he opted for the research on the Heritage Project instead.

Time was also a problem as participants stated that the curriculum in the FET phase was extremely demanding. Learners had difficulty in undertaking the project as this requires them to work outside school, after school hours and during the holidays. The homework that was given to them takes up much of the learners' time and they could not do any real project work.

Participants also argued that many of their learners had come to board in the city and attend school in the suburbs and they returned home to spend time with their families during vacations. This made it difficult for them to find a comfortable location to do their oral history projects. A few participants used this to their advantage as they were able to tell learners to use their holidays to get the evidence needed by doing their interviews and transcription. Learners were thus able to complete the interviews in their areas with people with whom they were familiar.

When learners had drawn up their questions the checking and correcting of these questions became a problem. There were many learners who experienced difficulty in drawing up questions and they needed the history educator's support. The participants had to spend a lot of time on this aspect by reading through each question and correcting or adjusting the questions. However, the participants stated that they were sure that their learners would have learnt from their mistakes and that when they went to do the interviews their questions made sense to the interviewees.

Setting up the interviews was also a problem as not all learners had the skill to approach people to interview. Participants had to explain exactly what the learners are supposed to do when they approached their interviewees. It was not possible for the participants to glean a clear picture as to success rates at which learners were able to convince the interviewee to be part of the interview on their topic or how many times they had to ask different people to be interviewed.

Human subjects to interview on certain topics are also scarce to interview. Consequently the participants stated that the learners had difficulty in finding people to interview on certain topics. People who had bad experiences during the apartheid era were sometimes reluctant to speak of such experiences. Furthermore, many of the men and women who had experienced apartheid atrocities are now old and their memory has faded, or else they had blocked out certain bad experiences making it difficult to glean a clear picture of what really happened during this period. Although documents do exist the spoken words support such data that is collected. As a result some history educators were cautious of certain topics that may be hurtful to both the interviewer and interviewee.

It also emerged from the data analysis that a challenge existed relating to learners who did not know how to conduct an interview and often some learners would try to “make up” the interview but were easily caught out. Other learners could not identify people to interview in terms of the topic chosen. In such cases educators tried to assist them by making the appointments for the learners. History educators who had prepared their learners well on how to undertake the oral history projects experienced fewer problems. Learners who were taught how to go about identifying suitable interviewees and continued with their projects on their own did well. Those educators who had not really allowed their learners to take ownership of the oral history projects experienced problems as the learners had to wait for further instruction in order to continue with the oral history projects. Assisting in this case did not mean educators should give learners

what is required of them however learners need skills on which the oral history project focuses.

There was also a concern about the safety of learners while they conducted their interviews. Participants had expressed concern over learners going into homes of strangers to conduct interviews. They were afraid of sending learners out alone to conduct interviews and therefore asked the learners to go out in pairs as a safety measure. They also advised their learners that should they feel insecure they should leave the interview immediately. Female learners were especially cautioned to ensure that they would be safe.

The lack of technology needed to conduct interviews was another problem since the schools did not have any recording devices and most learners were from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, since most learners did have cell phones the educators informed them to use the cell phones to record their interviews. This was the first time for many learners to use their cell phones for recording so they had to firstly practise recording in the class.

A few learners also faced financial problems as they had to travel to other areas to do their interviews and had to use public transport. These learners sometimes used trains or buses to go to the interviewee. Participant B stated that she gave learners money so that they could go out do the interviews.

The transcription of the interviews was difficult for learners as learners had not previously done this. There was a concern from the majority of the participants as they had experienced problems in getting their learners to transcribe the actual spoken word without changing the text. So participants provided assistance and support to their learners by doing examples with small parts of the interview. Participants explained that the second language learners in particular experienced difficulty in transcribing and writing out reports.



The data analysed has revealed that all participants had experienced problems be they logistical, managerial or academic. Some were minor and the educator was able to solve them easily while others were not so easily resolved.

#### **4.14 Analysis of the interviews and report writing**

To analyse the interview meant that the learner had to read carefully and understand what information was stated on the various aspects of the topic. When a question is asked by the interviewer the interviewee answers the question posed. The question posed has some direction in terms of the answer so that answer has to be understood by the interviewer. By reading through the transcribed interview and listening to answers would give a clear understanding as to what that person was saying. Once that had been understood the expectation was that the learners write out a report of their findings on the topic in terms of what was researched and what was said.

Once the interview had been transcribed educators instructed learners to read the data received. Participant A just told his learners to use the information and to write a report. By him just telling he provided no instruction that should have been supported by further guidance on how to write the report. Participant B explained to her learners what they needed to do with the collected data. This included how to go about interpreting the data that was collected and relating that to the research for the learner to draw up a report. Participant B stated that she had got her learners to write out a paragraph at a time and they shared their reports in class with a peer. This collaborating was used to correct and refine the reports. She stated that learners wrote in reported speech as she made them understand that they were telling a story.

The data, and especially the learners' projects that were analysed, has revealed that the transcription of interviews was difficult for learners as they had not previously done this. The concern of participants was that their history learners experienced difficulty in transcribing the actual words. Secondly, participants felt it was time consuming for them to correct each person's report. A perpetual concern as expressed elsewhere in this

chapter was for second language learners who experienced many problems in transcribing and writing a report.

The report is an important aspect of the oral history project (it brings together the research and the interview discussion on the topic) and it should have been pointed out to learners. The participants' approach to getting their learners to write a report was different and the research participants who merely told their learners to write a report stated that the reports were too short. The participant who had given some direction received better reports, while those participants who provided clear instruction received very good reports. This was borne out by the textual analysis of the written reports. It is thus clear that informative in-depth instruction on writing a report was crucial in achieving good reports. The data analysed has revealed that those educators who had given full instruction received better reports than those who provided little or no instructions.

#### **4.15 Assessments of the oral history projects**

The purpose of the assessment of the oral history projects was to ensure that the learners had achieved the learning outcome as per the assessment guideline document for the FET phase. Learners had to be informed of the type of assessments that will be used by the marker of their oral history projects. Although the CAPS document is complex participants had been work-shopped in terms of the skills that the learners should have obtained by the end of undertaking such an oral history project and these aspects have been included in the assessment guidelines used by educators.

History educators had distributed these assessment guidelines sheets that they had prepared to their learners that were congruent with the documents that they received at the workshop they attended. Although the participants' assessment sheets did differ the various aspects on their sheets covered all aspects that the learners were required to cover in undertaking their oral history projects such as research, interviews, reports and reflective pieces. The participants explained the reasoning behind providing the rubric at

the very beginning of the project namely that this was done so that learners would know from the beginning as to what the end product would look like in terms of mark allocation.

The research participants emphasised that they had stressed that the learners adhered to the due dates. There were however problems with the dates for the projects. Sometimes learners do not understand the importance of keeping to due dates for the various aspects of work, more especially at the beginning of the project with the drawing up of the questions. If this aspect is done well the participants argued then learners were able to continue with their oral history project. Participants had observed that some learners did not work to the best of their ability nor did they take pride in their work and some just did the work for the sake of getting it done rather than taking their work seriously. This showed in the assessment as revealed by the projects analysed. However, it must be pointed out that not all participants had problems with their learners keeping to the time frames. The participants who had been constantly monitoring the projects stated that they were able to complete the projects on time. It can therefore be stated that learners worked better with continuous guidance and monitoring. Educators who had left the learners to continue with little or no guidance unfortunately had problems in terms of learners adhering to due dates.

#### **4.16 Involvement in oral history competitions**

In South Africa after the demise of apartheid oral history had been included in the curriculum and has been given importance as it is through oral history that the voices of those whose stories had not been documented may now be told. Educators began facilitating oral history with learners and the learners were given incentives to compete with each other. One such competition is the Nkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition run by the National Department of Education/Department of Basic Education and Training where schools from all nine provinces are given an opportunity to compete with each other. This is one of many such competitions and there are certificates awarded to participants at the oral history district competitions as well as the

national competition. Educators and learners from all nine provinces are invited to participate in these competitions.

Participant A stated that the projects produced by his learners were not worthy of entering competitions as many of his learners lacked proper technological skills and finances to produce a better standard of projects. Participant B specified that her learners had entered provincial competitions and had won. They went to enter the national competitions and participant B spoke of her experiences in entering such a competition as being rewarding. She stated that she was exposed to oral history practices that have helped her to improve the standard of projects.

The other participants who participated in the research argued that they had received some excellent projects but they did not have access to competitions and nor did they know how to enter learners in competitions. However, participant C explained that he had entered his learners in local government projects and had successful rewards. During one of the certificate presentation ceremonies after the learners had completed their projects interviewees were invited to listen to learners present some of the better projects before being presented with certificates. It was rewarding for the participant on a personal and professional level as she had met the interviewees who thanked her for getting learners to document their stories. Participant D stated that he did not get his learners involved in competitions as he believed their projects were not as good as the learners from other school since his school and the learners in his school did not have access to technology that would produce a project worthy of competition standards.

The oral history competitions can provide a platform to increase learners' confidence and inculcate a healthy community since they expose the stories of local inhabitants, who have stories to share to a wider audience.

#### **4.17 What is done with the completed oral history projects?**

Once learners have completed their projects they handed them to the educators for marking. The educators kept the learners projects so that they were available for moderation. Once the moderation process was over educators were free to do whatever they pleased with the projects.

Participants had explained that the completed projects that were done well were kept by them to show future history learners. Other participants stated they did not have a place to keep the completed oral history projects so they had no option but to return them to the learners as it was their hard work.

One participant had displayed the good projects in her classroom and in the school library as she believed that by so doing it would motivate other history learners also to do good projects.

#### **4.18 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an analysis into how the educators have experienced the facilitation of oral history in the FET phase. It gave a clear view of the challenges and successes experienced by the educators in facilitating the project with learners. It also served to answer the first of my research questions namely: “What were the experiences of history educators in preparing learners to conduct oral history projects till completion?”

The findings from the data in terms of the experiences of educators have revealed that not all educators have the same method of facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. Some history educators were trained in facilitating the learners in undertaking the oral history projects at university level. They themselves had to undertake an oral history project during their training which influenced their facilitation as they had an understanding of how to facilitate oral history. This, however, was not the same for other educators who had no training at university and had no experience themselves of

undertaking such projects. They were not aware of the challenges they would face nor did the educators anticipate problems in motivating their learners.

While some educators were able to gain the interest of the learners in completing the projects others faced challenges in involving learners for various reasons, such as poor language skills, not able to secure interviews, a lack of funds to travel, not having recording devices and more.

Furthermore, the training that was provided by the departmental workshops was not always sufficient for the educators to acquire the necessary skills that were needed to facilitate the oral history projects with their learners. The departmental workshops were of 2 days' duration and there was not sufficient time to delve further into the practices of oral history than beyond the basics. Even as recent as the change in curriculum to the CAPS in the FET phase in 2014 there has been a lack of proper training in terms of the workshops for the facilitation of the oral history projects by the local education department. The department workshops have taken place just one time a year and do not place enough emphasis on the facilitation of the oral history projects as there is emphasis placed on other aspects of the curriculum. The training on oral history projects is carried out by the subject advisor who does not have sufficient knowledge on the facilitation of oral history. Thus the training of the facilitation of oral history is lacking at departmental workshops.

The experiences of the history educators that have been discussed in this chapter also included discussion on reasons why they perceived oral history the way they did. The methods that educators used were influenced by a variety of factors, among which are the educators' training and experiences in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners.

There were important experiences that I have noted in this chapter which provided information on the educators' experiences of facilitating the oral history, their understanding and the choice of topics on the oral history projects, methods that they

used in facilitating and guiding learners, the setting of time frames and the differences and similarities to other educators who facilitate the oral history projects with their learners.

In this chapter I have provided an analysis of the educator's experiences of facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. There have been major themes that have emerged in terms of the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with the learners.

In the next chapter I will provide a deeper discussion that will link the literature to my findings. By looking at major findings in my study and the literature there should be theories that will emerge and I will be able to answer my second research questions and conclude the study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will provide a brief overview of each chapter that has been completed. Thereafter I will provide a list of the major findings. Next I will conduct a second level analysis in terms of the findings I reached and the literature on oral history. This will be done by comparing the findings of the data analysis in Chapter Four to the literature reviewed. Then I will address my key research questions as listed in Chapter One, which are: What are the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners in the Further Education and training phase? Secondly: Why did educators experience the preparation process the way they did? Thereafter I will discuss the shortcomings of my study and reflect on my personal and professional growth during my study in this the final chapter. Finally, I will make suggestions for further research and then conclude the dissertation.

#### **5.2. Brief overview of my study**

In my introductory chapter I stated that oral history is an academic discipline. I further provided a background and context for my study, and then I provided the rationale and motivation for my study. Next I presented the purpose and focus and provided my research questions. Thereafter the methodology and theoretical framework of my study were outlined and lastly I presented an overview of my dissertation.

The literature review was conducted in Chapter Two. In this chapter I provided a background to the literature that I had chosen in the context of my topic. Then I provided a clarification of the nature of oral history. Next I looked at the spread of oral history internationally and in South Africa and thereafter I looked at the pedagogy of



undertaking oral history. This was followed by a clarification of memory and validity in relation to oral history. Next, literature related to the emergence of oral history in schools in other parts of the world and the teachers experiences in this regard were dealt with. Thereafter the growth of oral history in South Africa and in South African schools came under scrutiny. Finally I identified the gaps that are in oral history research so as to find a niche for my work.

In Chapter Three I explained my research design, paradigm as well as my research approach. I further discussed the ontological and epistemological assumptions of my study. I then explained my research sample and ethical considerations before concluding the research methodology chapter.

In Chapter Four I have discussed the findings in terms of the experiences of the History educators who participated in the study and how they facilitated oral history projects with their learners. The findings from this chapter will be discussed below in section 5.3.

### **5.3. Summary, analysis and discussion of the findings**

There are many findings that have emerged in Chapter Four during the analysis of the interviews with educators on the experiences of facilitating the oral history projects with learners as well as the analysis of learners' completed oral history projects.

The major findings that have emerged are: history educators' interpretation of oral history; the training received by educators in order to facilitate the oral history projects with their learners; the methods used by the educators to facilitate the oral history projects; the topics and direction provided by the educators to learners in preparation to undertake the oral history projects; drawing up of questions for the project; the gathering of evidence through researching sources additional to the actual oral history project; the challenges and strengths of oral history work; issues of memory; transcription and verification of data; addressing multiculturalism in the classroom and society; challenges experienced in the process of facilitating oral history in the classroom as experienced by

the educators; the analysis of the interviews and report writing; the impact of gender and race as experienced by educators when facilitating the oral history projects; assessment of the oral history projects; involvement in oral history competitions and lastly the end product being the completed project.

Clear findings emerged from the data that I have analysed on the experiences of the educators on facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. From the above list I will discuss six major findings in this chapter as I believe that these are the strongest themes that have emerged during the research process.

#### The nature of oral history

The first finding is the conceptual understanding of what oral history is according to the history educators. The data analysis has revealed that not all research participants could provide a clear conceptual understanding of what oral history is. One participant related oral history only to interesting stories as told by old people. Another history teacher also did not provide a clear concept but instead said that oral history was merely “spoken words”. Although these aspects do relate to oral history the conceptual understandings reveal some limitations. I have thus deduced from the answers obtained from the educators that the conceptual understanding in most instances was not clear and precise. It would thus be necessary for more emphasis to be placed on getting educators to clearly understand what oral history is.

In my literature review I have been able to clarify the difference between ‘oral testimony’ and ‘oral tradition’. The two concepts, although similar, should be clearly understood by educators. As explained by Witz (1988) oral tradition is part of our past but this may be lost due to it not being written down. People who were not literate then passed it on by word of mouth, unlike oral history that deals with a specific topic as decided by the researcher, an interview is conducted whereby information is gathered on the topic. Dennis (2000) sums this up as follows: “A conversation is an exchange of information but it is a relationship. Two or more enter into a communication.” This conversation is between interviewer and interviewee. Questions are posed by the interviewer and the

interviewee answers the questions. The significant value of the use of oral history is explained by Jeffrey and Edwall (1994), who state that oral history connects the old and the young, the academic world and world outside, but more specifically it allows us to make connections in the interpretation of history; for example, between different phases of life. Within the classroom context it is the learner who engages in the oral history research which means that the learners interact with the elders within the community to gather information about the past. There is however no limitations as to who undertakes oral history projects as academics and ordinary people may also engage in oral history projects. This value, directly related to the nature of oral history were not well conceptualised by the history educators.

There are gaps in the conceptual understanding on the nature of oral history that may be linked to the curriculum documents and the training workshops that took place. The short training workshops could have resulted in this gap of educators' understanding of the concept of oral history not being filled.

#### *The rationale for including oral history in the curriculum*

The second clear finding that I will foreground is the history educators understanding of why oral history was included in the curriculum. Educators were confused and reluctant to undertake the oral history projects with learners as they did not fully grasp why oral history was included in the curriculum. The literature has revealed that the DOE/DOBET had decided on the inclusion of oral history in the curriculum post 1994. This happened after careful deliberation on righting the imbalances of the past by getting learners to record the voices of those who were not previously heard. There were, however, challenges in enabling educators to understand the reasons and benefits for the inclusion of oral history in the curriculum.

The history educators who participated in the study knew the complexity of undertaking an oral history project. Some had already undertaken oral history projects at tertiary level and were aware of the different stages of such an undertaking as well as the complexity of undertaking oral history projects. They had articulated the difficulty in

undertaking oral history projects since they had personal experiences of doing oral history. However, despite this academic knowledge the data analysis has revealed that educators were not entirely aware of why the oral history component was introduced at school level. None of the educators spoke of righting the imbalances of the past after the demise of apartheid by recording those whose voices had been omitted and is relevant to all in understanding our divided past. Differently put, in South Africa oral history is an important method of documenting the experiences and oppression of living under apartheid (Thompson, 2002: p88). South African citizens, more especially the Black people, could not read or write as apartheid education had not prepared them for this therefore they could not record their stories, but now these stories can be documented by learners, who will now become the writers and custodians of the history that belongs to them by recording and preserving them. The educators found it difficult to understand this link as a reason to include the oral history component in the curriculum.

The need for the oral history aspect being included in the curriculum internationally is clearly outlined by Thompson: "It encourages teachers and students to become fellow workers. It brings history into and out of the community. It helps the less privileged and especially the old, towards dignity and self-confidence" (2002: p23). The purpose of the inclusion of the oral history component into the history curriculum in South Africa corroborates the above statement since after the demise of apartheid the focus in education is greatly on constructivist learning by means of using resources within one's own environment.

Another reason for the inclusion that could have been explained to the educators was attempts by the apartheid government to ensure that documents that would implicate them in any form of atrocity were not available. In the light of this, "Tina Sideris, who was a member of the Oral History Project of the South African Institute of Race Relations (1982-1984), argues that for a number of reasons, the history of popular organisations has not been well documented. Illiteracy has militated against the systematic documentation of activities and organisations amongst certain groups". If, for

example, trade unions and political organisations did keep official records, then these were confiscated and destroyed by the state. Many sources of historical investigation were removed and repressed in the form of censorship and banning” (Oelofse & du Bruyn, 2004: p156). The literature furthermore revealed that the apartheid government did not want to keep records that could have been used against them at any time and for this reason had destroyed much evidence of any gross human rights violation committed during the apartheid era. Without any form of written records due to their scarcity, one may ask did the events take place and oral history can answer some of these questions.

The purpose of advancing democracy post 1994 have been emphasised as the NCS and CAPS curricula clearly state that history builds the capacity of people to make informed choices, to contribute constructively to society, and to advance democracy. It is therefore relevant for learners to seek the truth through investigation, rather than to accept a clean view as presented in text and this may be done through research and investigation. Oral history is cardinal in this regard.

Furthermore, some South Africans do not have their own histories and there was also a need to move away from the Eurocentric history that existed prior to 1994. There was consequently a demand made by the post 1994 change in curriculum for the inclusion of the oral history component into the curriculum. By including the oral history project as part of the curriculum emphasis was placed on introducing learners to the practices of the historian as enquiry skills are within the discipline: “... the purpose of teaching and learning history in the classroom is to bring epistemic tradition of history to the pedagogical site so that pupils can understand the grounds on which valid claims are made” (Counsell, 2011: p202).

Pre-1994 in South Africa the writing of history was seen as removed and textbooks discussed Eurocentric histories that not all South Africans could relate to. After attaining democracy in South Africa the change in governance saw a need to change the education system, to develop skills in learners. Building of skills through the introduction

of oral history was therefore part of the focus on outcomes based education where learners were engaged in learning through experiencing rather than rote learning.

Oral history research also emphasises the importance of heritage and the uniqueness of South African history as well as the recording of ignored histories and distorted and unrecorded histories of indigenous people. The purpose of the introduction of the oral history component in the curriculum was also to record the traumatic events of the past. Remembering means a dialectical relationship with the historical event. Since the majority of South African faced gross human rights violations this could only be recalled by the ordinary people and documented by means of oral history. In the South African context the traumatic events that took place under apartheid needed to be documented. Consequently, when an interviewee speaks during the interview he is able to visualise the event, thus a historical event is relived.

Oral history definitely compliments the recorded history and adds value to the written documents. Written records are sometimes impersonal, and they can lack feelings and are mere written accounts telling us that an event has taken place, but oral history goes beyond as it tells us how people felt about certain events. It tells us of the emotions and their effect on the people involved and relates to memory. Historical memory aids in historical continuity through a better understanding of society as explained by Hayes: “In a racist and radicalised society the identificatory projections of not me are easily displaced onto black people, or more anonymously and dismissively, onto blacks, the historical negative others in apartheid South Africa” (2000: p45).

Finally, oral history is linked to heritage. In South Africa we inherited a past through colonial rule and transformation, so “... oral history component within the curriculum is presented as a means of rewriting South Africa’s history and to address previously marginalised, hidden and subjugated ‘voices’ and ‘memories’ into history books. In addition, the new history curriculum addresses the issue of inclusiveness, IKS, and a syllabus that is relevant to the average South African child” (Wahlberg, 2008). These

aspects of learners writing the histories and documenting ordinary people's stories are foregrounded in the intent of undertaking the oral history project.

It would have been more meaningful if the educators who participated in this research had clarity as to why the oral history aspect was included in the curriculum. There has been a lack of enabling educators to understand the strengths of encouraging learners to undertake the oral history projects with their learners and this can be attributed to the fact that they did not understand the value of oral history as outlined above.

### *Training of educators in oral history*

The nature of the training of educators and their practical links to facilitating the oral history projects with their learners was also a firm finding. Training of history educators was carried out by the subject advisors, who had been trained at National level – in other words a cascading model of training was used. The educators attending the workshops on facilitation of oral history in the classroom were taught how to undertake oral history projects. The educators did experience problems as the training period was driven by time frames. They had only a few days in which they were work shopped on the new curriculum in history (first NCS and then CAPS) and not just the oral history component. This led to the training period being limited and little time being specifically spent on oral history.

Educators were initially reluctant to facilitate the oral history projects with their learners as the pedagogy of undertaking the oral history project was deemed to be too complex and their training insufficient. This reluctance was due to oral history not being clearly explained to them and they argued that they did not know what to do or how to facilitate this aspect of their work. This was the case despite the above-mentioned workshops which they deemed as being insufficient.

In addition, some history educators themselves have never undertaken oral history projects and therefore could not understand what the learners were supposed to do. As a result the educators were filled with reluctance as they felt that they may not have met

the expected outcome of the oral history projects. There is a clear link between the educators' understanding and the reluctance in undertaking the oral history project since the educators from the outset did not have a clear understanding of what oral history was as a starting point and this snowballed to all other aspects of oral history.

A question to ask oneself is whether the educators have undertaken steps to improve their knowledge of oral history by for example (those who have not done so before) undertaking an oral history project? The experience of the educator as well as their planning and management style will result in the success of the oral history project. If the educator is committed to what is being done in terms of motivating learners towards achieving successful oral projects then the educators would ensure a successful oral history project. Enthusiasm shown by educators such as empowering themselves and planning in advance, researching some of the topics themselves, looking for persons who learners could possibly interview when researching a particular topic and drawing up clear time frames, constantly monitoring and guiding learners could have mitigated against the poor training they have received in this regard.

It was important to note that although the workshops offered by the subject advisors had been well attended some history educators were not present. Those educators who had missed out did however make an attempt to acquire the necessary information from other educators and cluster co-ordinators (senior educators who have been teaching history).

The history educators stated that there was a lack of time as they were faced with curriculum demands, they needed to plan preparation of lessons, deal with social issues in their classrooms and find that they are overloaded with work. Hence they did not go the extra training mile. Linked with that, educators may or may not have the skill of monitoring the projects of learners due to them either having or not having undertaken the project themselves. Confidence to undertake the oral history projects is developed over time and through practise. Furthermore, some of the research participants argued



that uncertainty existed of the actual expectations related to oral history projects that are not formally mentioned in the curriculum documents.

The history educators during the research process also foregrounded a range of issues which they viewed as related to their lack of training to do oral history projects with their learners. Some pointed out that their learners were second language English speakers who could not write or speak the language well enough to be able to undertake the projects in English. Hence the research and reporting required a lot of time. The educators clearly did not view the oral history projects as an opportunity to build the language skills among their history learners. The learners were also not encouraged to conduct the interviews in the medium of instruction with which the interviewee is comfortable. Language was linked to class size with the large number of learners in the classes of the history educators being of different ability levels. To them this made the task of facilitation and monitoring difficult to manage. The educators stated that they had to make time so that they were able to work with the learners, thus large class size and time management added to their concerns on the facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners. The curriculum demands needed to be met and educators felt that there was insufficient time for the oral history projects.

Time constraints were thus presented as a major problem which their training did not address. The major concern in this regard was that too little time was available for the learners to develop the necessary oral history skills. The educators did however show concern for the various oral history skills that had to be taught to the learners. They spoke of the difficult nature of doing oral history as well as various aspects and stages of work that have to be covered in regard to completing a successful project. They spoke of complex pedagogy that had to be covered. Although a few concerns were addressed the history educators were not entirely satisfied as there were many concerns that were not addressed. The bottom line for them was that the time frames for the training were inadequate cover all their needs

The history educators also argued that they were issued with the documentation that was to assist them in preparing to undertake the oral history projects and with the assessment of the projects but they had received little advice in these manuals on how to deal with problems that they experienced. Although the mentioned documents are important the educators felt that there was need for actual physical support from the KZNDOE for the successful undertaking of the oral history projects with their learners. In the view of the history educators regular training workshops and sample presentations of oral history work undertaken by learners at the workshops would be of greater benefit than the once off workshop experienced.

### *Facilitating the oral history projects*

The analysis of my data has revealed that different methods had been used by the educators in facilitating the oral history projects. But this was haunted by numerous challenges. For example, the educators had expectations and so did the learners. The educators expected learners to follow instructions while the learners expect instructions that are clear from the educator, ongoing support and remedial measures. Sometimes a simple thing such as educators setting out clear time frames played an important role in learners delivering work of quality with the absence of such structures causing problems.

Educators emphasised the importance of giving proper instructions, they understood that the process of oral history is complex, thus they began with simple step by step processes of undertaking the projects. The educators seemingly had a certain expectation and will therefore provide instructions, but there was also tension between what the learners are to do in undertaking the oral history projects, their attitudes, their skills and the expectation of the educators. However, the educators also used different methods to facilitate the oral history projects with their learners. Audio visual presentations were used by one educator. The audio visual presentations meant that learners simply watched and listened to the step by step guide on doing oral history. This guide began with the choosing of topics, drawing up questions, undertaking interviews and researching. In the use of this method the educators played a secondary

role and thus did little else but guide the learners. This method is unlike the chalk and talk method used by another educator which meant active involvement in training the learners on the different steps needed to undertake oral history. In the latter case learners felt free to ask questions and to practice. Another participant used worksheets and explained the pedagogy of undertaking the oral history projects to the learners, allowing learners to interact and plan questions. This method was interactive as learners paired off to plan and practice the questions.

The instructions to learners are an important aspect that was carefully organised by all of the educators. The educators had a clear understanding as to what was expected of the learners in terms of the project starting from topic choices to report writing. However, even when an educator chose not to explain in great depth he had given the instructions in writing by setting up time frames.

All participants whom I interviewed did provide guidance and knew the pedagogical approach of undertaking oral history although their methods differed. My research has revealed that there was training of the educators on the pedagogical approach of undertaking oral history with learners, although this was limited. Educators who had previous training at university and who had themselves undertaken oral history were more au fait with the challenges and were able to prepare learners to face these challenges. Some of the educators also drew on the available material. Numerous guides on the facilitation of oral history have been drawn up. Literature reveals that early guides were drawn up internationally but had a Eurocentric way of undertaking oral history. In South Africa early guides on undertaking oral history were drawn up by Witz (1988), Wassermann (2007), Ntسامane (2008) and Wahlberg (2008). These have been discussed in Chapter Two. All these guides clearly provide a breakaway from the Eurocentric pedagogy to become more focused within the South African context of undertaking oral history.

Basic ethical principles were for the most part discussed with the learners by the educators. There is a clear code of conduct for undertaking oral history in South Africa

that has been drawn up by Dennis (2008) which is similar to that which is used in the United States of America and other countries. Ethical principles have been outlined clearly by Dennis (2008) who speaks of four principles: autonomy and respect for people's dignity, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice. The fact that the educators had a good sense of these principles proved to be important.

### *Challenges experienced by the educators*

Educators were faced with a range of challenges in facilitating the oral history projects. The first challenge related to the selection of topics that would be relevant and appropriate for learners on which to undertake their oral history project. The educators were given examples during the training workshops on oral history, however these topics would not be usable within their context, since the schools were situated away from those suggested in the given examples. Consequently the educators had to research suitable topics within the setting of the school and community that they served.

Educators whom I interviewed introduced topics to their learners in a variety of ways. Some educators chose to allow learners to choose from a variety of topics, while other educators gave topics to their learners. Choice of topics were in most cases given by educators. This can pose a problem if the learners have not taken ownership of the topic. According to one educator when learners formulate their own topics they take ownership and they produce better work. The principle of guiding is better than giving learners the topics was applied in this case. Oral history focuses on the development of skills, therefore it was better to allow learners to make informed decisions.

Some selected topics were recent such as street name changes. The educators argued that there were many articles written on the various street name changes and researching this was thus easy for learners as well as finding suitable people to interview from within the community or town. However, educators had expressed the view that learners did find it difficult in identifying people to interview on certain topics. Some history educators stated that they had therefore to tell learners who to interview.

Some interview projects focus on very specific topics, like the memories of the faction fights between different groups in different areas in the country, forced removals of a specific group and natural disasters that affected a specific group of people and a person in their community. It is important to note that just because someone was there it does not mean they fully understand what had transpired as it is through getting another account of the same event that information can be verified. The narrator of the event and his/her personal bias must be understood if all the information is to be presented accurately.

Facilities such as libraries, archives and museums served as important resources for learners when they were undertaking their projects. Educators had stated that it was sometimes difficult for learners to find a library to do their background research on the chosen topic, sometimes there were libraries but the learners could not find written material on the topics on which they were doing their projects. In certain cases educators tried to ensure that the learners would have some background material to base their research on, so educators went out themselves researching topics in their communities and providing support, like brochures and other publications that would assist their learners. This is helpful, however it is not wise to just hand out the information, and educators should develop research skills so that learners would become good historians. This is supported by Meltzer who explains “What is the historian? The historian is the creator and custodian of the memory of civilizations. A civilization without memory is no longer civilized. It loses its identity. If it doesn’t know what it is and where it comes from, it has no purpose. Without purpose it withers and dies” (Meltzer, 1994: p94). It is thus important for educators to ensure that learners know their purpose and develop skills in the researching and finding the resource that will enrich their oral history projects and develop skills.

The challenges cannot be ignored as they are realistic and the complexity that the learners may face cannot be minimized. The use of the library requires the skill of using the catalogue, knowing how to find the books through author and title, knowing under which section to find the book. One educator had the assistance of a librarian to

educate her learners on how to find the books, which was a short workshop that was enriching for learners. Educators should note that they should not take for granted that learners would know how and where to find the books. These resources can be used only if learners have access to them. It is difficult for many learners to access the resource due to a lack of finance, taxi fares and other modes of transportation may not be available and other social issues and challenges hinder learners in conducting their research.

The educators who planned carefully around the topics were the ones who themselves went out and did some research on the aspects that could be covered as topics for the learners on which to undertake their oral history projects. One educator drove around his area and visited old temples, churches and mosques. He went in and spoke to people who were involved in overseeing the running of these places, he gathered whatever information he could from them and then gave learners these topics along with some background information. These learners enjoyed doing the oral history projects. It is important to note that the enthusiasm shown by the specific educator did rub off on the learners

Educators also faced a challenge in getting their learners to draw up questions for their oral history interviews. A major concern the history educators expressed in this regard was that they were teaching in schools where there were students who had not been able to read, write and understand English, as most learners are second language learners. This resulted in educators having to dedicate extra time to help their learners to improve and develop language skills by writing out questions that would make sense. The educators in question tried to get learners to draw up their questions, however this was a difficult and long process as it was the first time that learners were drawing up questions for themselves.

Conducting interviews proved to be a complex process for the learners. One has to know who is speaking in an interview as “Who’s’ inflect oral narratives. Yet identities are neither singular nor fixed” (Shopes, 2006: p8). For example, political leaders will tend

not to mention events that will create a negative impression about themselves. These are but some examples of how an interviewee may blur information as explained by the educators.

Large numbers of learners as explained before also meant more work for the history educators in that checking their questions and correcting them was time consuming. Due to educators having large numbers in their classes and the lack of time to support all learners, the educators felt it was better to give the questions to their learners. One may question if this is good practice especially since the oral history projects that are undertaken by learners are meant to build skills among learners.

The educators spoke of problems that their learners experienced with regard to identifying suitable interviewees for whom their learners conduct their interviews. There are less organic intellectuals left to interview on certain topics as the educators found it difficult to point out these people to learners. The organic intellectuals are those people who have much knowledge of the subject although may not have been formally educated. Educators have acknowledged that due to the problem of identifying oral source people (interviewees) learners opt to omit certain topics and focus on a topic where there would be oral sources available to them.

The interview process is complex and the educators did try to equip their learners by educating them on various aspects that they would need to prepare, such as checking their equipment, taking along a pen and paper to make notes, as well as them being punctual for the interview. These are just simple steps of undertaking the interview, there are other complexities that may arise, it is sometimes impossible to assume the problems that may arise, so it may not be possible to adequately prepare learners.

Lastly there have been numerous technological challenges that educators have experienced during the facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners. Technology is constantly changing and the history educators in this study provided instruction to their learners on the use of technology to record. However, they generally

admitted that they themselves have not used such technology as a video camera or a recording device before. Technology itself posed a huge problem for learners. Firstly technology is not easily available and secondly if they could borrow such items they did not always know how to use it.

The educators have argued that learners do not have access to technology so their projects are not good enough to be taken to competitions. This is a contradiction since the purpose of the inclusion of oral history in the curriculum, amongst other reasons, was for learners to develop skills and become assertive. The history educators therefore need to reflect on giving learners an opportunity to use poster presentation, flip chart presentations and do their presentations. The competitions are not only based on portfolio presentation but also content, so learners should not be disadvantaged.

Limitations of resources that are needed in undertaking oral history (research resources human, technology) were another challenge faced. Resources that are required for a successful oral history project are both written and oral resources. There were challenges that learners have experienced in a democratic country that may clearly be understood through the past histories. "... Historical research requires considerable skills, which can be taught and learnt as well as acquired with experience" (Fullbrook, 2009: p30). Researching is a skill and it is through practice that learners will acquire this skill.

Educators had also expressed a concern where learners spoke of interviewees wanting to be paid for the interview. The issue of being paid raises a problem as learners want to capture the story of the person for their school oral history project, they are not working or earning a salary and students do not have an income. When learners go out into the community it is important that they are aware of the community that they are working in as well as the person. They clearly need to outline their aim and not make any promises of financial or other gain to the interviewee. The educators' concern is justified as they are also responsible for the safety of the learners, so they had to be cautious of where the learners were going to do the research and the person whom they



are interviewing. In line with this ethical issues must be clearly outlined by the learner to the interviewee. Interviewees must know the purpose of the project and how it is to unfold. The interviewer needs to get informed consent in order to undertake the interview. Educators must ensure that learners explain the purpose and get informed consent and inform interviewees that they are allowed to withdraw at any time.

In our unique South African society which has experienced the process of democratisation, there are many challenges to rid South Africans of their horrific past. This belief had to change and it is through oral history that the voices of those who were subjugated can now be heard. Educators should become aware of this important aspect in order for them to become motivated and view the oral history undertaking as allowing for a healing process. For learners to understand they should have thoroughly researched the topic, time, place and an appreciation of the topic, complexity of cause and consequences. The training of educators on the facilitation of oral history in the classroom is now being included in modules in the teaching training courses; the practical aspect of the training further develops the educators' skills in carrying out the projects with learners.

Another challenge related to the chronology of a story was the sequence of recollection of events which differed among the educators whom I had interviewed. Educators themselves need to realise the complexity of recollection of events. "The unreliability of the interviewee's memory for hard and specific facts and chronological sequence is undoubtedly the major criticism of oral evidence" (Oelofse & Du Bruyn, 2004; p160). The challenge that interviewees face is the sequencing of actual events as people cannot recall and express the events in a sequenced manner.

Different people recollect the same event in different ways. "He may hesitate, forget passages, add embellishment, abbreviate, etc ..." (Vansina, 2006: p130). People recollect events differently. "Narrators frequently get names and dates wrong, conflate disparate events into a single event, recount stories of questionable truthfulness"

(Shopes, 2006: p6). This also proved a challenge to educators as they had to explain this to their learners who struggled to understand it.

Oelofse and Du Bruyn (2004) also inform South African educators to be aware of pitfalls when using oral history as a teaching tool within the local context. "The notion of a community-orientated history in a multicultural society, like South Africa, is fraught with dangers. The interviewer should be sensitive to intra/inter- community divisions and tensions along the lines of political and ideological affiliations, race and ethnic identity and class positions. Religion, language, culture, political loyalty, race and class are all factors that determine the way in which communities define themselves" (Oelofse & Du Bruyn, 2004: p160). In South Africa the undertaking of oral history has a unique complexity, therefore it is important for the learners to know the community in which they are undertaking their project. There are unwritten rules, such as greeting, the way a young person should greet an elder, the type of language that he/she should use, the dress code when meeting an interviewee, the tone of voice, and the various channels used to approach the elders to interview females and others in their community. These are not written anywhere for learners, but learners have to be aware of them and their educators have to see to this.

In the above paragraphs I have explained some of the problems that educators have encountered when undertaking the oral history project in terms of memory, recollection and sequencing of events. The above are realistic problems of which all educators should become aware.

My first research question was: What are the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners in the Further Education and Training phase? During my analysis of the data I had asked experienced educators who had facilitated oral history projects with their learners to shed light on their experiences. I have gained insight that educators were not all the same. There were many aspects that have been discussed in-depth pertaining to the facilitation of the oral history projects with the learners and both strengths and challenges have been discussed, I will now link this

with the second research question that being: Why did the educators experience the facilitation of the oral history project with their learners the way they did?

My research has revealed that not all educators had the same training on the facilitation of oral history with their learners. As explained earlier some educators did receive training at university while studying as they themselves had to complete oral history projects whereas other educators were trained at cluster workshops and departmental workshops. It is the training that provided educators on the conceptual understanding and the pedagogy of facilitating the oral history projects with their learners. It must be noted that the educators who had personally undertaken the oral history project were better equipped to facilitate the processes with their learners on undertaking the oral history projects.

Educators' own interest in oral history has also impacted on the end product. Educators who knew the pedagogy were better able to facilitate the oral history projects sequentially with learners and this resulted in good projects. The educators who were interested also provided learners with a background on the topics presented and gave clear direction as to where to go to get further information. The educators own experiences do impact on the facilitation of the oral history project with the learners.

It is also important to know that there was prior reluctance by some educators on facilitating the oral project with learners as they felt that this aspect lent itself to journalism and was not at the level of the learners. This assumption by the educator was proven incorrect as this specific educator acknowledged his learners for excellent oral history projects that they carried out since he himself began to research old buildings in his town. The data did reveal that educators ensured that the oral history projects were undertaken successfully as the projects of their learners were evidence of this. Despite the educators challenges and own opinions the projects of the learners were well laid out, there was evidence of oral interviews and analysis of the data, including the learner projects, a report and the educators did assess these projects.

In section 5.3 I have discussed my major findings and in so doing explained what the experiences were of history educators in facilitating oral history projects and why they had such experiences. In the next section I will discuss the limitations to my study.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the study**

Any dissertation has shortcomings and mine was no different. I conducted my research using a qualitative approach that involved interviewing experienced educators in the KwaZulu-Natal area and by also engaging with learners' projects. I had not included educators from other provinces which limited the scope of my study. I also could not interview all educators (the total research population) due to the vastness of the province, travel costs and the time available to complete the dissertation. Consequently my study was confined to history educators in areas within my reach – in other words those who could be conveniently selected in a purposive manner.

#### **5.5 Personal and professional reflections on the study**

I had been able, by means of my dissertation, to view the facilitation of oral history through the window provided by experienced history educators who have provided me with their in-depth experiential knowledge, their conceptual understanding, their pedagogy and their own understanding and training on the undertaking of the oral history projects. All information that I received has given birth, through careful analysis to this dissertation. This in itself proved to be an empowering endeavour.

My interaction with educators during the interviews also provided the educators with some thoughts for the future such as the storage of the oral history projects for future reference on the topics undertaken, competitions that were taking place annually and the OHASA conferences that provide an opportunity for learners to showcase their work on oral history topics in keeping with the themes annually.

As a history educator myself, and based on this dissertation, I do suggest more support from the authorities for educators undertaking the facilitation of the oral history projects with learners in the FET phase. I suggest that educators be provided with a guidebook to assist them in the facilitation of the oral history projects with their learners. This may assist the educators and learners in understanding the pedagogy more clearly. Also we in South Africa have a unique culture and this culture impacts on the approach that we use to gain access to participants whom we wish to interview, hence a unique South African schools handbook on the facilitation of oral history should be looked into by the national education department. I also think all stakeholders involved in oral history should meet and take ownership in drawing up a South African pedagogical guide that will ultimately benefit all interested oral historians. This pedagogy should also reach universities where educators are trained on the facilitating of oral history at school level.

Furthermore, I believe that much work goes into doing the oral history projects thus these projects are valuable and should be properly stored for future use or reference. In South Africa there has been a lack of information provided to educators as to where the projects could be sent to or stored. As mentioned earlier that the Department of Arts and Culture has a NARROS programme that welcomes the storage of oral history projects for future use, thus educators could be encouraged to make use of such facilities.

I also need to point out that technology poses a huge challenge to both educators and learners in South Africa. Although the authorities tried to provide I-pads to schools it had a negative aspect as these schools were subjected to break in and theft of the I-pads. Communities need to understand the need for technology amongst the youth and respect the property and provisions made by government to schools. I argue for this since having access to technology makes it, in many ways, easier to conduct oral history projects.

My study on the experiences of educators in facilitating the oral history projects with learners has increased my professional understanding on the facilitation of the oral history projects as well as providing an understanding as to why educators have experienced the facilitation of the oral history projects the way they have. This has opened a new world to me and has made me reflect on my practices as an oral historian and history educator. There is certainty in my mind that the more interest the educators show the greater the success of the oral history projects will be.

## **5.6 Suggestions for further research**

The interest in oral history in South Africa is increasing and there are numerous topics that have not been thoroughly covered to date. I suggest a list of topics be drawn up by DOBET in conjunction with educators and subject advisors in each of the nine provinces and these made available to all schools. The research on these topics should also give an angle to heritage as there is clear link between heritage and oral history.

In this study I have looked at the experiences of educators in the KwaZulu-Natal area. It may also be useful to research the experiences of educators in other provinces and their practises in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The experiences of the history educators, who participated in this study, although at times alike, were also in many ways different as different challenges were faced. This may be seen in the understanding of the concept of oral history, through the various workshops that educators had attended, through the preparation of learners in undertaking the oral history project, by their choice of topics that the educators give to learners, the varied forms of monitoring and guidance, right to the final product of the

completed oral history project. The success and challenges are significant as it is through understanding why these have emerged will we as educators be better able to prepare and equip ourselves to undertake successful oral history projects in future.

I viewed how and why these educators were successful in facilitating the oral history projects with their learners and discussed why some were not successful. I also engaged with how they had overcome the problems that they experienced, as this may assist the novice educator to prepare, plan and facilitate the oral history aspect in their classrooms.

Significant challenges faced included proper training of educators and monitoring of learners doing the projects. Since the oral history aspect has been included in the curriculum it is necessary for educators to reflect on their training and facilitating style. Most of the educators had been trained in undertaking the projects with their learners, and the educators themselves might have undertaken oral research and done projects. But in all of this I have found that the history educators are very much alone and that the history subject advisors should become more active and involved in assisting the educators. The support structures for the educators must also be improved since many educators stated that they had only been trained but received no support afterwards when actually undertaking the projects with their learners. This is key amongst the many findings in this chapter on how and why history educators experienced the facilitation of the oral history projects the way they did. Despite this, and the many other challenges they faced, the history educators who participated in this project generally exhibited a solid sense of how to get their learners to do oral history projects. In so doing, in a small way, "The history of everyday life, the role of ordinary people in shaping events and importance of social issues such as racism, gender equity, reconciliation and social justice are gaining more prominence in tertiary education in South Africa" (Oelofse & Du Bruyn, 2004: pp161-164; Ritchie, 2003: p201; Ludlow, 2007: pp207-208) were unpacked with some success. Oral history has the potential to expose the everyday life of people in a unique South African way and bring people and communities together. This is the power of oral history.

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# APPENDIX A

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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13 September 2011

Mrs S Singh (203400656)  
School of History Education  
Faculty of Education  
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Singh

**PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0840/011M**

**PROJECT TITLE: The experiences of educator's in facilitating oral history projects in the Further Education and Training Phase (FET)**

In response to your application dated 6 September 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

**Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.**

**PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the 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)**  
**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

cc. Supervisor: Prof J Wassermann  
cc: Mr N Memela/Mrs S Naicker, Faculty Research Office, Edgewood Campus



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONS**

1. When did you begin facilitating oral history projects and why?
2. What sort of previous training did you receive in undertaking oral history projects with your learners?
3. Have you personally undertaken any oral project either during your training years as an educator or thereafter? Explain.
4. Can you discuss how you plan to undertake oral history projects with your learners?
5. How has your training (if any) helped you in undertaking oral history projects with your learners?
6. Do you experience problems in planning and preparing learners to undertake the oral history projects? Explain them.
7. In your opinion are learners motivated enough to carry out the projects? Why
8. What were some of the problems encountered by learners who undertake oral history projects?
9. How do you guide or assist learners to overcome such problems?

10. What do the learners gain from undertaking oral history projects?
11. How do you assess learner's projects?
12. What happens to the completed projects thereafter?
13. Are there any form of outside assistant from other organizations and structures in assisting you with the oral history projects?
12. What are your views about the oral history competition?
13. How have you exposed learners to oral history competitions?
14. What else would you like to tell me about facilitating oral history projects with the learners.

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YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Faculty of Education

ETHICAL CLEARANCE REVIEWER'S REPORT

Date 30/08/11

Name of applicant Mrs S. SINGH

Comments:

*This application for Ethical Clearance is approved as it meets all the requirements. The questionnaire/interview schedule and letters of informed consent are attached and they comply with all ethical considerations*