

**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS'
EXPERIENCES AND EVOLVING TEACHER IDENTITIES IN POST-
APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

BY

MRS BEVERLEY ANN VARATHAIAH

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE**

OF

**MASTER OF EDUCATION – TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT (TEPD)**

IN THE

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

EDGEWOOD CAMPUS

DURBAN

DATE : DECEMBER 2010

SUPERVISOR : DR KATHLEEN PITHOUSE-MORGAN

DECLARATION

I, Beverley Ann Varathaiah declare that

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other person's data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This dissertation does not contain other person's writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
 - a) their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
 - b) Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks, and referenced.
- (v) Where I have reproduced a publication of which I am an author, co-author or editor, I have indicated in detail which part of the publication was actually written by myself alone and have fully referenced such publications.
- (vi) This dissertation does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the References section.

Signed.....

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation is submitted with / without my approval.

.....

Dr Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely express my gratitude and appreciation to my Supervisor, Dr Kathleen Pithouse- Morgan whose support and guidance has been invaluable to me. A special thank you to my family and friends for their encouragement and motivation throughout this study. I must acknowledge the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in my life who has guided me throughout this journey. I would be failing in my duty if I did not mention my spiritual heads Pastors Clive and Sandra Gopaul who have allowed me to take time off from my church commitments to complete this study. Finally, to the participants, thank you for telling your stories.

ABSTRACT

This narrative inquiry study explores the past and present relationships between the personal and professional experiences of teachers and their evolving teacher identities. In this study, I take on the role of participant-researcher to work together with two other teachers in my school to share and study our personal and professional stories of lived experience in order to better understand how our teacher identities might be evolving in response to the South African educational context. The diverse contexts from which we have journeyed frame the different experiences that we share. In considering the question of how teachers' past lived experiences might have shaped our teacher identities, I identify political, social, educational and economic forces as well as teacher and family legacies that have emerged from our personal and professional narratives. In looking at the question of how teachers' current professional experiences might be affecting our evolving teacher identities, I highlight the daily lives of the teachers in this study, their influences and experiences, their inter-personal relationships, their passion for their subject and finally their future expectations that may or may not bring about change. Overall, this study draws attention to the value of teachers examining the personal and professional experiences that they have had in order to understand why they take on and project the identities that they do and how these identities might evolve and change in response to new situations and challenges.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ANC- African National Congress
- SRC-Student's Representative Council
- SASO-South African Students' Organisation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY	1
Introduction	1
Focus and purpose of the study	2
Key Research Questions	4
Methodological and Theoretical Approach	4
Progression in this Personal and Professional Journey	6
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY – THE JOURNEY THAT WE HAVE TAKEN	7
Introduction	7
What is Narrative Inquiry?	7
Why Narrative Inquiry?	8
The Research Process	11
Research Setting	13
Data Production Methods	14
Data Representation and Analysis	27
Limitations of the Study	29
Trustworthiness	30
Ethical Issues	30
Conclusion	32
CHAPTER THREE: THE WAY WE WERE	33
Introduction	33
Embarking on our Journeys of Self- Exploration	34
Our Personal and Professional Teacher Narratives	34
Forces of Influence Emerging from these Teacher Narratives	46
Conclusion	55

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SCHOOL, A PLACE OF SELF-DISCOVERY	57
Introduction	57
Our Professional Experience Narratives	58
Forces Emerging from these Professional Experience Narratives	67
Conclusion	72
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION: EVOLVED AND EVOLVING IDENTITIES	73
Introduction	73
A Review of the Dissertation	73
What I have learnt about the Relationship between Teacher Experiences and our evolving Teacher Experiences	75
How Could Further Research Build on this Study?	77
My Personal Response to the Study	78
Conclusion	79
REFERENCES	80
APPENDIX A: Interview Schedule- Unstructured Interview Topics	87
APPENDIX B: Open-ended Questionnaire as a Prelude to the Focus Group Discussion	89
APPENDIX C: Information Sheet-Participants, Principal	92
APPENDIX D: My Collage- As I Journey	97
APPENDIX E: Certificates and Report of Kate-Mountain Top Experiences	99

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Preface: Why is There a Need for us to Construct our Stories as Teachers?

It was a warm morning on 8 December, 2008, as the sun lit up the sky when the teachers at Ream Secondary School¹ were having a heated debate surrounding the academic year. Most of us had completed our marking and began to reflect on the year that had gone by. The discussion began to take extreme proportions with a few individuals very positive about the year and the majority of the teachers engrossed with large extremes of negativity. Fathima, Maud, Thandi and Shirley were keen on highlighting the success they had achieved with learners such as Kerusha, Freedom, Kunin and Precious. On the other hand, the majority of the teachers were consumed with the fact that they thought that they had ‘failed’. They felt that they had tried their best and yet not succeeded in an environment of drugs, learner apathy and the ill-discipline of the learners.

In a split second, I thought to myself that it would be very interesting to delve into the reasons why a few educators seem to portray a positive, mature attitude in assisting learners to develop whilst the other educators persist in a negative, non-progressive attitude towards the same learners. I decided at this moment that with the next academic year looming, I would be interested in exploring the relationships between the teachers’ experiences and their evolving teacher identities in post-apartheid South Africa. In order to achieve this, I would encourage teachers to retell their stories to see how their particular identities might be evolving in relation to their lived experiences. This would be my focus.

Introduction

This chapter begins with the rationale for my study, focusing on my motivation for exploring the relationships between teachers’ current and past personal and professional experiences and their evolving teacher identities. I then go on to elaborate on the key research questions that guide this study. Next, I introduce the methodological stance of narrative inquiry and the related theoretical

¹ To ensure confidentiality, the name of my school and the names of the teachers and learners have been changed.

² Bold print has been used to indicate headings, sections and sub-sections.

approach that I have adopted in attempting to answer these questions. To end the chapter, I offer an overview of this dissertation.

Focus and purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore how the past and current personal and professional experiences of teachers might influence or affect evolving teacher identities in post-apartheid South Africa. As Masinga (2009, p. 247) highlights, “teaching is not just a technical enterprise, but is linked to our personal lives and emotions.” I am thus interested in gaining insight into the relationship between teachers’ lived experiences and teacher identity. This study is underpinned by an understanding that it is important to examine how teachers’ “thoughts, actions and knowledge have evolved throughout our personal and professional lives [as this] will help us understand how classrooms have come to be the way they are and how they might become otherwise” (Goodson, 1992, p. 57).

This study has its setting in a secondary school in an urbanised area in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The school staff component comprises educators from diverse backgrounds who are now working in a rapidly changing educational context that is very different from the contexts in which they attended school and trained as teachers. In the study, I take on the role of participant-researcher (see Khau, 2009) to work together with two other teachers in my school to explore, understand and communicate the complexities of our diverse lived experiences in order to better understand how our teacher identities might be evolving and could evolve in response to the post-apartheid South African educational context.

South Africa has seen the birth of a new democratic state in 1994. Sixteen years of democracy have seen us witnessing transformation in all spheres of life. I have experienced the birth of democracy, taught democratic principles and seen the implementation of democracy both in the classroom and in the staffroom through the process of elections and appointments. My personal interest in this topic stems from the fact that I am a passionate History teacher. As individuals, citizens and teachers, my research participants and I have all experienced different events and have collaborated with many people throughout our teaching careers. In doing this, we have learnt to establish the capacity to make important choices both in and out of the classroom. In making these important choices, our contributions to society and to the advancement of democracy have been more profound and positive. History is a tool for every

person to become empowered to understand others more. Our values such as responsibility, the promotion of human rights and equality have been touched on throughout our experiences as participants of this study. The values that have been instilled in us can only be further strengthened as we continue on our personal and professional journeys.

History encourages critical reflection on how the past relates to the present and on how an understanding of the past might inform our actions in the future. Thus, I concur with Clandinin and Connelly (2000) that it is crucial to engage in critical reflection on the lived experiences of teachers if efforts at educational improvements and reforms are to be effective. It is imperative that in reflecting on our past personal and professional experiences our goal will be to strengthen our present and future experiences (Masinga, 2009).

In my understanding, a teacher's professional identity reflects her/his personal and professional self-image, as well as the way in which she/he perceives her/his professional roles, responsibilities and contexts (Demirezen, 2007; Kelly, 2006; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Sen (2006) emphasises the value that identities can bring to our lives. He maintains that identities can enrich our bonds and assist us in taking us beyond our self-centred lives. He also re-iterates that identity can be a source of richness and warmth and contribute to our relations with others, whether they are our neighbours, community members, fellow citizens or religious counterparts. Our identity as teachers is special and unique because it has to do with the lives of children (Graves, 2001). We are in the 'business' of helping children grow and develop.

Carrim (2002) argues that if we are to examine teacher identities, we must address the lives of teachers and, how they perceive their lived experiences. Similarly, Masinga (2009) maintains that it is imperative for teachers to understand their own backgrounds and the implications of these for their professional identity and classroom practice. Zeichner and Liston (1996) concur that the extent to which we think about our lived experiences informs who we are, what we feel and how we plan and act as teachers. Shulman (1997, p. 506) makes this quite clear when he compares two kinds of teachers: "One with twenty years of experience and the other with one year of experience twenty times." He emphasises that there is a large difference between learning from experience and simply having experience: "It takes special teachers working under special circumstances to learn from that experience" (Shulman, 1997, p. 506). This study includes those 'special teachers'. My hope is that this study will also help other

teachers to reflect on how their own experiences might have shaped or could shape their teacher identities.

Key Research Questions

The first key research question that I address in this dissertation is: *How might teachers' past personal and professional experiences have shaped their evolving teacher identities?* To respond to this question, my participants and I, as a participant-researcher, reflect on our early childhood memories and retell our teacher biographies that include our schooling experiences and our past teaching experiences.

The second key research question that underpins this study is: *How might teachers' current professional experiences be affecting their evolving teacher identities? (How have these experiences brought about or might they bring about change?).* To respond to this question, my participants and I reflect on our current teaching experiences in order to see how our teacher identities are evolving and also to explore how we might seek new directions for our personal and professional selves in the future.

Methodological and Theoretical Approach

In this study, I have adopted a narrative inquiry methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which is situated in the interpretive paradigm and is a qualitative approach. (I discuss my narrative inquiry methodology in more detail in Chapter Two of this dissertation.) My understanding was that taking a qualitative approach would help me to obtain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences and how they might help to shape their teacher identities. Narrative inquiry is a very naturalistic approach involving conversational dialogue and story-telling (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The narrative inquiry approach that I have chosen for my study is, as described by Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 20), "a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction." Thus, in this study, my participants and I have worked together over a period of time to tell, relive and retell our stories, journeys, experiences and testimonies both personally and professionally in order to see how these might have influenced and informed our identities.

According to Hamilton, Smith and Worthington (2008), it is vital that we understand the theoretical positioning of a researcher in order to develop educational knowledge and practice. My theoretical approach is underpinned by my decision to undertake a narrative inquiry

examining the lived experiences of my participants and myself. Narrative inquirers in the Education field study stories of lived educational experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and, in so doing, draw on the ideas of social constructivists (for example, Dewey 1934, 1963; Bruner 1990, 1996) who argue that education and experience are inter-linked and that human learning and development are contextual, active and social processes. My thinking about teacher identity is thus informed by insights from a range of scholars who understand the development of a teacher's professional identity as a continuing and dynamic process, which is influenced by past experiences, but is also being informed, formed and reformed as we develop over time and by interacting with others in various contexts (Fraser, 2007; Franzak, 2002; Cross, 1999; Kelly, 2006; Samuel, 2009). This study explores how past and current experiences of teachers might play a role in shaping their professional identity. It aims to examine how meanings and understandings develop from the social spaces and encounters in which teachers have found themselves. Thus, in making sense of lived experiences, I also draw on the narrative conceptual framework of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), which looks at three commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place (see Chapters Three and Four). Temporality highlights events in the lives of the participants and follows their past, present and future. Sociality stresses the importance of relationships in lived experience and place emphasises the significance of the environments in which experience occurs

In addition, in thinking about the relationship between lived experience and the development of teacher identity in the South African context, I draw on Samuel's "Force Field Model of Teacher Development" (2003, 2008, 2009), which recognises the "numerous forces of influence" (2003, p. 270) that impact on the evolving practices and identities of teachers. The forces that Samuel identifies include teachers' biographies, what teachers are taught at teacher education institutions, the ongoing introduction of new curriculum policies and the diverse contexts in which teachers are working. Samuel's model emphasises the value of teachers recognising and examining these diverse forces of influence. As he explains:

Our identities have been shaped by and shape the world within which we live. Through the act of telling stories, [teachers] are able to reveal what these forces are – are able to critique them, to alter them and to modify their influence over them. (2003, p. 271).

In Chapters Three and Four, I analyse our stories of experience to identify and examine key forces that have played a role in the development of our teacher identities.

Progression in this Personal and Professional Journey

In this first chapter, I have explained the rationale that gave birth to this study. In addition, I have highlighted my key research questions and methodological and theoretical approach. As is common practice in narrative inquiry research texts (see Pithouse, 2007), I have not provided a separate literature review chapter on the “scholarly conversations” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.136) that inform and influence my study, but have rather integrated these conversations into the storyline of this dissertation.

The second chapter of the dissertation thus focuses on my research methodology. In the methodology chapter, I elaborate on my reasons for choosing a narrative inquiry methodology. I also provide reasons for the selection of my setting and my participants and elaborate on the data production methods and techniques that I have employed in this study. In addition, I examine the process of data analysis, highlight the study’s limitations and consider trustworthiness and ethical issues.

Thereafter, Chapter Three addresses my first research question of how teachers’ past personal and professional experiences might have shaped our evolving teacher identities. In addressing this question, I identify political, social, educational and economic forces as well as teacher and family legacies that have emerged from the journal writing, interviews, collage representation and artefact retrieval with my participants.

In the fourth chapter, I address my second research key research question of how teachers’ current professional experiences might be affecting our evolving teacher identities. I also consider how these experiences have brought about or might bring about change. Chapter Four highlights the daily lives of the teachers in this study, their influences and experiences, their inter-personal relationships, their passion for their subject and finally their future expectations that may or may not bring about change.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, concludes this dissertation by considering what contributions this study can make to understandings of the relationship between teacher experiences and teacher identity, particularly in the South African context. Chapter Five also includes possibilities for future research. According to Lyons and LaBoskey (2002), there are many times that the lives of teachers are easily dismissed and often demeaned. So, is the life of a teacher not worth telling? The study seeks to indicate otherwise.

CHAPTER TWO:
**METHODOLOGY: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY – THE JOURNEY THAT WE HAVE
TAKEN**

Introduction

The aim of this study is to work with teachers to recall their lived personal and professional experiences both past and present in order to see how these experiences might have helped or might help their particular professional identities to evolve. In the previous chapter, I provide my reasons for undertaking this research journey, explain the focus and purpose of the study, highlight the key research questions, introduce the methodological and theoretical approach underpinning the study and provide a guide to this dissertation. In this chapter, I elaborate on my understanding of narrative inquiry and on why I have chosen this particular methodology. I explain my research design including my research setting and the reasons for the selection of my participants. Crucial to the methodology of narrative inquiry, I discuss the data production methods and techniques employed in this study. Thereafter, I examine the process of data analysis and representation, as well as the study's limitations and trustworthiness and ethical issues.

What is Narrative Inquiry?

Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 45) take a strong standpoint by stating, “narrative inquiry is flourishing, it is everywhere.” According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), narratives are stories and testimonies that are told by people about how they behave, where they are at any point in time and how they understand the world. By doing this, they see the transformation and changes that take place in society. This helps us examine social evils and injustices that occur and consider how change might be brought about. Clandinin (2006) explains that what distinguishes narrative inquiry from narrative is that narrative inquiry goes beyond simply telling stories. Participants are encouraged to express, explain, describe and translate their life stories. This process provides them with a deeper understanding of their life's journey. Narrative inquiry can take on a holistic ‘teacher's life story’ form, meaning that it describes the whole life and most of

the experiences. However, the personal and professional experiences that are studied may or may not encompass the whole life of the teacher (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Narratives describe our journeys through life. From my reading of Connelly and Clandinin (1990), it seems as if our lives are a play (at home and at work) within our particular settings. Thus, in this study, my participants and I examine the context, the apartheid and post-apartheid backgrounds, against which our lives are unfolding. This includes our locations and our environment. It also includes our family background and school background together with the main characters in our lives (our family and our work colleagues). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe our lives as lived on our own as well as together with others. Thus, our stories are underpinned by our relationships with the people in our lives. Clandinin (2006) also maintains that narrative inquiry allows us insight into the lives and experiences of other people that are both important and significant to us:

Narrative inquiry allows us to work with one another in different settings. What we hear about others' stories is important so that we can see and understand the society, culture and place of those we live with. It is for this reason that our lives become enriched and changed when we can learn from others' experiences. (Clandinin, 2006, p. 46)

Our stories have their highs and lows, successes and failures, achievements and downfalls. The 'risk' that we take in life, the choices that we make and the decisions that we take, influence us and shape our destiny and identity. We start from birth and continue to mould and shape our lives as we continue life's journey. Chiu-Ching and Chan (2009) maintain that telling our stories can help to build teacher knowledge. By sharing stories about our lives, we can examine our own child development, our position in our families, our choices to become a teacher, as well as the influence of other siblings, relatives, friends and other role models such as primary and high school teachers. We also reflect critically on the attitudes, personality and values learnt through family life which we have carried over into our teaching. We can also look at other influences such as location, environment and surroundings. When we work collaboratively, we can begin to draw on our similarities and differences as we construct and reconstruct our stories.

Why Narrative Inquiry?

After much introspection and reflection, I decided to use the methodology of narrative inquiry to explore how the past and current personal and professional experiences of teachers might influence or affect evolving teacher identities in post-apartheid South Africa. I felt that this methodology was appropriate as it would assist us in telling and re-examining our stories of our lived experiences that have helped shape our identities. I reflected on the work of authors such as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) who place emphasis on the narrative inquiry methodology, which is situated in the interpretive paradigm. According to Putnam and Borko (2000), the interpretive tradition reminds us that we learn and know through life's journey because we are a part of the context of time. As we pass through life's journey, there are significant moments in our life as we go through certain experiences. Our childhood could be a time for instilling in us the importance of reading that would contribute to further education, or the importance of manners that would instil in us some positive values. As we progress through life, there may be times as we journey through school that we learn the importance of influence of both educators and friends. So, it is at different times in our journey that we are shaped by our life experiences.

In choosing the narrative methodology, I believed that it would be interesting for the participants and me to narrate and retell our stories and lived experiences as events in our lives that have shaped our identities. As human beings, we tend to recall our past lives by means of narrating and retelling our stories, thus helping others imagine, recall, and live through our experiences with us while we begin to find meanings and make sense of our lives (Clandinin, 2006).

I felt that re-examining our lives would provide us with a perfect opportunity to stop, pause and 'listen' to our stories. Often we continue life's journey without pausing to gain any understanding of how we have come to be. This journey of ours needs to be examined and researched to reach this deeper knowledge. Every day, I interact with my colleagues, not knowing how they have come to be, what 'makes them tick', or how their lives contribute to a just society. This study seeks to provide some insight into the lives of my colleagues and me. Thus, for me, this was just not a research study, it was a chance to work in a participatory way with my colleagues to explore who we are, how we have come to be the way we are and how we might seek new directions for our personal and professional selves in the future.

Another reason why I chose this type of methodology is that, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, it is a very naturalistic approach, allowing us to talk easily about our life stories. It is chronological and continuous as experiences grow out of other experiences. It captures personal and human dimensions.

In addition, I understood that by employing this type of methodology we would be able to tell the stories we live, reaffirm them and perhaps modify them (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is important that we all understand that the lives of teachers must be made meaningful at each stage of development. Through challenging and interrogating our thoughts and ideas about our personal and professional lives, we can understand the meanings associated with development and experiences that we would otherwise take for granted. Narrative inquiry, as elaborated by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), can assist us in re-enacting our stories in moments of time and space. My understanding was that my participants and I would bring meaning to our words, descriptions, ideas, feelings and thoughts when we elaborated on our experiences of teaching and of life. My hope was that this would help us to reflect and learn about ourselves and how we teach, which would be beneficial to not only to the findings of this study, but also to our ongoing work and lives as teachers.

I also felt that this type of methodology could help us to connect the events, stories and memories in our lives through a narrative re-telling of accounts that would be ongoing. Through a thorough introspection, teachers can reflect on their biographies and experiences critically and examine how these experiences and influences might have shaped their teacher identity. Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) highlight several important aspects of narrative inquiry about how we enquire and how we get to know. They place emphasis on narrative as a reflective activity, seeing it as a means of telling past and present stories of what we have experienced and continue to experience.

The biographies of teachers help us unravel their experiences, problems, hurdles, challenges, highs (moments of triumph and success) and lows (moments that have been painful and hurting) that have made them who they are. By interrogating our lives through a narrative path, we can challenge the norm that teachers are born and not made. Teachers seldom have the opportunity to sit back and reflect on their personal and professional lives in order to determine how they are responsible in not only shaping their own identities but also in shaping the lives and minds of those under their care. Show me a teacher who is not busy! What is all this activity and

administration that consumes us without us stopping to reflect on what we are really doing? My intention was that this study would help us to do that in the hope that through reflection on our experiences we could improve on our weaknesses and increase our strengths.

The Research Process

Selecting and Relating to the Participants

My intention was that this would be an in-depth study, focusing on, interpreting and understanding the ‘lived’ experiences of particular teachers. I therefore decided to select only three participants (including myself as a participant) for this study. I have decided to use the pseudonym Ann for my study. Creswell (1998, p. 111) emphasises the need to find participants “who are accessible and willing to provide information as well as those who can shed light on issues being explored.” A decision about whom to include in one’s study thus has to be carefully thought out. When planning my study, I had to consider whether to choose teachers with whom I was very familiar or whether rather to choose teachers who were strangers. This decision was made easier for me when I decided that I would choose participants from my own environment. Bertram (2003) states that this kind of purposive sampling is often done through convenience sampling. I realised that teachers at my school would be easy to reach as I teach with them and live close to them. This is convenient. As a senior teacher, I decided to approach two individuals with whom I had a very good relationship and with whom there was a high level of mutual respect. I anticipated they would be less likely to be resistant to my study. In my experience, these individuals were amicable, mature, committed and would be less likely to leave the study. As noted by Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 118), “openness and trust between participant and researcher [can be] useful to explore social change, causality and social identity.” I felt that the fact that we are all friends and colleagues at school would help facilitate mutual collaboration and sincerity amongst us. And indeed, my participants, Kate² and Olwethu, have shown much enthusiasm in participating in this study. My participants were approached to select their own pseudonyms. The reason for this is that there is a slight possibility that the participants might be recognised if their real names are used.

As each individual is unique, I knew that each of our stories would be worth telling. Each of the three participants is a product of the National Party government’s system of

² To ensure confidentiality, the names of the participants have been changed.

apartheid education with each having different educational backgrounds. Kate trained and began teaching during the post-apartheid era and Olwethu learnt, trained and began teaching during the apartheid era under the former Department of Education and Training (which was a separate education department created by the National Party for Africans living in South Africa). She brought diversity in to the staff room because she belonged to a different race and joined the staff after having trained at a different institution, adopted different teaching strategies and teaching methods and had different experiences from the rest of us that were already there. Like many members of the staff at my school, I went to school and trained during the period of apartheid under the former House of Delegates (which was a separate education department created by the National Party for Indians living in South Africa) and have had experience of teaching during the apartheid and post-apartheid eras. As discussed in Chapter One, I chose to work with my participants as a participant-researcher and to contribute my experiences to this study.

In selecting Kate and Olwethu as participants, I took into account issues of race and gender. Under the apartheid era racial classification system, Kate and I were both classified as 'Indian' and Olwethu as 'African'. African and Indian teachers in South Africa have emerged from a society and education system that has been shaped by race, gender and class. As a result of apartheid-era policies, we were situated in different locations in society and different race-based education systems during apartheid. My thinking was that this choice of participants might help me as a researcher to understand the struggles, challenges and obstacles created by the racial discrimination of the apartheid era. The fact that Kate, Olwethu and I are women means that this study is inclined towards female experiences and female identity. In South Africa, girls' and women's educational experiences have often been undermined through gender inequality and oppression (Moletsane, 2004). However, in this study, I also seek to highlight the strength, stamina, wisdom and prowess of women through their life stories and experiences.

Bertram (2003) highlights that the way that participants view the researcher is important. As I worked with my participants, my aim was not to be seen as a stranger or an intruder or as a threat as this might have dampened the research and negatively affected our working relationship. It was for this reason that I decided to work collaboratively with Kate and Olwethu and share my own narrative. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state that it is important for us to understand the nature and value of the researcher-participant relationship that develops within narrative inquiry. It is crucial that this relationship is balanced. It ought to involve seeing each

other as equals, as well as sharing and caring for one another with a common purpose and goal in mind. It is crucial that everyone involved in the research process does not feel undermined, but instead feels important and connected. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) make clear the importance of the ‘voice’ of both the researcher and the participant in narrative inquiry. This is another reason why I decided to become involved as a co-participant in this research process.

Research Setting

As Hamilton, Smith and Worthington (2008) highlight, issues of place are important to narrative research because paying attention to place emphasises the significance of the environments in which lived experience occurs. The school in which this research took place, Ream Secondary School³, was born into democracy in 1994. It was initiated as a primary/secondary co-educational school to cater for the diverse surrounding population. As years went by, the school phased out the primary phase and became just a secondary school with learners from Grades 8 to 12. Ream Secondary School, is set against a poor socio-economic background. Many of the learners in the school come from a ‘previously disadvantaged background’ (a society of oppression and exploitation) and have experienced social dilemmas. Many of these learners emerge from child-headed households, alcoholic, drug and abusive backgrounds. Many have poverty-stricken lives and are experiencing hunger and health related problems. These are the learners with whom we as participants interact with on a daily basis. I recall when a grade ten learner, Thuso⁴, could not engage with the history activity I had given him. On enquiring the reason for this, he replied, “I am hungry.” Placing some money in his hand and asking him to go and get something to eat brought out the compassion for children that has shaped my teacher identity. It is these values that emerge that this study seeks to examine. It will explore how we as teachers have shaped and continue to shape our identities in the context of our setting.

The growth of teacher diversity at Ream Secondary School with its multi-dimensional teacher component has also accelerated my interest in this arena of teacher identity. Post-apartheid saw Ream Secondary School being transformed under the new democratic government and through affirmative action, with a mixture of two race groups being represented. During the early 1990s, the school first saw the arrival of African teachers on a staff that was previously

³ To ensure confidentiality, the name of the school has been changed.

⁴ To ensure confidentiality, the name of this learner has been changed.

dominated by Indian teachers from the House of Delegates era (as indicated above). It was therefore of interest to me in this study to find out how the personal and professional experiences of the African and Indian teachers would play out in the context of what was a previously Indian school under the apartheid regime. Currently, it is a multiracial secondary school, with the majority of the learners being African.

In planning my study, I decided that data would be collected not only at the school but also at my home, coffee shops or at any convenient location at various intervals. I realised that to collect data only at school would be difficult due to time constraints. We would need sufficient time to conduct the interviews, present the collages, answer the questionnaires and conduct the focus group discussions. I foresaw that with the disruptions and administrative burdens of the normal school day, we would definitely have to find more time outside of school hours to do justice to this study. As mentioned below, we decided to meet at our homes where the production of data was fruitful, productive and forthcoming. I think it was the comfortable and leisurely atmosphere that was created in our homes in which the participants felt less threatened and more at ease to share their stories.

Data Production Methods

In this study, my participants and I have explored and documented our experiences using a range of qualitative methods that are described below. In focusing on the first research question – *How might teachers' past personal and professional experiences have shaped their evolving teacher identities?* – the data that was produced was generated mainly from journals, interviews, collages and artefact retrieval. In focusing on the second research question – *How might teachers' current professional experiences be affecting their evolving teacher identities? (How have these experiences brought about or might they bring about change?)* – the data that was produced was generated mainly from interviews, collages, questionnaires and the focus group discussion. The data obtained has helped us reflect on how our biographies and professional experiences have shaped or might shape our evolving teacher identities.

To generate this data, I used the following data production methods. I have elaborated on how the different instruments such as interviews, collages, artefact retrieval and focus group discussions were used to inform the final narratives. Narratives were compiled from the evidence generated from these instruments and the data that emerged was used to inform the narratives.

The sources of these findings are made evident. After having conducted the interviews, I then transcribed the interviews and began the process of colour coding to categorise experiences and select those that were relevant. For example, I read through all three transcripts and I used different coloured highlighters to classify forces of influence. I used pink to highlight the influence of teachers that motivated all participants to eventually choose the choice of becoming teachers. I used yellow to compartmentalise the motivation of the members of our families that have shaped our characters as teachers. I used purple to indicate the access or lack of access that we as participants had to educational resources, green for primary and high school education and orange for location. Furthermore, I used symbols to code aspects of temporality, sociality and place. I went through each transcript and used circles to indicate the influential people that were involved in each of our lives. I then used asterisks to highlight the significant events in our lives and triangles to portray how our lives have changed.

Secondly, each participant was requested to compose a collage of their own. Each collage would be tagged differently. Participants had the opportunity to share their collage. Once this was completed, I set out to discover patterns and meanings that emerged from their collages. This time, I decided to use abbreviations to reinforce my data analysis. On examining the collages, I used the abbreviation (Pol) when identifying where each of the participants lived. For example, I (Ann) the researcher lived in a flat in Central Durban that fell into the Group Areas Act of 1950. Kate lived in Chatsworth, an Indian suburb created by the National Party and Olwethu lived in Soweto, an African township created by the same apartheid government. (So) Social abbreviation used to indicate aspects such as hospitality, and entertainment. (FI) Family legacies point to the influence of our families, their strengths and weaknesses that have influenced us. (Ed) Education has been indicated by books, adjectives on the collage describing schooling such as “highflyer”, “aesthetic education” and “holistic education ” and pictures of chalk and graduation. I also used a cross to indicate the religious intensity of each of the participants.

Thirdly, I relied on artefact retrieval to ascertain the success of the participants both as learners and teachers. Kate, especially felt honoured to share her learner reports and certificates to indicate her mountain top experiences. This evidence enhanced the fact that Kate was academically successful. Finally, after having conducted the focus group discussions, I attempted to highlight similarities and differences of the three participants into themes, topics and common

areas. After the discussion I grouped together the similarities and differences of the day to day experiences of the participants and the complexities of their experiences in the classroom. On the positive side of things, I did not fail to capture the enjoyable and fulfilling aspects of the teaching experiences in the classroom of the participants. The participants shared their common methods of how they were able to examine, inform and advance their practice as teachers. More importantly, we were able to draw on our own experiences and relate them to historical, social, economic and the political contexts of our classrooms. Furthermore, we found that our interpersonal relationships in teaching, learning and researching were similar in some ways and different in others. For example, our relationships with other teachers were cordial, and in learning and researching it was somewhat advanced technologically. Each of us drew the conclusion that advancing in the teaching profession in the future would be bleak. The focus group discussions helped us learn about each other. Surprisingly, we gained from our strengths and remained committed to work on our weaknesses.

Journal writing.

After reflecting on the readings of Moon (2006) and Clandinin and Connelly (1996), who explain the value of writing in a journal, I understood that journals could provide a space for us to reflect, to record experience and to organise and clarify our thoughts. I also understood that journals could help us to improve our understanding of and focus our attention on our experiences. The journal entry, as described by Moon (2006), allows us to stop, take stock of our thoughts and ideas and put pen to paper. Journal writing therefore encourages a deep approach to learning and helps us to describe our experiences more clearly. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) emphasise that keeping journals provides information for narrative research. Lyons and LaBoskey (2002, p. 126) emphasise the importance of keeping a journal and “the willingness to be reflective”. They explain, “Reflection is crucial. If you are not reflecting or taking a hard look at what you are doing in the classroom you can’t make changes.” Journal keeping thus helps us make sense of our situations and experiences and reflect on what we deem important or less significant, what we have done well or what we could have done differently.

My journal writing.

I began my data production process by keeping a reflective journal that provided written evidence of the progress of my research. I experienced some difficulty at first in trying to keep up with daily recordings but realised that commitment to this task would yield resounding results. I realised that I must commit myself to include direct quotations of my ideas, thoughts and feelings at any specific time and at any specific date. Thoughts that ‘pop up’ in our minds are a reflection of what we are thinking and of what we know. Moon (2006, p. 29) also highlights that “journal-writing is a process helping us to experience, address, explore, manage and work with emotion.” Paying attention to emotions, such as what makes us happy or sad, helped me to reflect on my behaviour and gain more insight into my self and my relationships with others. This is an example of my journal writing, reflecting on my response to the emotions of one of my participants:

We continued with our discussion until she came to a stage where she became emotional. She spoke of the illness of her dad and of his strength and courage to pull through. I gathered strength to listen to her tell her story. All the participant wants is a strong ear to listen to what they have to say. I allowed her ample time to let her have her say. (Journal entry, 1 August, 2010)

I also realised that recording ‘things to do’ would help me organise my study in a more methodical way. I maintained journal recording as consistently and as best as I could.

Kate and Olwethu’s journal writing.

I very sceptically made my way to visit Kate and Olwethu in their classrooms at school, armed with a slab of chocolate and a seventy-two paged exercise book. I began with petty conversation about the weather and school and then very carefully asked them if they could document their thoughts, feelings, experiences and ideas about their personal and professional experiences. Having done a research module for my Master’s coursework, I was aware that many people struggle with keeping journals and in many cases it proves futile, but I was going to try anyhow. I assured my participants that they must not feel pressured in keeping this journal. After some persuasion, both these teachers agreed to do what they could. I thanked them for their voluntary participation. Both my participants attempted to jot down their thoughts and allowed me to read their journals but retained the journals as their personal source.

Individual unstructured interviews.

Another instrument that I used for data production was individual unstructured interviews with each of my participants. Interviewing is “one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand fellow humans” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 118). Kang, Orgill, and Crippen (2008) state that identifying teachers’ knowledge and beliefs can be obtained through qualitative methods such as interviews. Denzin & Lincoln (2008) stress the importance of interviews to find out about the experiences of people and the meanings thereof. They bring to view an important aspect of the interview process where they describe it as a means where all things such as authority, race and gender come together. No matter what avenue of life we come from, we find a common place through dialogue and communication. The interview process helped us as Indian and African teachers to speak to each other on the same level without judging each other. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) state that interviews help shape narrative experiences. The interviews provided us with a platform to retell, recall and remember our stories, which is what narratives are all about.

Creswell (1998, p. 124) mentions that for individual interviews, the researcher must find participants who are willing “to speak and share ideas.” I felt confident in this regard as my participants had indicated this willingness. Marshall and Rossman (2006) also make it very clear that the attitude of the interviewer is important. The participants must be made aware of the fact that their input is highly valued. I therefore tried to ensure that I showed my appreciation of Olwethu and Kate’s time and input.

My role as an interviewer for these unstructured interviews was to prepare a list of possible topics (See Appendix A) and then to guide the conversation, rather than to ask a set of pre-planned questions. The questions revolved around teacher biographies and teaching experiences. Participants shared their stories and life experiences through our conversations. The interviews provoked new insights and changes in the participants themselves. We worked together to make the interviews enriching experiences, telling the stories of our lives as imaginatively and creatively as possible.

I recorded these interviews by means of audio taping the oral telling of the participants’ lives and took down field notes. I later transcribed these taped interviews.

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) state that interviews are important as they allow knowledge to be generated between humans through conversations. These interviews allowed the

participants to communicate depth of feeling and experience. I encouraged them to share their experiences and life episodes as openly and candidly as possible. This was to see how each teacher made meaning of her own experiences. I also shared my own narrative with my participants when I approached them to set dates for their own narratives. When I shared my narrative with my two participants, they seemed to feel less threatened. They knew that I was being transparent with them in sharing my own life. It gave them a sense of security and trust knowing that I was able to open my life to them as well as allowing them to provide me with their own responses.

These two interviews of approximately two hours each (once a week) were conducted with each of the participants during their free time outside school. Although my first option was to conduct these interviews only at school, it became apparent to me that my participants might feel stressed and pressurised due to time constraints at work. A classroom is not necessarily a very comfortable space and I felt that the interviews might be rushed and too formal. My experience last year during my Master's coursework exposed me to the downside of conducting interviews at school, with the sound of the bell and continuous disruptions by learners either wanting to enquire about something or requesting something else. I therefore decided that it would be more feasible to have a non-threatening atmosphere of trust, warmth and confidence to conduct these interviews. Together with the participants, I decided to conduct these interviews at their homes or my home, where I could make them feel as comfortable as possible over a cup of tea and some refreshments.

I went to Kate's house to arrange a meeting for our unstructured interview and explained what it would entail and how long it would take. I really did not know whether Kate would be able to conduct this interview as she seemed so overwhelmed by taking care of her baby. However, she assured me that we could arrange a date and time for our interview. The night before the interview Kate sent me a message to inform me of a change of venue. The message said, "I will not be able to conduct the interview at my home as the painters are busy painting. I will come to your house." I began to feel nervous and afraid that this would become the first stumbling block to begin the data representation process. However, I was pleasantly surprised when Kate arrived at my home as scheduled and well prepared. I think that it is so important that one chooses the most suitable participants who will prove to be reliable and committed to the process of research. Kate was thoroughly prepared for the interview as I am sure she is with her

lesson preparations as well. Beforehand, I had provided Kate and Olwethu with some topics (See Appendix A) so that they could peruse them and become familiar with the focus of this study. The actual time for the interview far exceeded the time allocated as Kate continued to pour her heart out about her life. As the researcher, I was very attentive to what Kate had to say. I recorded her data and then transcribed it. My journal entry of the interview included these details:

Her cell phone rang during our conversation and I was polite enough to stop the recording and allow her to answer her call. This was to make her feel that her life was more important and not on hold just so that I could complete my study. Her appreciation for this was shown. She then switched off her cell-phone politely. (Journal entry, 1 August, 2010)

The interview went off much better than I had ever anticipated. I was ecstatic. Instead of me thanking Kate first, she took the first step to thank me for the opportunity to narrate her life. “Relating my life to you has been completely therapeutic. I would never have had this opportunity if this study was not conducted.” I was eternally grateful to Kate for her time and sacrifice.

My second interview was with Olwethu. This was the second time that Olwethu had postponed. I understood that Olwethu was ill and had other commitments. My journal entry regarding my interview with Olwethu includes the following:

I sent Olwethu a message to arrange for our unstructured interview. I scheduled my day around this interview. Throughout the night, I phrased, re-phrased and grammatically poised in my mind the way in which I will approach the interview. I awoke the next morning, ready for the day ahead. I picked up my cell phone only to receive a message from Olwethu that she is extremely unwell and wishes to postpone the interview. Disappointedly, I returned her message stating that I understand and shall we postpone the interview. At this point in time, I did not want to put pressure on her, in case she steps out of the study at this late stage. So, I said, “Do not worry Olwethu, concentrate on getting better. We will re-schedule this meeting.” (Journal entry, 8 August, 2010).

Waiting in anticipation to hear from Olwethu for another date kept me on tenterhooks. I plucked up the courage and did not request but suggested a further date for our meeting. Pleasantly surprised, Olwethu agreed that I fetch her from her house and we have the meeting at

my home as it would be much quieter. I created a comfortable home atmosphere for the interview to take place. It was agreed that the members of my family would occupy themselves with something whilst I conducted my interview. When Olwethu arrived, we made ourselves comfortable over a cup of tea and some refreshments. Olwethu was anxious to tell her story. She provided data according to the questions posed to her. For example, when I asked her about growing up in Soweto, she replied, “Things were bad.” Her replies were crisp and non-expansive and our interview was not as extensive and far reaching as that of Kate’s. However, I was pleased that she provided me with certain data on teacher identity. I was not dismayed and knew that I could provide a depth of analysis of Olwethu’s data rather than breadth with Kate’s data. I was satisfied and so was Olwethu.

Collages.

The next method of collecting data was the creation of collages. Raht, Smith, and MacEntee (2009, p. 229) explain that collage is “a creative, arts-based method in which separate images are cut from magazines, newspapers and or books and then glued together to create an image”. Norris, Mbokazi, Rorke, Goba, and Mitchell (2009) explain that a collage is an example of a situation where people display their artistic talent. Raht et.al. (2009, p. 221) state that creative work can spur one on to do something with one’s life and in the lives of others. Being creative can arouse different kinds of emotions that might inspire one to take action.

Raht et.al. (2009) explain that the use of pictures, symbols and metaphors in a collage help to convey a message. They explain that collage is a way to engage with a topic and helps one to discuss and tell one’s story. Sometimes, the use of pictures provides an ideal opportunity to convey issues that one would normally find difficulty explaining. I felt that working with collages would be an opportunity to see our life experiences in a different way through symbols, pictures and illustrations. Butler-Kisber (2008, p. 265) supports this idea of learning through collages by stating that collages “help to mediate understanding in various ways.”

My interest in collages developed approximately seven to eight years ago when I attended a seminar by Tele-friend. Tele-friend is an organisation that assists people who need counselling. There are those who undergo traumatic events and experiences in their lives and phone this organisation that provides telephone counselling to people in need. People are trained to give advice, listen and provide support to those who phone in. My group was unknown to me

and we were requested to produce a collage of our lives that would help us heal. It was a wonderful opportunity for all of us to express our thoughts, inner feelings and emotional highs and lows. Our experiences were expressed from our inner being. We all were very transparent knowing that we would not be judged or criticised. It gave us a chance to recall times, places and events in our lives that gave meaning to what we have become. Being able to tell one's story is very cathartic and therapeutic in helping us heal our inner beings. In sharing our stories, we found that although our faces differ and so do our needs, we do indeed share some of the same needs, wants and desires. We found that it our ability to cope with our challenges and difficulties had helped to shape our identity.

Having had the experience of using a collage, I saw it as a creative method that I had used to express my life experiences through visual and textual images. It was enjoyable and was a platform for me to express my experiences and viewpoints. As the saying goes, 'a picture paints a thousand words', as symbols and metaphors can be used to say express many idea and feelings.

The success of this collage intervention inspired me to use it as a data production technique during my study for evoking and examining our teacher biographies. As Butler-Kisber (2008) emphasises, "the use of collage gives voice to the study and multiplies our understandings. By selecting art forms, we can give meaning to who we are" (p. 273). I have experienced that the use of collage elicits evocative, visual and sensory responses to our lived experiences. By reflecting on our experiences, we can associate and connect certain events in our lives together. By recollecting, remembering and reminiscing about past experiences we can bring to life key happenings that we have forgotten or failed to place value on. Therefore, I felt that this would be such an important technique that would help us to discover, unravel, unearth, and find the meanings of our teacher identities. I saw it as a process that would help us place significance on place, time and space and enquire about things that we always 'put on the back burner'. Butler-Kisber (2008, p. 270) reinforces that "the collage process is a spontaneous and intuitive method that is able to re-discover ideas about our experiences. It provides us with various ways of thinking about experiences and revealing things that we would have forgotten." By creating a collage, we can become producers of knowledge.

I began by creating my own collage. Clandinin (2006) describes the use of collage as visual narrative inquiry that can involve working collaboratively and sharing experiences

together. I felt that sharing my own experiences with my participants through showing them my collage would allow my participants to 'hear' my voice and then allow me to hear their voices through their stories.

It was then time to enhance the data I had received from the interviews with the data from Kate and Olwethu's collages. However, the national teachers' strike began. I became worried, frustrated and angry as I had provided dates in my research proposal by which I would be able to complete the collages. I was unable to contact Olwethu as she belonged to a different teachers' union from me. It was then that I became afraid that this research process would come to a halt and that she would no longer wish to continue with her participation in this research. I had not spoken to her for three weeks. The only other communication I had was with Kate. Kate too, felt nervous and apprehensive and did not feel that this was the right time to engage in any other communication. Kate said, "We will have to wait to continue the study once the strike is over." Time was running out and I feared that this process would discontinue indefinitely. I prayed every day that this strike would end.

Finally the strike ended and we returned to school. I could not immediately approach Olwethu to continue with the process as I was afraid of her reaction. I began to play it safe, greeting her when I saw her and being as pleasant as I could. Then on this particular day when she was all bubbly and happy, I felt, "Let me strike when the iron is hot" and I approached Kate and Olwethu to make arrangements to have the collage discussion.

I was the first to share my collage with my two participants (see Appendix D.) To provide rigour to my collage-making process, I divided my poster into categories and used pictures, symbols and drawings to reflect my lived experiences. Having categorised my poster into personal, social, economic, religious and educational sections, I shared my collage with both my participants and let them use it as a template to share their own narratives of their personal and professional lives. Kate commented, "I am surprised to hear of what a difficult life you have had." To which Olwethu replied, "Challenges makes us better people." Butler-Kisber (2008) explains that the results emerging from the collage can be analysed collaboratively using a process of viewing, discussing and writing to seek out our similarities and differences. Norris et al. (2009) agree that working with collages involves interpreting, collecting and analysing images.

Kate took me to her laboratory to share her collage. She said, “I have been waiting to share this with you for quite some time now, but there was never the right time.” Kate had taken such pride in what she had done. The collage representation corresponded with what Kate had shared in her interview with me. It seemed very authentic and non-contradictory. I feel that it added rigour to the data generation process.

At first, Olwethu, who has had so many ‘run-ins’ because of the examinations being currently held at school was hesitant to share her collage. “I am too busy to share my collage with you,” said Olwethu. Olwethu had become disillusioned after being held responsible for an error made with a matriculation entry and then there was a problem with invigilation and relief. These were just ordinary, commonplace problems that teachers face on a regular basis. After a little bit of persuasion, she agreed to share her data.

Their collages included: symbols, for example, a cross to indicate that they were Christians; pictures, for example, a wedding dress to show that they eventually married and books to indicate learning and teaching; photographs; and excerpts from magazines and newspapers. Kate and Olwethu explained how these different components reflected their personal and professional experiences and how they might have informed their teacher identity. (For reasons of confidentiality, their collages are not shown in this dissertation.)

Artefact retrieval.

To complement the collage method, I used the method of artefact retrieval. Allender and Manke (2004) maintain that when we choose artefacts to study we reveal a great deal about ourselves. Artefact retrieval is a tool that helps us reminisce about our past and about our principles, ethics, standards, morals and ideals (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). When we look for artefacts, we must remember that many of the artefacts hold a very emotional, sentimental and important significance in our lives. Whether we have left them in files, albums or boxes, we must re-discover them for the purposes of enriching our experiences.

When we retrieve artefacts, we retrieve from our memories experiences that have been stored and forgotten about. There are many instances and events in our lives that we might prefer to forget about or choose to remember and therefore using artefact retrieval can help us to connect our chosen artefacts with feelings that can help explain our identity. Allender and Manke (2004) write that by analysing our experiences in relation to significant artefacts, we can become

aware of our frustrations and our accomplishments. Reflecting on artefacts we have chosen can assist us to identify what went wrong in our lives as teachers and also look at what we did and are doing right.

I asked Kate and Olwethu to identify artefacts that they felt highlighted key experiences that might frame their teacher identity. These could include certificates received by the Department of Education, letters of commendation, awards, posters, classroom notices, objects, photographs and pictures. My intention was that these artefacts would complement and extend the collages. As with the collages, I also took part in the artefact retrieval activity. Artefacts that I selected included certificates of achievements, report cards and letters of commendation that highlight the success of the participants.

A week after meeting each participant to inform her about the collage and artefact retrieval activity, I met each teacher to work through her collage and artefacts. When informing them about the collage and artefact retrieval activities, I used the opportunity to first share my collage and artefacts with them so that they would know what would be expected of them. It also provided the platform for them to clear up any questions and doubts that they might have had about how to represent a collage.

I worked with each teacher to interpret my collage and artefacts first so as to give her a sense of how the collage and artefacts might be analysed through participatory discussion and to help her feel more comfortable about sharing her own experiences.

Kate proudly displayed the album that her mother had so meticulously retained with copies of her reports, pictures of her academic and sport successes and other highlights. “My mum made certain that she keep all my documents intact,” said Kate. Kate volunteered to allow me to use these artefacts in my research process if necessary. I expressed my gratitude and sincere appreciation to Kate. Olwethu also agreed to allow me access to whatever documents that I would deem necessary. Olwethu had a folder with some of the school reports that she could find as well as her graduation certificates and letters of achievement. I too retained all my letters of commendation and my documents reflecting my successes and achievements. I was not too proud of my diploma that I received from Springfield College of Education⁵ qualifying in both History and Physical Education. In Chapter Four of this study, I indicate my contempt for teaching Physical Education, a subject that I had no talent or passion for. My passion for

teaching History however, more than made up for the years of distress and discouragement I experienced in teaching Physical Education.

Open-ended questionnaire and focus group discussion.

Creswell (1998, p. 124) brings to our attention that focus group interviews have their own advantages when the participants can interact with one another, are known to each other, cooperate with one another and that this will most likely “yield the best information.” A focus group discussion is normally held after initial research has been done.

Before holding the focus group discussion with Kate and Olwethu, I formulated a related open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix B) that they could complete at their own leisure. I wanted them to complete the questionnaire in order to provide a foundation for discussing their current professional experiences that would be the focus of my second research question. Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 125) indicate that researchers hand out questionnaires to their participants in the hope that they will be honest, accurate and truthful as possible. However, this is probably not guaranteed. There are times when participants may rush through questionnaires and may not give it their one hundred percent commitment. Therefore, I provided my participants with sufficient time to complete their questionnaires and expressed the importance of honesty and thoroughness in the completion of the questionnaire for the purpose of my study.

I was the first person to complete the questionnaire. I found that some of the questions were thought provoking and required a lot more insight than I had originally expected. The questionnaire proved helpful because I could respond in my own time, be as objective or subjective as I wanted to be and complete it in a relaxed, non-threatening environment. Olwethu was the first participant to return her questionnaire and I noted that her responses were clear cut, crisp and to the point. “I hope that this will do,” said Olwethu. Kate also managed to respond in much the same manner. The questionnaires captured our experiences and situations at school. The data generated provided me with sufficient material for the analysis in Chapter Four.

Once the questionnaire was completed, a focus group discussion was conducted at my home. This involved Olwethu, Kate and myself and focused on finding out how our current professional experiences might be affecting our evolving teacher identities. This discussion provided space for participation, getting together and creating meaning amongst ourselves. We identified similarities and differences across our experiences. The focus group discussion helped

us to find information that might we not otherwise have been able to access. The focus group discussions looked at themes, specific topics and areas that are common and different surrounding teacher identity. We generated and analysed data from each participant. Together, we reflected on our impressions, interpretations, relationships and connections. Participants were encouraged to be sincere as possible when expressing how they felt about certain events and incidents in their lives. It was beneficial to highlight those instances in our lives that were turning points or milestones for us in helping establish our teacher identity.

Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) highlight the importance of having conversations in a group. Having conversations in a group gives one the opportunity to tell one's story. It allowed us the chance to say what we thought so that others could hear us and we could share our experiences together. This seemed to provide an opportunity for us to bond and socialise with one another. When we shared with one another, we seemed to be alarmed that many of us go through similarly challenging situations (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002). Cave and O'Malley (1967, p. 31) state that in many ways when we are involved in group discussions, we tend to learn about ourselves from the way others react. We are made aware of ourselves through these kinds of activities.

Data Representation and Analysis

Creswell (1998) stresses how vital it is to interpret and represent data carefully. In representing the data generated through the study, I wanted the reader to have the experience of 'being there' with us and walking through the journey as they read. I wanted the data to come 'alive' and resonate with the reader.

As Henning (2004) advises, the data analysis was a continuous process that took place throughout the research process. I felt that it was essential in this study that I reflected the participant's interpretations as well as my own as a researcher. I wanted to avoid drawing my own conclusions, arriving at my own explanations or reaching an interpretation without consulting my participants where feasible. Therefore, as illustrated in the above discussion of my data generation methods, I tried wherever possible to involve Kate and Olwethu in ongoing, participatory analysis of the data as it was being produced. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) support the view that because collaboration takes place from beginning to end in narrative

inquiry, the plotline continues to be revised as consultation takes place and data is continuously being collected and reviewed to give new and important meaning to our stories.

In Chapter Three of this dissertation, I represent data that relates to my first key research question: *How might teachers' past personal and professional experiences have shaped their evolving teacher identities?* As discussed above, this data was produced through reflective journal writing, individual unstructured interviews, collage-making and artefact retrieval. I worked with this data to produce *personal and professional teacher narratives* that tell the stories of our past personal and professional experiences. I read through all our personal and professional experiences and used colour coding and abbreviations to classify them (as explained below). I categorised these experiences and only selected those that were relevant to my research question.

In constructing this data representation, I used a narrative framework, drawing on the narrative conceptual framework of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), which looks at three commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place (see Chapter One). The narrative framework I developed consisted of *influential settings* (location, environment, the community and surroundings), *colourful characters* (the participants and those with whom they are involved), *changing times* (historical and political) and *powerful plot* (significant events in the participants' lives). After conducting the interviews, completing the collages, viewing the artefacts, completing the questionnaires and meeting for the focus group discussion, I became aware that although our lives are so different, in many ways there are still similarities. The data that emerged from our childhood experiences seemed to fall into the category of *influential settings*. Thereafter, we began talking about our families and other relationships, which we would categorise under *colourful characters*. As we progressed through our lives, our awareness of our situations became clearer and therefore I decided to examine the *changing times* in which we lived and finally and most importantly, I looked at key events in our lives, which fell under the category of *powerful plot*.

The data representation presented in Chapter Three was followed by a re-examination of the teacher narratives in which I attempted to discover patterns and meanings that were emerging from our personal and professional teacher narratives and to consider how our past experiences might have influenced our evolving teacher identities. As explained above, the analysis of the narratives was informed by my ongoing discussions with Kate and Olwethu during the data

production process. In analysing the narratives, I categorised certain “forces of influence” (Samuel, 2003, p. 270) using colour coding. Pink was used to code *teacher legacies*, yellow for *family legacies*, purple for *access to educational resources* and so on. Abbreviations were also used to reinforce this system of data analysis, for example: Pol (political), Ed (educational), So (social), Tl (teacher legacies) and Fl (family legacies).

In Chapter Four, I placed emphasis on the current professional experiences of the participants, their future expectations as teachers and how these have shaped their teacher identities. The participants and I completed questionnaires to explore our professional experiences. Thereafter, we held a focus group discussion in order to seek out similarities and differences in our professional experiences. In Chapter four, as in Chapter three, I have drawn parallels between the *influential settings* which in Chapter four is the classroom, *colourful participants*, being the learners and colleagues, *the powerful plot*, concentrating on the daily teaching lives of the participants and finally *changing times*, by attempting to look at the changes that have taken place and will take place in the future. Kate, Ann and Olwethu have similar experiences in the classrooms of Ream Secondary School. They interact daily with the very same learners with whom they have challenges of discipline, apathy, indifference, a lack of concern and interest and lethargy. In order to analyse the narratives, I used symbols such as a star to code influential settings, a circle to code colourful participants, an asterisk to code the powerful plot and a triangle to code changing times.

Limitations of the Study

This is a small scale but in-depth study that cannot be generalised across South Africa or to other contexts. However, it can raise significant issues and ideas that could be further explored in different contexts or on a larger scale. By providing clear and detailed descriptions of how I went about my research, I hope to offer some ideas and inspiration to others who are interested in undertaking similar work. After having proceeded with the data representation and analysis process, I did not think that this ‘small scale’ study would be a disadvantage. My participants responded well and enhanced the study with their narratives. I believe that the findings of this study will have resonance and relevance beyond these three individuals.

Trustworthiness

In establishing trustworthiness in narrative studies, it is essential for the research audience to be able to see what has been done, what decisions have been taken, why certain procedures have been followed and how certain interpretations and conclusions have been reached (Mishler, 1990). Therefore, in this dissertation, I have attempted to give clear and detailed explanations of the research process. In order to provide authenticity and legitimacy to this study, I have undertaken interviews, the presentation of collages, journal writing, completion of questionnaires and a focus group discussion. These different data production techniques have assisted me in gaining a multifaceted perspective on the focus of my study.

I have also attempted to establish trustworthiness in my study by involving my participants in an ongoing process of data analysis and by checking with the participants that they agreed with my representations of their lived experience. When Kate read this, she was interested in how the narratives had been written. “I am amazed at how you wrote this story,” said Kate. Olwethu smiled and this indicated to me that she showed her approval.

Ethical Issues

Creswell (1998, p. 132) emphasises that a qualitative researcher “faces many ethical issues that surface during data collection in the field and in analysis.” Bertram (2003) too, highlights the importance of ethics in research, especially when dealing with people. The principles to be followed are autonomy, getting the consent of every participant, allowing them to volunteer for the study, allowing them the freedom to withdraw at any stage of the study and being sensitive about not bringing any harm to them.

It is important that an ethical researcher safeguards the identity of the participants. In this study, I have used the pseudonyms of Kate, Olwethu and Ann for my participants and myself as well as for pseudonyms for other people, the name of my school, the area in which the school is situated and an organisation that has been mentioned. In as much as a researcher may find it essential to safeguard the identity of the participant, the identity of the researcher should also be provided with the same amount of respect as her participants so as to ensure confidentiality and privacy of all those involved in this study. I also preferred to use a pseudonym for my own

narrative because I did not want my narrative to dominate and overshadow the narratives of Kate and Olwethu. I assured my participants that confidentiality was a priority. I was aware of the fact that they might not want their opinions or views to be traced back to them as the information they gave is personal, sensitive and important. In order to respect their dignity and privacy, I have confirmed with my participants if there are any details or stories that they would like to exclude from the study.

It is also vital that participants knew full well about the aims of the study and were in no way were misled about its purpose. Bertram (2003) emphasises the importance of participants receiving a clear explanation of what the researcher expects of them so that they can decide to participate voluntarily. Therefore, informed consent letters were given to the participants and others involved in the study (see Appendix C).

Clandinin (2006, p. 50) states, “for those of us wanting to learn to engage in narrative inquiry, we need to imagine ethics as being about negotiation, respect, mutuality and openness to multiple voices.” By this I understand that ethics in narrative inquiry involves placing value on the life stories of others. Therefore, I did my best to ensure that my study did not expose my participants to any questions that were stressful, diminishing, displaying a lack of respect, shameful or embarrassing. I have attempted as far as possible not to bring any negativity to their stories or discredit them in any way.

I selected my participants very carefully, knowing full well that they are mature, clear-thinking, expressive and had shown their willingness to participate in this study. Together, we have a good rapport, mutual trust, respect and a cordial but professional relationship. I was aware that my participants would be investing a lot of valuable time in this study. Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 81) agree that participants make sacrifices when they give of their time to engage in research. It is important that as a researcher, I have shown some kind of appreciation and was sensitive to the needs of the participants. Reciprocity as explained by Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 81) involves “giving time to help out, providing informal feedback, making coffee or being a good listener.” It is important that as a researcher, I have respected that the time of the participant is voluntary and have not imposed my demands on the participants. I anticipated that this could be avoided if I had a cordial relationship with my participants without taking advantage of them.

Should there have been any challenging situations that arose that were traumatic or distressing, necessary steps would have been taken to seek professional advice and counselling from the authorities concerned such as Lifeline or a trained professional counsellor. During the data generation process there were no situations that required special counselling or professional help. However, there was just one situation when Kate became slightly emotional when speaking of her father's ill health. "Sorry," she said, "for becoming so emotional." She composed herself and I allowed her some time to reflect on that situation in her life. I felt that it was therapeutic for her to reflect on the situation.

Conclusion

As is demonstrated in the following chapters, the narrative inquiry research that I have conducted has proved fruitful and productive and has elaborated to a large extent the experiences of the participants that have helped shape their teacher identity. Through sharing our narratives, we were able to understand our experiences in new ways and in greater depth.

Through using a narrative inquiry approach, I have realised that our lives are continuous and changing. By telling our stories, I have realised that these are stories of real people, human beings that have emotions, feelings and 'heart.' We have recalled and retold the stories of our lives which makes them all the more meaningful. By bringing our stories to 'life', they no longer only exist in our minds and in our imaginations but in 'written word.' We have told our stories so that others can learn and be educated from them. Through reflecting on our experiences, we become familiar with other experiences that may continue to grow from them at any time. We are real people, telling real stories to make meaning of our teacher identities.

The next chapter, Chapter Three, addresses my first key research question that explores the past personal and professional experiences of teachers and how these might have shaped their evolving identities.

CHAPTER THREE: THE WAY WE WERE

Introduction

The purpose of this narrative inquiry is to explore the relationship between teachers' past and present personal and professional experiences and their evolving teacher identities in the South African context. In the previous chapter, I give an account of the research process of this narrative inquiry. In this chapter, I focus on my first key research question: *How might teachers' past personal and professional experiences have shaped their evolving teacher identities?* As a participant-researcher in this study, I have worked together with two other teachers, Kate⁶ and Olwethu, to share and examine stories of our personal and professional experiences as teachers in South Africa. In this chapter, I look at the stories of our early childhood memories as well as our schooling experiences and our past teaching experiences. (Our current teaching experiences are addressed in Chapter Four.) As discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, the stories that form the data for this chapter were produced through a range of methods, which include reflective journal writing, individual unstructured interviews, collage-making and artefact retrieval.

The first part of this chapter briefly introduces the participants and our involvement in this study. I then go on to represent our stories of lived experience in the form of *personal and professional teacher narratives*. In constructing this data representation, I have developed a narrative framework, drawing on the narrative conceptual framework of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), which looks at three commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place (see Chapter One). The narrative framework presented in this chapter comprises *influential settings* (location, environment, the community and surroundings), *colourful characters* (the participants and those with whom they are involved), *changing times* (historical and political) and *powerful plot* (significant events in the participants' lives). This is then followed by a re-examination of these teacher narratives in which I attempt to discover what patterns and meanings emerge from the different stages of our lives, our milestones and experiences and to consider how our past experiences might have influenced our evolving teacher identities.

⁶ To ensure confidentiality, the names of the participants, names of teachers, role models, peers, the name of my school has been changed.

Embarking on our Journeys of Self-Exploration

Kate: It was during the autumn of 2010 when I was approached by one of my colleagues. The staffroom was empty and I was a little sceptical and uncertain about this. The secrecy and confidentiality surrounding this conversation had a bigger agenda than I thought. It was going to be a journey that I was going to have to undertake to recollect, remember, reflect on and recount the experiences, memories and stories of my personal and professional life. Being the positive, optimistic person that I am, I thought this would be an ideal opportunity for me to delve into my past and re-discover and relive my story at my own discretion. I agreed wholeheartedly. My name is Kate (pseudonym) and what will follow is my story.

Olwethu: A cold and windy day saw the unexpected arrival of one of my colleagues at my classroom door to discuss her studies ‘in confidence.’ Having studied recently myself, I knew that my participation in her research would be a bit time-consuming and require commitment, transparency and my contributions. I was informed that I was chosen for this study as an African teacher who lived as a student and teacher during apartheid. My preferred perspective regarding my personal and professional experiences would be vital to this study. I agreed to undertake this assignment to recall, evoke, summon up, probe and bring to mind my story. My name is Olwethu (pseudonym) and I am going to enlighten and acquaint you with my narrative.

Ann: Having invited two of my colleagues to chronicle their lives, I decided that it would be imperative that I become responsible to share my own life with them in order to facilitate a level of trust and confidence between us. Together, we would be able to collaborate as we worked on our stories. In this chapter, I also give an account of the details of the personal and professional experiences of my own life. I am Ann (pseudonym), the researcher.

Our Personal and Professional Teacher Narratives

The following personal and professional teacher narratives have ingrained in them storylines and narrative threads that involve *influential settings* (location, environment, the community and surroundings), *colourful characters* (the participants and those with whom they are involved), *changing times* (historical and political) and, most importantly of all, the *powerful plot* (significant events in the participants’ lives). Included in our narratives are ideologies that

surface, attitudes, choices, influences, opportunities, values, beliefs, philosophies and character traits that emerge, emotions that materialise and our objectives as teachers that come to light. These will become apparent from the stories that follow.

Influential Settings (location, environment, the community and surroundings)

Kate.

Hammarisdale, KwaZulu-Natal Midlands is where I was born. The roads were rugged and Hammarisdale was fairly underdeveloped. During the 1970's and 1980's, the area of Hammarisdale was depopulated. The reason for this was that this area was demarcated by the National Party government as an outlying area of the then province of Natal during apartheid.

My family felt that Hammarisdale was not a suitable location for me as an Indian child. Indian families were few and far between and Hammarisdale did not boast a thriving Indian community. My family felt that it would be difficult for me to have an upbringing where I would not be able to share my Indian culture, language, values and beliefs with those around me. They therefore decided to send me to live with her maternal grandmother in Chatsworth.

I excitedly boarded a train with my father to go and live in Chatsworth. Chatsworth was a suburb created by the National Party as an exclusive Indian residential area. (The Group Areas Act of 1950 segregated all race groups in South Africa.) Chatsworth was a colourful, diversified community that saw the emergence of very high profile leaders in all avenues of life. Chatsworth was a melting pot of Indian people of different social classes and religions. To illustrate, Mr and Mrs Pillay lived in a double storey mansion that housed a Mercedes Benz and Jaguar in their double garage. They had a sprawling lawn with landscaped gardens and a swimming pool. They were business people and belonged to the upper echelons of society. Just twenty minutes away from the Pillays, in another Unit of Chatsworth, lived another family in an over-crowded set of flats created by the National Party apartheid government. These flats were the site of drugs, poverty and other social evils. This family belonged to the class of society that provided cheap unskilled labour and earned a meagre living. They were mired in poverty.

This suburb was politicised and many anti-apartheid activists emerged from it. The heroes were role models to the generations that followed. The Indian community in Chatsworth also came together to prioritise education and skills development. At first, I wondered if I was in the right place. I felt abandoned and hated my circumstances away from my parents. However, in

time, I was motivated to do better and become someone someday. I was motivated academically at school through competing with other learners. The community itself also provided me with motivation to live a better quality of life and maintain a high standard of living. Many people living in this community were highly successful individuals in areas such as medicine and education. I remember that the Indian community at that time was very proud of teachers. I remember that teaching was considered to be a noble profession.

Ann.

For me, living in a block of flats in the 1960's in an urban area was enjoyable and enriching. The area of Central Durban in which I lived was set aside exclusively as an Indian residential area. My family and I felt a sense of belonging, togetherness and unity living in an enriched community. I felt safe playing hopscotch on the street, hide and seek with all my friends and sharing and caring for one another. My days of living in Central Durban during the time of apartheid were filled with mixed emotions. I remember the segregation and racism. I remember standing outside the Wimpy restaurant and buying an ice-cream. I was too small to understand why my sisters and I could not go inside this 'whites only' restaurant. We were oppressed, marginalised and powerless against the whites. However, in my experience, the Indian community did not allow apartheid to become a hindrance or stumbling block to progress towards greater educational success.

Olwethu.

Soweto in the Johannesburg township is where I was born in the 1960's. This is a sprawling township where millions of Africans were relocated during the apartheid era. There were so many people living in houses "the size of matchboxes". There was no privacy, just room for social chaos. I lived in a two bed-roomed house overcrowded with children and adults. There was "no room at the inn" and so my brother slept in the dining room. Others slept on the floor. How could they as human beings be expected to live in such conditions? It seems that no thought or consideration was afforded to the masses that were born African. The future seemed bleak in this expansive location called a township. The community and surroundings were steeped in poverty. There was massive unemployment, crime was rife and socio-economic problems were prevalent. I remember that there were no libraries and the ability to encourage reading was

limited. The atmosphere was ripe for discontentment, unhappiness, restlessness and disgruntlement. The years ahead would prove to be crucial, especially in the area of education. 1976 saw a turning point in the history of South Africa as the African youth in Soweto came to resist the learning of subjects in Afrikaans. Many died. Resistance to the apartheid government was the first step to the road to democracy. In the 1980's, I moved to Ladysmith and then to Durban.

Colourful Characters (the participants and those with whom they are involved)

Kate.

There was excitement when I was born. I was the first grandchild born on the maternal side of my family. This put me in a good position to be spoilt by those around me. Being the first grandchild, I thrived on the attention I received from my uncles and grandparents. My father belonged to an elite, economically advantaged family. However, he was unstable and had many challenges in the area of employment. He earned himself the slogan of the “black sheep” in the family. I learnt from a very young age that a person's economic position affects relationships with others. I know and have experienced hardship.

Neither of my parents was academic. Despite this, I speak of my parents with great pride. My parents were supportive and committed to ensuring that both my brother and I did not want in any way. Hard work, perseverance and motivation are character traits that I have adopted from my parents. Keeping oneself busy and working meticulously are characteristics that were a part of my upbringing. My parents sacrificed a great deal so that I could have the best. I remember my mother as one with a listening ear and a special kind of friendship. My father ensured that I had the toys and dresses I desired. He also bought me the Pro-Maths programme to assist me with mathematics at school. He taught me that despite being down and out, one can still get up and succeed. The motivation I received from my parents spurred me on to become the best that I could be. I consider myself a role model to my brother.

It was an ordinary day just like any other, at about two o'clock in the afternoon when I received a phone call to tell me that my father was ill. Having knowledge about illnesses and diseases as a Life Science teacher, I hurried to try and see if I could identify the illness. My father was rushed to hospital and suffered a heart attack. He underwent a bypass operation. I am

grateful that my father survived this operation. Having survived this, he picked himself up, dusted himself off and started a new business.

I also speak of the influence of my uncles and aunts in my life. I gauged from them that studying must be a priority in one's life. These uncles taught me a love for reading and how to play chess. I also learnt from them that one is never too old to learn. This philosophy of one of my uncles, who continues to pursue his studies, encourages, inspires and motivates me to continue with my studies.

I maintain that God was important in my family life. I recall being a youth leader contributing towards helping other youth in my neighbourhood. Being religiously aware was a priority in my family. It helped keep them focussed on pure morale and ethical values.

I am married and have one child. I am grateful to have an extended family that provides me with ample support.

Ann.

My life has evolved and I have been transformed from a passive, introverted shy individual into an audible, confident person, outspoken publicly and privately. "Aagh!!! Not another girl!" were the first words that greeted my entrance into the world. I became haunted and obsessed with the fact that I was not so warmly greeted as I entered into the world. I felt neglected and alone. My two sisters, who are now deceased, were always ill. I grew up fearful, anxious, lonely and eventually developed an inferiority complex about myself. I had to fend for myself, but now I see that this made me stronger and more determined.

My mother and father belonged to very religious families. Therefore, they were instilled with good moral values. Having the fear of God helped them develop pure, unadulterated values of honesty, trust, humility, worthiness, compassion, respect and care. Belonging to a family that leaves behind such a rich heritage and legacy is indeed a great honour for me. Being part of a family that has been influential in various aspects of the life of society has been enriching. "God must always be a priority in your life." These words spoken to me by my parents and the rest of my family laid the foundation for good moral and ethical values that became the cornerstone of my religious life.

My family provided sufficient love and care. My father was a good financial provider in the home. His weakness however, was his lavishness and extravagance. He did not save for a

rainy day and that eventually cost me my dream of becoming an accountant. My father's lack of communication contributed to my insecurities and fears. My mother was self-sacrificing and supportive. Her weakness was her extreme humility that allowed others to take advantage of her. She failed to be a good disciplinarian and allowed her children too much freedom.

Joining the Umgeni Jaycees (an organisation that believes in the social upliftment of society) and meeting important community leaders provided me with a platform to become more outspoken and vociferous. It was at this level that I gained exposure to procedures, policies and organisational matters.

I am married to a teacher and have two children. Education in my household is highly prioritised. My son has completed his Business Science Degree with his Honours in Finance and my daughter is a second year Humanities student. My husband and I are both currently completing our Masters studies.

Olwethu.

Born an African during apartheid, I felt robbed of my rights to citizenship. It was a time of oppression, abuse and persecution. I was the second born of two brothers and three sisters being raised by my mother and father in Soweto. My father was an average earner and the provider in the home. I was influenced by members of my mother's family, three of whom were teachers. I recall that teaching earned a great deal of respect from the community.

Going to church was of utmost importance to my family. Throughout the days of repression and subjugation, the church was a community that helped to provide a support for my family and me. Despite our struggles, my family and I continued to pray and trust God for better days.

I married and was blessed with two children.

Changing Times (historical and political)

Apartheid was a time of oppression and subjugation by the National Party, which ruled South Africa with white minority rule since it was legislated in 1948. Historically, we grew up in separate residential areas and, politically, we were dominated. There was a separation geographically (where we lived), economically (how much we earned) and socially

(entertainment, health and education). As women, all of us found ourselves marginalised and oppressed even further during apartheid.

Kate.

I remember that my uncles were very politically aligned. They were involved with the ANC (African National Congress) – a banned political organisation – and fought against oppression. This led me to become more aware of my rights as a citizen and as a woman of a different class. I knew that I belonged to a racial class that was considered to be inferior by those in power and that was oppressed

Ann.

One day, when I went to visit my grandmother, there was a knock at the door and there stood three burly white policemen. They were looking for my cousin whom they said had some information about the ANC. At the age of fourteen, I was not certain of the magnitude of this search. I remember my cousin scaling the pole outside my grandmother's flat in Central Durban in an attempt to escape capture and find a different hiding place. During my youth, I became very aware of what was missing from my life because of racial inequality. My gender, class and race identity was politically aligned. I became very politically aware of being oppressed and exploited because of the implementation of apartheid.

Olwethu.

I grew up in a township that raised many of the leaders that have emerged today. Historically, Soweto is a place where transformation began. The spread of the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko motivated, stimulated and inspired the youth to rise up above their situation and challenge the government of the day. Violence, riots and social upheaval was the order of the day. It was for this reason that I left Soweto and moved to Ladysmith and then Durban.

Powerful Plot (significant life events)

Kate.

“I am so proud of you.” These words echo in my mind as my parents look back at my life and

agree that the experiences that I have had has allowed me to become this individual with my own personal, independent identity. My story starts in humble beginnings from which I learnt perseverance, the need to strive, to overcome and to succeed. The influences of my family were crucial in shaping my life. The fact that my grandmother and grandfather were illiterate did not stand in the way of my drive for scholarly success. The positive drive of my uncles who encouraged me to read and study helped me to pursue my education.

“How was your day at school?” “Is there anything that you require for school?” The constant echoes of these words from my mother and father indicated that they were fully supportive of my pursuit for educational success. Reading was a window to the world. I loved reading the books by Roald Dahl. It was an escape into another world. The transition into this literary world helped me to achieve great academic success at school. I experienced academic success at a very young age of her life. Copies of my certificates (see Appendix E) are proof of my levels of academic success. Being in the top three in my class motivated and spurred me to always compete and be the best that I could be. However, Mrs Perumal, my class teacher from standard three (now known as grade five) tended to be biased in her affections and support of a selected few in the class. I hated this attitude and this resulted in my performance taking a dip and my academic decline from the A class to the B class. Being in the B class was disillusioning. Mr Pillay, the B class teacher, was rude and arrogant and it was for this reason that I grew to hate Science. It was at this stage of her life that I told myself that I would never want to be a teacher like Mr Pillay. Negativity engulfed me whilst I was in the B class. The harsh words spoken by Mr Pillay affected me.

My move in standard four (now grade six) to a school of academic excellence gave me the impetus to climb the academic ladder once more. My holistic primary school education began here. “Well done, Kate!” were the words I often heard when I excelled academically and on the sports field.

High school was a unique experience for me. Attending the ‘ideal’ school opened doors for me that I had not believed would be possible. I became the SRC (Students’ Representative Council) President. This platform provided me with the opportunity to express myself confidently and to be outspoken. I showed an avid interest in conservation whilst at school. It might have been this that later sparked my interest to become a Life Science teacher. The climax

of my schooling career was celebrated with two A's, two B's and two C's in my final matriculation results. I wondered where the road would lead to from there.

I left school in 1995 with the aspiration to study Accounting rather than the desire to become a teacher. However, this became a distant dream for me when my father lost his job. "We jumped onto a bus and travelled to Springfield College of Education to register for teaching." Becoming a teacher seemed to be a last resort for me. I was continuously harassed by my friends who reminded me that I could have been "someone better than a teacher". I maintained that the negativity that surrounds teaching seems to stem from the low salary, the stress and the burden of administration as well as the problems related to discipline.

Finding a teaching job was difficult for me. I had to relocate to Gauteng to a private college. Next, I moved to an ex-model C school (a school that was designated "white" during the apartheid era) in Johannesburg. I label this school as "the perfect school", which was run on very professional grounds. I see it as "professional" because it provided a holistic education for the learners with sports such as rugby. The principal, Mrs Gordon, was very strict. I recalled the day when Mrs Gordon paid a visit to my class: "I was so nervous." I remember conducting a lesson on acids and bases. After five minutes, I expected Mrs Gordon to leave, but she remained for the duration of the lesson. I was then called to the office. Being apprehensive at first, I was pleasantly surprised when the principal raved about how impressed she was with my lesson and commended me for the excellent delivery of the lesson. I recall my role as a "social worker"/teacher (which is discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation). Being a Life Science teacher, I had laboratory assistance and received administrative assistance. The remuneration and receiving a fourteenth cheque was a bonus.

Homesick, I decided to relocate to Durban. I began my teaching post at Ream Secondary School and have been there ever since. I make stark comparisons between my previous school and current school. These parallels and differences are highlighted in the next chapter.

Challenges and problems that my family encountered made me become more determined to succeed and overcome. When I got married and had a child I felt that this type of domesticated pathway would be ideal for a woman who had chosen teaching as a career. The time and the benefits of holidays would be beneficial to a mother who strives to bring up a family and lead a balanced life.

Ann.

Ann explains, “I have come a long way. This journey has been trying and yet fulfilling. I have made mistakes and learnt from them.” I am the only professional to emerge from my family. I recall the days growing up in an urban landscape mushrooming with blocks and blocks of flats. It was a vibrant, cultural experience as an Indian: “It was awesome to learn about food, culture, values, beliefs and ideologies that enmeshed our lives.”

Being the third daughter, I had to grow up very independently. I recollect how the drive for education arose from my inner being. “Schooling became a priority for me.” I took much inspiration from my mother, who even though she was not very educated and academic, taught me the common sense things in life. Her hard work, love, commitment to family life, generosity and hospitality ensured that I was brought in a well balanced home. The motivation to do well came from support from my mother. I remember my mother encouraging me and celebrating my success. The pride that radiated from my mother to convey her happiness and joy at my success was sufficient to give me the need to continue to strive to do my best. My father expected nothing but the best.

I remember my friends calling me “Prof” (Professor). It was then that I knew that my academic expectations were great. I have mixed feelings about my schooling experiences. I am convinced that teachers play a crucial role in shaping one’s destiny. The teachers I remember in school were Mrs Barbeau, an English teacher who had no control of discipline and poor teaching skills. The fact that Mrs Barbeau entered the classroom unprepared was a recipe for disaster. She had no control of the class. I recall that “Even though I was never one to be rowdy, I remember thinking, ‘If you cannot beat them, then join them.’ I joined in the activity of class disruption. It was then that I knew that a teacher should always be prepared and ready for her lessons in order to gain the confidence, support and respect of the learners.” However, Mr Patel, my Mathematics teacher, was the opposite. He instilled in the learners the passion to be in love with the subject. I remember, “We ate, slept and lived Mathematics.” It was this enthusiastic passion for the subject on the part of the teacher that became infectious and contagious to all learners.

I felt a sense of accomplishment as I progressed through school year after year. I remember often “playing school” and taking on the profession of the teacher. There were many times that I was teacher to the neighbours’ children at a very young age. I recall them saying to me, “You will make a good teacher.” Our career choices might have also been influenced by the

fact that when we were younger we experimented with our own chalkboards and ‘played teacher.’

I am proud that I have never been absent a single day in my entire schooling career. I regret never having had the opportunity to excel in any code of sport or being able to participate in any cultural activities. My parents did not encourage me to take part in any code of sport or art or music. I reminisce about how during my high school days I had the opportunity to join a community organisation and gain the experience of public speaking. This was the impetus to greater and active public participation.

Economically, my family was stable until one day my father came home and said, “Ann, I have lost my job.” This changed the destiny of my life. Instead of pursuing my passion to work with figures and become an accountant, I had to abandon my studies of a Bachelor of Commerce degree at university and pursue teaching instead at Springfield Training College.

Being the only child to pursue tertiary education, I did not feel I had any role models among my immediate family. I was however, influenced by my uncle who was a school vice principal. All visits to his house saw him buried under a pile of books that needed marking. This was enough to deter anyone from the teaching profession. Nevertheless, I did not have a choice.

I was first posted to a high school after graduating as a primary school teacher to teach Physical Education and History. After training at a college, I was uncomfortable amongst the high school teachers who were university graduates. However, I did my best and was regarded as a productive teacher. I hated teaching Physical Education as I had no flair for it but I did my best. After four years, I was transferred to a primary school, where I continued teaching Physical Education. These were the worst years of my teaching career. Spending between twenty to twenty-two hours each week teaching a subject that I hated left me feeling unfulfilled and exhausted. My dream of teaching an academic subject came true in 1994 when I was posted to Ream Secondary School. (My experiences at this school will be described in the next chapter.)

Education and the pursuit of academic success is still of prime importance to me. I believe that education can become the stepping-stone to a greater quality of life.

Olwethu.

I have come a long way from the dusty roads of Soweto. I recall the days of over-crowding and the social evils that permeated the society in which I lived. These evils were the result of the

policies implemented by the National Party of South Africa. As an African, I have had my fair share of challenges in life. Despite the hardships I have had to endure, I have persevered. My journey has been tiring and fraught with many hurdles that I had to overcome. My hurdles were political, social and economic.

Born in a large family, my mother and father did their best to ensure that I continued to achieve educational success. I remember my primary school experiences in Soweto in the 1960's. Mrs Moloji was my favourite teacher. She was approachable, spent time with me during the breaks to explain the things that I did not understand and was patient. The words spoken by Mrs Moloji to me helped me onto a straight path: "As an African girl, you must take special care of yourself." On the other hand, I remember Mrs Phewa who was lazy and screamed a great deal.

I recall the memories of the first high school that I attended during the time of the Soweto Uprising. SASO (South African Students Organisation) was an organisation formed by students, but it was an organisation that I did not want to join because I was more focused on completing my academic studies than becoming involved in politics. After leaving Soweto in 1987, I was proud to attend a seminary school in Durban whose motto was excellence. My stay at this school helped lay the foundation for greater educational success. Discipline, responsibility and accountability were the order of the day at this school. The rules and principles that were adhered to demanded pupil and teacher responsibility that contributed to the smooth running of the school.

I was greatly influenced by my aunts to pursue teaching. Like Kate, I maintained that teaching was considered to be a noble profession. Teaching was my first choice of study. Tertiary education for me had its own successes and challenges.

I began her teaching career at Ladysmith High School I recall those days with fondness. Discipline, authority and influence were the order of the day. I looked forward to going to school. (In the next chapter, Olwethu compares her former school, Ladysmith High School, to her current school, Ream Secondary School, and looks at the similarities and differences).

Having been exposed to different places, such as the township, the farm and the urban area of Ladysmith, I have learnt much. As an African, I felt "robbed of [my] dreams". However, the opportunities to realise my dreams eventually began to materialise as I began to study and become more economically independent. As an individual, I have made certain that I have

continued to pursue the highest levels of academic achievement and continued my studies via correspondence. I continue on my pathway towards educational success.

Forces of Influence Emerging From These Teacher Narratives

The teacher narratives that are presented above reveal that life is a continuous journey that unfolds and evolves as we progress. In this section of the chapter, I return to these narratives to seek out similarities and differences among my participants' lived experiences, to explore the importance and meanings of events of the past and see how these might impact on the participants' evolving identities as teachers in post-apartheid South Africa. Drawing on the "Force Field Model of Teacher Development" (Samuel, 2003, 2008, 2009) (see Chapter One), I have identified the following "forces of influence" (Samuel, 2003, p. 270) that appear to have played a significant role in the development of our evolving teacher identities. As with the teacher narratives above, I consider these forces within the narrative framework of *influential settings* (location, environment, the community and surroundings), *colourful characters* (the participants and those with whom they are involved), *changing times* (historical and political) and *powerful plot* (significant events in the participants' lives).

Under *influential settings*, I have identified the forces of *access to educational resources*, *socio-economic circumstances* and *community*. For *colourful characters*, I have identified the forces of *family legacies* and *teacher legacies*. *Changing times* involves the force of *political oppression* and *powerful plot* comprises the forces of *academic success and struggles* and *career choice*. I discuss how these forces have played out in our teacher narratives and consider how they appear to have influenced our evolving teacher identities.

The analysis of the narratives is informed by my discussions with Kate and Olwethu during the data production process. As I explain in Chapter Two, the data production process in this study has been accompanied by ongoing and participatory data analysis. During the interviews and our discussions of the collages and accompanying artefacts through which my participants and I retrieved and recounted our lived experiences, we kept coming back to the underlying question of how these experiences might have formed part of our evolving teacher

identities in the South African context. History emphasizes that in order to know where we are going, we must reflect on where we have come from.

Influential Settings (location, environment, the community and surroundings)

Access to educational resources.

There were great inequalities that existed in resource provision amongst the more advantaged and less advantaged schools during the apartheid era. Blignaut (2000) identifies four different systems of education that existed during the period of apartheid in South Africa. The participants of this study were educated under the House of Delegates education system for Indians and the Department of Education and Training education system for Africans. These systems were based on discrimination and keeping people apart based on the colour of their skin. Cross (1999) refers to the system of inequity that discriminated against Africans, Coloureds and Indians in favour of whites. We were all victims of overcrowded classrooms as the National Party government dictated the amount of money spent per learner according to race. This government deliberately discriminated against children from non-white race groups and this detracted from the quality of education that we received. We would have loved to have more access to facilities such as swimming pools, well-resourced libraries, hockey fields and gymnasiums in order that these might have enhanced our level of learning. For example, Boggs and Golden (2009, p. 217) state that libraries form a very important part of teachers' early literacy learning experiences, giving them "access to multiple texts, and encouraging their desires to read more about the world."

However, despite the lack of material resources, our schools were places where we were able to create our own identities, engage with society, learn social skills and develop. For instance, Ann remembers that by joining a community organisation she learnt to be influential, pro-active and to be able to work together with the community, which is vital to a teacher's identity. Kate on the other hand recalls the influence of the older members of her family in promoting generosity. It is for this reason that Kate has run a breakfast club at Ream Secondary School continuing the values learnt from her experiences to be generous. Olwethu has engaged in the art of counselling after having lived in a community where people share their lives and their stories.

Socio-economic circumstances.

By reflecting on our lived experiences, we have come to see how our academic progress was influenced by race and social class and the families to which we belonged, as well as the educational resources we had access to. Economically, our parents were limited to semi-skilled employment and therefore earned average incomes. Kate's father worked at a chicken factory, Ann's father worked at a foam factory and Olwethu's father worked in a sugar factory. This limited income restricted our ability to achieve our academic dreams. However, our educational achievements whilst at school emerged from the motivation to achieve that we gained from our parents' and other family members' attitudes towards learning rather than from their economic circumstances. Kate recalls the character traits of hard work, perseverance and motivation that she adopted from her parents that spurred her on towards academic success. Ann also recollects the encouragement she received from her mother and the moments her mother celebrated her success. Similarly, Olwethu's mother and father did their best to ensure that she continued to achieve educational success. Being an African girl, Olwethu knew that she had to try harder than others to achieve academic success, a principle to which she adhered. She remembers a teacher saying to her that she must continue on her path towards educational achievement, "Especially because you are an African girl."

Both Ann and Kate emphasise the parallels in their lives. They both wished to pursue an Accounting career but due to lack of finances, they were forced to accept bursaries to follow a teaching career. Although this was at first rather daunting, they stress that the intrinsic motivation that had become part of their personal identities helped them to develop a passion and enthusiasm for teaching that became an integral part of their professional identities.

Community.

Both Kate and Ann experienced living in communities that tended to lean towards Indian cultures, customs, beliefs, values, performance and behaviour. In their experience, the Indian community prioritised education, the importance of owning one's own house, the value of heritage, moral ethical behaviour, loyalty and the values of discipline, obedience and respect. They were able to relate to others so that they could 'fit in'. The Indian communities also comprised people of varying religious, linguistic and cultural traditions. Living in this melting pot with diverse cultures, Ann and Olwethu recalled that they were able to accept and learn from the various cultures of their communities. Ann remembers, "Aunty Bibi who was a Muslim

taught us how to cook, how to be tolerant and how to accept each other just as we are.” Having been able to grow up in a community that promoted tolerance and acceptance has helped Ann who today teaches in an educational institution that demands that those values are practised on a daily basis. As Chiu-Ching and Chan (2009, p.23) state, “culture affects our way of thinking and behaviour which also has implications for the way we develop our own personal perspectives on child development.” Dealing with learners that come from diverse socio-economic circumstances and cultural and linguistic backgrounds demands that a teacher is tolerant and aware of the need to make an effort to understand a variety of perspectives.

Having been originally brought up in Soweto, Olwethu recalls that her community was very conscientised and politicised. Olwethu grew up in a community of resistance where confrontation and struggle were the order of the day. Olwethu knew that she would have to persevere to succeed.

Whatever we experienced in the communities in which we lived shaped our teacher identities. We all learnt from the communities in we lived the importance of never giving up. The difficulties, challenges and obstacles that we faced in our communities has helped us to pursue our dreams, reach our goals and persevere until we can achieve what we set out to achieve. Our teacher identities have therefore taken on qualities of perseverance, goal-setting and dream-making.

Colourful Characters (the participants and those with whom they are involved)

Family legacies.

Our teacher narratives show that our families have left a legacy that has fostered good family relations and moral values such as honesty and respect. Having this notion of security helped us to gain confidence, become more trusting, nurture optimism and a positive attitude towards schooling. Furthermore, as previously discussed, the expectations of our parents positively influenced our academic results. Kate recalls her mother communicating with her daily about her school day. Ann reflects on the support her mother gave her when she sat up late at night whilst Ann studied and Olwethu remembers the family support she received so that she continued towards educational achievement.

We all agreed that our fathers brought stability to our homes. They were seen as providers, authoritarian figures, protectors and individuals whom we feared and loved. We

always knew that no matter what happened our fathers would always ensure that we did not lack or want for anything. Ann's father said to her, "Remember to always find yourself a stable profession, so that if anything happens in your marriage, you would be able to fend for yourself." Teaching became that stable profession.

Although both Ann and Olwethu's fathers lacked communicative skills, they were figures of authority who demanded obedience and a quick response to their orders. Despite this, they both agree that their fathers were very humane. Olwethu and Ann also both emphasise that their fathers took responsibility for their families and ensured that they did not lack for anything. Ann's father did not even have to say a word to her before Ann knew what was expected of her. These experiences with their fathers created an equal amount of shyness and reservation for Ann and Olwethu as they were growing up. This may have changed over time. Ann's self-assurance was improved when she joined a community organisation where she had opportunities to become more vociferous and vocal. Olwethu became more determined to participate in discussions as she gained confidence as a good teacher. The fact that Ann and Olwethu's fathers were so aloof and partly detached from their lives taught them the principle that if you want to do something well, do it yourself. This detachment has encouraged both Ann and Olwethu to strive for individuality and independence. The ability to work on your own and not to depend on others has been carried over into the teaching profession. Although collaboration is advised, the absence of collaboration encouraged Ann and Olwethu to work passionately to become the best teachers that they could be. Ann and Olwethu maintain that having a good relationship with pupils means that they must be cordial, friendly but firm.

Kate, on the other hand, expressed that her father was open-minded and allowed her freedom of expression that allowed her to become more creative and embark on journeys of self-discovery. Kate explains that, having been brought up in a democratic environment, she understands the importance of practising that type of freedom in the classroom that must be accompanied with responsibility.

This study has revealed that, for us, it was our mothers rather than our fathers who were more actively involved in supporting the schooling life of their children. Similarly, Graves (2001, p. 35) explains, "the conditions for learning set by my mother at home contributed more to my education than any other single factor in my life." Boggs and Golden (2009) also highlight the important role that mothers often play in teachers' early learning experiences." Our mothers

displayed dedication to family life, devotion to bringing up their children, love, care, humanity, warmth and supportiveness that resonates with our love and care for our pupils at school. Our mothers allowed for freedom of expression, as we were able to speak openly to them. In addition, our mothers taught us to strive for self-actualisation and to be grateful and content in our achievements. The need to become zealous, passionate, fervent, and enthusiastic about one's life occupation were principles embedded in us by our mothers who encouraged us to "Be the best you can be and do the best that you can do." Each of our mothers radiated genuine sympathy for the downtrodden and showed a great amount of hospitality and sympathy for the less fortunate and those who were in dire need of help. This sense of empathy has helped us show the same kindness and compassion to those whom we teach.

Boggs and Golden (2009, p. 216) maintain that "families—mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, grandmothers, grandfathers, and even stepparents" play a vital role in teachers' early learning experiences. Important role models and mentors in our lives were our uncles and aunts. As we grew up, we were exposed to uncles and aunts that visited and inspired us towards higher education. To illustrate, Kate remembers the books that her uncles bought her that encouraged her to read. Ann recalls the stack of books she saw every time she visited her uncle and Olwethu reflects on the respect her aunts had for teaching.

A study by Steyn, Badenhorst and Kamper, (2010, p. 1) indicates that religion is a key factor in the home and school environments of many South Africans and that it is thus a significant influence on many of their views about life. Our teacher narratives indicate that religion played a key role in all our family lives. Reading the Bible, learning prayer verses and reciting God's word inculcated in us all the love for the written word. It was this outside experience of being in the church that laid the foundation for acceptance and the building of a positive self-esteem. Optimism, trust in God and support from the church family also boosted our confidence to forge ahead. Stemming from our families' religious values, we were taught to respect others, show empathy for one another and to be accountable to one another. The principles of tolerance, patience, a positive attitude, living without anxiety and a belief that God has a plan and purpose for your life, helped to develop our teacher identities. Therefore, these lessons of our lives are passed over to the classroom and staffroom as they have helped us adopt attitudes and values that influence how we engage with the learners and our colleagues at school.

Teacher legacies.

Through this study, we have also recalled our schooling experiences. The relationship that exists between the attitudes of the teachers and those of the learners are revealed in our teacher narratives. Graves (2001) highlights how teachers can influence our learning and teaching. Boggs and Golden (2009, p. 217) highlight the significance of “positive teacher impact and negative teacher impact” on teachers’ early learning experiences. Similarly, Allender and Allender (2006) emphasise the relationship between our educational experiences as children and the kind of teachers we become. Olwethu, Kate and Ann all agree that there are some teachers that we remember that we would want to emulate and others that we would choose to forget. The teachers we would want to emulate are those who were positive, encouraging, patient, systematic, hardworking, demanding and enthusiastic. On the other hand, teachers we would prefer to forget are those who could not command discipline and respect, those who were lazy and those who were condescending, racist, boring, without a good command of their subject matter and negative.

We have retraced our experiences with teachers who were helpful, encouraging, passionate, dedicated and positive and compared them to those teachers whom we found to be negative, lazy, unprepared and uncommitted. We are more drawn to and express admiration for the teachers whom we consider a positive influence on our lives and those who believed in us rather than those teachers who were negative. The teachers that we admired were those that were genuine and sincere. As we recalled our schooling experiences, we seemed to discern those teachers who put their heart and soul into their teaching and reached deep within themselves to reveal themselves. Graves (2001) identifies some teachers as those from whom we can draw energy. The example he recalls is that of a librarian who was selfless, helpful, made one feel better and was a source of advice. hooks (1994) also identifies the positive teacher as a healer who can engage in shared experiences with her learners. A study of the impact of preservice teachers’ early learning experiences conducted by Boggs and Golden (2009) reveals the most liked teachers were those who allowed for learner participation, allowed learners to selectively choose what they would learn and promoted excitement in the class.

In reflecting on our schooling, we came to see how we have replicated some of the teaching habits and mechanisms employed by those teachers who were well-liked when we were at school. To illustrate, Ann was impressed by the Maths teacher under whom she learnt best. He

would be precise, accurate and thorough in his explanations, allowing all the learners to figure out the Maths problems on their own. She was ecstatic at the success she achieved on completion of all her Maths homework. Ann was so impressed with the work ethic of the Maths teacher that she has adopted the same passionate attitude to her work as a teacher. Ann has thus realised that the passion of the teacher is transferred to the learner. (The next chapter reveals more about how our earlier learning experiences have influenced our teaching.)

We all recollected the influence that teachers with positive attitudes have had on us. Ann, as mentioned, was encouraged by her Maths teacher and Olwethu was motivated by the teacher who stayed in during the breaks to assist her. Negative experiences at school taught us that we would never want mirror the attitude of those teachers whom we did not admire. For example, Kate was disillusioned by primary school teachers who were biased and practiced favouritism.

Changing times (historical and political)

Political oppression.

The inequalities in education in apartheid South Africa were based on race. It structured schooling in ways that divided the four race groups. The Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2005) emphasises that the lived experiences of teachers in South Africa is influenced by and develops through their own history of experiences with race, gender, sexual orientation, class positions and geographical connections. Carrim (2002) mentions that if we are to examine teacher identities, we must address the lives of teachers and, how they perceive their lives and experiences. He reveals that, under apartheid, the identities of South African teachers were greatly influenced by experiences of racial and gender discrimination. Perumal (2007) highlights the fact that rather than accepting the negativity of identity from which emanates inferiority, one can transform one's sense of self and community through consciousness-raising. We have realised that as South Africans living in a new democracy and having emerged from apartheid and a state of inferiority, we must as Perumal (2007) advises, transform our identities through consciousness, participation and awareness.

Each of us reflected on the social interaction that transpired at different sites for eliciting our narratives. We realised that, growing up in apartheid South Africa, we were socially defined by the race groups we belonged to. Kate and Ann were classified as Indian and Olwethu as African. The places in which we lived during apartheid became spaces of imprisonment carved

out by the National Party government. For example, Kate felt that growing up in Hammarsdale meant growing up in an area/land allocated only for Indians. Separating out land for each race group was racist and discriminatory. However, Kate indicated that her father had no option but to live there as he was subjected to this area because of his job. Ann too makes mention of how she felt imprisoned by the apartheid space as she walked down the main street of Durban unable to enter the restaurant to purchase ice-creams from a 'whites only' restaurant: "We had to purchase our ice-creams through a glass window." Olwethu grew up in an oppressed community that had to struggle within a society that provided inferior Bantu education for Africans (Luthuli, 1985). These spaces of imprisonment ingrained in the participants some feelings of inferiority.

Kate, Ann and Olwethu grew up in these oppressed, racially divided social spaces. They became very aware of the struggles that existed as members of their families played pivotal roles in the struggles against oppression. Kate also learnt from her uncles that the struggle to be free comes with a price and many sacrifices that have to be made. It is the awareness of the rights for justice, equality, privileges, equal opportunity, egalitarianism and impartiality that all of us have been exposed to that have stirred in us the very essence of humanity. As teachers, therefore, we have learnt to afford our pupils the same rights for which our families fought. We have learnt that freedom is not cheap but comes at a high price. Although the Constitution in South Africa demands that every child has a right to education, it does not guarantee that all of them will have quality education. Consequently, as teachers we must persevere to ensure that every learner under our care receives the best tuition and care that we can possibly muster.

Powerful Plot (significant life events)

Academic success and struggles.

Ann and Kate are proud to elaborate on their primary and high school experiences, revelling in the fact that they were high flyers and academic achievers. It was their early success that laid the foundation for high academic expectations and a bright future. High school too saw the proud moments of accomplishment, achievement and greater success. Having reached the climax of their academic educational success, both Kate and Ann experienced the same sense of disillusionment when their dreams of becoming accountants were dashed to the ground due to financial constraints. However, they both realised that they had to move on and embrace life as it faced them. Their schooling experiences and family support had engendered in them the zest and

passion for hard work, perseverance and commitment that has allowed them to become the best teachers that they know how to become.

Olwethu, on the other hand, experienced academic struggles as she moved from school to school. Her achievement, however, was completing her final year of schooling and going to work but making her way back to the teaching profession for which she had a passion. She too became the best teacher she knew how to become.

Olwethu and Ann both continued to pursue their studies to complete their Honours in Education. Although Olwethu may have not started her schooling career as a ‘high flyer’ due to the political instability in which she found herself, she agreed that she is now regarded as a proud academic. Having emerged from a society that promoted inferior education for Africans, Olwethu now feels proud of her accomplishments. As a teacher, she now feels empowered and more enlightened as an educator and as both a transmitter and producer of knowledge.

Career choice.

We are all adamant that teaching was not our first choice of career. Ann and Olwethu emphasise that eventually they were influenced by their family members who had chosen teaching as a profession. This mentoring relationship encouraged their decisions to choose the profession of teaching. All three of us noted that in our communities teaching was considered to be a “noble profession” and that teachers were valued and seen as worthy of respect. Teachers were conduits who channelled knowledge, information and values to the next generation. We all believed that teaching provided stability and was well paid. There was much respect that teachers earned for counselling, helping, shaping the minds of the youth and the influence that they provided. Despite our initial reluctance, we felt that to teach would be a means to give back to the community and that teaching would be a means to assist others to empower themselves.

Conclusion

In this chapter, my participants and I have related stories of our personal and professional experiences and considered how these might have shaped our identities. Masinga (2009) maintains that it is essential for teachers to understand their own background and its implications for their identity and pedagogic practice in the classroom. Goodson (1992) agrees with Masinga when he emphasises that biography influences teachers’ classroom behaviour and practices. We

have focussed on our early childhood memories and our learning and teaching experiences. Through examining the different stages of our lives, our milestones and experiences, I have identified a number of forces as having the potential to play a significant role in the development of evolving teacher identities in the South African context: *access to educational resources, socio-economic circumstances, community, family legacies, teacher legacies, political oppression, academic success and struggles and career choice.*

This chapter has revealed that through the practical experiences and the values that have been attained as the participants were growing up, our teacher identities have been shaped and reshaped. Cross (1999) maintains that identities can alter, they do not remain the same. Furthermore, “they are shaky, unstable and open to articulation where there is struggle” (Cross, 1999, p. 220). Franzak (2002) agrees that the development of a teacher’s identity is a continuing and dynamic process. This, he maintains, is being informed, formed and reformed as we develop over time and by interacting with others. Educationally, we have emerged out of lack of resources such as books and facilities to become teachers whose identity ensures that our own learners are well provided for. Socially, our communities have instilled in us an awareness of our surroundings and environments that have shaped our conscious identities of current situations. Economically, our experiences have taught us that we must overcome and help the learners overcome the mode of deprivation to ensure that they, like us, can achieve their goals. Politically, we continue to use our experiences to resist oppression and repression. Our families have set a standard that we must continue to uphold and pass it on to the generations to come. Our academic success and struggles have all been a part of shaping our identities. Without struggle, there is no success. We have learnt that career choices play a vital role in ensuring that we live a fulfilled life.

In the next chapter, this study explores the second research question: *How might teachers’ current professional experiences be affecting their evolving teacher identities?* The chapter also looks at how these experiences have brought about or might bring about change.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SCHOOL, A PLACE OF SELF-DISCOVERY

Introduction

The aim of this study is to work with teachers to narrate their life stories in order to see how their professional identities have evolved and might evolve in response to their experiences. In the previous chapter, I focus on my first key research question: *How might teachers' past personal and professional experiences have shaped their evolving teacher identities?* In response to this question, I portray *personal and professional teacher narratives* that represent significant lived experiences from the lives of my two teacher participants and me. I then elaborate on various “forces of influence” (Samuel, 2003, p. 270) that have contributed to shaping our teacher identities.

In this chapter, my focus is on my second research question: *How might teachers' current professional experiences be affecting their evolving teacher identities? (How have these experiences brought about or might they bring about change?).* Lang (as cited in Woods & Hammersley, 1977) states that the chief purpose of studying the life and experiences of a teacher is to bring about educational change. Thus, my aim in this study is not only to gain greater understanding of the relationship between teachers' experiences and identities, but also to explore how such increased understanding might help to bring about change, not only for the benefit of the teacher concerned, but also for the school and the learner and even society as a whole. As Chiu-Ching and Chan (2009, p. 20) explain, “it is through inquiry that teachers examine the self within the teaching environment and their practices in terms of roles, actions and beliefs.” This is important so that teachers can learn to change and improve.

In the first part of this chapter, I represent our stories of our daily school routines and current professional experiences in the form of *professional experience narratives*. I use a narrative framework (as I did in Chapter Three) to structure these narratives. This framework consists of the *influential settings* of the classroom, the school and the community, *colourful characters* – the learners and our colleagues, *powerful plot* – our memorable moments and daily stories, and finally, *changing times* – how our professional experiences have brought about and might bring about change, concentrating on our future expectations. In the second part of the

chapter, I reconsider these professional experience narratives to identify significant “forces of influence” (Samuel, 2003, p. 270) that appear to be affecting our evolving teacher identities.

Our Professional Experience Narratives

Influential Settings (the classroom, the school and the community)

As you drive a few kilometres along a long winding road, you will wonder where this road leads to. Eventually, after driving for a specific length of time, you will eventually reach the end of the road where you will find a huge structure called Ream Secondary School⁷. It is difficult to find and seems somewhat ‘hidden’ as it was built post-apartheid in a community relocated by the apartheid government. The school is found towards the end of this peri-urban area. The learners and teachers at Ream Secondary School sometimes feel as if they have to take on the identity of “being forgotten”.

The current professional experiences of the participants involved in this study have occurred here at Ream Secondary School. The school caters for learners that reside in the townships of Remington Farm, Lettleani and Worthridge. These areas cater for a population that is pre-dominantly African, emerging from a poor socio-economic community. These learners who help shape our professional experiences have experienced many social challenges such as drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy and health-related diseases such as malnutrition and tuberculosis. These are the challenges that daily test and expand our teacher identities.

In addition, the composition of the staff at Ream Secondary School has altered the diversity of the staffroom. Currently teachers from another race group (African teachers) form a part of a staff that was previously pre-dominantly Indian (prior to 1994). Chapter two describes in more detail the arrival of African teachers in a staff that was previously dominated by Indian teachers.

Olwethu.

I maintain that learners must be empowered to cope with challenges that they are faced with. As a teacher who believes in the holistic development of the learner, I believe that I must balance academic instruction with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in order to provide the

⁷ To ensure confidentiality, the names of the participants, names of teachers, role models, peers, organisations, names of schools, towns, cities and provinces have occasionally been changed.

learners with an all-round development. Therefore, my identity helps me believe in the ‘whole person’ and not just the academic aspect of the learner. I describe the social debating society at Ream Secondary School that has increased dramatically over the years. Learners have made great strides socially interacting with learners from other schools. These learners have become more pro-active in participating in external competitions and have become more visible.

Kate.

It was a day like any other day and I arrived at school and waited for the day’s routine to begin. I knew that each day was going to be extremely hectic and busy. I have learnt from experience that an organised life is less stressful and more productive. Armed with the notices from the morning briefing, I strode towards my class. In Grade eleven A, were fifty impatient, restless learners who waited for me to give them the day’s notices. I continued to adhere to the mundane tasks of marking the register, announced the notices and completed the burdensome administrative duties that were assigned to me. This aspect of my identity ensured that I adhered to the prescriptive demands of my job.

I have learnt that I cannot become irritated and annoyed by additional administrative duties and have learnt to remain calm amidst these demands. My colleagues and I must comply and submit to the rules of the institution.

I have experienced the routine task of teaching, completing exercises and marking them. My obedience to higher authority demanded that I met the requirements set out for me. Lunch breaks are not really ‘breaks’ at all. I use this time to complete my marking, photocopying, planning Cass exercises, tests and examinations. I have learnt that using my time productively will save me added stress later on. An identity of being well-organised, well-planned and prepared indicates that part of the ‘teacher’ that describes me.

Ann.

In this socio-economically challenging school in which we teach, the learners have their own challenges of hunger and exhaustion. As motivated as the teachers may be by the end of the day to teach an exciting lesson, the reality is that these learners are hungry and tired. “Mam, we’re so tired and hungry. Why do you give us so much of work?” These are words often echoed by the students under our care. However, as a teacher who feels responsible and accountable for

teaching and learning, the task of education on many occasions takes priority over the physiological needs of the learners. Ann explains:

“As a teacher, I sometimes feel helpless and powerless to be able to help every single learner that experiences these hardships. However, my identity as a teacher being one of compassion and sympathy towards the learners spurs me on to assist the learner to whatever extent I can. Nevertheless, there are times when it is logistically impossible to reach out to each and every learner that undergoes such hardships. This is painful and hurtful to the teacher who wishes to offer her help.”

Colourful Characters (the learners and our colleagues)

Olwethu.

I enjoy teaching and teaching well. Sharing my experiences with learners and fellow staff members brings me much fulfilment. My teaching approach has been strongly formulated around a motto that she has learnt throughout her life experiences. I believe that as a teacher I must “not only teach, but reach”.

I make it my duty to reach out to the needs of the learners. For me, teaching is a calling. I believe that the mere delivery of information is not teaching. I believe that teaching involves awakening the potential that lies contained in each and every one of our learners. My identity as a teacher therefore is not only to teach but to shape the lives of children, like a ‘potter who moulds clay.’ Thus, I am rather concerned about the mandated policies of Outcomes Based Education. This system, I believe, requires teachers to become facilitators and encouraged learner-centeredness. I believe that teachers must be supportive of the learning of children. I feel that Outcomes Based Education allows for an additional amount of freedom and independence of learners for which some of them are not ready.

I try my best to be a friend and counsellor and to provide support to learners. I see my role and identity not only as a compliant transmitter and producer of knowledge and information, but also as a mentor, friend and confidant. I remember the story of how Promise and Zandile arrived at her class just as the bell sounded for lunch. Educators look forward to using this limited time to just unwind and recuperate from the classroom situation. I had to choose between taking this break or acceding to the request from these girls for some help. Having always been a supporter of the needs of the children, I decided to sacrifice some time of her break to assist in

whatever way possible. These girls had found themselves in the difficult situation of being pregnant and required some advice. “What’s done is done” I said. “We need to look at a way forward to address your issues. First, is to consult your parents and then visit the clinic. We needed to ensure the safety of your health and the health of your babies.” I have the reputation of being approachable and sympathetic to the needs of these learners. My experiences have taught me that tolerance, patience and forbearance is what is required of me by this generation of learners. I have taken on the identity of pastoral care-giver.

Kate.

I consider myself to be a strict disciplinarian. I expect learners to be well-mannered and respectful. Kate maintains a stringent, no nonsense attitude in the classroom. However, if a child is in trouble and needs help, she is willing to help and offer counselling and advice. I recount a variety of vignettes of the different times when I have offered a shoulder to cry on and a listening ear to many of the learners who have approached me with the challenges that face us on a daily basis. I recall how Handsome lost both his parents through ill-health. My compassionate and humane side allowed me to step in to see how I could assist Handsome and his family. My family and I visited Handsome and his family at their home with groceries and other products of support. Furthermore, I adopted Handsome for a year in which I took care of his educational needs. My charitable experiences have shaped me into this person with a benevolent identity. Daily, I make my way to the breakfast club that I have started at Ream Secondary School to ensure that children do not go hungry. My humanity and selfless sacrifice have contributed to my identity of being a compassionate and caring teacher.

I have a cordial relationship with many of my colleagues and peers: “I try to avoid confrontation and altercations with those with whom I work so that I do not experience many problems.” I have learnt how to compose myself even whilst working with colleagues who can be demanding and distressing. I have displayed maturity and taken on a non-confrontational identity in my relationships with her colleagues.

Ann.

“We really missed you, mam.” I find great joy in listening to the words of the learners with whom she admits she has a cordial, firm and friendly relationship. Experience has taught me that

respect breeds respect. I believe that interpersonal relations with the learners must be confined to a level where learners must not cross boundaries. I also feel that learners are not at a stage when they can make the decision to separate personal and professional identities and there is a danger that learners can mistake friendliness with leniency.

I maintain that that the hospitality, generosity and kindness that formed a key part of my mother's identity (see Chapter Three) have become part of my professional identity. I tell the story of how Sanele had his head on the desk and could not complete his worksheet. After enquiring what was wrong, I was told that he could not continue his work because he was hungry. This appealed to the humanitarian side of me and I gave him money to purchase something to eat from the tuck-shop. I believe that this aspect of my teacher identity stems from my upbringing of showing compassion, love and care.

My relationships with my colleagues are civil and mature. I feel that becoming too personal and close to those with whom you work is not healthy for a working relationship and that professional relationships must be maintained at school level. I have learnt that support, motivation and incentives are what teachers need to inspire them to continue with their hard work. I believe that this is a motivating factor to make teachers change, knowing full well that they will be acknowledged and affirmed. It is a goal that many teachers work towards. Communication is also a cornerstone of successful collaboration and networking. Teaching can be enriched not only by individual excellence but also by collective effort. In my experience of being in an acting management position, I have found that decisions thrust upon teachers cause them to become defensive, frustrated, irritated and to feel less valued. Dialogue is the key to running a successful school. My identity has sometimes taken on the role of negotiator and listener.

Powerful Plot (memorable moments and daily stories)

Olwethu.

“You know Olwethu, if it were not for your isiZulu results, our overall performance would be dismal”, said the school principal. I was ecstatic that as a teacher I made a positive contribution to maintaining the standards of the school. “When your learners do well, as a teacher, you feel a great sense of accomplishment. It is for this very reason that you feel the incentive to get up every morning and be the best teacher that you could be.” My passion for my subject and my

inner drive have become an integral part of her teacher identity. I have a passion for my subject, isiZulu, because it is my calling to provide learners with adequate instruction in their mother tongue.

Kate.

It is 6 January 2010 and I arrive at school anxiously awaiting the results of my first set of Grade 12 matriculants. I know that I have ‘put my shoulder to the wheel’ and worked tirelessly and industriously with these learners. “Well done, Kate”, were the words that poured out of the mouth of the principal. “You have achieved a one hundred percent pass rate with your learners in Life Sciences.” It was then that I knew that all my personal and professional experiences had gained me the identity of a productive and skilled teacher.

Having taught in a well-resourced ex-Model C school (see Chapter Three), I have acquired the necessary skills to explore the internet and other visual technology to make my Life Science lessons vibrant and interesting. I have gone the extra mile to allow learners whatever they require for good progress. Using the resources provided by the department, using the internet and collaborating with other schools is what I do in my pursuit for academic excellence. However, I am disappointed that no matter what I do, the majority of the learners under my care do not seem to have the inner drive to stimulate and challenge me in my subject. Academic challenges I face include using English as a medium of instruction with those learners whose home language is not English. I feel that there needs to be additional instruction in English so that these learners can cope with instruction in the other subjects. As a subject teacher, I also take on the identity of a less-challenged, under-utilised Life Sciences teacher who has so much more to offer the subject.

Ann.

I recall that it was a hot summer’s day and I was called to attend the cluster meeting of my subject at the Teacher’s Centre. I was reluctant to attend as I was nervously awaiting my learner’s results. The projector beamed the results of all the schools in the district to all present. I was pleased, my learners had done well. “Come up Ann and receive a letter of commendation for achieving the best results in the district.” This was all I needed as an incentive to motivate me to continue tirelessly being the best teacher that I could be. The drive to work so determinedly and

unstintingly hard with the learners has become a significant part of my professional identity of being a hard-working and consistent teacher.

My daily TO DO list helps me to be organised. My motto throughout my life has been “never leave until tomorrow what can be done today.” I have not encouraged myself to accumulate things to do. My belief is that organisation, planning and preparation are of utmost importance. My personal experiences in high school with disorganised teachers (see Chapter Three) have motivated me to always use the motto of being prepared. I know from experience that learners are the best judges of teachers who are unprepared.

I maintain that “teachers are governed by the clock”. Each class that meets with the teacher expects the teacher to deliver the best lesson of her life. “Our level of productivity in the hours that we spend at school far exceeds that of many commercial jobs. In comparison, “we cannot leave our classes to sip on a glass of water, visit the cloakrooms or make a phone call. The break is well-deserved after the time spent with the learners.” I have highlighted that, as enthusiastic as teachers may be, the same sort of enthusiasm does not always exude from the learners. I have to admit that frustration, anger and irritation sometimes set in when learners straggle, are late or abscond from lessons. However, I have learnt throughout my experiences to always be composed and never to allow my dissatisfaction to get the upper hand. Being a teacher is accompanied by many other challenges. “Disruptions throughout the day of notices, request, administrative queries and other matters that require our attention can be distracting and disturbing. As teachers, we have had to learn one of the greatest characteristics of a good teacher, that of patience.” Thus, I see patience as a core element in my teacher identity.

Changing Times (how our professional experiences have brought about and might bring about change, concentrating on our future expectations)

Olwethu.

I am of the opinion that schooling in South Africa stands at the threshold of tremendous changes and its role in the creation of a new nation that will be central to multi-cultural education. I feel that this holds much potential as a means by which a more just schooling dispensation can be implemented. As an individual who has experienced inferior education during apartheid, I have been able to adapt to the changing times of this decade. As a teacher at Ream Secondary School, I have been forced to adapt to her changing circumstances in a diverse staff of teachers. My

professional identity is thus also one of ongoing adaptation to her circumstances and my place of work.

Kate.

“I continued throughout my school journey believing that learning with children from just my own race group was ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable.’ When, we eventually came into contact with other race groups when I was in Grade twelve, I was not certain about how to react.” Thus, I reveal that, as a learner, I had led a very sheltered life and lacked some of life’s more diverse experiences. The exposure to different race groups began when I was posted to a teaching position in an ex-model C school in Gauteng (see Chapter Three). I explain that, at first, I was rather apprehensive and nervous about this experience. However, maturity, confidence and optimism allowed me to take my rightful place as a teacher in this institution. I was also confident about my subject matter. My identity therefore took on that of expert in her subject.

Being exposed to different cultures and different socio-economic backgrounds was an eye-opener for me. I discovered that children from different socio-economic backgrounds enjoy different standards and quality of life, yet many of them are similar despite these differences. They are similar in that many of the learners have the same common goals and dreams and different when it comes to parental support and economic stability.

When I compare this ex-model C school to my present school, I see a stark contrast to the quality of life and standard of living experienced by these children. I compare Peggy (16 years old) from the ex-Model C school where I taught who gets dropped off and picked up at school by her dad who drives an expensive motor vehicle. She has her own laptop, access to internet, goes to the gymnasium after school, plays a musical instrument and has complete parental support with her mother and father both on the school governing body. Peggy is financially secure and can afford most luxuries in life. In comparison, Purity (16 years old) at Ream Secondary School finds much difficulty with transport. She is forced to take two taxis to get to school, uses an electricity card at home and has the responsibility of taking care of her two siblings as both her parents are deceased. She also has the burden of balancing her academic life with running a household as well. I have displayed a tremendous amount of empathy towards Purity whom she knows has this ‘mountain’ full of daily challenges. I therefore have shown such

generosity as part of her teacher identity in running a breakfast club at school to reach out to learners like Purity who are so disadvantaged.

“This is my tenth year of teaching,” “I am now looking forward to fresh and new challenges.” I feel that I have exhausted all possibilities as a Level One teacher and make it clear that I have no intention of pursuing or advancing into a management position. I have currently taken on a teacher identity as a Level One teacher as one of contentment and satisfaction. I have examined my present situation to see what how much more I can progress. I intend pursuing my studies in Environmental education. I have become disillusioned that teaching now fails to command the respect and professional status that it once commanded from society.

Ann.

Growing up as an Indian learner in an Indian school was ‘normal’ for me. Rooksana, Kogie and Cheryl were my best friends at school. Mrs Chetty, Mr Patel and Miss Sheik were my teachers.

”Being exposed to learners and teachers of the same race group made us feel safe and secure. We did not know anything different. We were brought up accepting that we needed to live separate lives. We were separated according to where we lived, where we went to school, the beaches in which we swam, the busses on which we rode and the streets on which we walked.”

It is my opinion that children in the present climate are oblivious of the nature of the oppression of each other in terms of race and colour. I am pleased that as a teacher today, I have the opportunity of collaborating and co-operating with teachers of other race groups. “This provides us with such diversity and multi-faceted interaction that is fruitful and productive to the enhancement of our subject.” As a teacher, I have taken on the identity of collaboration and co-operation.

Having served for many years in an acting management position, I am not anxious about permanency. I seem to find more fulfilment advancing in my subject of History rather than at a school management level:

“It seems that when you are in a position of teaching for over twenty years, you become accustomed and used to the routine of things. There is no pressure, tension and anxiety over not being able to climb the ladder of school management.”

Thus, I take on the identity of fulfilment and contentment in my role as a History teacher.

Forces Emerging from These Professional Experience Narratives

The teacher narratives that are presented above are stories of teachers' professional experiences as a part of their evolving teacher identities. In this section of the chapter, the professional experiences of the participants are analysed in order to ascertain to how they have contributed to the participants evolving teaching identities. I identify "forces of influence" (Samuel, 2003, p. 270) that appear to be playing a significant role in the development of our evolving teacher identities. I consider these forces (as I have done in Chapter Three) within the narrative framework of *influential settings, colourful characters, powerful plot* and *changing times*. Under *influential settings*, I have identified the force of *the school as a place of complexity and contradictions*. For *colourful characters*, I have identified the forces of *relationships with learners and colleagues* and *emotions*. *Powerful plot* comprises the force of *our enthusiasm and zeal for the subjects that we teach* and *changing times* involves the force of *our desire and need to change*.

Influential Settings

The school as a place of complexity and contradictions.

The narratives above reveal the complexities and contradictions of our professional experiences in our particular school context. These experiences make teaching both enjoyable and fulfilling and frustrating and discouraging. As Graves (2001, p.1) explains, these shifting experiences of teachers form an "emotional roller coaster." The professional experience narratives reveal the complexities of our experiences in our school context and what we have learnt from them. Claxton (1989) also speaks of the professional experiences of teachers. He maintains that teachers have good days (positive) and not so good days (negative). By this, he means that there are days when things go well in the classroom with a great deal of work being accomplished and other days when teachers feel overwhelmed by the weight and burdensome load of administration.

We experience high levels of frustration, anger, irritation, disappointment and dissatisfaction with many aspects of our teaching context. These include frustration with the

disorganisation of management, disappointment at the lack of commitment of learners towards their work, anger at not being able to resource technology to enhance our work and irritation at the burdensome load of administration that we are daily faced with. Additional daily challenges facing us as teachers are those learners who return to school without work completed because they remain unsupervised. Late coming and absenteeism are also common at our school. Learners are also often talkative, restless and tired. Other problems of drugs and discipline are commonplace in our school context. We have learnt to change and adapt our professional identities to accommodate the learners that are affected by these circumstances.

However, we have found fulfilment when our hard work has been recognised. The success of the learners in their examinations too, can be attributed to our unstinting hard work of the participants. To see a learner excel academically and accomplish great things through participation in extra and co-curricular activities allows us to feel victorious and triumphant. In our quest for excellence, exposing the raw talent of learners at Ream Secondary School is a worthwhile achievement for both us and the learners, especially because the learners emerge from a poor socio-economic background. In addition to academic achievement, there is success in sport, cultural activities and participation in non-academic activities. This is the aspect of fulfilment that Olwethu maintains is crucial to her teacher identity, the holistic development of the learner.

Colourful Characters

Relationships with learners and colleagues.

Kelly (2006) highlights the significance of social interaction for the ongoing development of teacher identity. Our professional experience narratives reveal that we all feel that we have established cordial and healthy relationships with our learners. Kate's narrative highlights that her benevolent identity has drawn learners to her due to her compassion, kindness and willingness to be of help. Ann has learnt that respect breeds respect and this is part of her identity. She also has shown generosity in reaching out to the physiological needs of the learners. Olwethu has taken on the identity of counsellor and 'friend.' She says that learners feel comfortable approaching her for help with problems.

The narratives also show that we guard our relationships with our colleagues. We strive to maintain an open healthy relationship with those with whom we work. We all agree that professional interaction must be established so that relationships do not go beyond the boundaries of disrespect. Moffett (as cited in Robinson, 2003, p. 26) states that “schools with strong professional learning communities enable teachers to respond more successfully... and to sustain positive change.” Thus, we have found that collaborating with other teachers through a support network and communication and dialogue have proved helpful and fruitful, with the learners being the ultimate beneficiaries of this partnership. The identity of teachers therefore takes on that of collaborator, mediator, partner and team player.

Emotions.

Reio (2005) and Zembylas (2004) highlight the crucial role that emotions play in teachers’ experiences and the development of their identities. The narratives reveal that teacher’s emotions change depending on the participation and enthusiasm from learners themselves. Teachers show excitement and happiness when there is collaboration between learners and themselves and alternatively show frustration and anger when there is no response from learners. (Zembylas, 2004) states that teachers feel content and fulfilled when learners get excited about learning. The enthusiasm of learners indicates to the teachers that what they are doing is valuable, useful and meaningful. To illustrate, Ann mentioned that she is enthusiastic and energetic enough to teach a lesson by the end of the day, but the learners are too tired and hungry to partnership with her. This affects Ann’s emotional state when she knows that she cannot obtain the same enthusiasm from the learners. Nevertheless, Ann highlights that her cordial relationship with the learners brings her joy and her pride in the learners’ academic achievements keeps her motivated.

Powerful Plot

Our enthusiasm and zeal for the subjects that we teach.

Kelly (2006) states that teachers who consider themselves experts in their subjects possess a thorough and active knowledge in that field. The professional experience narratives reveal our passion for and expertise in our subjects. Olwethu is committed to providing learners with adequate instruction in their mother tongue. Kate uses technology (although limited technological resources are available at our school) in order to make her subject matter as interesting and stimulating as possible. Lam (2007) indicates the value of teachers continually modifying their teaching. In doing this, they may add, change, re-structure and emphasise skill development. In embracing and re-structuring change, teachers have taken on the identities of being ‘modifiers’ as they change their teaching methods’, and ‘innovators of new classroom experiences as they introduce new methods to the classroom .

The narratives also reveal the importance of extrinsic motivation, the need to be affirmed for the success in our subjects and the motivation that this gives to us as teachers to do better. Each of us has received recognition for the impressive results our learners have achieved in our subjects.

Ann and Olwethu are content to continue teaching their respective subjects of History and isiZulu. However, Kate’s story highlights how she feels that she is not as stimulated and challenged by the responses of her learners as she would like to be. Thus, she is keen to change her ‘subject identity’ by pursuing her studies in Environmental education.

Changing Times

Our desire and need to change.

Chapman (as cited in Robinson, 2003, p. 25) states that:

Change occurs most rapidly when people want to change, when they see some benefit in doing so...New reform programmes demand that teachers try new teaching behaviours, use different instructional materials, employ different testing procedures or submit themselves to different types of instructional supervision, all in response to problems that teachers may not see as existing.

Our narratives also reveal that we have overcome many professional challenges and changes that have allowed us to make informed decisions as teachers. Ann speaks of the challenging task of teaching a subject for which she had no passion. Kate nervously recalls teaching in an ex-Model

C school that forced her into a form of integration and Olwethu recalls how she has been forced to adapt to changing professional circumstances at Ream Secondary School.

Our influences and experiences as learners and teachers prior to democracy were restricted due to the fact that we were exposed to racial oppression and separation. We recalled that we were influenced by friends and teachers from our own race groups. Our interaction and influences were altered once South Africa became a democracy. We are all learning to adapt to working in a racially, linguistically and culturally diverse setting.

To identify an effective teacher, according to Reio (2005, p. 988) one must concentrate on areas such as “respect to subject matter, teaching methods, classroom management, effective relationships with administrators and parents, and the implementation of reform.” This study has identified the participants as those who keep abreast with their subject and alter their teaching methods, thus embracing change when it is necessary. For example, Kate explains her innovativeness in researching the internet when searching for new material to enhance her lessons.

Franzak (2002) maintains that we have a negotiated identity constructing and revising visions of one’s self. He states that “teacher” as part of our identity must continuously negotiate our professional identity in relation to our students, peers, the public and ourselves. The challenges that we have faced as teachers with additional administration, heavy teacher workloads and maintaining cordial relationships with our colleagues have helped us to do things differently. As teachers, we have learnt the importance of organisation when it comes to additional administration, time management when it comes to heavy teacher workloads and cordial relationships when it has to do with inter-personal relationships. Kelly (2006, p. 507) maintains that “Teacher identities are significant, and revealed in the stances teachers adopt in their working lives.” Our attitudes and response toward our current professional experiences teacher identity reveal us to be organised, mature, responsive individuals who have the ability to cope with the professional challenges and changes that beset us.

Conclusion

In Chapter Four, my participants and I have recalled present professional experiences and considered how these are influencing our evolving teacher identities. The chapter places emphasis on the stories prioritised by teachers and the significance of these stories to teacher identities. Within the narrative framework I have constructed, I have identified a number of forces that have contributed to our evolving teacher identities in the South African context. *Influential settings* highlights the challenges and successes experienced in the classroom, the diversity of the school and the complexity of the conditions of the community. The *colourful characters* reveal the importance of relationships among learners and staff members at Ream Secondary school and the significance of emotions our lives and work as teachers. The *powerful plot* excites us and discourages us as we narrate our moments of success in teaching our subjects and acknowledge problem areas that we are daily faced with. Finally, in *changing times*, we speak of how we have embraced change and are prepared to face the change that will still occur. This chapter helps to dispel the myth that teachers are just ordinary workers. Instead, it shows that they are those with identities that are more than ordinary. They are indeed extraordinary human beings.

In Chapter Five, I bring this dissertation to a close with a reflective review of the dissertation. I also consider what I have learnt through this study about the relationship between teacher experiences and our evolving teacher identities and look at possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION: EVOLVED AND EVOLVING IDENTITIES

Introduction

This narrative inquiry has responded to the assertion made by Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) that the lives of teachers are often dismissed and demeaned. Throughout this study, I have attempted to give meaning to our lived experiences as teachers by reflecting on how these have shaped our evolving teacher identities. In doing so, I have found that our lives as teachers are indeed worth telling.

In this final chapter, Chapter Five, I conclude this dissertation by offering a reflective review of the dissertation and considering what I have learnt through this study about the relationship between teacher experiences and our evolving teacher identities. I have included how the study has adequately addressed the research questions and the findings thereof. The first key research question that I addressed in this dissertation is: *How might teachers' past personal and professional experiences have shaped their evolving teacher identities?*

The second key research question that I addressed is: *How might teachers' current professional experiences be affecting their evolving teacher identities? (How have these experiences brought about or might they bring about change?).* Chapter Five also includes possibilities for future research that could build on this study.

A Review of the Dissertation

In Chapter One, I set in motion the narrative from which my study originated. This narrative motivated me to gain insight into teacher identities at Ream Secondary School. In order to do this, I have studied the personal and professional lives of three participants (including myself) at this school in order to see how our lived experiences might have shaped our teacher identities. The study has revealed that the sound educational practices of my participants have been established through our positive teacher identities shaped by our diverse personal and professional experiences.

The narrative inquiry process that I have elaborated on in Chapter Two has brought meaning to the past and present personal and professional experiences of my participants that

have shaped their positive teacher identities. The data production techniques that I have used have been fruitful and productive in helping me obtain the information needed to tell the multifaceted stories of the participants. The selection of data for my analysis was carefully thought out, weighing the similarities and differences of the experiences of my participants in order to create a balance of their stories. The limitations, issues of trustworthiness and ethics have been well adhered to so as it make this study authentic. The narrative inquiry methodology afforded me the opportunity to sit down with my own colleagues in a non-threatening atmosphere, and thus helped me to understand that teachers are unique human beings who are not ‘machines’ ready to regurgitate content, but are real people who experience pain, hurt, love and success. Working with Kate and Olwethu at Ream Secondary School has given me renewed respect for these teachers who are not only producers of knowledge but are individuals who have journeyed a long way to reach the destiny that they have found themselves in. What a cathartic and therapeutic voyage we have experienced in telling our stories. It has helped us heal and mend our lives. I hope that other teachers may be inspired by us to also tell their stories so that the world may know that the *experiences of teachers are worth telling so that we can better understand who teachers are.*

The data representation and analysis process in Chapters Three and Four addressed my first and second research questions of, firstly, how teacher’s past personal and professional experiences have shaped their evolving teacher identities and, secondly, how teacher’s current professional experiences are shaping their evolving teacher identities. Chapter Three revealed that through the practical experiences and the values that have been attained as the participants were growing up, our teacher identities have been shaped and reshaped. This is in keeping with what Cross (1999) has to say about our identities changing and not always remaining the same. Our identities are always being shaped with every new experience that we encounter both personally and professionally. Chapter Three highlights how our identities have been shaped by significant lived experiences. I identified a number of forces as having the potential to play a significant role in the development of evolving teacher identities in the South African context: *access to educational resources, socio-economic circumstances, community, family legacies, teacher legacies, political oppression, academic success and struggles and career choice.* This chapter reveals that struggles are part of a process of growth and development and choices in life are crucial to leading a rewarding existence. Therefore, the first key research question has

adequately addressed how the personal and professional experiences of teachers have shaped our identities. In our personal lives, we have screened our lives growing up, our relationships with our families, the ways in which our attitudes, values and personalities have been shaped by our families and the environment in which we grew up. In addition, we have delved into our relationships with our communities and their impact on our lives. Economically, our lives have also been shaped by rands and cents as we could only afford the education that lent itself to the availability of finance. We discussed our educational experiences as learners, students and teachers. Professionally, we were able to emphasize the highlights and challenges of our teaching careers, our turning points and our future expectations.

Chapter Four explored the current professional experiences of the participants. In Chapter Four, the participants were very 'real' when we spoke about our challenging professional experiences that have allowed us to take on humane roles of counsellors and providers. We were able to reflect on our daily lives as teachers, the challenges we face, the fulfilling experiences in the classroom, the ability to examine, inform and advance our practices, relate our experiences to the context of the classroom and describe our interpersonal relationships with both learners and teachers. Chapter Four also revealed that the participants have identities that reflect that we are generous, patient and tolerant, but that we also experience many frustrations in our professional lives. Our experiences have revealed that as teachers we are compliant and obedient when necessary. However, we have also embraced change by becoming more resourceful, innovative, inventive and creative.

What I have learnt about the Relationship Between Teacher Experiences and our Evolving Teacher Identities

Through this study I have learnt that it is not enough for teachers to just be disseminators of knowledge, producers of knowledge and facilitators of content in the classroom. Teachers need to be able to keep abreast with continuing educational changes that stem out of the twenty-first century in order for South Africa to make progress and compete with the rest of the world in all spheres of life. Therefore, I would argue that all teachers need to examine the experiences that they have had in order to understand why they take on and project the identities that they do and how these identities might evolve and change in response to new situations and challenges. The beneficiaries of this activity would be the learners who would profit from a teacher who has

a deeper level of self-understanding. Teachers must reflect, remember, recall and retell their stories of their lived experiences as they are the individuals who shape the next generation and in so doing shape the future.

In this study, we as teachers have recollected our biographies and our experiences as professionals in order to ascertain how our teacher identities have evolved or will continue to evolve. All the participants had to sacrifice some time to carefully think about who we are, how we came to be and who we might become. We were able to trace the steps of our personal and professional lives to explore by whom, what, where, how and why we were influenced to take on certain aspects of our identity

When I look back at this study and reflect on the journeys taken by just three teachers at Ream Secondary School and how diverse they really are, it forces me to think about the other teachers at Ream Secondary School and how colourful and diverse their lives and experiences must be. Our influential settings in Chapter Three have connected our experiences of living in different areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal as mandated by the National Party in the apartheid era to our evolving teacher identities. Thus, our experiences of living in these ‘average and below average income’ communities have shaped our identities of perseverance, determination and human rights. The colourful characters with whom our lives have been enmeshed have contributed to the experiences that have shaped our identities. There is a saying, ‘show me your friends and I will show you your future.’ Our families and friends have contributed in many ways to shaping our identities of commitment, religious tolerance, generosity and dedication. The story of our lives as revealed in the powerful plot has shaped our identities and our destinies. The choices we have made and the decisions that we have taken have contributed to where we are today. Hardships experienced through political oppression have made us more appreciative of what we have achieved today and more determined to ensure that the next generation receives the best tuition and care.

In reflecting on our classrooms, the school and the community, we have embraced the experiences that we have that have allowed us to become teachers who are responsible as Olwethu has said for the “holistic development of the learners.” Our experiences at the school have encouraged our identities of benevolence, generosity, and humanity. Circumstances have encouraged us to become counsellors, pastoral caregivers, mentors and confidants. The narratives that are related in Chapter Four help us beam with confidence knowing full well that

our experiences as professionals have helped us taken on the identities as experts of our subjects, skilled professionals, successful individuals and, in our daily routines, extraordinary workers. Our emotional make-up has also become an integral part of our teacher identity, highlighting our attitudes. Chapter Four highlights that teachers' emotions are often affected by the attitude of the learners and the level of confidence with their subject matter.

I have learnt from this study that teachers often do not feel worthy enough to tell their stories. This is probably due to the fact that teachers have been stigmatised and stereotyped by society as being unworthy to be called professionals. As mentioned in this study, the participants reflected that teaching used to be considered a noble profession, but teaching is not considered noble any more.

The most important and significant force that has influenced our teacher identity is the role of family legacies. The influence of family, both the mother and the father, has carved out our foundation on which we have based our values through our experiences. It is disappointing and unacceptable that insufficient gratitude is bestowed upon teachers who make tremendous sacrifices to shape the next generation. Every single person in society, including you, the reader, has had your life shaped by a teacher. Not enough credit, praise, recognition and acknowledgement is given to the teacher who has the crucial responsibility of shaping a human life. Teachers are taken for granted and what they do is most often forgotten.

How Could Further Research Build on this Study?

Boggs and Golden (2009) call attention to the significant role of family in the early experiences of teachers. Parents and guardians play a crucial role in shaping the character and lives of all those in their care. The study emphasises how members of our families were instrumental in shaping our identities. To illustrate, the motivation for reading for Kate came from her uncles and the motivation to become a teacher for both Ann and Olwethu came from their aunts and uncles. It would be very interesting if further research could be undertaken in South Africa to explore the roles played by the mother and the father or guardians and extended family in the development of teacher identity. It would be fascinating to find out more about how families influence the development of teacher identities, including the choice of career, academic achievements, motivation to succeed and interpersonal relationships.

My Personal Response to the Study

In this study, Kate, Ann and Olwethu have been vividly transparent in recalling our past personal and professional experiences as well as our current professional experiences in helping to explore how our identities have evolved. It is evident from this study that all three participants have been transformed and changed through our experiences into individuals of maturity, individuals with expertise, individuals who show compassion, generosity, empathy and care and individuals who now feel confident as teachers. For the participants in this study, teaching is not just a job, it is an opportunity to mould and shape the lives of the next generation for which we feel honoured. I have learnt that there are reasons for human behaviour depending on what experiences people have gone through and are going through.

Conclusion

This narrative inquiry study has helped me as a researcher-participant to understand that as teachers we are not alone in our struggles and triumphs. The other two participants have helped me understand that we have not just arrived at where we are today, but we have undertaken a journey through our personal and professional experiences to evolve into who we have become. Our journeys have been interspersed by a variety of experiences that have moulded us into the teachers we have become and are still becoming. It gives us renewed hope that as we continue on our journeys we will continue to evolve through our experiences and learn to develop new strategies, techniques and understandings that can make us better teachers.

The experience of writing the narrative experiences of all participants has taken me into the lives of my participants. I have had the honour and privilege of understanding the influences and experiences of the participants and how it has affected who we really are. It has given me the opportunity to understand who a teacher really is. Therefore, I have learnt that it is important and imperative that individuals do not make assumptions or become too judgemental of other individuals (teachers) and their practices without being able to understand their personal and professional journeys.

REFERENCES

- Allender, J. , & Allender, D. (2006). How did our early education determine who we are as teachers? In L.M.Fitzgerald, M.L.Heston & D.L.Tidwell (Eds), *Collaboration and community: Pushing boundaries through self-study. Proceedings of the sixth international conference on self-study of teacher education practices, Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England, July 30 – August 3* (pp. 14-17). Cedar Falls, IA: University of Northern Iowa.
- Allender, J. S., & Manke, M. P. (2004). Evoking self in self-study: The analysis of artifacts. In D. L. Tidwell, L. M. Fitzgerald & M. L. Heston (Eds.), *Journeys of hope: Risking self-study in a diverse world. Proceedings of the fifth international conference on self-study of teacher education practices*, Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England, June 27 - July 1 (pp. 20-23). Cedar Falls, IA: University of Northern Iowa.
- Bak, N. (2004). *Completing your thesis, a practical guide* . Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Bertram, C. (2003). *Understanding Research: An introduction to reading research*.(2nd ed.) Scottsville: School of Education Training and Development.
- Blignaut, S. (2000). *Statistics on Education in South Africa (1968-1979)*. SA Institute of Race Relations: Johannesburg.
- Boggs, M., & Golden, F. (2009). Insights: Literacy memories of pre-service teachers self-reported categories of impact. *The Reading Matrix*, 9(2), 211-223.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2008). Collage as inquiry. In J.G.Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research* (pp. 265- 276). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Carrim, N. (2003). Teacher identity: Tensions between roles. In K. Lewin, M. Samuel & Y. Sayed (Eds.), *Changing patterns of teacher education in South Africa: policy, practice and prospects* (pp. 306-322). Sandown: Heinemann.
- Cave, R.G. & O'Malley, R. (1967). *Education for personal responsibility*. England: Northumberland Press Limited.
- Chiu-Ching, R.T., & Chan, Y.m.E. (2009). Teaching and learning through narrative inquiry. In D. Tidwell, M. Heston & L. Fitzgerald (Eds). *Research methods for the self-study of practice* (pp.17-33). New York: Springer.
- Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27(1), 44-54.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Claxton, G. (1989). *Being a teacher: a positive approach to change and stress*. Great Britain: Biddles Ltd.
- Cohen, L.; Manion, L.; Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. (6th ed.) Great Britain: MPG Books Ltd.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.]
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. *Choosing among five traditions*. California: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Cross, M. (1999). *Imagery of Identity in South Education (1880 – 1990)*. Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.

Denzin N.K. & Lincoln Y.S. (2008). *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. California: SAGE Publications Inc.

Department of Education. (1997). *Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the 21st century*. Pretoria: Government Press.

Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Dewey, J. (1963). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier Books. (Original work published 1938).

Franzak, J.K. (2002) Developing a teacher identity: The impact of Critical friends practice on student teacher. *Journal of English Education*, 34 (4), 258 - 280.

Fraser,C.; Kennedy, A.; Reid, L. & Mckinney (2007). Teachers' continuing professional development: contested concepts, understandings and models. *Journal of In-service Education*, 33 (2), 153-1

Goodson, I.F. (1992). *Studying Teachers' Lives* .Great Britain: Biddles Ltd.

Graves, D.H. (2001). *The Energy to Teach*. Portsmouth: Reed Elsevier Inc.

Hamilton, Mary Lynn, Smith, Laura & Worthington, Kristen. (2008). 'Fitting the methodology with the Research: An exploration of narrative, self-study and ethnography,' *Studying Teacher Education*, 4 (1), 17-28.

Henning, E. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. (6th ed.) Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

- Kang, N.H.; Orgill, M.& Crippen, K.J. (2007). Understanding Teachers' Conceptions of Classroom Inquiry with a Teaching Scenario Survey Instrument. *Journal of Science Education, 19*, 337-354.
- Kelly, P. (2006). What is teacher learning? A socio-cultural perspective. *Oxford Review of Education, 32*(4), 505-519.
- Khau, M. (2009). Journeys into the hidden self: Reflections on a collaborative inquiry into women teachers' memories of adolescent sexuality. In K. Pithouse, C. Mitchell & R. Moletsane (Eds.), *Making connections: Self-study & social action* (pp. 59-75). New York: Peter Lang.
- Kunene, A. (2009). Learner- centeredness in practice: Reflections from a curriculum education specialist. In K..Pithouse, C.Mitchell & R.Moletsane (Eds), *Making connections: Self-study and social action* (pp.139-152). New York : Peter Lang.
- Lam, C. (2007). The compliance tradition and teachers' instructional decision- making in a centralised education system: A case study of junior secondary geography teaching in Changchun, China. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education, 16* (3), 233-249.
- Lyons, N. & LaBoskey, V.K. (2002). Narrative inquiry in Practice, *Advancing the knowledge of teaching*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. (2006). *Designing Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). California: SAGE Publications Inc.

Masinga, L. (2009). An African teachers' journey to self-knowledge through teaching sexuality education. In K. Pithouse, C. Mitchell & R. Moletsane (Eds). *Making connections: Self-study and social action* (pp.237-252). New York: Peter Lang.

Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education. 2005. *A National Framework for Teacher Education in South Africa. Report by the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education*. Pretoria: Department of Education. 24. Nieto, S. (2003). Teaching as Intellectual Work. In S. Nieto, *What Keeps Teachers Going?* (pp. 76-77). New York: Teachers College Press.

Mishler, E.G. (1990). Validation in Inquiry-Guided Research : The Role of Exemplars in Narrative Studies. *Harvard Educational Review*, 4, 415.

Moletsane, R. (2003). Teacher identity and the need for curriculum re-conceptualisation in South African teacher education. In K. Lewin, M. Samuel & Y. Sayed (Eds.), *Changing patterns of teacher education in South Africa: policy, practice and prospects* (pp. 323-326). Sandown: Heinemann.

Moletsane, R. (2004). Gender equality and teacher education in South Africa: A review of the history. Retrieved 28 February, 2005, from <<http://k1.ioe.ac.uk/schools/efps/GenderEducDev/Lebo%20Moletsane%20paper.pdf>>

Moon, J.A. (2006). *Learning Journals: A Handbook for Reflective Practice and Professional Development*. Great Britain: Cromwell Press.

Norris, G.; Mbokazi, T.; Rorke, F.; Goba, S. & Mitchell, C. (2007). Where do we start? Using collage to explore very young adolescents' knowledge about HIV and AIDS in four senior primary classrooms in KwaZulu- Natal. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 11 (4), 481-499.

- Perumal, J. (2007). *Identity, Diversity and Teaching for Social Justice*. Bern: International Academic Publishers.25.
- Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. London: Penguin Books .
- Pithouse, K. (2007). *Learning through teaching: A narrative self-study of a novice teacher educator*. PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.
- Putnam R.T. & Borko, H. (2000). What do New Views of Knowledge and Thinking have to say about Research on Teacher Learning? *Educational Researcher*, 29 (1), 4-15.
- Raht, D., Smith, J., & MacEntee, K. (2009). *Engaging youth in addressing HIV & AIDS: Creative and participatory methods in the classroom*. In C.Mitchell & K.Pithouse (Eds), *Teaching and HIV & AIDS* (PP.219-236). Johannesburg: MacMillan South Africa.
- Reio, T. G. J. (2005). Emotions as a lens to explore teacher identity and change: A commentary. *Teaching and Teacher Education, In Press 11 July*.
- Samuel, M. (2003). Autobiographical research in teacher education: Memories as method and model. In K. Lewin, M. Samuel & Y. Sayed (Eds.), *Changing patterns of teacher education in South Africa: policy, practice and prospects* (pp. 253-272). Sandown: Heinemann.
- Samuel & Y. Sayed (Eds.), *Changing patterns of teacher education in South Africa: policy, practice and prospects* (pp. 284-305). Sandown: Heinemann.
- Samuel, M. (2008). Teacher Identity and the Force Field Model of Teacher Development. *Perspectives in Education*, 26 (2), 5 – 11.
- Samuel, M. (2009). *Context and Identity: Shaping Educational Reform*. Paper presented at the Conference: Education for Democracy and Sustainability held in small island states and countries in the Indian Ocean, on the 16 – 17 April, 2009.

- Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*. London: Penguin Books.
- Shulman, L.S. (1997). Professional Development from Experience. In *Common Schools, uncommon futures. A working consensus for school renewal*. New York: College Press.
- Steyn, M.; Badenhorst J. ;& Kamper, G. (2010). Our voice counts: adolescents' view on their future in South Africa: *South African Journal of Education*, 30 (2), 1-12.
- Woods, P. & Hammersley, M. (1977). *School Experience*, London: Croom Helm.
- Zeichner, K.M. & Liston, D.P. (1996). *Reflective Teaching An Introduction*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. Publishers.
- Zembylas, M. (2004). The emotional characteristics of teaching: An ethnographic study of one teacher. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(2), 185-201.

APPENDIX A

M.Ed Research-INTERVIEW SCHEDULE-UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW TOPICS

TOPIC: Exploring the relationship between teachers' experiences and evolving teacher identities in post-apartheid South Africa: A Narrative Inquiry.

Meeting with Teacher X for an hour to explore the biographical details of participant (past, present and current) exploring how their biography might have influenced her/his evolving teacher identity.

Meeting with Teacher Y for an hour to explore the biographical details of participant (past, present and current) exploring how their biography might have influenced her/his evolving teacher identity.

Providing own responses in exploring my own biographical details as a participant-researcher showing how it has influenced my evolving teacher identity.(Teacher Z)

TOPICS:

FAMILY-YOUR IDENTITY-EXPLORING HOW IT MIGHT RELATE TO YOUR TEACHER IDENTITY

THE REASON/S FOR YOUR BEING-

YOUR POSITION IN YOUR FAMILY AND HOW IT MIGHT HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR CHOICE TO BECOME A TEACHER-INFLUENCE OF OTHERS- SIBLINGS, RELATIVES, FRIENDS,ROLE MODELSYOUR EARLY DAYS

ATTITUDES, PERSONALITY,VALUES LEARNT THROUGH FAMILY LIFE- CARRIED THROUGH TO TEACHING

Passion, transmitter of knowledge, information, developer of relationships, humane, honestly, enthusiastic, zealousness, dominating, positive, striving for self-actualization,individuality

LOCATION/ENVIRONMENT/SURROUNDINGS

POLITICAL,SOCIAL,RACIAL,CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS ON EDUCATION-

SCHOOLING-EDUCATIVE AND MIS-EDUCATIVE EXPERIENCES IN

SCHOOL(positive and negative learning experiences that have influenced you as a teacher).

UNIVERSITY AND WORK-

CHOICE OF TEACHING AS A CAREER AS OPPOSED TO OTHER ALTERNATIVES.-
EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHING-PURPOSE AND MEANING IN LIFE, CONNECTING
AND LINKING TO THE WORLD THROUGH LEARNING, SPIRITUAL VALUES,
COMPASSION AND PEACE.

JOYS AND TRIALS

TURNING POINT

FURTHER EDUCATION

APPENDIX C
INFORMATION SHEET-PARTICIPANT
M.Ed

Exploring the relationship between teachers' experiences and evolving teacher identities in post-apartheid South Africa: A narrative inquiry.

23 Clegdale Gardens
Newlands West
4037
12 April 2010

The Participant-
Ream Secondary School
Durban
4001

Dear fellow educator

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between teachers' experiences and evolving teacher identities in post-apartheid South Africa. This study is supervised by Dr Kathleen-Pithouse Morgan who is a lecturer at the School of Education and Development, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Dr Pithouse-Morgan can be contacted telephonically at 031-2603460.

I am a M.Ed student at UKZN, and this research forms part of my Master of Education (M.Ed) study. The findings of study will be used in my M.Ed dissertation and any related publications and presentations. The data production techniques that I will use are: Journal entries, individual unstructured open-ended interviews, collage, document retrieval, a focus group discussion, an open-ended questionnaire.

Please take note of the following:-

1. I will record your views in writing and would also like to tape record the interviews and group discussion.
2. The unstructured individual interview, the collage presentation and the focus group discussion will last approximately two hours each.
3. These will take place at the school during your non-teaching time or outside of the school at convenient venues that we can agree upon.
4. The data and information will remain anonymous, that is, it will not be possible for the data to be linked to your name. I will use pseudonyms for the participants and the school where the research is being conducted. All the responses retrieved will be treated in a confidential manner.
5. It is very unlikely that you will be distressed through any of the discussions. However, if you feel a need to deal in more detail with any stressful situations, I will ensure that you are given information about an appropriate counselling service.
5. I request permission for you to take part in my research. I would appreciate it if you could take some time consider my request and then complete and sign the attached form.
6. If you have any questions regarding the research, please feel free to discuss this with me or my supervisor.

7. You will not be disadvantaged if you choose not to participate or if you choose to leave/ withdraw from the study at any stage. Participation is voluntary. I value your support.

8. I am ready and willing to provide you with any information that you may require. If you have any questions relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587. Yours sincerely

Mrs Beverley Ann Varathaiah
Phone:031-5782111
Cell:0837973350

INFORMED CONSENT SHEET – PARTICIPANT

I, _____-(full name of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study, and do consent to participate in the study .

I understand that I am free to leave/withdraw from the study at any time if I want to without any negative or undesirable consequences to myself.

Please indicate which techniques and procedures you are prepared to consent to:

	YES	NO
a. Journal entries-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Individual unstructured interviews-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Collage-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Document retrieval-----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Focus group discussion -----	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Open-ended questionnaire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

DATE

APPENDIX C
REQUEST FOR PERMISSION-PRINCIPAL

M.Ed :Exploring the relationship between teachers' experiences and evolving teacher identities
in post-apartheid South Africa: A narrative inquiry.

23 Clegdale Gardens
Newlands West
4037
12 April 2010

The Principal-
Ream Secondary School
Durban
4001

Dear Madam or Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between teachers' experiences and evolving teacher identities in post-apartheid South Africa. This study is supervised by Dr Kathleen-Pithouse Morgan who is a lecturer at the School of Education and Development, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Dr Pithouse-Morgan can be contacted telephonically at 031-2603460. If you have any questions relating to the ethical aspects of this research, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587.

I am a M.Ed student at UKZN, and this research forms part of my Master of Education (M.Ed) study. I would like to conduct interviews with educators from your school which should last between 45 minutes to an hour. My interviews will be conducted outside of teaching hours. I will record their views in writing and would also like to tape record the interviews. In addition, respondents will keep journals, participate in the drawing up and discussion of a collage, document retrieval and a focus group discussion. The data will remain anonymous. I will use pseudonyms for the participants and the school where the research is being conducted. All the responses retrieved will be treated in a confidential manner. The findings of the data will be used in my M.Ed dissertation and any related publications and presentations.

Please find attached my research proposal and ethical clearance approval from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

I value your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Beverley Ann Varathaiah

Phone:031-5782111

Cell:0837973350

INFORMED CONSENT SHEET-PRINCIPAL

I, _____-(full name
) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study, and
do hereby grant permission for the study to be conducted.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

DATE

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

DATE

APPENDIX D:

MY COLLAGE: AS I JOURNEY

APPENDIX E:
KATE'S CERTIFICATES AND A REPORT-MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCES