

Teachers' Dominant Discourses of Barriers to Basic Education in an HIV and AIDS Context

By

Padmini Ramiah

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Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu Natal.**

Supervisor: Professor Anbanithi Muthukrishna

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DEDICATION

**This research study is dedicated to the memory of my late dad, and
my late husband whose humility and support have sustained and
encouraged me to pursue my studies.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly I would like to thank God, as I would not have been able to complete this dissertation without his divine intervention in my life.

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Thanks to my son, Kalwyn and my daughter, Sharesce for inspiring and encouraging me to pursue my studies.

My gratitude to my mum for her support and help.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation titled **Teachers' Dominant Discourses of Barriers to Basic Education in an HIV and AIDS Context** is my own work and that all the sources that have been used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Ramiah

Ramiah Padmini

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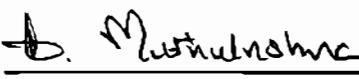
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**APPROVAL OF DISSERTATION SUBMISSION BY
SUPERVISOR**

Name of Candidate	Padmini Ramiah
Title	Teachers' Dominant Discourses of Barriers to Basic Education in an HIV and AIDS Context.

**As the candidate's supervisor I have approved this dissertation for
submission.**

Name of Supervisor	Professor Anbanithi Muthukrishna
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Signature	<u></u>
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Date	<u>10.04.06</u>
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Abstract

This study is situated within a poststructuralist paradigm and uses qualitative methods to examine how teachers map and make sense of intersecting barriers to basic education embedded in their specific schooling contexts and communities, in particular, in a context in which HIV/AIDS prevalence is high. The study examines how teacher constructions of their experiences of teaching in a particular context shape their taken for granted understandings of the intersecting barriers to basic education. In other words, it explored how teachers position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the community in which they teach, and how these shape their understandings of barriers to basic education. The participants were thirty-six teachers (ten males and twenty six females) from five schools in the Richmond Municipality. Focus group interviews were used to access participants understanding and experiences' of barriers to schooling in the context of HIV and AIDS. Within the focus group sessions, participatory techniques were used as a means of drawing out sensitive information from participants, namely, a ranking exercise and the vulnerability matrix. The findings in the study suggest that the teachers relied on a deficiency framework as a basis for understanding the intersecting barriers to basic education in an HIV and AIDS context. Five key themes relating to this framework emerged: a discourse of detachment; silences; difference as deficit; normalisation discourse; and a discourse of caring.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ESAR	Eastern and Southern African Regions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
ONAP	Office of National Aids Policy
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
WHO	World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has left no part of the world untouched. Notwithstanding the catastrophic effects that are already being experienced, (Kelly, 2000) the full consequences of the pandemic are still to be felt. According to ONAP (1999), the bleak prospect is that over the next decade AIDS will kill more people in Sub-Saharan Africa than the total number of causalities lost in all wars of the 20th century combined. Kelly (2000) adds that the AIDS pandemic is disrupting social systems, exacerbating poverty, reducing productivity, wiping out hard-won human capacity, and reversing development gains.

For a social service sector such as education, Kelly (2000) stated that this apocalyptic scenario has massive consequences. Just what these consequences are can be gleaned from an examination of the potential multiple effects of HIV/AIDS on the education sector, with special attention to the formal schooling system. Education has the potential to stem the apparently inexorable advance of the epidemic, and to assist in coping with its causalities. Almost every educator, including myself, will eventually be teaching some learners who are HIV/AIDS positive. Teachers are pivotal in the education system for the transmission of information about HIV and hence can play a central role in the prevention effort. According to Malaney (2000) teachers are faced with the challenge in that the virus undermines the structure and function of the education system.

1.2 Motivation and Rationale for the Research

According to De Lange, Greyling & Leslie (2004), HIV/AIDS is part of the South African reality to such an extent that more than half the children admitted to South Africa's second largest hospital are HIV positive or have full blown AIDS. This has implications for the education sector, as HIV/AIDS has also infiltrated and affected schools and education institutions. This no doubt calls for the role of the educator to exceed that of teaching. It is now more than ever necessary that educators pay close attention to the impact of HIV/AIDS as a barrier to learning. De Lange, Greyling & Leslie (2004) have found that educators have not adequately been made aware of the need for more specialized support of learners who are infected or affected by the

prevalence of HIV/AIDS in their environment, nor are they thoroughly equipped to teach, facilitate the development of, and provide support for these learners. Although some educators have knowledge of HIV/AIDS, many may feel uncertain of how to deal with it in the classroom.

Baxen & Breidlid (2004) argue that research in the area of HIV/AIDS within the education sector is largely influenced by dominant discourses from within economics, medicine and epidemiology sectors which, by and large, fail to take into consideration the social and cultural embeddedness of the virus. According to Baxen & Breidlid (2004) the field of education can contribute meaningfully to understanding the discursive fields of practice in which messages and knowledge about the pandemic are articulated, produced, reproduced by not merely reproducing forms of research that respond to what we come to know but how or whether we can come to know. A shift in the nature and focus of research needs to pay close attention to where and how the production and reproduction of the HIV/AIDS discourse takes place. This discourse should be understood within deeply embedded situated, discursive spaces (contexts) where social and cultural practices are negotiated, produced and reproduced.

Looking at dominant discursive constructions of teachers and the frameworks they use to make sense of barriers to schooling in an HIV and AIDS context can provide invaluable insights for the education departments, other educationists, for communities, and for those working in other fields. This understanding can enhance both existing and current HIV and AIDS initiatives.

1.3 Context of this Research

This research is situated in a broader South African study exploring the barriers to education that may have been precipitated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. A team of researchers from the disciplines of education and psychology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal engaged in a project aimed at mapping barriers to basic education in the Richmond municipality, KwaZulu-Natal. Although the larger project targeted numerous stakeholders, including parents, learners, NGOs, people living with AIDS, this study focuses on teachers from five schools in the Richmond area. Teachers being the most influential people in the lives of learners play a pivotal role in accessing

knowledge that can combat HIV transmission. However, studies have acknowledged a gap in research within the educational sector in relation to HIV and AIDS suggesting that research neglects the “social and cultural embeddedness of the disease” (Baxen, 2004:1).

In order to obtain an understanding of how teachers position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the community in which they teach, teachers’ from five schools were identified to participate in this study. Three were primary schools, (two urban and one rural) and two high schools, (one urban and one rural) in the Richmond District. These schools ranged from rural with limited resources to more urban with better resources.

1.4 Focus of the Study

Much of literature reviewed has generally focused on teacher lives in the context of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. Much of the research has been situated within an interpretivist paradigm. Not all studies access the voices of teachers. Having identified the gap in the literature review, this study is located within a critical poststructuralist paradigm. It focuses on frameworks teachers use to make sense of barriers to schooling in an HIV and AIDS context. This study also explores how teachers position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the communities in which they teach.

1.5 Aim of Study

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) suggests that key barriers in the South African context that render a large number of children and adults vulnerable to learning breakdown and sustained exclusion include: problems in the provision and organisation of education; socio-economic barriers; factors that place learners at risk, such as high levels of poverty, violence and crime, HIV/AIDS epidemic; substance abuse; attitudes; an inflexible curriculum; problems with language and communication; inaccessible and unsafe built environment; inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services to schools, parents, care-givers, families and communities; lack of enabling and protective legislation; disability; lack of human resource development; and lack of parental recognition and involvement. This study has extended the debate by examining how educators map

and make sense of the intersecting barriers embedded in their specific schooling contexts and communities, in particular, a context in which HIV/AIDS prevalence is high. The study also examined how teacher constructions of their experiences of teaching in a particular context shape their taken for granted understandings of the intersecting barriers to basic education.

1.6 Key Research Questions

- What are teachers' constructions of barriers to basic education and how these barriers intersect in the contexts in which they teach?
- How do teachers position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the community in which they teach, and how do these shape their understandings of barriers to basic education?
- Why do teachers select and in some cases discard particular discourses of barriers to basic education?
- What are the contradictions and contestations embedded in these dominant discourses relating to barriers to basic education?

1.7 Structure of dissertation

The dissertation includes the following four chapters.

Chapter 2 reviews literature that examines barriers to basic education in the context of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa from the perspective of teacher lives.

Chapter 3 has two sections. The first section is an overview of the research design and methodology used to elicit the data for this research, and the second section focuses on the theoretical framework, namely, discourse theory situated within the poststructuralist paradigm.

Chapter 4 documents the findings of the research.

Chapter 5 is on researcher reflections.

CHAPTER TWO: PERSPECTIVES ON BARRIERS TO BASIC EDUCATION IN HIV AND AIDS CONTEXTS

2.1 Introduction

This study examines how teachers make sense of barriers to basic education in a context where the incidence of HIV and AIDS prevalence is high. The way in which we make sense of things and behave are determined and sustained through historically and culturally specific social processes. Social life is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning systems. The concrete experiences and responses of educators and how they make meaning of intersecting barriers including HIV and AIDS at a local level, namely, the school and the community are of paramount importance. According to Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) the impact of HIV/AIDS on education indicates it is a barrier in the sense that it prevents optimal learning from taking place.

2.2 Teacher Lives and Barriers to Basic Education in the Context of HIV and AIDS

This chapter reviews literature that examines barriers to schooling in the context of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa from the perspective of teacher lives. It looks at some key intersecting barriers to achieving quality education for all that have been documented in recent literature.

2.2.1 Researching teachers in the context of HIV and AIDS: some insights

While in South Africa, education is viewed as the key to social, cultural and political participation as well as personal and community empowerment (Badcock-Walters, 2002), HIV and AIDS represents the largest single threat to these democratic ideals. Badcock-Walters (2002) discerns that the advent of HIV infection followed by AIDS-related mortality will build on already high levels of voluntary or enforced exclusion, aggravating the impact on education and contributing to the decline in enrolments, transition rates and output from the system. Malaney (2000) perceives the linkage between the education system and the AIDS epidemic as a dual one. On the one hand, the school system provides a mechanism for the transmission of information about HIV, and hence, plays a central role in the prevention effort; and on the other hand, the disease undermines the structure and function of education itself.

Malaney (2000) explains that teachers' are a central pillar in any education system. Their survival and well-being is essential for the sustainability of the system. Except for South Africa, Ghana and Botswana, other countries have proceeded as if HIV/AIDS is not a problem among teachers. Yet, according to Rugalema & Khanye (2002), evidence to the contrary exists. Baxen (2004) explains that within a South African context, at a micro level, teachers are affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in a number of ways.

Notwithstanding the above, there has been a marked lack of studies that focus on teachers and schools. In some studies, Akoulouze, Rugalema & Khanye (2001) found that teachers have been positioned as deliverers of an uncontested, already negotiated body of HIV/AIDS knowledge within spaces (schools and institutions) that are unproblematic. In this regard, teachers within the sub Saharan contexts have consequently been targets of training programmes that have largely portrayed them as lacking knowledge and skills to teach lifeskills or sex education programmes effectively.

Baxen (2004) concurs that studies on teachers within the sub Saharan context focus on them being objects of a structure and system (deliverers of curriculum) rather than teachers as individuals who work and live in contexts where HIV/AIDS is prevalent, and to which they themselves are producers, interpreters, reproducers, mediators and purveyors of knowledge. Other studies argues Kelly (2002), have attempted to describe teachers as more 'vulnerable' than the rest of society, citing reasons such as mobility as a key indicator.

According to Akoulouze, Rugalema & Khanye (2001) teachers are the most influential adults with whom school-going children come into contact most often, yet not many studies have been conducted on teachers' perceptions and experiences with regards to HIV/AIDS as a barrier to learning. Boler (2003) states that not only are teachers in the Southern African region directly affected by HIV/AIDS, but they also face the additional challenges of teaching about HIV and dealing with children affected by HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is likely to compromise education quality in South Africa. Since the present study is examining the frameworks teachers use to understand or make sense of barriers to learning in an HIV and AIDS context, a

review of literature on teachers lives in the context of the pandemic in sub Saharan Africa is relevant.

2.2.2 Teacher attrition, teacher stress, teacher morale and quality education in the context of HIV and AIDS

While this study examines teachers' constructions of their experiences of teaching in a particular context, and how this context shapes their understandings of intersecting barriers to education, this section reviews literature that focuses on teacher attrition, teacher stress and low teacher morale and how these impact on the quality of education.

2.2.2.1 Teacher attrition

According to Hepburn (2002) educational quality in sub-Saharan Africa is negatively affected in AIDS-affected areas by firstly, the decreasing supply of trained teachers and secondly, the loss of teacher productivity when they become ill. As a result, parents and caregivers choose not to educate the children because educational materials are rare, teachers are often absent, and the learning environment is disorganized. Kelly (2000a) also perceives that high teacher mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa have a serious impact on the future and quality of primary education, and without trained teachers, it is difficult to maintain high quality instruction and keep schools open. The result is that often schools are forced to combine students in different grades into one classroom. While estimates of teacher mortality vary from country to country in sub-Saharan Africa, a striking trend towards increased teacher HIV infection levels and mortality is emerging.

Kelly (2000a) points out that in Zambia, in 1998, teacher deaths were equivalent to the loss of approximately two-thirds of the annual output of newly qualified teachers. Overall, there was no net gain of teachers in an educational system that continues to grow. Kelly (2000a) explains that a recent study in sub-Saharan Africa revealed teacher mortality to be 4 percent, almost 70 percent higher than the general population, with AIDS being the primary cause. According to Kelly (2000a) in Botswana, 1999 estimates suggest the country was losing up to 5 percent of its teachers annually. A 1992 study in Tanzania predicted more than 14,000 teachers would die from AIDS by 2010, and the number was projected to grow to 27,000 by

2020. The study also found that in 1999, Malawi was losing approximately one teacher per day to AIDS.

Lawrence (2002) however, argues that to claim that teachers are more affected than others is only partly correct. Instead he thinks that they are more likely to have sexual relations with strangers because of high mobility. It is also partly incorrect because teachers within sub Saharan Africa are socially visible. For example they are few (not more than seven teachers at an average Tanzanian primary school), they earn money (a significant sum in impoverished villages), and are, therefore, in a socio-economic class of their own in rural areas. According to Lawrence (2002) if one teacher dies at a school with seven or even ten teachers, one is talking of a loss of more than ten percent. If three of them die, one is talking of around 50% loss! Mortality among teachers, especially if measured in percentages, is not a good indicator or rather would not be a good indicator of differences in HIV positivity between teachers and the general population.

Hepburn (2002) found that in sub-Saharan Africa, when teachers become ill, their teaching capacity decreases, further limiting the quality of instruction. As HIV progresses into full-blown AIDS, teachers are often forced to take long absences to recuperate from illnesses. Since substitute teachers are rare, classes are often suspended. If teachers are able to physically attend classes, the emotional stress is traumatic and lesson preparation, homework correction, and classroom interaction are often a last priority. Terminally ill AIDS patients generally suffer long periods of ill-health before death.

Malaney (2000) disagrees with Hepburn(2002) in stating that infected teachers often have increased periods of absenteeism that continue until they can no longer work. Malaney (2000) explains that even when they are in the classroom, increased morbidity during this period can affect productivity. Perhaps the greatest cost to education systems will be the high rate of teacher attrition due to AIDS mortality. There has been an attempt in most African countries to lower pupil-teacher ratios. While the epidemic will cause a decline in the number of students enrolled, the impact of teacher attrition could outweigh that. Malaney (2000) explains that larger schools

may cope by having other teachers substitute in the short term, or by combining classes. Strategies like these will once again affect the quality of education.

In addition to these mortality losses, Kelly (2000b) points out that education systems are experiencing increased rates of attrition as they lose teachers to areas of employment that offer better remuneration. The attrition which has been a long-standing running sore for education has been aggravated by the search for educated personnel to replace those lost to AIDS in other sectors of government, business and industry.

Kelly (2000b) draws attention to two other aspects of the loss of educators that are important for their impact on the education system. One is that the capacity of teacher education programs to keep pace with teacher attrition will be undermined by their own staff losses. The second is the problem of finding replacements for specialist teachers and other staff. When the loss is that of a general educator, there is some possibility of others moving over to cover the needs. This is not possible when the loss is that of a highly specialized educator, such as an A-level teacher of mathematics or science, or a college lecturer in infant teaching methods(*ibid*).

According to Malaney (2000), within the education sector itself there will be a financial burden, as governments will need to compensate teachers who are terminally ill and unable to work. Many governments also provide death benefits and other compensation, and will find the cost for such compensation increasing as mortality rates increase. Perhaps the greatest burden on the education sector will be the increased rates of morbidity and mortality among teachers. It has been speculated that teachers in Southern Africa are particularly vulnerable to the disease for a combination of reasons. First, they are often placed in schools away from their hometowns, and lack of housing facilities frequently requires that they live alone, leaving their families behind. Second, they generally have higher levels of disposable income than the general population. These factors combined can increase the likelihood of risky behaviour.

2.2.2.2 Teacher stress

According to (Kelly, 2000b) teachers also suffer from overwhelming stress and psycho-social trauma. They are deeply affected personally by the incidence of HIV/AIDS among their relatives and colleagues, and by fear and uncertainty about their personal infection status. Though these are major causes of concern for them, they are areas in which they may receive little support. Kelly (2000b) explains that less than one-third of a sample of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa who had experienced AIDS sickness or death among relatives had talked about the problem with friends or relatives. The remainder felt either unable or unwilling to do so.

Malaney (2000) found that in Namibia, while teachers were willing to discuss the impact on schools in a broad sense, as well as the effects that they were witnessing on their students, none would admit that HIV/AIDS had directly affected themselves or any of their colleagues, and that they would, therefore, need to consider establishing coping mechanisms. It was apparent that as yet no particular coping mechanisms had been developed in response to the disease. When a teacher fell ill, the class was taken on by another teacher, combined with another class, or left untaught. This had clearly begun to present a problem for schools as one principal in Namibia indicated, “you have 60 to 70 learners in a class. And according to the methods we are using now, this learner centred approaches, I think it’s impossible” (Malaney, 2000).

According to Malaney (2002), in Namibia, in the case of the death of a teacher principals reported it to school inspectors, who would arrange for another teacher to be appointed. The supply of teachers was sufficient, so this did not technically present a problem. However, there was often a long waiting period before the post was filled, especially in more remote regions. Here again, lack of housing and other facilities were pointed to as a major cause of this difficulty, and the implications of the problem for further spread of the disease were also not lost on school principals. Many principals also pointed out that when a teacher was terminally ill with the disease, they could not apply for someone to fill the post until at least six months of absence. This presented a bureaucratic problem that several principals requested to be modified.

2.2.2.3 Teacher Morale

A recent survey to ascertain teachers knowledge, attitudes, practices and skills in the teaching of HIV/AIDS, Siamwiza & Chiwela (1999) found that approximately 25% of the teachers admitted to worrying about their own HIV status and nearly 40 percent would like to talk to somebody about their own HIV/AIDS related problems. Coombe (2000) explains that even among educators who believe they are not infected or do not want to be tested, morale is likely to fall significantly as they cope emotionally and financially with sickness and death among relatives, friends and colleagues, and wrestle with uncertainty about their own future and that of their dependents. Most educators will have to take on additional teaching and other work – related loads in order to care for sick colleagues. Although discrimination is illegal, stigmatisation of infected learners and educators is a deeply rooted problem.

According to Malaney (2000), even before HIV-positive individuals begin suffering from AIDS-related morbidity, the knowledge of their seroprevalence status can cause acute psychological trauma. Feelings of hopelessness and frustration that often accompany knowledge of infection will undoubtedly affect the focus and productivity of some teachers. Even among teachers who are not infected, morale can be highly compromised. Already, rates of absenteeism are higher as teachers take time off to attend to funerals and mourn lost friends and family friends.

Another reason for low teacher morale is that of the social location of the teachers. Khoza (2002:75) explains a situation where an educator justifies why he sleeps with schoolgirls by saying, “What are we supposed to do? The Department doesn’t take care of us, there are no decent women around here, and there are no activities in this area, which is why we end up sleeping with schoolgirls...I know it is wrong, but what can I do? Educators are treated like missionaries... we are underpaid”. In another study in sub-Saharan Africa, Bennell, Hyde & Swainson (2002) found low pay, poor conditions of service and inept school management were most frequently cited as the most important causes of low teacher morale. Given this situation, many teachers are reluctant to take on more duties and responsibilities as a result of increasing morbidity and mortality among AIDS – affected colleagues.

Coombe (2002) explains that many teachers in sub-Saharan Africa perceive that the system does not care about them. Their morale is low, not only because they are poorly paid, but because too often the system is unresponsive to their needs and concerns. They work in dire conditions, with little or no professional or administrative support at school, district or higher levels. If no one cares for teachers, why should they care about each other or about the children and parents?

Lovelife (2000) explains that teaching is being transformed by HIV/AIDS with new tasks and roles constantly emerging for educators in the field of care, counselling and trauma. The array of deprivation and special needs arising from HIV/AIDS will challenge the education system to go beyond its traditional teaching role, and develop capacity and systems to support the large numbers of children in crisis, and provide them with life and survival skills from relatively early ages. Malaney (2000) agrees that in many cases teachers are being forced to take on the role of counsellors, as children are faced with the loss of family members and have nowhere else to turn. As these factors play into teacher morale, they will increasingly affect the education process.

Wijngaarden & Shaeffer (2002) found that very often members of the community look upon teachers as role models or as advisors. However, increasing demands on teachers in this field, and a perceived inability to deal with these demands, may decrease teacher motivation and productivity, leading to a decline in the quality of education.

2.2.3 Gender violence and vulnerability

This section reviews literature that documents teachers as perpetrators of gender violence, and how the issue of power plays itself out.

2.2.3.1 Teachers as perpetrators

Boler (2003) found that in a study conducted in India and Kenya, the school is viewed by the community as a trusted and important place for young people to learn about HIV. Within this context, teachers were perceived as paramount in teaching young people about HIV/AIDS. Contradictory to Boler's findings, Hepburn, (2002) explains that in sub-Saharan Africa, hostility and distrust towards teachers who are viewed as a

dangerous source of HIV/AIDS transmission in the community decreases the credibility of education in the eyes of children and adults. Kelly (2000a) states that many families in sub Saharan Africa are reluctant to send girls to school because they have a greater vulnerability to HIV infection. The high HIV infection rate of teachers and an increasing concern about HIV transmission from teacher to student or peer to peer on school grounds discourages school participation-particularly for girls.

Teachers as a dangerous source of HIV/AIDS transmission is highlighted by Coombe's (2002) finding that male teachers still represent one of the greatest dangers to children and to female educators. One third of all reported rapes of girls younger than fifteen were perpetrated by schoolteachers. Leach (2002) states that while there is general acknowledgement now around the world that serious abuse of children exists in the home, the community and the labour market, there has been a particular reluctance to admit that it also goes on in school and, most shockingly, that some of it is perpetrated by teachers, who are seen as figures of respect and authority, the guardians and protectors of our children.

Ebersohn & Eloff (2002) explain how a girl with an infected mother may decide to cope with her trauma by having sexual relations with a teacher. Her choice increases her susceptibility to infection, yet provides her with lunch money and passing grades. Her stigmatized family, seeking social-acceptance, may strengthen her acquaintance with an admired community figure. If she becomes pregnant, or infected, or both, she may be abandoned by the teacher and add her personal trauma to the distress already experienced by the family.

According to Shell & Zeithlin (2001) in Tanzania one quarter of primary school girls reported having sex with teachers, relatives, or an adult known to them, and another 23 percent with 'strangers'. 'Forced sex' accounted for one – third of all primary school girls' first sexual experience and nearly half reported having 'forced sex' at some point. In one South African study Hepburn (2002) found that approximately 23 percent of HIV infection in the region is acquired between the ages of 10 – 19 years, and suggests that schools may be major sites of HIV transmission. A second study documents cases of rape assault and sexual harassment committed by both male teachers and students and suggests that violence and abuse are an inevitable part of

schooling environment for many South African girls. Hepburn (2002) explains that girls who encounter sexual violence in schools were raped in school toilets, empty classrooms and hallways, and in hostels and dormitories.

Leach (2002) explains that sexual violence by teachers is widespread but less frequent numerically, despite the impression created by high profile reports in the African media of teachers and head teachers impregnating, and in some cases raping, girls in their schools. It is, however, more shocking because of the position of trust that the teacher is placed in and the fact that the relationship, whatever the age of the girl, is an illegal one. It is almost certainly true that many cases go unreported, prosecutions are rare, and few teachers are dismissed for having sexual relationships with female pupils. It is, therefore, difficult to gauge the real extent of the problem. There is no doubt, however, that the sexual abuse of girls by teachers is pervasive in many African countries.

Human Rights Watch (2001) states in its South African report that interviews with educators, social workers, children and parents in sub Saharan Africa revealed that the problem of teachers engaging in serious sexual misconduct with underage female students is widespread, and they provide a number of disturbing case studies of schoolgirls raped by teachers. The medical journal *The Lancet* (2002) published findings in January 2002 from 1998 study of rape among a sample of 11,735 South African women; of the 159 women who had been victims of child rape (those below the age of 15), 33% had been raped by teachers.

According to Leach & Machakanja (2000) a study conducted in Zimbabwe recorded that in one province within a two-month period during 1999 eleven cases of 'improper association' by teachers had been reported to the provincial Ministry, one involving a 13 year old girl and another a 10 year old. There was also a five-year backlog in dealing with cases, and for the first 6 months of 1999, there were already 15 recommended cases for dismissal awaiting approval by the central Ministry of Education.

Leach and Machakanja (2000) also report that interviews with girls and boys in the three co-educational schools as part of the Zimbabwe study revealed the widespread

opinion that certain named teachers propositioned girls on a regular basis. Fourteen out of 73 girls reported that they had been propositioned by male teachers and 48 girls said they knew of someone who had been propositioned by a teacher. Boys who were interviewed named the same teacher seven times in one school and six times in another. Two boys reported that they had found a teacher having sex with a schoolgirl in his office after school one day. Both boys and girls claimed to know of girls who had got pregnant by a teacher and dropped out of school. The headmaster of the school made one girl's older sister pregnant.

Leach & Machakanja (2000) found that in Zimbabwe teachers appeared to pursue their amorous activities both inside and outside the classroom quite openly. In the classroom, boys and girls would whistle or hiss if a teacher called on a particular girl, known to be of interest to him, to read out loud or come to the front of the class. In Ghana, boys were loud in their condemnation of such teachers, not for moral reasons, but because they saw it as unfair competition. Their view was that the teacher was abusing his position of authority; the girls were their peers, and therefore, 'their property'. Most seriously, male teachers and older men preying on female students provided negative role models, and conveyed the message to boys that young girls were 'fair game.'(ibid).

During a group interview in a Malawi school, Leach (2002) found that a member of the school management committee revealed that her daughter had been impregnated by a deputy head, who was then made the head of another school. Although the extent to which girls are forced into such relationships rather than entering into them freely is not clear. The teacher's position of authority in the school makes intimidation or entrapment likely. During recent field work in Ghana the head teacher of a peri-urban school chosen at random was found to be routinely demanding sex of girls, some still at primary level. This head teacher's behaviour has subsequently been investigated and he has admitted his offences - his likely punishment is to be transferred to another school.

2.2.3.2 Power and power relations

According to Allenmano (2003) consensual and coerced sexual activity among pupils is not infrequent between teachers and pupils. Girls are particularly vulnerable to

pressures from teachers to trade sexual favors for good marks or material advantages. While cultural factors and gender roles have much to do with these phenomena, the AIDS epidemic seems to be worsening for them. For example, “sugar daddies” at the school gate are an increasing phenomenon as mature men seek (hopefully) AIDS-free sexual partners. Because of these unprotected sexual activities, there is a rising rate of teenage pregnancies leading to repetition and abandonment for many girls.

In a study carried out in the Eastern and Southern African Region (ESAR) on how teachers constructed their identities, Chege (2004) found that regardless of whether (or not) male teachers in an affluent Kenyan city school actually sought, or indeed, had sexual relationships with their female pupils, it was certainly the impression of boys and girls that this was a common occurrence of sexual harassment. While sexual harassment in school is a serious issue punishable under Teachers’ Code of Conduct, the code is rarely enforced, and clearly the Kenyan schoolgirls did not seem to know how to seek redress when harassed sexually. The sexualisation of girls seemed to raise problems especially when the teachers who had been implicated attempted to be moralistic during social ethics, sexuality classes or in HIV/AIDS education classes.

Leach & Machakanja (2000) found that within the Zimbabwean schools, pupils reported that male teachers who engaged in sexual advances towards girls also manifested aggressive behaviour in terms of invading their private space. They would take the opportunity of daily close physical contact with girls, for example putting an arm round a girl on the pretext of reading her exercise book so as to touch her breasts, ordering a girl to come to his office or to a store room and then molesting or assaulting her.

In a study on teachers’ gendered lives, Chege (2004) found that while many of the boys in Botswana were highly critical of relationships between male teachers and girls, a few of them explained that because they were ‘men’ (perhaps men in the making), they understood what male teachers were ‘going through’. Such sentiments underline the kind of strong masculine models that male teachers provided and the likelihood that such boys might follow in the teachers’ footsteps to prey on young girls for sex. Indeed, some of the boys appeared to rejoice, perhaps because they did not have access to those girls sexually, and were, therefore, jealous of their teachers

and hateful of the girls for stealing the limelight in class as they (boys) watched passively. Even though the boys were pressured to outperform girls in class-work, as males (and men to be), they were bound to feel inferior and emasculated, particularly in their quest for sexual identities through possible relationships with girls.

According to Khoza (2002) some educators, learners and parents are perpetrators of gender-based violence. It thus becomes very difficult to work with them. Perpetrators often do not want to acknowledge such violence as a problem. Often gender-based violence as a problem is seen in families as something acceptable and part of the socialization process, or as a natural part of sexual relationships. Educators and other adults in the community are generally reluctant to engage with the issue: they often claim to be unaware of any problem, deny that violence against girls occurs or try to minimize its extent, or blame the girls. Malaney (2000) also highlights that teachers discussed gender imbalances in the ways in which the disease was affecting young people, pointing out the inequities within the culture and their effects on schooling.

Khoza (2002) explains that educators in South African schools are confronted with more and more cases of sexual violence and child abuse, and quite often feel incompetent to deal with such issues. It is difficult for educators to deal with HIV/AIDS and gender violence, when they are struggling with these issues in their own lives. Some educators may be infected with the virus themselves or dealing with the loss of loved ones, as well as teaching children who are infected or have lost their parents through HIV/AIDS related deaths. Girls feel that educators do not take complaints of gender-based violence seriously, or blame them. Girls also claim educators do not keep reports confidential. Learners are often reluctant to report gender violence because educators and schools are inconsistent in their responses, do not provide adequate support to victims, nor proper follow – up through disciplining the perpetrators. However, there is a tendency to take action where violence between boys occurs. In such case educators use corporal punishment or call the parents.

Dreyer (2002) state that gender-based violence in schools must be taken seriously as not only does it result in psychological and emotional scars, but it also renders women educators and girl-learners vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. It is against this situation in schools, and against cultural beliefs, societal stereotypes, attitudes towards gender,

and gender-based violence in the wider context that we have to consider HIV/AIDS education and prevention in schools. One cannot deal with HIV without dealing with gender equity and safety and security in schools. Therefore, any programme directed at HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in schools needs to focus on the issue of gender equity, and whether or not schools are safe spaces for women educators and girl-learners (Khoza, 2002: 75).

2.2.4 Curriculum as a barrier

This section reviews literature that examines the tensions created by the curriculum as a barrier to teaching and learning. Implementing HIV/AIDS education programs is similar to the introduction of any innovation within the school. Despite the good intention of governments and ministries of education in integrating HIV/AIDS in the school curriculum, Rugalema & Khanye (2002) state that questions have been raised about the suitability and preparedness of teachers to deliver HIV/AIDS information and impart knowledge to learners. This is a genuine concern in the light of the 1) ubiquitous tardiness in capacitating teachers, 2) evidence that teachers are culprits in sexual exploitation of learners, and 3) many instances which shows that teachers' beliefs on HIV/AIDS are conservative, mythical, and counter-productive. These significant shortcomings will have to be overcome for teachers to play a useful role in HIV prevention among school children.

Despite the above, Rugalema & Khanye (2002) argue that it is difficult to think of any other approach through which learners could be consistently engaged if teachers are left out. Leaving out teachers in HIV/AIDS prevention could prove counter-productive in the sense that they would be unable to play their traditional role as informers, educators, and counsellors. If teachers are by-passed in the delivery of HIV/AIDS information and knowledge they would be disempowered. Communities and learners in sub Saharan Africa would no longer see teachers as reliable sources of information and knowledge.

According to Kelly (2002) educators are usually aware that a knowledge and information gap exists between the home and school. However, they do not always make allowance for an equally wide but frequently much deeper gap between the values, attitudes and behaviours promoted in the school and those enshrined in the

totality of life in the community and home. Underlying this gap there may even be a radical difference in philosophical outlook. Bridging this gap can be crucial for the effectiveness of HIV preventive programmes.

2.2.4.1 Teaching life skills

England (2003) observes that a fundamental obstacle is that teachers in sub-Saharan Africa are not equipped or eager to deal with sexuality education for young people. Cultural and religious factors work against this. Effective education for HIV/AIDS requires large-scale attitudinal change and skills development by teachers in the use of participatory and student-centred approaches. However, there are few incentives for changing from more traditional didactic teaching methods in countries where education sector reforms are slow. Teachers' colleges in the region lack clear policies to support teachers in sexuality education and HIV prevention. There is a great need for culturally appropriate and gender sensitive instructional materials on HIV/AIDS for all levels of the education system.

Agenda (2002: 97) concurs that teachers are expected to teach 'life skills' to learners but this is problematic. The teachers themselves went through a school system that did not offer Life Skills. Educators may hold conservative values, and some educators have been implicated in gender-based abuse. Teachers must first grapple with their own issues, before they can facilitate 'life skills' for learners. A great majority of teachers teach matters pertaining to sexuality in communities to which they do not belong, and where they are migrant workers from cities and towns. The 'values and norms' bias of the program raises some awkward questions in the minds of many community members who do not understand the life skills context of the sexuality and HIV/AIDS education and who feel that something other than community values is being discussed.

According to Chege (2004) teachers in Botswana were quite defensive when their pupils assumed positions of agency and freely constructed the teachers as sexual beings. Apparently, the teachers were shocked at this role reversal that positioned them on the 'receiving end' of classroom dynamics that they were so used to controlling. However, the very fact that children felt able to pose questions about sex and sexuality suggests that perhaps these particular teachers were now being

embarrassed by explicit talk about sex, condoms, menstruation and sexuality, then a strong message was delivered about such talk being shameful. This could explain the inhibition from speaking that was observed among many of the pupils, particularly the girls, in HIV/AIDS classes.

Chege (2004) also highlights that teachers who appeared embarrassed could also possibly have encouraged learners to become disruptive in class, and talk to deliberately in ways that they knew would embarrass their teachers. This would most likely position the teacher as being out of control of the class dynamics especially in co-education classes, where some of the male teachers may have presented themselves as sexual towards female pupils. Both boys and girls can be withdrawn by the presence of members of the opposite sex – particularly when teaching about male and female condoms, menstruation and teenage pregnancy.

According to Njoroge & Bennars (1986) the teacher is expected to help learners to find their way from ‘here’ to ‘there’ using a roadmap that ought to lead them successfully to becoming what they are not. The assumption is that without teachers, the learners would most likely ‘get lost’ as they navigate their roadmap on their way from ‘here’ to ‘there’. As a guide, the teacher is not expected to act as the master who forces the learners into submissions, but rather as the caring, compassionate, and empathetic mentor, who enters into a relationship founded on respect for, and understanding of the learner as a equal human being.

Chege (2004) explains that teachers in Botswana often encountered problems in the different aspects of sexuality education, including lessons on HIV/AIDS. Classroom observations also revealed that, presumed traditional cultural values were used to legitimate the gendering of the learning process in ways that sidelined girls, often leaving them out of most of the discussions about sex and HIV/AIDS. In a life skills class in Botswana, Chege observed that a male teacher using notions of traditional culture to construct the feminine gender as inferior, was effectively silencing the girls even when they tried to participate. Notably, the boys talked disparagingly and laughed about the inferior nature of women as the teacher explicitly encouraged this sort of ‘anti – women talk’ and subverted the objectives of the lesson, transforming it into a ‘male thing’ with total disregard of the girls. The teacher relegated the girls to

the periphery of classroom learning as he and the boys ridiculed and vilified femininity in ways that only inhibited further attempts by girls to participate on equal terms with the boys.(ibid).

2.2.4.2 Selective teaching and rationale for this practice

The occurrence of selective teaching is alarming. Boler (2003:2) argues that discussion of HIV without direct reference to sex, or advocating abstinence without mentioning safe sex, cannot work. On the contrary, it bonds notions of HIV to immorality, and leads to a “them, not us” attitude. This, in turn, leads to even further discrimination. It also fails to help the many young people who are sexually active, making it less likely that they will seek advice or personalize their risk of becoming HIV positive. Silences in communication over the issue of condoms, or messages other than abstinence arise out of a paradox of safer sex. In the context of young people, a paradox or tension can occur between two assumptions: a societal assumption that young people do not, and will not, have premarital sex, and the necessary assumption needed to discuss condoms; that young people do have premarital sex.

Kelly (2000) states that the HIV-related stress that many teachers experience is aggravated by the expectation that they will incorporate HIV/AIDS education (possibly in the form of reproductive and sexual health education) into their teaching. Many feel poorly equipped to do so, saying they have not received the necessary training or support materials to enable them to teach in this area. Several show by their teaching and responses to questionnaires that their knowledge and understanding are very deficient. Others are afraid to raise issues of sexuality with their students lest they tread on taboo areas, cause offence to parents, or be accused of teaching immoral practices to children. Many are personally very sensitive on the whole subject of HIV/AIDS, knowing or suspecting that they themselves or one of their family members may be infected. (Morrel, Moletsane, Karim, Epstein & Unterhalter, 2002) explain that for various reasons, which include being parents themselves, teachers have also been found to shy away from discussing HIV/AIDS and sex in the classrooms.

According to Chege (2004) a study on teacher gendered lives found that some teachers in Botswana had difficulty in conducting HIV/AIDS lessons because, they claimed, pupils were quite hostile to the subject and displayed symptoms of what is sometimes called ‘HIV/AIDS’ fatigue. This refers to a feeling of being bombarded with messages about the horror of HIV/AIDS and images of death and suffering that they did not want to hear anything more about it. The feelings of learner apathy had its toll on teachers who expressed feeling less enthusiastic to teach HIV/AIDS education. A study in Zimbabwe by Leach (2002) showed that there is clearly a lack of trust by pupils in their teachers and few appear to seek advice from them.

In another participatory action-research project by Sherman & Bassett (1999) it has been observed that talking continuously about AIDS could be a source of boredom to the pupils. The teachers agreed that the emphasis should not be on AIDS, but on life skills, such as decision making, resisting peer pressure, and questioning stereotypes. Boler (2003) discerns that given the sensitivities that surround sex and HIV, teachers reported finding it difficult to discuss HIV/AIDS with their students. Research findings suggest that ‘selective teaching’ often takes place with teachers selecting which messages to give or else choosing not to teach HIV at all. Sometimes an overly-scientific emphasis leads to discussions of HIV without any direct reference to sexual relationships. In other cases sex is discussed, but only within the “acceptable” boundaries of abstinence.

Commenting on the introduction of HIV/AIDS prevention at school, Panchand, Clarke & Pillai (2004) explain that although reactions from teachers in the Southern African Region, are in general positive, it is perceived as challenging: it represents an additional task in an already crowded curriculum, teachers feel ill-prepared to deliver such a sensitive topic. Teachers are exposed to critics from parents and the community and often lack support from school authorities. There are also opinions in some communities that teachers should not teach subjects related to sexuality. Lack of commitment from teachers, since HIV and AIDS education is not mandatory, has also been mentioned as an additional barrier. Neither curriculum developers nor teacher trainers seemed to be aware of various international technical resources available to assist them in their work.

2.2.4.3 Teacher professional development and HIV/AIDS education

According to Rugalema & Khanye (2002), the concerns about the suitability of teachers to deliver HIV/AIDS curriculum should be addressed through deliberate and well-focused in-service and pre-service training programmes as well as deliberate management strategies. These would ensure that schools are not risk-areas but safer places for children. England (2003) explains that there is a need for teachers' colleges to begin to consider the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education sector. This will require immediate and medium term planning to address the need for increased output of graduates to replace teachers needing to assume additional responsibilities to cover for absent colleagues; and specialized training to help teachers meet new demands as a result of the behavioural, emotional and psychological problems of students affected by HIV/AIDS.

Schenker & Nyirenda (Series 9) explain that effective teaching methods employed in educating about HIV/AIDS prevention differ from more traditional subject areas teaching. Teachers need to learn additional skills, instructional methods and models, and perhaps change some of their old ways of teaching in order to effectively deliver school-based AIDS education using many different channels. Teachers may feel threatened, tested, concerned and uncomfortable in this new role. Beyond mastering new techniques, they must both as teachers and as individuals, deal with and overcome their own social feelings of discomfort, as well as their biases and prejudices.

Research related to teachers and HIV/AIDS has primarily focused on examining ways of providing teachers with more information about HIV/AIDS, more training or more effective programmes to 'implement the new proposed curricula' (Akoulouse, et al, 2001). In some studies such as, Rivers and Aggleton(1999), there is a suggestion for a need to consider teachers as sexual, who themselves might have difficulty teaching sex education. This implies that teacher training needs to address the specific needs and circumstances of teachers in the workplace. HIV/AIDS is a workplace issue for teachers and there is a need for comprehensive support system that would enable teachers to perform their duties and yet deal with their own personal situation.

At a school-based approach to AIDS intervention program, Sherman & Bassett (1999) found that not only did teachers express a need for additional resources; they also expressed a sense of isolation. Although most of the teachers had the support of their headmasters, they still felt they were working in a vacuum. Also, it was virtually impossible for them to get access to the extensive educational materials available on AIDS. However the periodic visits to the schools, the quarterly information packets, and follow - up workshops, all contributed to the teachers feeling that their efforts were of continued importance and helped to renew their interest and dedication.

2.2.4.4 Teacher positioning in and out of school

Few studies take account of teachers' lives as a mediating factor in the teaching (delivery) of HIV/AIDS. Baxen (2004: 9) infers that it would seem that an assumption is made that if they (teachers), have the knowledge about skills to teach, they *will, can* and *will want to* teach effectively notwithstanding how they position themselves (or are positioned) within the HIV/AIDS discourse. Unattended too, is how these teachers are positioned in and out of school and how within such spaces, cultural and social practices shape their experience and understanding of the disease. Within the current research agenda, and more importantly, is a lack of interrogation of teachers as active agents working (shaping and being shaped), within contested and contestable discourses where they can, and indeed do, make choices about what knowledge to teach, when and how.

Baxen (2004:2) states that teachers, like any other members of the human family have a past, present, and aspirations for the future. This (hi)story influences decisions they make about their work at a variety of levels. Programmatically, it shapes decisions with regards to planning what to teach and what knowledge to privilege, even in the face of already well articulated prescribed curriculum guidelines mandated by education departments. At another level, it shapes decisions teachers make about the act of teaching, that is, about the nature and active process of engagement in the classroom. Teachers therefore, are not merely implementers of curricula or policies but are active agents in their reconstruction, translation interpretation.

According to Seddon (1994) professional behaviour, including that of teachers, is not only determined by a preset organizational or institutional context but also by a

person's life history and experiences that are transformed accordingly, as situations demand. Thus, experiences of the past and expectations of the future influence the self-perceptions of the present, and since no two people have the same life experiences, we all learn to perceive the world and ourselves as part of it in different ways. Such perceptions influence our daily decisions and behaviour.

Chege (2004) explains, like every human being, teachers and learners in the Eastern and Southern African Region (ESAR) continually construct, modify, and present themselves differently in different social settings. It is this production of the self in multiple gendered ways that teachers in the context of their work, including the teaching of HIV/AIDS education, has transformed the roles of teachers as carers and minders, in ways that bear major implications on pedagogy.

2.2.5 Attitudes and beliefs as a barrier (denial, stigma and silences)

This section examines how attitudes and beliefs such as stigma, discrimination, silences and denial intersect with other barriers to basic education in an HIV/AIDS context. According to Goffman (1963) people who possess a characteristic defined as socially undesirable (HIV/AIDS in this case) acquire a 'spoiled identity' that leads to social devaluation and discrimination. Herek (2002) defines HIV/AIDS stigma as an enduring attribute of an individual infected with HIV that is negatively valued by society, and thus disadvantages persons living with HIV/AIDS. According to UNAIDS (2002) stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS are the greatest barriers to preventing further infections, providing adequate care, support and treatment and alleviating impact. HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination are universal, occurring in every country and region of the world. They are triggered by many forces, including lack of understanding of the virus, myths about how HIV is transmitted, prejudice, lack of treatment, irresponsible media reporting on the epidemic, the fact that AIDS is incurable, social fears about sexuality, fears relating to illness and death, and fears about illicit drugs and injecting drug use.

According to Francis (2003), there is a tendency by agent groups (those who are HIV negative or unaware of their HIV status), to stereotype people living with HIV/AIDS as sinners, immoral beings, and sexually promiscuous. The assumption made by the agents is that all people living with HIV have been immoral and/or sexually deviant

and therefore, deserve their predicament. This labelling/stereotyping causes people living with HIV/AIDS to be devalued and ashamed while the agent group is elevated to a position of superiority and normalcy. Through labelling and stereotyping people living with HIV, the agent group establish and maintain their dominance and power.

Research conducted in Namibia by (Malaney, 2000) on the impact of AIDS on the education sector, teachers and school principals indicated that there is indeed a high level of awareness of the disease. However, it was also pointed out repeatedly that there is a considerable stigma associated with the disease. Even though communities were beginning to experience rises in death rates, many participants indicated that there was a resistance to admitting that it was AIDS – related. Another finding was that as a result of the extreme stigma associated with the disease none of the teachers wished to admit that there had been any losses as a result of AIDS within their own schools, though principals sometimes contradicted that claim.

Allemano (2003) argues that stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS also stem from cultural beliefs. Sexual exploitation of pupils by teachers exists and educational leaders have yet to deal seriously with attitudes that encourage male pupils and teachers to take advantage of girls. In many cultures, including those in the West, males are given the suggestion that they are virtually “entitled” to look for sex. At present, The African press is the major actor that reports on problems of sexual harassment and exploitation in schools. Teacher unions, parent-teachers associations and promoters of the Convention of the Rights of the Child have not yet addressed the issue of sexual exploitation in schools forcefully enough.

Boler (2003) explains that a number of social factors influence young peoples' perceptions about HIV, including religious influence, the media, family and peers. Parents often feel uncomfortable talking about sensitive issues with their children and, particularly in India, the media is perceived as giving out harmful messages. Consequently, the school is viewed by the community as a trusted and important place for young people to learn about HIV. Within this context, teachers were perceived as paramount in teaching young people about HIV/AIDS.

Many of the teachers who taught HIV/AIDS education claimed that they faced serious difficulties in their work especially responding to sensitive questions about sex and sexuality (Pattman & Chege, 2003). Chege (2004) adds that teachers expressed feelings of embarrassment and vulnerability during the lessons, resulting in most of them adopting a moralistic, didactic and authoritarian approach in order to assert their positions and protect themselves from ridicule. This presented the teachers as being in conflict with the self, especially the male teachers who sexualized girls in class.

Chege (2004) found that in many African countries, teachers appealed to traditional norms in dealing with sexuality issues, including the HIV/AIDS scourge. However, in Rwanda, female teachers criticized ‘traditional cultural practices’ for promoting the spread of HIV/AIDS. Ironically, they cited these in response to a question about how ‘elements of Rwandese culture and tradition’ could ‘contribute to teaching about HIV/AIDS and sexuality today’. In contrast, a male teacher responded by blaming girls and women for not adhering to what he regarded as the norms of Rwandese culture – namely the wearing of long dresses to avoid attracting men sexually. Both female and male teachers constructed girls and women as potential signifiers of sexual corruption associated with modernization and the spread of HIV. Further, the same male teacher constructed himself as the ‘modern man’ who was gender sensitive and who thought it was important to maintain gender equality in addressing matters related to sexuality.

2.2.6 Poverty and HIV/AIDS

According to the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) poverty and HIV/AIDS are barriers in the South African context that render a large number of children and adults vulnerable to learning breakdown and sustained exclusion. It is therefore important for this study to see how teachers position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the community in which they teach, and to examine how these shape their understandings of barriers to basic education.

According to Leach (2002) there is a clear link between HIV/AIDS and poverty. There is also a strong link between sexual abuse and poverty, with poverty itself being gendered. Girls are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation than boys where, as with

adult women, they are financially dependent on men. Boys have greater opportunities to earn money from casual labour. Adult men, whether male teachers or sugar daddies, take advantage of some girls' poverty to bribe them with money or gifts in exchange for sex. A girl may respond to such advances because her family is unable to provide her with school fees and other necessities. Leach (2002) explains that a pupil is likely to be sent home until he/she can pay the fees. Where girls live some distance from the school and do not have money for bus fares, they may solicit lifts from car and truck drivers, which increase their chances of being assaulted or raped. Girls from less privileged backgrounds know the opportunity of obtaining a well paid and secure job are slim and may see their best chance for securing a comfortable future in finding a man to support them. The opportunity of a comfortable lifestyle, even outside marriage, could be very attractive to a girl. It is now common in some sub-Saharan African countries for girls who become pregnant by an older man to settle, often through parental negotiation, for accommodation and /or maintenance.

Whiteside and Sunter (2000) argue that the socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS will only manifest with time as the number of people infected and dying accumulates. First, through the illness and eventual death of the economically active members of families and communities, productivity will drop, leading to inability and /or unwillingness to pay for education. Secondly, with the increase in the number of sick and dying, scarce resources from bank savings and / or animal wealth (cattle) are often diverted to care. According to Moletsane (2003) this means that even when money is available, most of it is spent on medical and nutritional care of the sick and dying. Of course, with the decline in the number of economically active people, children, most of who are orphans and / or live in child-headed households, are left to fend for themselves. Under these circumstances, unable to access resources for their basic needs, education becomes either a nuisance or a luxury. Thus the possibility of successfully educating children becomes remote, and that of keeping them in school almost impossible. The result is high failure and retention rates, and eventually high dropout rates from schools.

In addition, that failure to finish school compounds financial difficulties by reducing the future economic possibilities for children and their families. Hepburn (2002) concurs with Moletsane (2003) in that many children in AIDS-affected households

delay or drop out of school because they are expected to assume the responsibility of caring for a sick parent and/or siblings left behind. These responsibilities increase the opportunity costs of sending a child to school, particularly if the quality of education is perceived as poor. As the demand for a child's labour increases, tardiness and repeated absences affect their ability to learn and often leads to dropping out of school.

2.2.7 Summary

The above studies examine barriers to basic education in the context of HIV and AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa from the perspective of teacher lives. Much of this literature is within an interpretivist framework. Having identified the gap in the literature this study will be embedded within the critical-poststructuralist paradigm. It will examine frameworks teachers use to make sense of barriers to schooling in an HIV and AIDS context. This study will also explore how teachers position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the community in which they teach. The researcher will interrogate the contradictions and contestations embedded in these dominant discourses.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter has two sections. Firstly, it draws on the discourse theory as the theoretical framework with post structuralism as the overarching paradigm, and secondly, it focuses on the research design and methodology used in the study.

3.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

This study is located in a post structural paradigm as it explores how teachers position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the community in which they teach. Post structuralism is often explained as an epistemological understanding of a person in a social world. Foucault is one of the key figures in post structuralism, and he argues that what enables us to make sense of a world that both shapes and limits our choices and possibilities, is language. Post structuralism is concerned with discourses, which are a set of meanings or representation we make of an event or picture. Further, this theory seeks to understand how these discourses form our subjectivities (the way in which a person gives meaning to themselves, to others and to the world). Finally, understanding how power operates within these discourses to position us and form our subjectivities, whether actively or passively, is important within post structuralism.

Foucault (1988:18) views post-structuralism as a critique of metaphysics: of the concepts of causality, of identity, of the subject, of power, knowledge and truth. Ward (1997) argues that for poststructuralists there are no facts. According to Brooks (1997) they seek to dismantle hegemonic discourses through the displacement of dominant discourses by marginal epistemologies that engage and challenge them. There are only interpretations. Lye (1997) explains that post-structuralism is a group of approaches motivated by some common understandings, not all of which will necessarily be shared by every practitioner. Post-structuralism is a set of theoretical positions, which have at their core a self-reflexive discourse that is aware of the tentativeness, the slipperiness, the ambiguity and the complex interrelations of texts and meanings.

Post-structural view holds that persons are culturally and discursively structured, created in interaction as situated, symbolic beings. The common term for a person so conceived is a ‘subject’. Subjects are created, then, through their cultural meanings and practices, and occupy various culturally-based sites of meaning. Subjects are material beings, embodied and present in the physical world, entrenched in the material practices and structures of their society. Subjects are social in their very origin. They take their meaning, value and self-image from their identity groups, from their activities in society, from their intimate relations, from the multiple pools of common meanings and symbols and practices that they share variously with their sub-cultural groups and with their society as a larger unit. According to Foucault (1982), to be a subject can be understood in the sense of being subject to something, such as the power of a sovereign. Being subject carries a connotation of being dominated, repressed, constrained or silenced, subjugated by some force or limits.

Post-structuralism derives in part from a sense that we live in a linguistic universe. Gergen (1991) argues that poststructuralists try to open texts up and cut meaning loose. They do not necessarily believe that everything is meaningless, just that meaning is never factual or final. Post-structuralism rejects the notion of ultimate, underlying grounds beneath meaning. To poststructuralists, language and language systems are important. Hence, one such system operating through language is discourse.

3.2.1 The notion of discourse: A Foucoulodian perspective

The term ‘discourse’ integrates a range of meanings in its daily use and these vary not only with discipline but also with intellectual persuasion. Lye (2004) explains that in Foucault’s terms, the production of discourse, the (historical, material) way we know the world, is controlled, selected, organized and distributed by a certain number of procedures. Discourse is regulated by rules of exclusion, by internal systems of control and delineation, by conditions under which discourses can be employed, and by philosophical themes that elide the reality of discourse, the themes of the founding subject, originating experience, and universal mediation. Discourses are multiple, discontinuous, originating and disappearing through chance; they do not hide the truth but constitute its temporary face. Foucault is post-structuralist in his insistence that

there is no great causal flow or plan or evolution of history, in that what happens is mainly by chance.

According to Johnstone (2002), scholars influenced by Foucault sometimes use ‘discourse’ in a related but somewhat different sense, as a count noun. ‘Discourses’ in this sense can be enumerated and referred to in the plural. They are conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking. These linked ways of talking and thinking constitute ideologies (sets of interrelated ideas), and serve to circulate power in society. In other words, ‘discourses’ in this sense involve patterns of belief and habitual action as well as patterns of language. Discourses are ideas as well as ways of talking that influence and are influenced by the ideas. Discourses, in their linguistic aspect, are conventionalised sets of choices for discourse, or talk. Human worlds are shaped by discourse.

Sunderland (2004) explains that discourses are not ubiquitous, but the fact that they are relatively unbounded means that the same discourse may be produced all over the place, in different linguistic guises. These various meanings are sometimes employed in an unreflecting way. According to Wodak (1996) cited in Wodak, 1997, discourse as a social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation, institution and social structure that frame it. Not only is the discursive event shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constituted, as well as socially conditioned, it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of, and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it.

Wodak (1997) argues that if discourses are socially grounded interpretative frameworks, based in specific social institutions, they can be seen to act, within those institutions, as powerful forms of knowledge which structure and constrain what can be thought, said and done by social actors. To study the social order is then, in part, to study discursive relations – convergences and divergences within and between them, their degrees of robustness under challenge, their scope of application, the emotional and moral investments that subjects make in particular discourses. According to Sunderland (2004), discourses are not themselves visible, discourses in the

interpretive sense are ways of seeing the world, often with reference to relations of power and domination.

According to Litosseliti & Sunderland (2002) discourses exist in relation to other discourses and discourse is less easily identified and profoundly amorphous, necessarily unconstrained by boundaries of space and time. It can be seen as a process: of production and interpretation by given people in given contexts, and as “interaction itself: a cultural activity” (Talbot, 1995a: 25 cited in Litosseliti & Sunderland, 2002). Litosseliti & Sunderland (2002) explain that discourse in a social practice sense is not only representational but also constitutive: not only a form of knowledge about cultural ways of thinking and doing, but also more powerfully, a potential and arguably actual agent of social construction. Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects; (Foucault, 1972: 49) discourses are practices that systemically form the objects of which they speak. They do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct them or constitute them (Fairclough, 1992). Kress (1985) discerns that discourses can be seen to give meaning to an experience, or articulate our ways of seeing the world; to organise and give structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is talked about.

Weedon (1987) explains that discourses are conventions which to a significant extent govern what can be said, by what kind of speakers, and for what types of audiences. Discourses are shaped by the power relations in social institutions and in society as a whole such that ‘power – knowledge relations are integral to the production and reproduction of discourses’ (Urwin, 1984: 284). If discourses are shaped by power relations then individuals are shaped (positioned) by their access to discourses and the subject positions made available to them in those discourses. Any exercise of power by human actors is affected by the discursive nature of power itself (Foucault, 1972; 1977; 1980): power is exercised through the production, accumulation and functioning of various discourses. Discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power that is to be seized (Foucault, 1984: 110).

Parker (2004) draws on Foucault’s concept of discourse, which casts a relationship between knowledge and power in the production of meaning. Discourse “never

consists of one statement, one text, one action or one source. The same discourse, characteristic of the way of thinking or the state of knowledge at any one time... will appear across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct at a number of different institutional sites within society" (Hall, 2002:44). This is related to Foucault's concept of episteme or discursive formation, which refers to discourses addressing the same objects with the same patterns and commonalities occurring across a range of texts. Knowledge is thus interconnected with power through discursive formations that generate meaning (truth) through repetition and reiteration.

According to Parker (2004), ideological discourses can be thought of as 'regimes of truth' that involve positioning of world-views and political ideas with the intent of bringing about interpellation. In terms of construction, ideologies are layered discourses. At the first level are epistemologically derived orthodoxies, ideas that to do with assumptions about what constitutes knowledge. These may involve explicit theoretical frameworks or epistemological assumptions, or alternately, these assumptions may be relatively untheorised frameworks that have an implicit epistemological foundation (orthodoxies). At the second level are the rationalisation and legitimisation of ideas. This includes discourses that reiterate foundational assumptions and which expand these into broader sets of ideas. At the third level is the interplay of structural relationships to other ideologies and ideological formations that involves a struggle for dominance including hegemony.

Parker (1977) argues that dominant discursive constructions should be given due weight for the ways in which they circulate and the power they enjoy. They exist within what Foucault (1972) referred to as regimes of truth, which make any challenges to the 'realities' to which they refer very difficult indeed. According to Wodak (1997) schools are powerful agencies of social control because of the discursive power they exercise and because of their place in an established hierarchy of social formations. A discourse may gain a dominant position over others in the way in which it is strengthened and launched by individuals and institutions. Teachers in the educational process are in a powerful position to do just this.

Teachers in this study are in a powerful position of voice and authority relative to learners. Words and propositions will change their meaning according to their use and

the positions held by those who use them. Meanings thus arise not from language, but from institutional practices, from power relationships, from social positions. Words and concepts also change their meaning and their effects as they are deployed within different discourses (Muthukrishna, Ramsuran, Pennefather, Naidoo & Jugmohan, 2005).

3.2.2 Key concepts in the study

Power and knowledge, silences, teacher identity and ‘othering’ are key post structural concepts in this study, in exploring how teachers position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the community in which they teach, and how these discourses shape their understandings of barriers to basic education. These concepts also examines how the deficiency discourse constructs the learners, their parents and the community in ways that pathologise, generalise, homogenise, marginalize and deem them as being inferior.

3.2.2.1 Power and knowledge

Discourses function in association with power relations. The exercising of power produces what is held to be knowledge; what is the right interpretation of what is experienced, for example, seeing parents as deficit by middle class teachers. Francis (1999) explains that discourses are socially and culturally produced patterns of language, which constitute power by constructing objects in particular ways, and as such a person or group can be positioned as powerless within one discourse whilst positioning themselves as powerful in another. Teachers in the study appear to be powerless with regards to certain ethical issues and yet at other times are seen in positions of power. Educators in the study occupy a particular social location and their lived experiences are not inclusive of voices from the margins, where poverty and HIV/AIDS are the defining dimensions of those being marginalized.

According to Wodak (1997), Foucault has been given credit more than any other theorist, for making the observation that power and knowledge are inextricably interrelated. According to Pitsula (2001) Foucault also views progressive education as essentially an instrument of power and domination, rather than emancipation and enlightenment. He makes no moral judgement and sees power and knowledge as two

sides of the same coin, inseparable from one another. There is no such thing as disinterested knowledge that can be used to call power to account.

Foucault (1982) explains that power must be analysed as something that circulates, or rather as something that only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. Not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. Foucault (1979) maintains that the formation of knowledge and the increase of power regularly reinforce one another in a circular process. He merely describes and dissects power relations; he makes no comment as to whether the exercise of power in any particular case is good, bad or indifferent. As far as Foucault is concerned, those who are subordinated or oppressed may deploy power against the power being exercised upon them, but they have no good or rational basis either to do so or not to do so. Foucault admits that within a social field there is 'one class' which strategically holds a privileged position, but he insists that nobody, including the state, either owns or possesses power.

Johnstone (2002) argues that two aspects of social relatedness that are expressed and created in discourse are power and solidarity. Power has to do with the respects in which relationships are asymmetrical, with one person able to control the other. Solidarity has to do with the relatively symmetrical aspects of human relationships. Power and solidarity are both always at play in any relationship. Solidarity can be thought of as the counterpart of power in human relations: only in the context of mutual orientation to shared knowledge, membership in common predefined social groupings, or joint activity, do negotiations for control arise. Human life is social-it takes place in the contexts of groups of various sizes. Thus humans need ways to claim membership in groups and to show that they are thereby in some senses in symmetrical relationships with fellow group members. Power is also negotiable. If there were no power, there would be no interaction. Power is not necessarily dominance, but rather more like agency: a person's ebbing and flowing contribution to shaping the activity at hand.

3.2.2.2 Silences

Johnstone (2002) highlights that in addition to being shaped by what *is* said, the worlds evoked and created in discourse are also shaped by silence: by what *cannot be* said or *is not* said. The worlds that shape and are shaped in discourse involve absences as well as presences. Noticing silences, things that are not present, is more difficult than noticing things that are present, but it is equally important. Foregrounds are only possible in the context of backgrounds; what is not said or cannot be said is the background without which what is said could not be heard. Silences sometime become the foreground. Struggles over power and control are often struggles over whose words get used and whose do not and over who gets to speak and who does not.

Boler, Ibrahim, Adoss & Shaw (2003) report that a collaborative project in India and Kenya highlights that silences or barriers in communication about HIV/AIDS are hindering teachers' ability to respond to the challenges of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The report also suggests that the culture of silence is exacerbating the HIV/AIDS pandemic resulting in increased confusion, stigmatisation and denial. Madlala (2001) explains that there is a mystery at the heart of the AIDS epidemic in Africa that scholars have explored but have been unable to explain. The mystery has to do with the stubborn and multi-layered AIDS silence, or what the professionals call 'the denial' that consistently characterises the AIDS pandemic in Africa. The silence has to do with culture. By turning our collective attention to academic debates on the origins or existence of AIDS, we are conveniently avoiding facing up to sensitive issues around sexual culture.

3.2.2.3 Teacher identity

A universal and probably necessary feature of the ways humans deal with other humans is by categorizing them. According to Johnstone (2002) we tend to think that people's "social identities" are natural and predictable, but, in fact, few if any of our categories are really natural. According to Zembylas (2003), a Foucaultian perspective would argue that teacher identity formation is a by-product of power/knowledge within a context of normalized institutional codes. On the other hand, a sociological and socio-cultural approach (for example, a neo-Marxist standpoint) would seek to understand teacher identity formation in terms of an agency

that is at the centre and claims ontological priority to the various roles and functions through which it assumes meaning and creates resistive actions. What constitutes teacher identity within socio-cultural accounts seems to centre on the issue of what feature(s) establish the continuity of the teacher identity through time, while poststructuralist accounts refuse to assign any ontological priority to teacher agency and instead emphasize discursive practice and powering forming teacher identity.

In a poststructuralist approach to identity (Zembylas, 2003), identity is a dynamic process of intersubjective discourses, experiences, and emotions: all of these change over time as discourses change, constantly providing new configurations. Even ‘small events’ within a particular cultural and political context are significant in constructing social meanings as they are subjected to discursive practices. As each one of us struggles in the process of coming to know, we struggle not as autonomous beings we single-handedly perform singular fates, but as vulnerable social subjects who produce and are being produced by culture. In other words, identity is constantly contested and under transforming shifts.

Søndergaard (2002) argues that poststructuralist discourse extends the possibility to focus on the constitution of social practices and cultural patterns and on processes of subjectivation. Identities and social categories are constructed through processes of exclusion, and in particular through the exclusion of the binary other. Social identities and categories form some of the conditions for subjectivation within current Western cultures. ‘Subjection’ signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject. Subjects emerge through and within discursive power. According to Hamberg & Johansson (1999), as individuals we have multiple identities that can be used, not used, highlighted and minimised depending on the situation and these have consequences for the type of data that will be collected.

3.2.2.4 Othering

De Beauvoir (1949) originally applied the term ‘othering’ to describe a process whereby people define who they are by contrasting self with others and historically this term was used with regard to relationships between men and women. Using the term more broadly, Aitchison (2000: 135) defines ‘othering’ as being characterised by

dualisms, this process inevitably defines norms and deviants, centres and margins, cores and peripheries, the powerful and the powerless. According to Johnston (1998) the process of ‘othering’ can occur in many contexts and usually refers to exclusion of a minority group by a dominant group on the basis of difference. Aitchison (2000) argues that the creation of the ‘other’ necessitates the creation of the ‘same’, the latter being accorded greater status and power. Johnston (1998) explains the ‘other’ is seen as lowly and unsophisticated in contrast to the dominant group, whose members are seen as civilised and superior.

In this study the process of ‘othering’ occurs when the community, including parents and learners are seen as an oppressed group and are defined as different by the dominant group namely, the teachers. The experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of social life by the group relegated to the status ‘otherness’ are not shared or valued by the dominant group (Young, 2000). On the other hand, the dominant group asserts its perspective and experience of social life on the oppressed group as though these are universal.

While Johnstone (2002) maintains that people do orient to the ways they categorize themselves and are categorized by others, and to the ways others categorize themselves and are categorized, and people create, claim, and express these orientations in their discourse. Wodak (1997) argues that the other is constituted as a mirror image of different, problematic aspects of the self, such as conflicting processes of socialization. The other is a victim, where the self is the agent. The other lives collectively, where the self is individualized. The other has a ‘natural relationship’ with the body while the self shapes the body according to societal norms, etc. These oppositions reflect those forms of socialization that cut individuals off from their desires and thus subordinate them to existing power relations. Foucault views power as creative: it creates power relations and thereby constitutes the subject in a specific way. It does not merely suppress people’s liberating powers, but transforms them. Discourses of the other seem to have two different effects: while the other is constituted as homogenous, the self is constituted as flexible and heterogeneous. Discourses of the other are one way in which individuals internalise the ‘social order’.

Deacon, Stephney & Prosalendis (2005) discern that in the process of ‘othering’, disease stigma usually deploys stigmatising content from a wide variety of other forms of prejudice and follows existing patterns of inequality and prejudice. Social distancing results where people living with HIV/AIDS are judged to be promiscuous or immoral and they may experience varying kinds and degrees of status loss and discrimination, for example being excluded from a religious community. This form of discrimination is a direct consequence of stigmatisation that helps to affirm risk-free identities by projecting negatively-defined characteristics and risky behaviours onto other groups. According to Nelkin and Gilman (1988: 362-3) categories of blame often reflect deep social-class biases. Illness is frequently associated with poverty and becomes a justification for social inequities. Disease is frequently associated with the ‘other’, be it the other race, the other class, the other ethnic group. Inevitably the locus of blame is also tied to specific ideological, political and social concerns.

3.2.3 Summary

This study draws on post-structuralism as it attempts to make transparent the inevitable tensions of knowledge as partial, as interested, and as performative of relations of power. It brings to the fore concerns about what it is that structures meanings, practices and bodies, about why certain practices become intelligible, valorised or deemed as traditions while other practices become discounted, impossible, or even unimaginable. The post structural concepts have prompted a deepening of our recognition and respect for the ways in which participants in this study can simultaneously accommodate and resist the very discourses that shape their lives.

3.3 Research Methodology and Design

This section aims to give an overview of the research design and methodology used in this research. It outlines the context of the study, the participants, the research methodology, data collection methods, how data is analysed, key ethical issues, and finally discusses the limitations in the study.

3.3.1 Context of Study

Teachers from five schools in the Richmond municipality participated in this study. Three were primary schools, two urban and one rural; and two were high schools, one

urban and one rural. Richmond is a small rural town about 35 km south of Pietermaritzburg and is facing many challenges. Richmond was affected by severe political conflict in the 1980's and 1990's. The schools ranged from rural with limited resources to more urban schools with better resources. Most of the schools are situated in areas characterised by high levels of poverty and unemployment. Where people are employed, it is mainly on farms and timber estates, or as migrant labourers. Although there are some areas that appear to be more peaceful, there are others where there is still some instability. One of the effects of violence on Richmond was high population mobility, with thousands of refugees leaving the area, and later returning when peace was restored. According to Whiteside and Sunter (2000), population mobility and the disruptions caused by political violence are associated with high rates of HIV infection.

3.3.2 Participants in the Study

School A an urban primary school comprised of fourteen participants, three males and eleven females. School B a rural high school comprised of six participants, three males and three females. School C an urban primary school comprised of three participants, two males and one female. School D an urban high school comprised of four participants, one male and three females and school E comprised of nine participants, namely one male and eight females. The total number of participants in this study was thirty-six. Their teaching experience ranged from three years to twenty-four years.

3.3.3 Research Methodology

A qualitative method was chosen. There are three distinguishing assumptions of qualitative studies. Firstly, researchers share in the understandings and perceptions of others and explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Berg, 2001). Secondly, people are deliberate and creative in their actions. They act intentionally and make meanings in and through their activities. Finally, situations are fluid and changing rather than fixed and static, events and behaviours evolve over time and are richly affected by context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001:22).

According to Creswell (1998) qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a

social and human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) agree that qualitative research is inquiry that is grounded in the assumption that individuals construct social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations, and that these constructions tend to be transitory and situational. The dominant methodology is to discover these meanings and interpretations by studying cases intensively in natural settings, and by subjecting the resulting data to analytic induction.

Edwards & Talbot (1994) explain that qualitative methods provide an advantage in that they allow the voices of participants to be heard when the research is completed. The subjectivity of qualitative research allows for the depiction of people's personal views and opinions. According to Struwig and Stead (2001) qualitative research methods, particularly interviews are versatile and flexible and allow the reader to see through the eyes of the participants. Qualitative research methods in this study give voices to teachers and explore how they position themselves within historically constructed discourses about their learners and the community in which they teach, and how do these shape their understandings of barriers to basic education.

3.3.4 Methods of Data Production

3.3.4.1 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews were used to access participants' understanding and experiences of barriers to schooling in the context of HIV and AIDS. Focus groups are group interviews. De Vos (2002) explains they are a means of better understanding how people feel or think about an issue. Participants were selected because they have certain characteristics in common that they could relate to the topic. The group is "focused" in that it involves some kind of collective activity.

According to De Vos (1998), in focus group interviews the interviewer is normally called the moderator because the role of the interviewer is to stimulate the participants to communicate. The moderator stimulates communication from the participants. He or she needs to facilitate the group through identifying and utilizing the group dynamics, exploring the range of attitudes, opinions and behaviours in the group; and observing and facilitating the process of agreement and consensus in the group.

Litosseliti (2003) maintains that focus groups are appropriate for gaining insight on multiple and different perspectives, interaction and power dynamics within a group, ‘what’ happens and ‘why’ it happens, controversial, sensitive and complex topics. The focus groups are also good for generating new ideas and consolidating old knowledge. This can be obtained in a shorter period of time than individual interviews. It is fundamentally a way of listening to people and learning from them, and of creating lines of communication. There is continual communication between the researcher and the participants, as well as among the participants themselves. Equally important, however, De Vos (2002) states that there is a larger process of communication that connects the worlds of the researcher and the participants.

De Vos (2002) also mentions that focus groups draw on three of the fundamental strengths that are shared by all qualitative methods: exploration and discovery, context and depth, and interpretation. Focus groups create a process of sharing and comparing among the participants. The researcher creates focus groups for a well-defined purpose and they produce large amounts of concentrated data in a short period of time, though not the richly textured view of life that comes from participant observation. Focus groups should be seen as a way of closing the gap between people. They are a powerful means of exposing reality and of investigating complex behaviour and motivation. Focus groups are especially useful in attempting to understand diversity, since they can help one understand the variety of others experiences. The method is also a friendly and respectful one. People feel relatively empowered and supported in a group situation where they are amongst others. They may also be more likely to share experiences and feelings in the presence of people who they perceive to be like themselves in some way.

Litosseliti (2003) argues that although focus group interviews offer some advantages compared to other methods of collecting data, there are potential limitations of focus group interviews. There is the element of bias and manipulation. The danger is that of leading participants and encouraging them to respond to the researchers own prejudices. Participants may respond according to what they think the researcher wants to hear. The other limitation is that of ‘false’ consensus. Some participants with strong personalities and similar views may dominate the discussion, while others may

remain silent. This limitation was experienced with the focus group interviews conducted by the research team. Some educators remained silent and they had to be drawn into the discussion through probing for responses. Focus group interviews also pose the difficulty of analysis and interpretation of results due to the open-ended nature of focus groups, and the influence of many immediate situational factors.

3.3.4.2 Participatory techniques

Babbie (2002) explains that participatory techniques to data collection make possible the production of knowledge in an active partnership with the participants who are affected by that knowledge. Participatory research techniques are favourable in that it attempts to eradicate the power imbalances between the researcher and the participants in the research. The participants become the co-researchers in the study whose knowledge of the community they serve is valued for sense making.

Using participatory techniques would enable a greater chance of inquiry and investigation. Willig (2001) and Babbie (2002) argue that participatory techniques are not only appropriate for researchers particularly concerned with social redress, but also singularly appropriate to the particular nature of this study where a sensitive issue is being researched. The participatory techniques will allow for the analysis of a number of different perspectives and dimensions regarding the extent to which HIV/AIDS is a barrier to learning and participation as well as its embedded-ness within various social, political and social contexts. HIV/AIDS is an understandably difficult area of exploration, given the level of stigma currently attached to the disease, and more participatory techniques have a greater chance of allowing this kind of exploration. The use of participatory techniques is aimed at obtaining rich descriptions that would provide an understanding of HIV/AIDS as an exclusionary factor and barrier to learning and participation.

According to Theis & Grady (1991) ranking is concerned with placing something in order. Its strength lies in its ability to draw out sensitive information from the participants. Van Vlaenderen (Unpublished paper) explains that ranking involves ranking certain objects or issues according to certain criteria, such as preference, importance or prevalence. Theis & Grady (1991) suggest that the researcher lets the participants conduct the activities in their own way, according to their own units of

measurement using their own names for categories. Boettiger (2004) explains that this is an illustration of how participatory research techniques emphasise the accessing of local categories and frames of reference. According to Theis & Grady (1991) ranking calls for the researcher to be both patient and organised at each step of the exercise. The researcher must sit quietly, listen to and learn from the participants. The researcher must also be organised in that he or she must be prepared to ask questions that probe deeper into what is being said, as well as practical considerations such as taking notes, having enough materials for example, audio tapes, paper etc.

Theis & Grady (1991) suggest the following steps when constructing a ranking exercise: Firstly, you chose a topic namely, how educators map and make sense of intersecting barriers to learning, embedded in their specific school contexts. Secondly, participants are then split into groups. In this study there were five groups, one group from each of the five schools. Thirdly, each group completes the direct ranking matrix. In this study the participants ranked the barriers to learning in a hierarchical manner with the most significant being at the top of a pyramid and the least significant being at the bottom. A fundamental feature of ranking of the barriers was the collaborative and co-operative nature of the participation. Finally, the ranked criteria of groups are compared, followed by discussion. This step is optional as tensions may arise.

The vulnerability matrix and simple ranking exercises were used in this study. The purpose of a vulnerability matrix is to score the vulnerability of people in various social groups against factors related to vulnerability. The scores are then added and ranked in terms of vulnerability. The vulnerability matrix is useful as it allows the vulnerability of participants in one group to be ranked against members in other social groups. This, thus, allows the researcher to identify the most vulnerable parties in a community. It also allows the researcher to identify the most pressing vulnerability factors in the community.

3.3.5 Research Process

Prior to the focus group interviews, the research team including myself, met with the principals and educators of the different schools on different days, and defined the purpose and outcome of the project. Consent was sought from the principals and

educators to participate in the research. The dates and time frame for the focus group interviews were given to the educators. It was very frustrating trying to get a date, time and group together at one of the high schools as the teachers were occupied with internal matriculation examinations. The number of participants in each focus group varied. It was important to strike a balance between having enough people to generate a discussion, but not having too many people that some feel crowded out.

At each focus group session, the research team met with the participants and welcomed them. An overview of the research was given and basic ground rules were set. It was also decided which participant would be the scribe in terms of recording the barriers to basic education that emanated from the participants responses. The tone for the interview was set, not being too formal and rigid nor being too informal and humorous. Although it was intended to conduct each interview in a setting where participants felt relaxed and comfortable, this was not always feasible. At one of the primary schools participants had to sit in a very crowded “staffroom”, and it was an extremely hot day. The space was not conducive to full interaction. Opening the door and windows presented a problem in that the wind blew the papers. There was also the noise from the playground. At the school the general atmosphere was fairly relaxed but teachers were quite upset at having to give up their time. They did, however, speak quite openly and freely. Each focus group interview lasted for approximately two hours. Participants were informed that the interviews would be tape-recorded as this enables the researcher recapture information that might have not been captured during the interviews. All tape recordings were transcribed.

Potential questions on teacher constructions of intersecting barriers to basic education in the context of where they teach were identified and formed a guide for the focus group interviews (appendix A). The interview guide was used to steer the open-ended questions asked at the focus group interviews. The open-ended questions are broader and allowed participants considerable freedom to choose what to say, how much, and how to say it. This allowed the interviewees some liberty in the direction of the conversation.

At the beginning of the focus group interviews, the participants were introduced to and briefed on the ranking exercise (Appendix A). When the questions (Appendix A)

were posed to the participants, they (participants) brainstormed responses to the questions. The scribe in each focus group wrote down the barriers on paper. Participants then ranked the barriers in a hierarchical manner with the most significant at the top of the pyramid. After the completion of the exercise, participants discussed and explained the order of ranking. Researchers then probed with questions to seek clarity and elaboration. A fundamental feature of ranking of the barriers was the collaborative and co-operative nature of the participants.

The research team asked questions (Appendix A) in a conversational manner. As the focus group is a social experience, conversational questions are essential to create and maintain an informal environment. The questions were clear, short, one dimensional, jargon free, and the language was familiar to the participant. While it is not the intention of the researcher to control the process to the extent that would limit inputs, it was necessary to ‘cut in’ on a few occasions to re-direct and probe discussions towards issues that had been interpreted as being crucial to the study. The focus group interviews enabled the researcher to interpret body language, gestures, particular emphasis and general demeanour.

3.3.6 Data Analysis

Data was analysed according to the following levels:

Level 1: Interviews were audio taped and transcribed.

Level 2: I coded the data with the research team. Various topics that highlighted the barriers were identified namely; policy, school factors, HIV/AIDS, risk factors in community, access to support, poverty, and family structure.

Level 3: Within each of the topics various categories were identified for example, the topic HIV/AIDS had the categories gender and power relations, discrimination, stigma, etc.

Level 4: I examined the discourses within and across the categories constructed by teachers, for example, discourses in teacher constructions of pregnancy amongst learners, lack of motivation by learners, etc.

Refer to coding framework (Appendix B).

3.3.7 Ethical Issues

In conducting any kind of research, it is necessary to obtain informed consent from the research participants. In order to achieve informed consent by the participants, the following four elements must be practiced: The subjects must be competent, meaning that they are responsible and mature and will make correct decisions when given relevant information. They are voluntarily participating in the research. They have received full information regarding the research and what the data will be used for. The subjects must fully comprehend the research project, even when risks are involved (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

All four of these guidelines were followed with regard to the research. Permission to conduct this research was obtained first from the Provincial Department of Education and then from the principals of each of the five schools. Educators of each school were also briefed on this study to seek their approval in undertaking this research. This research cannot be viewed as a separate entity from the participants who were engaged in it. Some of the ethical issues to contend with are how participants are affected, what impact the research has on them, non-violation of their rights, and the use of methods that would not be harmful to them. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000), ethical issues may arise from the kinds of problems investigated by social scientists and the methods they use to obtain valid and reliable data. In this investigative explorative research study, the nature of the problem in focus, that is, barriers, is loaded with multi-faceted issues that may be of a highly sensitive nature. Thus ethical issues arise, not solely in the context of the research process, but also from the nature of the disease itself.

Research into HIV/AIDS is a highly sensitive topic because of the stigmatisation and discrimination associated with it. Since the proposed research involved entry into the private spaces of participants in a community, it had to be particularly sensitive to issues around confidentiality and anonymity. Agreements were reached with participants about the limits to accessibility to records and documents, and to the process of dissemination of findings. Informed consent was acquired from the participants, and participants were assured that anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Anonymity, with respect to the identity of individual participants, is not possible when face-to-face focus group interviews are conducted.

It is unavoidable that the participants' identities are revealed to the researcher. In this regard, educators were assured that the data collected through such process would not be used to publicly identify participants in the study.

3.3.8 Limitations in the study

The interviews conducted in the first few schools were not very successful because it was evident that the interviewers (research team) dominated the sessions. The other limitation was the nature of probes by the research team. Although probes are good in stimulating discussion in focus group discussion, it was a problem here because the probes were leading the participants into desired responses. Fortunately, the research team identified this problem early in the study and met to evaluate the process. The research questions were reviewed and when the team visited the remaining schools, they were mindful of the mistakes made initially. A rich source of data was collected from the remaining schools.

3.3.9 Summary

The research situated within a poststructuralist paradigm, using qualitative research methods has drawn on focus group interviews and the direct ranking matrix as participatory techniques to examine the complex ways in which teacher constructions of their experiences of teaching in a rural disadvantaged context shape their taken for granted understandings of barriers to basic education. Given the context and sensitivity of the study informed consent from the participants was gained and the limitations of the study was discussed. The data was collected and coded into topics. Within each of the topics different categories emerged. I then examined the different discourses within and across the categories constructed by teachers. The themes that emerged are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine how educators map and make sense of the intersecting barriers embedded in their specific schooling contexts and communities, in particular, a context in which HIV/AIDS prevalence is high. The study also examined how teacher constructions of their experiences of teaching in a particular context shape their taken for granted understandings of the intersecting barriers to basic education. The data analysis focussed on examining discourses that were evident in teacher constructions of barriers to basic education in an HIV/AIDS context.

4.2 Teacher Constructions of Barriers to Basic Education: Interrogating Dominant Discourses

In analysing the data, I looked at dominant discursive constructions of teachers and what frameworks they use to make sense of barriers to schooling in an HIV and AIDS context. I examined the complex ways in which teacher constructions of their experiences of teaching in a disadvantaged context shape their understandings of barriers to basic education. I also looked at why teachers select and in some cases discard particular discourses of barriers to basic education, and what are the contradictions and contestations embedded in these dominant discourses relating to barriers to basic education.

4.2.1 Introduction

Various discourses emerged in the narratives of teachers. The discourses were contradictory and competing, and in tension with one another. Analysis of data reflects that while some teachers select dominant discourses others, although a minority challenged dominant discursive constructions. The discourses that emerged are ‘othering’: discourse of detachment, silences, difference as deficit, normalisation discourse and discourse of caring.

4.2.2 Discourse of detachment

According to Castro & Lindbladh (2003), the detachment discourse is basically a way of disconnecting one’s identity from a negatively perceived social environment. It can

also be described as ‘othering’. The most distinct characteristic of this discourse is the explicit reproduction of the stigmatic picture of the problematic area. The problems are acknowledged as being severe and degrading, and there is a conscious rejection of belonging to the place. It indicates an alienation from one’s origin, and a denial of essential parts of one’s life history. In other words, this discourse articulates a sense of displacement. The detachment discourse represents an offensive way of disconnecting people.

Johnstone (2002) argues that a common feature of the way people deal with others is by categorizing them. He maintains that people’s “social identities” are not natural and predictable. Zembylas (2003) explains that from a Foucoulitian perspective teacher identity formation is a by-product of power and knowledge within a context of normalized institutional codes. In this study the participants (teachers) are city dwellers who have professional qualifications and earn a monthly salary hence resulting in them being in positions of power and knowledge. They are looked upon as the dominant social group while members of the community they serve do not enjoy the same social status and are looked upon as being inferior.

While Sondergaard (2002) argues that identities and social categories are constructed through processes of exclusion, and in particular through the exclusion of the binary other, the social location of teachers in this study is a seemingly reasonable explanation for ‘othering’. Teachers live away from the schools and commute daily except for a few who live in teachers housing quarters. Distances travelled range from 30km to 150 km. The teachers’ who travel daily are very discontent as their time of arrival and departure from school is dependent on the driver of the bus. Another reason for their frustration can be attributed to travelling as one of the reasons for their financial resources being drained. Teachers are usually exhausted when they arrive at school, and although the data reflects that teacher absenteeism is not a problem, principals indicated there was a lot of ‘legitimate sick leave’. The mere fact that the educators live away from the schools has resulted in a sense of removal or distancing. They feel no sense of belonging, hence having no vested interest in their learners, or the upliftment of these schools or even the community they serve. Even those teachers who live in the quarters see themselves as victims and are resentful towards the community. They feel the community exploits them. These teachers express feelings

of discontent of what they perceive as poor living standards for people and their profession. Teachers' inability to empathise with the community they serve can be seen in their eagerness to go home at the end of the week. There is hardly any or in most cases very little contact or communication with the parent population of the community, given that most teachers commute daily. A common feature across the data was the use of 'them', 'they' or 'others' with reference to the learners, their parents and the community rather than the use of 'we' or 'us'. The following excerpt illustrates this,

Interviewer: OK, but inaccessibility of the facility. When you say people around here will not acknowledge that there might be HIV/AIDS and that it happens in other areas, why do you think that they won't. What is it that happens that makes people not want to talk about that?

Interviewee: Because, I don't know what to call it. I know the exact word to put it, because once they don't want to know about their status. When they are ill, they associate their illness with things, also their illness may be they are bewitched.

Interviewee: Bewitched

Interviewee: Exactly, they are bewitched. All those things.

Teacher, rural high school.

The teachers in the study do not feel a sense of belonging to the place they work at. They distance themselves from the community they teach in by using existing social representations. The 'other' are stereotyped and perceived as being inferior. Deacon, Stephney & Prosalendis (2005) reiterates when a particular group of stigmatising ideas is validated by a powerful person or group and deployed as part of broader struggles, it becomes pervasive, entrenched, and very difficult to shift. The powerful nature of dominant group 'othering' in a society can override other representations and even cause widespread self-stigmatisation. The following excerpt also accentuates the failure of teachers to recognise or acknowledge that they may be sharing similar experiences of HIV/AIDS with the community they detach themselves from and perceive as the 'other',

Interviewer: And teachers? Will teachers acknowledge, will teachers be open about it? They say the parents or people who live in the community. Do you think teachers are more prepared to acknowledge their status than parents?

Interviewee: Well, not because of the fact that these parents are many, unlike the parents are... (unclear). Teachers will not acknowledge their status because of their status, because of their dignity may be.

Teacher, rural high school.

While a different set of norms around the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status for teachers and the community reveals the injustice of ‘othering’, the following extract confirms that teachers too are affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic,

Interviewer: OK, So, you say maybe a high rate of absenteeism from the school because of problems like this?

Interviewee: Not really. We are late. They have to consider where they place teachers. This is very much important because the teachers are also affected by HIV and AIDS just because some of us are working very far from their homes as a result they stay here. Once you stay out of your house just a week you cannot stay alone. That is why we've got a high rate of HIV and AIDS. So, government is supposed to consider all those things because that is why teachers are so much affected.

Teacher, urban primary.

4.2.3 Silences

According to Johnstone (2002), in addition to being shaped by what *is* said, the worlds evoked and created in discourse are also shaped by silence: by what *cannot be* said or *is not* said. Silences were evident in how teachers mediate the curriculum and how teacher constructions are deficit in terms of HIV/AIDS and the community. Silences in communication are exacerbating the HIV/AIDS pandemic resulting in increased stigmatisation, discrimination, and marginalisation of individuals. Given the sensitivities that surround HIV/AIDS and sex, teachers reported finding it difficult to discuss HIV/AIDS with their learners, a finding that was also evident by Kelly (2000a) and England (2003) in the literature review. One reason for the silences in this study can be attributed to selective teaching. Social and cultural constraints,

sexual relations and power imbalances are threatening teachers' efforts to discuss HIV/AIDS and sexuality. This results in the practice of selective teaching. Teachers appear to be selecting which messages to give or else choosing not to teach about HIV at all. Entire lessons are not being taught from the syllabus. Teachers adopt an overly scientific emphasis during lessons for example, teaching learners the basics such as abstain, be faithful and to use condoms (ABC). This leads to discussions of HIV with no direct reference to sexual relationships, and even if sex is discussed it is only within the "acceptable" boundaries of abstinence. Teachers in the study gave the following reasons for selective teaching,

Well, the thing is that teachers haven't been well educated about sexual education. We don't know the difference between sexual education and sex education. Thus we teach them about HIV, we just teach them with those basics. The causes, the consequences, the results. What else? With the basic knowledge we ourselves have we can't go deep into details.

Teacher, urban primary school.

I think they are still young. That's what I was going to say that because they are still young we don't go too deep. It's jus ABC, abstain, be faithful, use condoms. And we tell them that, because you are at this stage which one do you think is good for you. So, it's to abstain. That's how we just end there. We don't go as far being faithful, using condoms because they are not yet that age.

Teacher, urban primary school.

Another reason teachers gave for selective teaching is parents' lack of support and disapproval of their children being taught about sex. One teacher's response was as follows,

And the problem that we have, parents don't turn up for meetings so that we can discuss. So that we can be able to implement this when we are teaching. It's very hard to teach it without consulting the parents.

Teacher, urban primary school.

Poverty was also cited as a reason for selective teaching. The following excerpt shows the tensions that exist and how some teachers, although the minority contested the dominant discourses,

You know it's very difficult to tell a learner who does not have the basics at home. You are only coming with this subject in the classroom whereby the learner is expecting you to teach subject matter not other matters in as far as life is concerned. So, it means that you are entering another vicinity where you are not supposed to enter. If you warn or tell a learner what to do life skills then he'll tell you, this one is expecting me me to listen to him. He's supposed to teach English. That is all.

Teacher, rural high school.

According to Boler, Ibrahim, Adoss & Shaw (2003) the occurrence of selective teaching is alarming. Discussion of HIV without direct reference to sex, or advocating abstinence without mentioning safe sex cannot work. On the contrary, it bonds notions of HIV to immorality, and leads to a “them, not us” attitude. This, in turn, leads to even further discrimination. It also fails to help the many young people who are sexually active, making it less likely that they will seek advice or personalise their risk of becoming HIV positive. Silences in communication over the issue of condoms, or messages other than abstinence arise out of a paradox of safer sex. In the context of young people, the paradox or tension can occur between two assumptions: a societal assumption that the young people do not and will not, have premarital sex, and the necessary assumption needed to discuss condoms: that young people do have premarital sex.

The other reason for silences in this study can be attributed to the blaming model. Many people living with HIV/AIDS still live in fear of discovery because of the prevalent stigma and its associated prejudice and discrimination. The definitions of stigma vary widely revealing opposing opinions of social control and ‘the blaming models of stigma’. Link & Phelan (2001), researchers in the sociological tradition adopt the view that stigma is defined by its discriminatory result, and believe that stigma is a social process that functions to constantly reinforce existing social inequalities (Parker & Aggleton, 2003), thus acting as an agent of social control. The main aim of social control models of stigma is to understand the relationship between stigma and power. It perceives stigma as a complex social process linked to exclusion and dominance perpetuating existing social inequalities. This model suggest that stigma cannot be adequately addressed by education programmes, since it serves to maintain social control, and exacerbates social divisions and inequalities of

marginalized, disempowered groups, therefore, maintaining the socio-political status quo.

According to (Crawford: 1994, Joffe: 1999) the ‘blaming model’ presents an alternative approach to stigma compared to the traditional and social control models. The ‘blaming model’ defines stigma as an ideology that associates a biological disease agent to negatively-defined behaviours or groups in society. This model views stigma as a problem of fear and blame and does not resort to individualism or functionalism. Stigma, according to the ‘blaming model’, is a “fundamental emotional response to danger that helps people to feel safer by projecting controllable risk, and therefore blame, onto outgroups” (Joffe, 1999). This creates a sense of power and protection from danger at an individual and a group level. The following excerpts from across the data indicate instances where teachers projected the cause onto someone or something else:

Sometimes I think the lack of sex education at their homes. Some parents are afraid to tell their kids about the truth. I think that's the cause too.

Teacher, rural high school.

We have a problem here. They don't identify parents who are ill. For an example, HIV and AIDS. People around here they say AIDS is not here. AIDS is around Pietermaritzburg and Durban. It's not here.

Teacher, rural high school.

We are not aware of the learners who are affected by AIDS and those who are infected. We are not aware at all. Because parents at home they don't talk about this disease. They don't tell children. So, we're not aware.

Teacher, urban primary school.

Silences in communication can be seen as a barrier to addressing HIV/AIDS stigma. Selective teaching and projecting blame onto learners and the community in deficit ways helps legitimise dominant discourses of learners and community in need of ‘treatment’. Given the realities of HIV/AIDS, it is vital to break the silence around it to help curb the pandemic.

4.2.4 Difference as deficit

Weedon (1987) maintains that discourses are conventions, which to a significant extent govern what can be said, by what kind of speakers, and for what type of audiences. Urwin (1984) make claim that discourses are shaped by the power relations in social institutions and in society as a whole such that ‘power-knowledge relations are integral to the production and reproduction of discourses’. According to Johnstone (2002), not all members of human social groups play the same roles. Social groups are often hierarchically stratified into subgroups such as “social classes,” “castes” or “cliques” that range from high to low on scales of status and power. In some situations, power is something one subgroup or person “has” and others do not. Power comes with social status. As evident in the literature review in chapter two, Moletsane (2003) argues that when people are unable to access resources for their basic needs, education becomes either a nuisance or a luxury. Thus, the possibility of successfully educating their children becomes remote and that of keeping them in school almost impossible.

In this study, the teachers are perceived as the dominant, privileged group that choose to use their own background and living standards to measure their learners and the community in which they teach. Teachers often failed to see the socio-economic conditions as a contextual reason for lack of parental involvement. Their inability to identify with their learners and parents was often evident in their responses.

We have seen the parents, we've seen in fact, I happen to a member of the governing body, whenever we have a meeting they don't care, they don't turn up, they don't turn up which also gives a big problem.

Teacher, urban primary school.

It's a big problem. Maybe you give the learners homework and you don't know to make it controlled because someone must check if the learner has done the homework, nobody does. The learner will come with his or her excuse why she didn't do the homework. Maybe you need them to buy files or colouring pencils or anything and you don't know who to tell because the parents are not supporting.

Teacher, rural high school.

It's a result of illiteracy from parents because they see no importance of their children to be educated. It's some of the things. Some of the children they pass matric and then they go and look for jobs in Pietermaritzburg. The housework jobs because there is no money to further their education. So they don't see a need for educating their children.

Teacher, urban primary school.

Of which I think the problem is back home. There is no parental guidance. Maybe when the parents leave early in the morning, he/she goes to work thinking that the child will also go to school, then she will be back in the evening when others are already back, then he/she will think that he or she was at school and the problem is as we have mentioned in the illiteracy. They can't read. They don't look whether they have homework, whether there is some work they did at school which is one of the problems.

Teacher, urban primary school.

This is why we said they are lazy. They don't want to cooperate. They don't want to clean the school. Even if you say "please come let us talk about your child" ... no they don't.

Teacher, rural primary school.

We have Life Orientation but I think peer pressure and pressure from outside the school is stronger. Ja. Like some of the things are beyond our control because you say something in school, they go out they get something from women, even like we... We...

There is a lack of teacher parent relationship. Because if we had relationship with their parents it would be better but there's no relationship whatsoever. Sometimes you see that when you have a problem with the kid you call a parent, they never come

Teacher, urban high school.

Discourses of difference as deficit also emerged in how teachers constructed learners. Teachers once again failed to acknowledge that poverty might impact on these learners perceived poor behaviour and lack of motivation.

Er, most of them well they just clean forgot. At 11 o' clock when... when they go out for break they don't come back. And you cannot even control them because they just move out from the premises. They are unruly, I can say.

Teacher, urban high school.

To them (learners) there is nothing wrong with falling pregnant, having a kid and come back to school. Fail the next two years. Like they don't know whether it's sunrise or sunset.

Teacher, urban high school.

They are not well motivated in terms of education, they are not well motivated.

Teacher, urban high school.

Again teachers' perceptions of learners and the community as being different and inferior will only perpetuate the situation of where the teachers remain the dominant group while the learners and the community continue to be the oppressed.

Despite the difficulty in challenging dominant discourses, there were some teachers who did not agree with the above assumptions and acknowledged the mitigating and intersecting factors as is evident in the excerpt below:

I wouldn't say they don't care... because you'll find that there are parents who really care for their own kids... but the problem is they are not employed. They don't have their source of ... source of income themselves. It's only the grandmother who is providing them... feeding about 6 or 7 kids in the family so they do care... the problem is they don't have the source of income. And there are those (pause) who ... who don't care... but ja, I will say it's about 5%.

Teacher, urban high school.

4.2.5 Normalisation discourse

According to Castro & Lindbladh (2004), the normalisation discourse is exclusively constituted by a normalising logic by means of which social problems in the area are systematically referred to as general social trends. Problems are symbolically diminished when perceived as being common. The normalisation discourse dislocates the social problems from the "problematic area" and places them in the wider context of the "society of today". In this sense, it presents a view that implicitly contradicts the stigmatising picture. At the same time, the normalising logic activates a social blindness in terms of denying the existence of the participants' urban location. Sennett (1998) explains that the normalising logic entails no collective subtext, no sense of we. It does not frame any sense of belonging to the place of residence, and does not

embody any notion of future directionality. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), the normalising logic can be understood as an expression of, and at the same time, a reinforcement of a sense of transiency, which in turn can be seen as a disposition to make a virtue of necessity by adapting oneself to events and conditions that are perceived as being beyond individual control.

Bauman (1997) explains that the normalisation discourse may be seen in the short-term perspective as being a perfectly rational strategy for adjustment to an existence marked by an absence of collective structures. In the long-term perspective, however, the discursive absence of sense of location and direction in social space is likely to promote strategies of denial and a sense of resignation. Hence it represents an impoverished form of an individualised identity with no roots, but also no vision of a future.

Wodak (1997) argues that discourses of the other producing two homogenous images have to be rethought. Discourses seem to have two different effects. While the other is constituted as homogenous, the self is constituted as flexible and heterogeneous. In this study, the learners and their parents as well as the community are marginalized and stereotyped. As indicated earlier the majority of the participants are not from the rural community. The teachers in the study are city dwellers whose background is different from the families of the children they teach in terms of lifestyle, experience, acquired knowledge, sophistication, socio-economic status and social class. There is a high degree of unemployment in the community and where people are employed, it is mainly on farms and timber estates, or as migrant labourers. In some cases, there is a serious breakdown in family life. The parents of children in the schools are the working class, underpaid, in some cases unemployed and the poor. Teachers being the dominant group in this study have little empathy for this community and perceive them in negative ways. Instead of looking at the disadvantaged situation of the parents and acting in ways to bring about positive changes, the participants act as social agents who merely reproduce the system of dominance and oppression as is evident in the excerpts below.

Even if you can ever arrange a meeting with the parents, for general meeting of the school they are not coming. They are not responsive. Parents are least... The environment as a

whole is 200+. I don't know where it is originated from because the environment itself contributes a lot to the school money.

Teacher, urban high school.

They are not employed. There is no food, they don't even pay school fees. Parents don't know how important it is for a child to come to school. When a parent is sick or they want to do something they stay at home and look after my baby or go to my work and work for me for once. I'm at home I'm sick'.

Teacher, urban primary school.

I would say they know about their right but they don't know their responsibilities. That's the only problem because if something bad happens it's something that the child is going to come home and tell the parents and the parent will come to the school and it will go to the principal's office. But if you ask the child to bring the parent to the school just because there's a problem towards the kid they never show up. They know about their rights but there's no responsibility towards these things.

Teacher, urban primary school.

Teachers in this study ignore the contextual reasons including poverty, sexuality and teenage pregnancy as reasons for the differences in the community they serve and that of their own lives. Findings in the literature review by Leach (2002) indicate there is a clear link between poverty, sexuality and teenage pregnancy. The narratives below indicate that the experiences or problems of teenage pregnancy and sexuality amongst learners and their families is homogenised. It is clearly evident that the social problems of the area are systematically referred to as general social trends. The problems are symbolically diminished when perceived as being common.

I think in this area it seems as if it's a competition. The other one who has a child, the other one will also have, will want to have a child. That is the problem.

Teacher, urban primary school.

There is that thing that if you don't have a boyfriend, and you don't sleep with a boyfriend, there is something wrong with you.

Teacher, urban primary school.

Ja, and there's peer pressure because some of them, they are like in Grade 9 they even tell others that do not have children that "You are barren".

Teacher, urban, high school.

It could. It's a traditional belief. You see parents here encourage young children to have boyfriends. They want to know their boyfriends and they don't go deeper explaining about sex and everything. And then the girls fall pregnant.

Teacher, urban, primary school.

Teachers construct all learners who fall pregnant and their families in the same way. From the narratives above one can infer that there are cultural explanations for pregnancy and sexually active behaviour in this community. Homogenising learners' experiences by teachers reveals their lack of contextualized understandings of the lives of these learners, and their failure to address differences across families that may arise out of social inequalities. Teachers only exist because there are students, and vice versa. People create roles for one another and reinforce the difference between roles as they speak in ways their roles require. Sometimes, this process can push people further and further apart, making their roles and behaviours increasingly dissimilar. The binary categories implicit in the process of 'othering' obscure the diversity that exists within groups, assuming homogeneity where it does not necessarily exist.

4.2.6 Discourse of caring

According to the Norms and Standards outlined in the Education Labour Relations Council, Policy Handbook for Educators (2003), educators are expected to play seven roles. One of the seven roles to be fulfilled is that of community, citizenship and pastoral role. The educator is expected to practise and promote a critical, committed and, ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others. The educator is also expected to uphold the Constitution of South Africa and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society. Within the school, the educator is expected to demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner, and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators. Furthermore, the educator is expected to develop supportive relations with parents, and other key persons and organisations

based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues. One critical dimension of this role is HIV/AIDS education. HIV/AIDS has increased demands for pastoral care work in schools.

According to Bhana, Morrell, Epstein & Moletsane (2006) many teachers are in some or other way involved in care work, but the conditions of schools determine the nature and extent of the care work that teachers are called to deliver. Teachers in the schools with the least resources are frequently those required to provide the most demanding forms of support and care to learners. Poverty, violence, and orphanhood, for example, mean that schools are sometimes the only places where children might expect and find any level of care. Yet lack of resources, an overloaded curriculum and multiple complex demands on teachers mean that such responsibilities are very difficult and may go unperformed. Furthermore, teachers sometimes lack the skills necessary for addressing their learners' problems.

There is some evidence in the study that indicate educators have difficulty in meeting the community, citizenship and pastoral role. The following extracts indicate that the school does not have a support system and these teachers lack the skills necessary for addressing their learners' problems.

Interviewee: Yes, they live with parents. Like I've got my two little girls in my grade 2 class. They are being raped by their relatives. One is the mother's boyfriend and the other one is an uncle.

Interviewer: Does the school have a support system for children? Who do they talk to? What is being done?

Interviewee: Not yet. Nothing is happening.

Teacher, urban primary school.

Ja, unless they open up to us, but sometimes it's very difficult because a kid can come to you and tell you "I'm being abused" but... there are technicalities...[in other words it is difficult for teachers to follow up because of the technicalities involved].

Teacher, urban high school.

You know what the problem here? It's the parents because you may want to help the child but maybe if maybe the parents don't want you to be involved it's very difficult because they are hiding some of these things that they are getting.

Teacher, urban primary school.

Or relatives ja. And I remember one instance where a child told me that "Teacher I have not eaten for three days because at home there's no food". So it's very, very difficult to work with these... these...these kids.

Teacher, urban high school.

The pastoral role of a few teachers did differ with deficit thinking as they contested constructions based on a pervasive deficiency framework. These teachers showed care, particularly when care was immediate and non-demanding. They engaged in various kinds of work outside the formal curriculum around issues of violence, abuse, poverty, orphanhood, teenage pregnancy, child abuse etc. despite having no formal training. The following excerpts show that these teachers gain no recognition or credit and are often taken for granted:

Ja sometimes I can make one example, we have a problem that sometimes during break time or when we are having chips, this and that, they have this habit of asking money from us. And to us we not used to that. Like some of us we are raised that you don't ask money... for money from strangers, but these kids they do ask because really they need the money, and sometimes they ask for money because they are hungry. They even come, "Mam, can I please have R2. I'm hungry. I didn't get anything from home to eat". And we give it to them because we feel guilty.

Teacher: urban high school.

There is a high rate of unemployment...yesterday I made calculations and noticed that 8% of my salary is going to the learners that come everyday asking for money. It has become strained... Mrs Cronje and the department must do something about this.

Teacher, urban high school.

The community perceives teachers as privileged, yet teachers' personal lives are just as affected by the pandemic and their perceived privilege leaves room for thought.

Teachers themselves don't know who, they are anymore as can be seen from the response below:

Sometimes you don't know what you are anymore. Because of your identity, sometimes... (laugh).
Teacher, rural primary school.

In order to transform power relations it is not enough for educators to position themselves outside the community they serve. In doing this, their attempts at getting rid of oppression might contribute to reproducing it in a more subtle way.

Deficit thinking emerges as a dominant ideology that shapes teachers explanations for not addressing barriers to basic education, with the exception of some teachers who contested constructions based on a pervasive deficiency framework, and showed instances of contesting and contradicting dominant discourses. In the main, many teachers tend to use deficiency framework as a basis for understanding barriers to basic education inherent in the lives of their learners, families and communities in a HIV/AIDS context. Such discourses are a powerful means of constraining how teachers think, talk or act in relation to particular social issues such as HIV/AIDS.

4.3 Conclusion

As the findings of this study show that deficit thinking emerges as a dominant ideology, it is imperative for academics involved in teacher education and researchers to be alert to the full extent of the impact of these dominant deficit-thinking discourses. While individuals can affirm or resist particular discourses, schools are important societal institutions that can challenge specific discourses. This study shows the debilitating effect these oppressive discourses have in the manner in which they construct those already marginalized as the 'other'. Educators should challenge and voice their opposition to these dominant discourses and attempt to participate in the construction of alternative ones.

CHAPTER FIVE: REFLECTIONS

This dissertation has sought to explore the complex ways in which teacher constructions of their experiences of teaching in a disadvantaged context shape their taken for granted understandings of barriers to basic education. Situated within a critical poststructuralist paradigm and drawing on the discourse theory, the study explored how teachers make sense of barriers to basic education in a context where HIV/AIDS prevalence is high. The findings of this study indicate that teachers rely on a deficiency framework as a basis for understanding the intersecting barriers to basic education. Five key themes emerged from this framework, namely, discourse of detachment, difference as deficit, silences, normalisation discourse and discourse of caring. Deficit thinking emerges as a dominant ideology that shapes teachers explanations for not addressing barriers to basic education. Teacher education programmes should engage teachers in challenging and contesting oppressive discourses that impact their work in HIV and AIDS context.

HIV/AIDS strikes at every part of a community and society points in the direction of making the most extensive possible use of the expertise available to communicate about it. Teachers have an obvious and important role, but to play this role they need to deconstruct categorization schemes, particularly those that purport to tell ‘the truth’ about themselves, their learners and the communities in which they teach. Teachers need to be reminded constantly that they are situated institutionally in ways that will systematically cloak competing discourses. Teachers need to be alert to signs of resistance, the presence of counter cultures, and unintended effects of organization. They need to challenge dominant discourses and participate in the construction of alternative ones.

APPENDIX A

EDUCATORS: FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH

1. Introduction: remind educators about focus of research project and research aims.

2. Ranking exercise: (participatory research techniques).

Question: What do you see as barriers to schooling as experienced by learners?

Teachers work in groups on newsprint on which a pyramid figure has been drawn.

They rank the barriers in a hierarchical manner – with the most significant at top of the pyramid.

After the completion of the exercise a discussion will follow. Educators will discuss and explain order of ranking. Researchers will probe/ seek elaboration.

3. How is the school attempting to address these barriers?

4. Tell us about the life orientation curriculum at the school. What are successes and challenges?

5. Group activity: Vulnerability matrix.

Aim: educators to identify who they consider to be vulnerable social groups in the school and community and to score the vulnerability of people in various social groups.

Process:

1. Ask participants to identify social groups and vulnerability factors.

2. List the most important social groups and vulnerability factors.

3. Participants draw up a matrix.

4. For each factor ask which is worst, then next worst, then next worst etc. Repeat this process until all factors have been addressed.

5. Each group is scored against a vulnerability factor.

6. Ask which factor is the most debilitating. Force a choice” if you could only choose one vulnerability factor which would it be?”

7. Tally up the total score for each social group, and rank groups in order from most vulnerable to least vulnerable or vice versa.
8. Confirm with the participants if the ranked matrix is a reflection of their reality.
9. A process of discussion in which the participants explain the matrix to the researcher will follow the above steps.

Appendix B	
Topic	Category
Policy	School fees C2005 Training and Resources Child support grant Pregnancy Feeding scheme
School Factors	Built environment Poor teacher development Teacher placement Sexuality Attendance Teacher attitude towards C2005 Culture of teaching and learning Discipline and control Home supervision of school work Class size Distance from school Teacher commitment and accountability School – community relationship Truancy
HIV/ AIDS	Deaths Illness/ sickness Myths Loss of family members Gender and power relations Discrimination Stigma Knowledge and Behaviour
Risk factors in community	Substance abuse Child labour and loss of education Non disclosure Poor discipline of learners Hunger
Access to support	State grants Food and nutrition Poor literacy Sexuality education Transport

Annexure C

Topic	Category
Poverty	Unemployment Inadequate food and nutrition Lack of health care Hunger
Family Structure	Grandmother as caregiver Absent parents

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