

Narratives of motivation to learn and barriers to formal
opportunities of female general assistants at a Durban school.

Submitted by : Jeanette du Preez

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Supervisor: Anne Harley

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I declare that this dissertation represents my own original efforts and that I have not plagiarised the work of anyone else in completing this research.

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Abstract

This interpretivist study looked at what acted as barriers and what motivated a group of five African women, aged about 30 working at a Durban school, to take up formal learning experiences. Qualitative data, through the use of semi-structured interviews, on a one-to-one basis was collected. This involved eliciting each woman's account of her educational and work experience, as a learner and a worker. Themes like unemployment of one or both parents; limitations imposed by the patriarchal culture they come from; gender issues like not valuing educating girls and the diverse role which women play in the lives of a family; domestic violence and abuse; adolescent pregnancy; previous learning experiences; financial limitations perpetuated in adult life because of the inability to access jobs which allow for the "luxury" of pursuing educational courses and supporting extended family who live in the rural areas of Kwazulu-Natal or the Transkei surfaced.

These themes were evaluated against the tenets of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Knowles's theory of what comprises ideal adult learning situations; whether Mezirow's suggestion that learning will be precipitated by rethinking the ways

people behave; and Tajfels' theory on personal and social identity. Using the perspectives of feminist writers like hooks, Hill Collins, and Magwaza this study looked at the role that culture, class and gender has played in the lives of these participants.

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CHAPTER 1

Focus and Purpose of study

I have been an educator at a particular Durban school for about 15 years. This school turns out approximately 180 matriculants every year. These adolescents go out into the world to embrace other learning opportunities yet, sadly, very little “educational” interest is paid to the general assistants who work at the school.

This school has about 50 adults who are employed as general assistants. They perform tasks to improve the quality of the lives of both the learners and educators. During the late 1990s two secretaries, with the support of the then Head Master and the local Rotary Club, ran ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) classes at the school on two afternoons per week. When there was a change over of Headmasters support for the classes dissipated and the classes were abandoned. Since then at least three of the general assistants appear to have engaged in furthering their education or acquiring/upgrading their skills.

In this study I interviewed five African female general assistants, who are about 30 year of age. Some of the tasks these women perform are checking the contents of the laundry bags before they are taken to the laundry and upon return, minor mending of the boarders’ school clothes, preparing venues for functions, preparing and serving food in the coffee shop and controlling the entry and exit of people on the campus.

I particularly wanted to study this group of women because of the historical marginalisation of women, particularly African women in South Africa. Prior to democracy, African women would have been exposed to inferior quality schooling, limited access to higher education if they matriculated, and lack of choices in selecting employment should they not have matriculated, and lower remuneration than men for their labour without any recourse to address this discrimination. These women would have been teenagers when South Africa became a democracy. The participants did not seem to have benefitted from the educational

opportunities which have been put in place in South Africa post 1994. Some of these opportunities as reported by Baatjes (n.d) are:

- The National Education Policy Act (1996) which supports the principles of people's rights to (basic) education, be this at school or another educational institution without discrimination
- The Department of Labour's Social Plan (1997) for the purpose of creating employment by offering skills development, vocational training, career services and learnerships. New policies put into place after 1994 were aimed at fixing the inequalities associated with apartheid policies
- The Urban Development Framework of 1997 as cited by Bekker and Leildé (2005) was a specific commitment to implement programmes of development in urban settlement areas. This was in the hopes that people would be able to make residential and employment choices to follow their ideals
- The Employment Equity Act (1998) which focusses on correcting the imbalances of the past with respect to access to employment training, and equitable remuneration - especially for African women
- The Skills Development Act (1998), an initiative to radically change workplace learning
- The Skills Development Levies Act (1999) which makes provision for the funding of education and training
- The Whole School Development: White Paper 6 (2001) which specifically makes provision for educational opportunities for those who experienced barriers to learning, development and participation, both within and outside the formal education system.

According to Chrisholm and Unterhalter (1999) another attempt to redress the inequities of the past by the first democratically elected government was a commitment to establishing the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) as part of the Department of Education to advise on gender imbalances in enrolment, dropout rates, subject choices, career paths and performance. This resulted in the formal elimination of admissions policies which discriminated on the basis of race, and the lifting of barriers like fees. It was hoped that this would ensure that girls and women would gain access to education.

It appears that the changes in legislation to skills acquisition and workplace learning have not benefitted the participants as adult women. They neither know of these opportunities nor have they been exposed to opportunities to acquire skills and or to upgrade their positions. Despite attempts in legislation and by policymakers trying to make education gender blind, discrimination still exists, according to Samson (1999).

In this research I have focussed on why, despite helpful and encouraging legislation and policies, the selected group of participants did not appear to have accessed skills training through the workplace, or benefitted from lack of job reservation or embraced any other type of learning/education/training. The purpose of this study was to also ascertain which barriers existed (and still exist) for these participants and what would motivate these women to access further education and or skills upgrades.

This study looked at five women who are employed as general assistants at a school in Durban in the light of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Mezirow's theory of transformation. Do adults really access formal learning experiences as a result of a "disorienting dilemma" as Mezirow (1991) has suggested. Is it as Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs suggests that learning will occur as a result of growth or deficiency needs? Does the desire for self-esteem and an attempt to acquire self-actualisation, in this case acquiring further education/learning/training, influence people once their basic human needs have been met?

Are Eschenmann (2006) and Tight (1999) correct about the myths which exist of adults as learners i.e. adults only embark on further learning experiences when they have no other options? Is Knowles (1975) correct when he says adults learn best when their learning is self-directed and their past experiences are valuable in any learning event and should be included as part of the learning process?

What role do theories of adults' motivation to learn have play in the South African context? Does social identity theory as put forward by Tajfel, cited in Turner (1982), or as advanced by Bekker, Dodds and Khosa (2001) influence on people's motivation to study further? Are people happy to remain within the perimeters of a particular social group's expectations of them (as women) or is there an urge to go beyond this? If so, what will foster or kick start this urge, if anything?

The key questions of this research are:

What motivates the women in this study to take up formal learning?

What barriers do working African women face in accessing formal educational opportunities?

Did these barriers result from their initial schooling or from (an)other source(s)?

The way forward

In chapter two I review literature on theories of motivation – specifically intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Maslow (1970) and Alderer's (as cited in Robbins, 1998), hierarchy of needs are discussed. I look at literature on what motivates adults to learn, focusing on Knowles (1975) and Mezirow (1991). The myths which exist about adults as learners will also be reviewed. Lastly I identify general barriers to learning which exist for adults and especially for women.

In chapter three I discuss the reseach design and methodology. This is a qualitative study which used semi-structured interviews to collect data to access narratives.

The participants' stories appear in chapter four.

In chapter five the findings of this study have been divided into dispositional, situational and institutional categories as suggested in the writings of Ahl (2006) and Indabawa and Mpofu (2006).

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

In this chapter I will discuss some of the literature available on what motivation is generally viewed to be, what theorists have to say about the adult as a learner and which barriers exist especially for women, to accessing further education and training.

Barriers to learning

Motivation

Robbins (1998) has pointed out that the majority of people have the erroneous view that motivation is a characteristic of a person - a kind of either you have it or you don't scenario. He provides the following definition of motivation: "a willingness to exert high levels of effort....to satisfy some individual need" (1998, p.168).

Motivation, according to Siebert, (cited in Ahl, 2006) is hypothetical, which explains why so many theories abound. I have selected only a few theories of motivation in this study. Freud, in his studies, looked specifically at neurotic people to try and explain human behaviour. Pavlov, in contrast, looked at the behaviour of dogs in an attempt to explain human behaviour. Pavlov was a behaviourist and of the school of thought that if adults are given the right stimuli or reward for their behaviour then they can and will automatically learn new ways of behaving. Maslow (1970), a humanist, looked more specifically at ordinary people, like his colleagues, to explain what makes people behave the way they do. Humanists focus on the dignity and potential of a person in the beliefs that they can develop into self-actualised and autonomous people.

During the 1950s Maslow presented a 'hierarchy of needs' to explain human motivation. Maslow believed that people were driven to fulfil their potential. He suggested that there were five levels of needs, starting with basic needs like food, shelter and warmth (in other

words physiological needs) and progressing to security, self-esteem and self-actualisation. Maslow suggested that motivation was either based on deficiency needs or growth needs. Most of our needs are based on deficits i.e. the lack of something. Growth needs are different. These are needs related to fulfilling our human potential. These needs will continue to be felt once a person has responded to them. However once they have been met this will no longer act as a motivator (as cited by Ahl, 2006). Maslow suggested that once a person had met all his/her deficit needs he/she may reach the stage of self-actualisation. Self-actualisers are those people who have made the most of their human potential according to Maslow (1974). This achievement is a rarity reserved only for the likes of people like Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King.

Modifications to Maslow's theory like that of Alderer, another humanist, appeared over time (as cited in Huitt, 2004 and Robbins, 1998). These theories, unlike Maslow's hierarchy, were aligned with empirical research. Alderer's theory, differed from Maslow's, in that Alderer proposed that people did not follow a single rigid level of progression to have their needs met. Alderer's theory puts forward the idea that at any one time more than one need may be operative. This theory, like that of Tajfel's, takes into account that social differences in people, such as their education, family background and cultural environment, will have an affect on the driving force i.e. motivation of an individual (as cited in Turner 1982). In this study I have looked at how education and family circumstances have impacted on the selected group of female participants.

According to Ahl (2006), McClelland, also a humanist, conducted his studies of motivation in India in the hopes of alleviating poverty. Hyde and King exposed that McClelland and his associate, Atkinson's research initially included women but when these women did not conform to their hypothesis they were excluded. It appeared that at the time of their study they found that women's need for achievement was not fired up in competitive situations. McClelland therefore deduced that there was something wrong with the women and not his theory. His target groups thereafter focussed on boys, male college students and adult men (as cited in Ahl, 2006).

McClelland and Robbins did not support the existence of a hierarchy of needs as suggested by Maslow but instead suggested that three basic needs exist, namely:

- affiliation - i.e. the desire for friendly and close inter-personal relationships
- achievement - i.e. the drive to excel, to achieve, to strive to succeed and
- power - i.e. the need to make others behave in a way that they would not have behaved otherwise.

Those among us with high needs for achievement may become the entrepreneurs - they are responsible for the economic growth and development in our society. According to McClelland, a woman's role in society is to ensure that she raises sons with high needs for achievement. However, in my opinion, one has to acknowledge that the role of women in many parts of the world has undergone dramatic change since the mid 20th century. Many studies, some mentioned here in this dissertation, have shown that women's need for achievement has increased. Women form a large part of the workforce and their need for achievement equals that of men today.

On the other hand, Herzberg, a humanist, rejected McClelland and Robbins's suggestions and was convinced that there are only two basic needs, namely, to avoid pain and to grow (as cited in Ahl, 2006 and Robbins, 1998). In his motivation-hygiene theory Herzberg proposes that a person's relation to his or her work is a basic one and that the person's attitude toward his work will probably determine his success or failure. According to Herzberg work is a means to avoid pain and discomfort and it is the tasks which are performed, the sense of achievement, recognition, responsibility, promotion and growth opportunities which act as motivators. The onus is therefore on the employer to create jobs which cater for these needs amongst employees. So in the case of employees they will not become more motivated by the things which already satisfy them. Instead their work should be reviewed (by their employer) in the hope of identifying higher needs which will initially motivate them until they are satisfied. In my

opinion this may take place in a perfect working world where managers, supervisors and others who hold positions of power will think deeply about how to meet the needs of their workforce in order to motivate them. But that can only be viewed as a goal to strive for or a luxury. I am of the opinion that in reality a very different mind set operates in the workplace, namely profit margins and delivery on time.

Vroom and Levin (as cited in Ahl, 2006), as humanists tried to come up with an all encompassing model to understand human motivation which takes into account values and outcomes, expectation and achievement, driving and restraining forces which influence behaviour and not just needs. But according to Carré (2000) it is research work by Bandera, Deci, Weiner, Vallerand and Thrill, all behaviourists, which holds the greatest favour today.

Behaviourism is a theory of animal and human learning that focusses only on objectively observable behaviour and discounts mental activities. Behaviour theorists define learning as nothing more than the acquisition of new behaviour. Behaviour changes are encouraged through the use of positive and negative reinforcement.

Behaviourist theories have resulted in a model of adult motivation which looks specifically at patterns of motivation and motivational processes. According to this model of adult motivation, temporary patterns which result in positive rewards (e.g. recognition) can be assimilated to become permanent. This will influence a person's attitude and motivation towards training and learning. A number of motives can exist at any one time which are changeable and dependent on the person's context, refuting Maslow's rigid hierarchical progression. The existence of a number of needs/motives seems to tie up with the ideas put forward by Alderer.

Although many theories of motivation have been presented over time one has to bear in mind that the majority of these theories were developed in the United States of America by Americans for Americans, as Robbins (1998) has pointed out. Eschenmann (2003) raises reservations and limitations about motivation theories as they relate to adult learners. It seems that few of the studies available on motivation have specifically

focussed on the adult as a learner. A possible gap in research presently could be the lack of focus on particularly the adult as a learner with regard to the North/South differences and more especially women as learners. Despite this, there is a commonality in all the models of motivation which can be identified as either personal (the self) and/or situational (context).

In all the theories I have looked at, it appears that the source of motivation can be either intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation (the self) implies that motivation comes from inside an individual and could be described as the things which are near and dear to them as a result of their beliefs, values and circumstances. The motivation comes from the pleasure and satisfaction a person gets from performing a task or solving a problem. This does not imply that intrinsically motivated people would not like to be rewarded with money or grades but rather that this was not the premise of performing. By the same token if a task does not motivate a person then the possibility of remuneration or a good grade might not be enough to make them put effort into the project.

Extrinsic motivation (context) could be described as the things which come from things outside of the person like money, grades, a smile, fame etc. It is the reward which provides the pleasure and satisfaction rather than the task. An extrinsically motivated person will work on a task, even though they have no interest in it, for the anticipated reward. This does not imply that an extrinsically motivated person will not derive pleasure from working on and/or completing a task.

Whether we want to accept this or not, when South Africa embarked on an economic policy to assist the country to compete globally, it required a skilled workforce. This automatically inserted learning in adult's lives i.e. if education and training is not mandatory at the very least it is a necessity for people seeking to improve their prospects (and that of the country). The question has to be asked: how do you persuade individuals who are earning low wages, who have little chance of increasing their pay, or prospects of promotion (like the participants in this study) to be motivated or to motivate themselves? The most obvious response would surely be by making education and

training appealing. A solution to this dilemma would probably be to find out whether the person is motivated by intrinsic or extrinsic needs or a combination of the two. In other words a unique motivating package is put together for each learner. I have to concede that this is easier said than done.

Motivation and the adult as a learner

Knowles (1984), a humanist, tried to convince the world that there was a difference between adults and children as learners, the foundation of his theory of andragogy. In an attempt to find possible causes for adults' lack of motivation to embracing education Knowles posited the differences between the development needs of adults and those of children.

Knowles identified four key elements in "the art and science of teaching adults" as quoted by St. Clair (2002, n. p.). These elements are:

- the need for adults to be motivated to learn
- adults need to be active in the learning process
- adults need to have their past experiences respected in the learning environment
- teachers of adults have the responsibility to ensure that their learners move from dependent to self directed learners.

Knowles later added two additional elements which are:

- adults need to know why they are engaged in further study and
- the biggest motivator for adults to learn can be attributed to self-esteem.

Knowles (1975, p.18) described self-directed learning as

a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.

Knowles (1975, p.20) suggested that self-directed learning should receive more attention because more effective learning takes place when learners initiate it. Learning is retained for longer when “learners are motivated by their own purposes rather than by external sources”. Knowles was of the opinion that when adults participate in learning activities, they bring many rich years of experiences with them to the classroom and these must be taken into account when planning learning events. I feel that from an idealistic point of view, these thoughts on self-directed learning may be true. But it has to be remembered that the group of women under review in this study do not have the legacy of the learning opportunities which the North offers and that to access formal learning in the South is more difficult.

According to Brookfield (1995) Mezirow proposed that learning can either be instrumental (task-orientated) or problem solving/communicative (learning by considering values, ideals, feeling, morals, love, justice etc.). According to Mezirow (1997) when a person’s experiences become too stressful and painful and gnaw at his/her very existence his/her frame of reference will have to be reviewed. Adults will find themselves reflecting critically upon their assumptions and beliefs based on their previous experiences, framed within their cultural context, and eventually the way they behave and think changes.

Brookfield (1995) has suggested that in order to understand adult motivation better more cross cultural research should be conducted so that the dominance of the North’s opinion is not the only source of reference. He felt that the differences of class, cultures, ethnicity, personality, the way people think, styles of learning and learning patterns, life

experiences and gender among adults are far more important than the fact that they are no longer children who are learning.

Like Knowles, Mezirow (1997) also developed a learning theory, in an attempt to make a distinction between child and adult learning, namely transformative learning. This type of learning is based on the learning theory constructivism. Learning is seen as a process in which the learner actively constructs or builds new ideas or concepts which are based on past and present knowledge. Reflection is an ongoing process because learning is based on the meaning given to experiences.

Mezirow conducted his early research on women who had returned to higher education. His focus was on transformation which he explained to be the learning process by which adults recognise and review their roles and relationships which they have subscribed to because of their culture.

Myths of adults as learners

Eschenmann (2003) and Tight (1999), drawing on Knowles' and Mezirow's ideas about adults as learners, identified common myths about adult/continuing/lifelong education. These seem to have a link with the ideas put forward by Carré (2000) and Indabawa and Mpofu (2006). They all have identified the myths as:

- adults do not need that much attention or time from trainers
- adults have a wish to return to school because they believe the education is good for them (they are volunteer learners)
- adults make good decisions about what they want to learn (they are self-directed learners)
- adults always bring valuable experiences to the classroom

- adults know what they have to do to advance their job prospects (they know what learning is of benefit).

Carré (2000) suggests, concurring with Tight (1999), that assumptions, rather than myths exist about adults as willing volunteers for learning in the hope that they can make themselves more mobile. Carré goes further to suggest that adults only access additional skills training in order to advance themselves in their earnings, for promotion, for personal growth and enrichment or because they are older adults who find themselves having to pursue a second career after retirement.

How does motivation or the lack of it impact on the adult as a learner? Vallerand and Thrill (as cited in Carré, 2000) maintain that educational psychology has led us to believe that motivation has to be present if learning is to take place. According to Eschenmann (2003), Madsen identified some 25 years ago that a motivation theory especially designed for adults was lacking and according to Wlodkowski (as cited in Eschenmann, 2003) research specifically focussing on motivation theory for the adult as a learner is still sparser. Imel (1997) puts the dearth of literature research, specifically focussing on motivation theory for the adult as a student, down to the lack of conviction that there is in fact a difference between adult and children as learners. Carré (2000) and Tight (2000) have suggested that a person can not be motivated to do anything but that circumstances can be created in which people can motivate themselves. It is just a question of listening and observing people for long enough. They will eventually reveal what motivates them and how this can be done.

Eschenmann (2003) is of the opinion that decision-making is a learning curve for adults and not instinctive. Just because adults make decisions on a daily basis it can not be assumed that they can and do make decisions which are effective, and in so doing enhance their self-esteem, and change the way they think and do things, as suggested by Mezirow (1991). From the interviews with the participants involved in this study it is quite obvious that some of them have come to the decision that they should try to build

on their previous education and training. But decision is one thing, putting it into practice is another.

The existence of learning myths could possibly be viewed as supporting some of Maslow's ideas on human deficiency and growth needs. Carré (2000) suggests that adults' motives to participate in educational programmes could be of a temporary or permanent nature. Carré like Tajfel has suggested that differences such as gender, age and professional status play vital parts in adults' motivation to take up learning experiences (as cited in Turner, 1982).

Lack of desire to study

Paldanius identified a group of people in Denmark who have not taken up offers of continued education (as cited in Ahl, 2006). Despite the removal of barriers and obstacles, they continued to be not interested. They were interested in doing things like working, their family and the predictable routines in their lives which offered them stability. The only reason why they would pursue education would be if deemed absolutely necessary and it resulted in a guaranteed job opportunity. Paldanius found that education, as such, was not viewed as valuable when respondents had no career ambitions. Paldanius's finding therefore upholds those of Carré (2000) and Tight (1999) that adults only access additional skills training in order to advance themselves in their earnings, for promotion, for personal growth and enrichment or because they are older adults who find themselves having to pursue a second career after retirement.

Even if the individual is motivated to pursue formal learning experiences, it has to be borne in mind that he/she will still face a number of barriers which he/she will have to address and/or overcome.

Barriers to accessing further learning have been categorised succinctly by Ahl (2006) and Indabawa and Mpofo (2006) as situational, dispositional and institutional. Although Indabawa and Mpofo agree with Ahl that the barriers to learning can be viewed in three

distinct groups, Indabawa and Mpofu takes this notion further by specifically identifying how these factors impact on women.

Ahl defines situational factors such as the lack of time, lack of interest and not achieving the results expected, whereas Indabawa and Mpofu explain situational factors as a lack of finance for classes and books, no child minding facilities whilst the woman is at class, and the impact of studying will have on her domestic responsibilities.

Ahl defines dispositional barriers as a lack of self-confidence, a lack of confidence to succeed in specific studies, negative school experiences which impact on continuous education and identifying with a group in which education is not of great value. Indabawa and Mpofu also define dispositional barriers as the lack of confidence to return to school and the impact that past experiences have. They also include the age factor and the possibility of lack of drive or enjoyment associated with studying.

Ahl describes institutional (or structural) barriers as the lack of educational opportunities available, the lack of information about what there is to study, lack of finances to study, time, teaching methods unsuitable for adults, lack of encouragement from the learner's social group, lack of job opportunities when a qualification is received and the lack of learning at work. Indabawa and Mpofu describe institutional factors as lack of information and relevance of classes available.

I believe that the differences in categories suggested by Ahl and Indabawa and Mpofu are because of the North-South contexts e.g. in the case of South Africa the financing of accessing learning events is usually the individual's responsibility. Hence Indabawa and Mpofu have categorised this barrier as situational. Ahl, from Denmark, has categorised financing as institutional, in other words the employer rather than the employee has to cover the costs of the learning event.

Even though various barriers have been placed in different categories they still have relevance for the lives of adults as learners, female or male. According to Ahl (2006) and

Indabawa and Mpfu (2006) once any, or at best all these barriers have been removed, motivation will re-emerge and the behaviour of the learner will be influenced. Although the barriers to learning have been categorised as situational, dispositional and institutional variables I feel that I should elaborate on some of these factors more specifically.

Policy and Legislation

The present government in South Africa appears to have taken some aspects of the situational, dispositional and institutional barriers into account in legislation for example:

- The South African Qualifications Authority Act (1995). This act puts into place a system where all learning/training education events can be structured to be worth a certain number of credits. The accumulation of credits would eventually result in certificates attesting to competencies. This allows workers employed in the formal sector to upgrade their skills whilst on the job. This would in effect take care of the situational, dispositional and structural barriers for many workers.
- The Employment Equity Act (1998). This act makes provision for on-the-job training, recognition of women in the workplace and equity in employment conditions. This act also attempts to break down the above-mentioned barriers. It relates only to women in formal employment
- The Skills Development Act (1998). This act ensures that the skills of the workforce must be identified and accredited. It is an attempt to create a skilled workforce which would allow the country to compete more effectively on a global basis and also permit employees more mobility in searching for other work.

Samson (1999) and Baatjes (n.d.) looked at some of the legislation dealing with redressing the past as far as education and skills acquisition are concerned and the social and economic development of the nation at large. The National Skills Development Strategy proposed by the Department of Labour in 2001 showed the government's

commitment to overall human resource development. The Department of Social Development launched a ten point programme of action in the hopes of addressing socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and poverty. Samson (1999) focusses on the improvement of the situation of women as a result of some of the above-mentioned legislation, strategies and policies. She is not impressed with the delivery on these. I think that the point that Cleaves Mosse (1993, p.109) makes in her writings that “laws are not enough, but they are a starting point” is valid. Serote, (as cited in Magwaza, 2006, p.4) is also of the opinion that there is a “mismatch between parliamentary advances” and women’s emancipation.

The government has put legislation in place in an attempt to redress the inequities of the past. However they have not yet been successful in their implementation of these all initiatives. They have not been able to reach the greater majority of people who are unemployed and unskilled.

Social and personal identity

Ahl (2006) would categorise social and personal identity in learning as a dispositional barrier. We can all identify with a need to belong or fit in. However, Tajfel has pointed out that a sense of social identity and personal identity are different. Social identity is derived from the group to which a person belongs and is therefore open to change as circumstances change, while personal identity is derived from our characteristics and individual relationships (as cited in Turner, 1982). Wetherall is of the opinion that identity is built on “culture, social, economic and emotional interactions and relationships dependent on context and cognitive and psychological strategies” (cited in Ecclestone, 2007, p.122).

Tajfel suggested that the group a person belongs to should be a valuable source of pride and self-esteem and would give the individual a sense of belonging to the world. If one hoped to improve one’s self-image, the status of the group to which one belongs will be raised through prejudice and discrimination against a group one does not belong to. This

he referred to as the “out” group. In other words, according to Tajfel the world is split into an “us” and “them” or “in” and “out” groups (as cited in Turner, 1982).

An example relevant to this study is the grouping of gender: male and female. The “in” group is male and the “out” group is female. Tajfel proposed that people employ categorising to decide whether they are part of the in or out group. This is done so that a person can understand their social environment. Categorising could be made on the basis of colour, country of origin, religion, form of employment and so on. It is possible for a person to belong to more than one category. An individual will adopt the identity of the groups that they have categorised themselves as belonging to for example a young South African, who has dropped out of school, who is unemployed, will adopt the identity particular to these groups. She will begin to act in the manner which she perceives she should therefore her self-esteem will be linked to the groups to which she belongs. Once a person has categorised and identified himself/herself as belonging to particular groups, comparison to other groups will take place. Rivalry, prejudice, competition and hostility could come into play in order to maintain a person’s self-esteem. Lave and Wagner (as cited in Wojecki, 2007). are of the opinion that learning results when a person becomes different. This will lead to a change in the construction of a person’s identity

Social identities and personal identities are emotionally loaded because of the potential involvement of feelings like pride, dignity or fear (Taylor, 1994). Tajfel has suggested that social and personal identity will influence learning events. Carré (2000), in agreement with Tajfel, has suggested themes like race, gender and class will shape the way adult learners think. In his research, adult female learners’ narratives revealed their feelings of subordination and this shaped their understanding of their academic potential and also the opportunities they as women anticipated in life.

Opportunities to study at work

Ahl (2006) would categorise a lack of opportunities to learn at work as an institutional barrier. Workplace opportunities in themselves can be viewed as a barrier to learning and

development since they can be associated with past unsuccessful experiences and a fear that should the employee not achieve success they may be fired.

When opportunities to learn have been part of the promises made at the start of a job and the employer has not provided these opportunities this can also act as a barrier to learning. The employee may feel that learning opportunities have been withheld because his/her superior has decided that he/she does not have the ability to participate in these learning opportunities. Later, when learning opportunities in the workplace do arise, the employee may experience feelings of doubt and inadequacy. These feelings can act as barriers to learning.

The women in this study at best could be described as somewhere between low skilled and semi-skilled. They have all received on-the-job training. Examples of this would be preparing food, setting up venues and basic sewing skills. This training was provided to enable them to perform expected tasks as part of their work. This on-the-job training has not resulted in formal qualifications. One participant was exposed to more structured learning. She attended courses on basic self-defence, communicating using various apparatus, security procedures etc. She was given a certificate of competence when the course ended.

People who are employed in jobs classified as unskilled will earn lower rates and have poorer conditions of employment. This has an impact on learning opportunities because career paths are rarely associated with unskilled work. There are few opportunities for job mobility. Any training offered will be restricted to immediate job-related needs or what is required by law, like for example adhering to health and safety legislation. McLaughlin points out that certain jobs will always make use of low skilled workers and those who perform repetitive and boring jobs will not have training and development extended to them. In so doing, employers are consciously deskilling their workforce - to their own detriment (as cited in Munro, Holly and Rainbird, 2000).

At the Confintea Conference (1997) the importance of adult learning especially for those who do not have regular work or the prospect of permanent employment was highlighted. In order to be employable or create their own jobs people need to have skills and competencies. It was agreed at this conference that employability and secure jobs would in future depend on the performance of workers. This implies acquisition of skills and pursuing personal growth paths to ensure employment.

According to Lewis (2002) semi-skilled and unskilled labour in South Africa represents half the workforce and also two-thirds of the unemployed. Job creation in the semi-skilled and unskilled labour category has been very small. And according to Mayer and Altman (2005) the central economic problem still facing democratic South Africa is trying to deal with massive unemployment. They maintain that South Africa's current unemployment rate is higher than that of any other economy for which data is available. According to Mayer and Altman the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (2002) shows that the unemployment rate amongst Africans was 37% in 2002. The unemployed are mostly young and recent entrants to the labour market, with 75% of them under the age of 35. Lehola (2008) backs up these findings and provides more clarity about the groups of the unemployed. Since 2001 when the Labour Force Survey was initiated it has consistently recorded that there is a higher unemployment rate among women when compared to men. In 2006 it was reported that the unemployment rate among women was 30, 7% as opposed to 21, 2% among the men.

Jammie, as cited in Ross (2008), contends that there is an abundance of job opportunities for young people (of all races). The problem of unemployment arises as a result of training in the fields where those skills are not in demand. Although the shortages of skills in South Africa can be blamed on the previous government, children at school level also do not study the right subjects such as science and mathematics and therefore can not access courses which will allay skills shortages. The Quarterly Labour Force survey (2008) has found that 30, 6 % of the unemployed have attained a Grade 12 pass. On the other hand, Wheelahan cautions that whilst enterprises need particular skills,

people need knowledge and skills which will allow their learning to go beyond the workplace (as cited in Ecclestone, 2007).

An all encompassing adult education initiative

An all encompassing adult education initiative would be identified by Ahl (2006) as institutional. According to research, human development is as the result of adult learning, yet the South lacks resources and funding to promote development. Walters (2006) takes a look at the progress of adult learning (or lifelong learning) in South Africa over the past 10 years. All kinds of initiatives - by the government and other organisations - have been launched, yet no all encompassing “department” which manages “adult learning” has been established. Walters feels that the lack of cohesiveness has been detrimental to adult education.

According to Walters, adult learning has become popular in the North because it is seen as a lever in an attempt to be globally competitive. In the South it has been less popular because of the reluctance of governments and funding agencies to provide real opportunities (as previously alluded to) for the unemployed, under educated, unskilled or semi-skilled adult. Crowther is of the opinion that adult learning has taken on negative connotations because it instills the idea that people have a personal responsibility towards their own (lack of) advancement (as cited in Walters, 2006). However, Torres (as cited in Walters, 2006) stresses the importance of a lifelong learning framework. Adult learning is required for all ages on an ongoing basis be it for personal, political, cultural or economic development. These ideas seem to concur with those of Wheelahan as cited in Ecclestone (2007). Adult learning can be effective in increasing efficiency in the marketplace. Yet in the South African context, according to Walters (2006), increasing efficiency is not the only purpose of adult learning. The most important social purposes for adult learning are:

- improving people’s chance to survive harsh living conditions;
- developing skills for people in the formal and informal sectors for economic purposes; and

- cultural and political education to encourage people to participate actively in society.

When one takes a look at these three points, in the light of the participants in this study, it has to be conceded that Walters is right - little progress in adult education has in fact taken place.

Funding

Whilst Ahl (2006) identifies funding of learning as an institutional barrier, Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) categorised this as situational.

Although this quote was not made with reference to South Africa, it has relevance here. Tight (1999, n.p.) has quoted the British Secretary of State for Education and Employment as saying:

Public financial support for learners should be designed to: bring back into learning those who stopped after leaving school; address particular shortages; widen access for those who are disadvantaged; and enable individuals to choose the method of learning that suits them best. For adults, the main responsibility will rest with them and their employers.

This last sentence is an example of how politicians practice the art of passing of the buck perfectly...

The Skills Development Levy Act of 1999 was put into place specifically to fund the improvement of the skills of the South African work force. Employers have been required to pay a portion of their payroll (if this is R 250 000 + per annum) towards skills upgrades. Employers are able to get a portion of their contribution back in the form of grants if they are prepared to provide training which is in line with SETA (Sector Education and Training Authority) prescriptions. Because of the bureaucracy (time delays, a myriad of complicated forms to complete, agreements between the learner, the institution and the Department of Labour) associated with accessing these grants, the

funding of those learning events which participants of this study are likely to embrace has been shifted on to their shoulders.

The influence of previous learning events

Both Ahl (2006) and Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) have categorised the influence of previous learning events as dispositional barriers.

According to Tight (2000) learning identities are fragile and linked to everyday life events and these can reflect the ever-changing spread of activities and relationships in adult life. When adults face the option of embracing “new” learning events all kinds of emotions come into play. Crossan et al (2003) and Ecclestone (2007) are of the opinion that previous learning experiences often result in a lack of confidence and a lack of desire to take on new learning. In fact the prospect of new learning experiences could result in hostility towards educational institutions and educational events. Wojecki (2007) seems to hold a similar point of view. The “wounds” or “injuries” which adults have incurred through previous learning experiences will have an influence on learning especially in the workplace. A person’s unique biography will contribute to his/her perceptions and intentions to engage in learning opportunities at work. The “wounds” from previous learning experiences will become themes or stories which will unfold depending on how the individual sees himself/herself. These stories become so believable for the person that they limit self-actualisation (the ultimate level in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, which, as previously stated, is a rarity to attain.)

Wojecki (2007) focusses on adults who are involved in training programmes at their workplace. He has suggested that the stories people tell about their lives are not necessarily the ones that they have lived. The stories which people tell are “stitched together” according to Ecclestone (2007, p.125). She has found, that adults’ stories will include previous learning experiences which influence their current outlook on their working lives and their learning careers. Previous experiences often result in lack of confidence, or commitment is lacking to take on new learning to the point of hostility

towards educational institutions. Wojecki has suggested that workers' identities are derived from previous working/learning experiences and directly impact upon future choices and actions in the workplace. Most writers on this issue are of the opinion that the content of courses which are taught has a great influence on increasing motivation because of previous negative and bad experiences. Non-traditional learners are adults who have not shown an interest in embarking on formal learning events once they had completed or left their initial schooling. When they become involved in formal learning they are usually sceptical about embracing this process. It stands to reason that good educational experiences should raise motivation according to Wlodkowski (1999).

Some of the participants of this study would have been in their final year of schooling during 1994 - 1998. According to Baatjes (n.d, p.4), the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, where the participants of this study originated, had only 11% and 14 %, respectively, of the total enrollment of learners at secondary school in South Africa in 1996. All five of the candidates have attested to failing at least one grade at school. Jonker has gone on record as stating that whilst school may be a source of confidence, education and knowledge for some, it can also leave a person with feelings of being doomed to fail for life (as cited in Wojecki, 2007). The fact that three of these women have undertaken further learning/education/training suggests that their school experiences were positive. Only one participant who failed two grades at school indicated no interest in further education or training. However I am of the opinion that this reluctance is because of unresolved emotional trauma she was exposed to in her parental home rather than school experiences.

Barriers to learning which specifically relate to women

Class, race and gender

Ahl (2006) and Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) have all categorised class, race and gender as dispositional barriers.

The peoples of South Africa have been dubbed as the “rainbow nation”, a term which glosses over the very real differences which exist amongst them. It is my opinion that ethnic groupings and their attitudes to the rights of men and women trying to live in harmony are, to say the least, diverse. It therefore becomes obvious that factors like class, race and gender will play an important role in helping to understand attitudes to learning experiences. Ecclestone (2007) points out that a person’s view of his/her identity, sense of power and status in society impacts on new education situations and how a person will respond to learning opportunities throughout his/her life. Adults’ learning identities are moulded by childhood and subsequent learning events.

Magwaza (2006, p.4) seems to agree with the sentiments of Ecclestone. She is of the opinion that culture is a “dynamic phenomenon” that can not be tied to a particular period or context. She points out that imbalances between rights to resources and recognition allowed for men and women are prevalent in South Africa. Clark (2006, p.9) quotes Geertz as saying:

Culture is best seen not as complexes of concrete behaviour patterns, customs, usages, traditions, habits, clusters ... but as a set of control mechanisms- plans, recipes, rules, instructions... for governing behaviour.

De la Rey suggests that culture has a huge influence on people’s daily lives. How people elect to live their lives is an enactment of “socially constructed cultural representations” which will show how culture, and tradition, race and gender have become enmeshed (as quoted in Clark, 2006, p.8). Two cultural scripts emerge, one for men and the other for women. It is suggested by de la Rey that society is aware of this and uses one or the other depending on who is being dealt with. This practice has been in existence for centuries.

Mama suggests that it is common, and also thought appropriate (amongst some), that men interpret African traditions and culture “in selective ways” which will result in increasing their power and authority. Literature, folklore and religious texts in many cultures are full of instances which support the idea of the inferiority of women. Needless to say the vast

majority of authors or tellers of these stories are ...men! (as cited in Magwaza, 2006, p.4).

Serote has stated that “changing a society’s perception of a woman is a ...difficult task” (as quoted by Magwaza, 2006, p.4). In African contexts cultural practices rather than laws regulate women’s behaviour. Yet Hassim in Magwaza (2006, p.5) writes that the change over from the Apartheid era to democracy in South Africa has allowed women to enter into the arena to discuss issues concerning them as women. She is also of the opinion that if women unite in a common cause, despite their differences, they can overcome oppression, described as “cultural law” by men and viewed as “cultural constraints” by women.

Greaney (1996) has cited the findings of researchers like Ramdas, Chowdhury, King and Hill to supply reasons for the lower participation rates for girls at school. It appears that in ‘developing’ countries participation will vary from country to country depending on cultural and economic aspects. Ramdas, (as cited in Greaney, 1996) indicates that in some countries, deep seated attitudes exist against girls almost from birth. Usually economic factors directly and indirectly associated with educating daughters appear to be of concern to the parents. According to Chowdhury examples of this would be school fees which may be prohibitive, school clothes which are expensive and mostly the cost attached to losing the help in the home or the farm of a child who is now attending school. Girls, usually the eldest, are engaged in looking after younger siblings, involved in domestic duties like cooking and cleaning, fetching firewood and water. This allows for little or no time to attend to studies. According to Greaney (1996, p.19) the repetition of a grade can be an expensive learning situation and is “a precursor to dropping out of school” prematurely, especially for girls. According to King and Hill as cited in Greaney (1996), educated women do not easily fit into traditional roles. In some countries in the South it is not considered astute to invest in educating daughters because they will leave the family and go to their husband’s family who will have the benefit of her education. (Many parents are of the opinion that their sons will look after them in their old age and not their daughters, so it is a waste of money to educate their daughters.)

Teenage pregnancy

Ahl (2006) and Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) all have categorised teenage pregnancy as a situational barrier.

Cleaves Mosse (1993, p.167) suggests that the “alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and child care... [and] the freedom of choice over childbearing” would go a long way to help women in Africa to access learning events.

This raises the issue of the ever increasing schoolgirl/adolescent pregnancy phenomenon that has emerged in recent years in South Africa. According to Lehola (2008) during 2002 the number of teenage schoolgirls reported pregnant was 66 000 and their pregnancy was their reason offered for dropping out of educational institutions. This figure rose to 71 000 in 2006. According to Clarke and Height (as cited in Macleod, 2001) in African countries where teenage pregnancy is estimated at 12 - 25%, research has shown that girls are vulnerable to repeat teenage pregnancies if their first pregnancy occurred before the age of eighteen.

Macleod (2001) has cited the writing of a number of researchers on teenage pregnancy namely Adams-Taylor and Pittman, Boulton and Cunningham, Macintyre and Cunningham-Burley. Teenage pregnancy has to be seen not only as a social problem which results in disrupting schooling, and limiting the mother’s career and future career prospects, but as a barrier to further learning as well. Boulton and Cunningham reported that only 50 % of African adolescents return to school after their confinement. Schools do not have the facilities to accommodate the needs of mothers and/or babies. If no female member of the family is willing to assume childcare responsibilities while the mother is either in school or at work the adolescent mother has no choice but to drop out or interrupt her education or to give up working. This will result in her becoming part of the millions of women worldwide who become victims of a poor education and few skills. The above-mentioned researchers are of the opinion that if women did not have children whilst they are in their

adolescent years they would succeed in their education and occupations and not live in poverty. According to Macleod pregnant teenagers will more than likely become trapped in a cycle of poverty.

If these women were able to access education and training courses, factors like the when and where these courses were held would also have to be considered. It raises questions of safety and security which are basic needs to be fulfilled as suggested by Maslow. Ahl, Indabawa and Mpofu view and label these “needs” as situational and dispositional barriers to learning.

What influence has race-culture-gender had in these women’s lives? In a study on rural and urban women in KwaZulu-Natal Clark (2006) and de la Rey, Mama, Ortner (as cited in Magwaza, 2006) found that the concept of culture has conflicting meanings even for women. This is perhaps because within the black African context, traditional culture does not place much value on women’s development, according to Ortner. Weiner (1994, p.12) is of the opinion that women’s ideas and beliefs are moulded and shaped “by and within their historical and cultural contexts”. De la Rey seems to concur with this opinion when she suggests that although culture is part of what we become, how we adapt to our surroundings can be linked to our past and this can act as a control of behaviour and dictate a person’s values and norms. Hill Collins as cited in Ken (2007) says that race, class and gender divisions have been created and maintained specifically to support and rationalise a certain group’s power. Mama agrees with Hill Collins but is bold enough to state that it is mainly men who “appropriate and interpret African traditions and culture in selective ways which enhance their power and authority” (as quoted by Magwaza, 2006, p.40). Furthermore, she is of the opinion that society has a different script for men and women i.e. where men have rights, recognition and resources, women are deprived of these. Therefore in the African context, gender is seen as a means to control. This exists despite the number of so-called democratic, modern societies in Africa, which still continue to practice ill-treatment of women because of their low status. Hill Collins feels that those who are disadvantaged may not understand how this came about, and how they are wilfully being kept in this state. Nor do they know that it is not good for them to be

complacent about this. Hooks, as cited in Ken (2007, p.6), argues that people who have been oppressed by gender, race and class must recognise that this actually holds an advantage for them. It gives them the opportunity to use this experience to speak out against overt “racist, classist, sexist hegemony”. Smuts, as noted by Magwaza (2006), seemingly agrees with the comments of hooks when she contends that urban women in South Africa are aware of their insubordinate positions as dictated by their cultural heritages and are beginning to challenge and redefine factors which add to oppressive behaviour towards them.

Conceptual framework

I will look at what has motivated the participants and what impact this has had on their education and training. I will look explicitly at Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as opposed to that of Alderer and pinpoint which model appears to be operational in the lives of the participants. I will look specifically at which needs surfaced and in which order they were addressed

I will look specifically at the participants in the light of Knowles and Mezirow’s theories of adults as learners. I will try to ascertain whether the participants have related better to self-directed learning as suggested by Knowles. Or did the participants take on education and training after they had experienced a disorienting dilemma as suggested by Mezirow.

Carré, Enschenmann and Tight have all identified myths about adults as learners. I will try to ascertain whether any of these myths are evident in the participants’ experiences as adult learners.

General barriers which exist for adult learners like opportunities at work, funding and the lack of desire to study will be taken into account. Other barriers which will of interest will be those associated with previous learning events as suggested by Crossan et al, Ecclestone, Tight and Wojecki. However, I will pay particular attention to the barriers which the participants have encountered especially as women. These barriers will be

identified and categorised as situational, dispositional or institutional as suggested by Ahl and Indabawa and Mpofu. Another focus point will be the barriers which the participants have experienced as a result of class, gender and race. These will be reviewed in light of the ideas put forward by Greaney and Magawasa.

CHAPTER 3

Research design and methodology

Paradigms

Research can be grounded in three paradigms namely, positivist, critical or interpretivist according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). Each of these paradigms has merits and limitations which will be discussed below.

In the positivist paradigm only objective, observable facts can be used as the basis for social research. Burrell and Morgan (as cited in Maree, 2007) are of the opinion that reality is made up of hard, tangible and somewhat fixed phenomena. Collecting data has to be done in an organised manner. Therefore the methods selected to acquire the data have to be considered carefully. Deductive logic, coupled with empirical observations of behaviour, are used with the aim of discovering and confirming “a set of probabilistic causal laws” which are applied in order “to predict general patterns of human activity” (Neuman, 2000, p.66). Therefore human behaviour is explained using the concepts of cause and effect. These forces operate similarly to the natural laws in the natural sciences. Neutral laws and principles which have to be discovered and confirmed by using a scientific approach make the world function.

In this paradigm scientific knowledge is considered to be superior to any other forms of gathering knowledge. The laws of science operate according to strict logical reasoning and it is the researcher’s task to make the connections between causal laws and factual evidence using deductive logic. There is an implication that truth will be recognised and distinguished from falsehood by using reason. By applying strict, rational thinking and systematic observation, personal prejudice, biases and values are eliminated. The purpose of research is to discover and describe the independent laws of nature in objective ways.

In positivism, the “knowledge” which is revealed through research is obtained through “observation, experimentation, control, measurement, reliability and validity.”

Researchers who adhere to the principles of the positivist paradigm produce “precise, verifiable, systematic and theoretical answers” (as quoted by Maree, 2007, p. 55). Methods of collecting data favour precise quantitative data (making use of numbers to represent data). This objective data allows hypotheses to be put to the test and analysed. This approach allegedly provides answers which are neutral and objective allowing research findings to be generalised to all cultures and contexts.

The positivist paradigm has influenced educational research but it has been criticised for its lack of subjectivity especially when it comes to people. Human behaviour is not passive, controlled and entirely determined by external environment. Hence human beings are dehumanised when their intentions, individualist and freedom are not taken into account. According to critics of this paradigm, objectivity needs to be replaced by subjectivity in the process of scientific inquiry.

The critical paradigm sees society divided into levels of power. According to Neuman (2000) social reality has many layers aside from the most obvious observable superficial activities. These layers need to be exposed to discover the deeper underlying structures. People become trapped in social activities, obligations and relationships which could cause them to lose their independence, freedom and control over their lives. The loss of control in people’s lives causes to them to become isolated and detached from people who are in similar situations. But people need not be oppressed.

Hierarchies of power have to be reviewed critically so that some kind of change in the spread of power can take place. People have the ability to change their circumstances by looking at the people who are in positions of power and domination and to look for the injustices which have resulted from this. Drawing on the data the data collected the researcher provides feedback and brings about transformation so that “oppression” can be eliminated or at least reduced. This type of research can not therefore be a neutral activity.

The main protagonists of this theory developed an approach to investigation and action in the social sciences, which considers the historical forces that restricted human freedom and looks for an ideological justification of those forces.

Critical theorists, like Habermas, (as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) were critical of earlier paradigms, like positivism and interpretivism, as they are not concerned with transforming the situations were being researched. Habermas put forward the idea that three types of interests exist and these in turn will generate three types of knowledge namely:

- technical interest i.e. the control of the physical environment, which generates empirical and analytical knowledge
- practical interest i.e. understanding the meaning of situation, which generates hermeneutic and historical knowledge
- emancipating interest i.e. the provision for growth and advancement, this generates critical knowledge and is concerned with exposing conditions of constraints and domination

Critical theory has been criticised for its blind acceptance of Habermas's interpretation of interest and knowledge. Habermas's work has been described as little more than speculation. The claim that there are only three forms of knowledge has raised doubts. There are a multitude of interests and ways of understanding the world according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) and it is unrealistic to reduce these to merely three.

Based on a deep, empathetic understanding of everyday life experiences, in an attempt to find meaning in human behaviour, the interpretivist paradigm makes use of a holistic way to conduct research. It is concerned with placing individual's actions in their cultural contexts. The interpretivist researcher believes that every culture and context differs and each person in a culture and context does too. Therefore each will require unique analysis taking these differences into account.

When the focus is on a person's subjective experiences, contexts will play an important role. This will create the chances to understand and to examine perceptions that people have of their activities. Although human behaviour may be patterned and regular this can not be seen as the result of pre-existing laws. Because human behaviour is always changing interpretivists accept that a variety of realities of events exists and that these can change depending on when and where they take place. Therefore findings can not be generalised.

The interpretivist researcher acknowledges the existence of interactive relationships between the researcher and the research participants. The researcher is as involved as the participants in the research so that the researcher can identify "real-life situations" from the point of view of the participants. In this way "patterns, trends, and themes" can be identified (Maree, 2007, p.56). Interpretivism is about understanding and interpreting phenomena, by looking at the meanings that people have attributed to them.

Interpretivist researchers seek to take perspectives of situations which often come from their own participant observation and analyse these in an attempt to make sense of what they have perceived. The researcher is therefore the means by which data is collected and then analysed. Common sense is seen as an important source of information and understanding people. Facts are viewed as fluid and not impartial, objective or neutral. Behaviour can have several meanings and can also be interpreted in many different ways. It is almost impossible to find objective straight forward facts when observing human behaviour. The interpretivist must therefore be aware of his/her own subjectivity when analysing data.

A possible definition of the interpretivist paradigm could be "the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds" (Neuman, 2000, p.70). This paradigm favours qualitative methodological approaches and it encompasses "the belief in a socially constructed,

subjectively-based reality, one that is influenced by culture and history” as proposed by O’ Brien (2001, n.p.).

I think that this paradigm suits the purpose of this study perfectly and I have positioned this study in this paradigm. I have interviewed five women in the hopes of finding out how they have lived their lives within a particular context and culture. From these interviews I have been able to gather up interesting and rich data even though this is from only a small sample group. Through the analysis of data collected I have identified common patterns, themes and trends and whether there is a relationship between these.

Most of the criticism of the interpretivist research approach concerns issues of subjectivity and the inability to generalise findings. Despite these reservations about this research paradigm I have situated this study in the interpretive paradigm

Research method

I have made use of narrative enquiry according to Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Each participant told her story chronologically showing how she had linked events together. Through the use of narrative enquiry parts of each story revealed different values showing how:

- the past influences feelings and perceptions in the present
- the present shapes feelings and perceptions from the past and
- present and past feelings and perceptions influence future events and the meaning which they give to these.

Elliott (2005, p.12-13) draws a distinction between first-order and second-order narratives. First-order narratives are “the stories that individuals tell about themselves and

their experiences”. Second-order narratives are accounts that researchers construct in order to make sense of the social world and of other people's experiences. In this study I use first-order narratives- the accounts of the participants motivation in accessing formal learning experiences and the barriers they faced to construct a second-order narrative. This will be my version of the events they have spoken to me about.

Narrative enquiry provides rich opportunities for individual participants to review and rebuild their perceptions and experiences.

Narrative enquiry, according to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), allows the researcher to have access to the content of human lives. Narrative enquiry captures and investigates experiences of people as they have lived them that are in context. The stories which people tell about particular events in their lives are analysed, with special attention paid to how these are strung together and how the past has influenced them. It is the researcher's duty to ask the questions which will unravel these stories.

For the purposes of this study I have decided that the qualitative data collected would be presented in the form of the narratives. This method of accessing information is not intimidating to the participants. The narrative approach is viewed as more user-friendly. I agree with Kostera (2006, p.8) that stories can be seen as the natural ways people use to organise their experiences and perceptions of the world, as opposed to the more formal forms of human knowledge. Organisations (like the workplace) are full of “narratives with simple but resonant plots and characters, involving narrative skill, entailing risk, and aiming to entertain, persuade, and win over.” Kostera argues that stories occur naturally and are plentiful. Use of this method allows for the individual participant's life experiences to be revealed through the stories they tell. This methodology of collecting data provides in-depth, rich and detailed accounts and insights of educational and working experiences and events in a small number of individuals. Dhunpath (2000, p.544) notes

...Individuals come ... with their own temperaments, histories, and purposes, and different individuals will obviously interact with a given configuration ... in different ways and with different outcomes.

Through the use of this method, I was permitted to have an insider's perspective of the participants' learning and working experiences. I was able to identify what motivated participants as well as the barriers to accessing further education and training opportunities. Dhunpath (2000, p.544) is of the opinion that the life history approach "is probably the only authentic means of understanding ... intimate... individual experiences in the post-modern world".

According to Ball and Goodson (as cited in Dhunpath, 2000) the factual accuracy of the stories should not be the focus of a study but rather the meaning they hold for the teller. McMillan (2003), through the use of narrative analysis, formulates explanations of how learners interpret their place in society through the use of life histories and whether there are any common links to their academic achievements. Narratives, as put forward by her, are the stories people tell of themselves and others in order to make sense of their world, thereby reflecting their identity.

Labov (1997) is of the opinion that narrative research is not about proving anything but is essentially a hermeneutic study. Ongoing discussion and debate allows researchers to gain access to the participants' perspectives on events which occurred during their lives. The researcher is allowed access to a deeper understanding of what the participant's life has been like. The way a person experiences the world will be related through his narratives.

Narratives are collected through interviews (and observation) which will involve a discursive component. The interviewer and the participant "are engaged in creating the meaning of the questions and answers that constitute the narrative as they negotiate understanding through language" according to Alvarez and Urla (2002, p.40). Markus

and Wurf are of the opinion that people achieve their personal identities and self-concept through the use of “narrative configuration” (as cited in Dhunpath 2000, p.545). A researcher making use of narrative research must pay special attention to the personal stories, the intensely individual nature of each person’s experience and that people constantly reinvent themselves – almost like an ongoing work in progress.

Goodson is quoted in Dhunpath (2000, p.545) as saying that “the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity.” The study of narratives is therefore the study of the ways in which people experience their world. Witherall and Noddings are quoted in Dhunpath (2000, p.546) as saying that “... telling stories can be cathartic and liberating”. Biesta and Tedder in concurrence with Witherall and Noddings suggest that life histories provide valid and authentic self-reports on events in people’s lives (as cited in Ecclestone, 2007). By telling their stories and in so doing sharing their lives, people are allowed to learn about themselves. In other words talking about life can be a process of learning and healing. Therefore narratives can be viewed as powerful research tools because they provide a look at real people, in real situations, struggling with real problems. Witherall and Noddings as cited in Dhunpath (2000) are of the opinion that narratives expose the outside world to what is happening “inside” the person.

Plummer identifies the limitations of this method as generalisability, reliability and validity (as cited in Mouton 2006, p.173). Because narrative research only targets small samples it brings into question its generalisability. However, because the approach involves extensive interviewing, it does not lend itself to a larger sample group. The narratives which surface from a smaller group will provide a richness and depth which other methods of empirical research will in all likelihood not be able to do.

A critique of narrative research is the question of what can be taken as “the truth.” Measor and Sikes are of the opinion that “historical truth employs its own mechanisms of validation and verification” (as quoted in Dhunpath, 2000, p.546). For the purposes of

this study, the stories will have to be taken at face value until history proves these incorrect.

Another point of concern with narrative research is the relationship between the researcher and the participants. In some ways the researcher becomes the voice of the participants. Critics of this approach are specifically concerned about the bias and or subjectivity of the researcher and for that matter the respondent. However, the nature of this type of research, collecting and interpreting personal accounts of people's experience means it can not be anything but subjective.

Narrative enquiry allows the storyteller free rein to tell stories and it is the researcher's task to tap into this anecdotal information. Because this type of research method does not make use of representative sampling, controls and causal analyses questions about subjectivity have been raised. As Labov (1997, n. p.) notes,

The discussion of narrative and other speech events at the discourse level rarely allows us to prove anything. It is essentially a hermeneutic study, where continual engagement with the discourse as it was delivered gains entrance to the perspective of the speaker and the audience, tracing the transfer of information and experience in a way that deepens our own understandings of what language and social life are all about.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, I believe that narrative enquiry was the most appropriate method to collect data from the participants in this study. The use of narratives allowed me, as a researcher, to have a somewhat subjective but none-the-less detailed look at motivation, the barriers to learning and why three participants appear to have embraced formal education and training experiences.

Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

When one looks specifically at the quality of data generated through narrative enquiry, issues like representativeness, validity and reliability are raised according to Plummer (as

cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Measor and Sikes (as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morison, 2007), believe that whatever participants divulge has to be taken as the truth.

There is a tendency in life history research to accept stories which are told at face value. The researcher has to be aware that the teller may have a motive for telling his/her story which could have impact on trustworthiness. Babbie and Mouton (1998, p.285) suggest 'validity checks' which include:

- getting the teller to read the completed product and ask them to comment on it;
- comparing the source with other written sources of data collected using others methods;
- comparison with official records if possible; and
- asking other people to verify the sources.

In order to increase the validity of research an appropriate methodology for the answering of the research question(s) should be selected and also an appropriate instrument for gathering data. In this study I used semi-structured interviews to find the answers to the research question(s). I tried to avoid bias and to be aware that participants could be biased or for that matter the interview questions could be biased as well. I ensured that the same process of eliciting data was followed with each participant.

Although not strictly necessary, but as cited in Gillham (2003), perhaps a little more ethical, and in accordance with the 'validity checks' referred to by Babbie and Mouton (1998) another interview with the participants was arranged after the transcriptions had been completed. Each participant was asked to read through their story to verify that the transcripts of the interviews are a true reflection of what was discussed. I also used this meeting to thank the participants for their participation in this study. This feedback-cum-reflection session did not last more than a half an hour.

What are semi-structured interviews?

I was interested to hear the stories of the participants. I felt that the most appropriate way to get this data from them would be through the use of semi-structured interviews. Bradburn, de Leeuw and Sykes, and Collins are cited by Stouthamer-Loeber and van Kammen (1997) as suggesting that the more anonymous methods of collecting data, especially sensitive data, should take preference over other methods. But, if data collection through interviews has been selected, the researcher must fully inform the participants of what the interview will comprise, its purpose and the choices that the participants have that is the freedom to withdraw from the research without recourse and the right to anonymity should this be their choice. This should be supported by obtaining written consent from the participants prior the interviewing process.

Dingwall is of the opinion that interviewing is the best method for certain studies as they are quick and cheap (as cited in Miller and Dingwall, 1997). Leech (2002, p.665) is of the opinion that unstructured interviews are like conversations, that is the “soaking and poking” experiences to gain insight of the world from participants’ perspective. Maree (2007, p.87) is of the opinion that an interview is a two-way conversation in which the researchers asks specific questions about “beliefs, values, points of view, behaviour and opinions of participants” hoping to collect data. Yet, according to Dyer an interview is not “an ordinary everyday conversation” because it has a specific goal attached to it (as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p.349). The important thing about using this particular instrument is the enquiry through conversation or dialogue.

A week before the interviews commenced, each of the participants was given a letter of consent to take home to read. I asked them to sign this letter showing their consent and agreement to the interviews. One of the women I approached returned the form declining to participate explaining that “...my people told me not to do any research...” (sic). I had to respect her wishes and look for another participant.

Identifying and honing the questions for the interview proved to be taxing and time consuming. Aspects like cultural sensitivity, posing questions of a suitable language level which were open-ended and which would result in detailed responses was not as simple as anticipated. I decided to identify themes rather than specific questions as such. Once I had identified the themes it was easier to ask broad open-ended questions which would encourage the participants to talk and not require lengthy explanation from me.

Gillham (2003) suggests that interviews should be conducted according to certain basic points namely:

- Introductory phase - at this time the researcher again reiterates the purpose of the interviews, affirms the participants' willingness to be involved and acquires permission from the participant to record the interview.
- The Central Core - this part of the interview deals with the actual questions asked in the hopes of collecting data which are suitable for the study. It is also the stage when sensitive questions should be asked.
- Closure - bringing the interview to a close both in terms of content (in the form of summarising what was said) and socially (where gratitude is expressed and co-operation is commended) and the follow up interview is mentioned.

Making use of interviews does require that the researcher, before the onset of the interview, identifies certain themes or questions which need to be broached. The semi-structured approach allows the researcher the freedom to deviate from the scheduled themes or questions. It also gives the researcher the latitude to get a clearer idea of what the participant is sharing about their experiences and thoughts. It also allows for the option to explore other themes or points which become evident when a participant responds to questions.

According to Dilley (2000, p.133) there are six types of questions which should form the backbone of all interviews namely: who, what, when, where, why and how. He claims

success with this 'formula' no matter the subject, time available for the interview or the setting. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) open-ended questions allow the participants to answer freely, express themselves easily and be as detailed and as complex as they choose. By adhering to this advice I was able to collect interesting and descriptive information from the participants whom I interviewed. I was able build up a picture of the participants' world, as they were experiencing it. Use of the semi-structured interview allowed me the flexibility to probe further on points raised by the participant. In so doing I ensured that what the participant was saying I clearly understood. This approach makes allowances for the gathering up of rich, anecdotal information which makes for worthwhile research.

I hoped that the interviewees would provide "real and true" information, even though this information may be subjective aspects of their experiences and their feelings. Henning (2005) suggests using this approach to access information. Gubrium and Holstein describe this as "the mediation of contemporary life" (as quoted in Henning, 2005, p.53). Beer seems to take the middle road on the real and true perspectives by suggesting that interviews "are not precise, definite, clear, predictable, measurable, or repeatable" but rather a process like "an artistic composition" (as cited in Dilley, 2000, p.135). The researcher has to bear in mind the following: Do interviewees really express their real true opinions and feelings during an interview?

The interviewer's task according to Stramberg is not to just listen to the words being spoken but also to the words not spoken, the pauses, silences, the tone of voice and for any contradictions (as cited by Dilley, 2000). According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p.349) interviews are versatile tools to gather "verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard" information. Gillman (2003) appears to agree with the latter-mentioned writers. He feels that interviews are not just about the words spoken but also about the facial expressions, eye contact, head nods, gestures and use of voice of both the participant and the interviewer.

The researcher may find herself in a position where she has to make use of a number of senses, observation and intuition during an interview. The likes of eye contact, body

language, understanding, not just the words being spoken but the words not spoken, the emotions, the tone of the voice, facial expressions etc. will become useful cues when posing further probing questions. However, for a novice researcher like myself to notice and follow up on ideas, to probe responses and investigate motives and feelings the participants may have experienced proved demanding. The negative aspect of conducting these interviews was my lack of experience, as an interviewer - and not the quality of information gleaned from the participants.

The interview approach to soliciting data involves direct personal contact with the participant whilst asking questions relating to the research topic, according to Bell (1997, p.25). Whilst one to one interviews appear to be an ideal situation to immediately probe and clarify responses, they can also be very intimidating for both the novice interviewer (like me) and the interviewees. Interviewing is a subjective process and the way I asked questions could have influenced the participants' responses. The quality of data collected will most decidedly depend on the skill of the interviewer, the types of questions he/she asked and the encouragement made at the correct moment or for that matter not.

The interviewer can influence the interview in many ways e.g. the quality of the personal contact can make the participant have more or less confidence. I had to be aware of the possibility that participants do sometimes respond in a particular way because they want to please the researcher. However, I do not think that this was a point of concern in this research because the participants were telling their story and my approval or disapproval would not have been of any benefit to them. Whatever the participants divulged to me was therefore taken at face value and assumed to be "real".

I had planned that each interview would last about an hour. According to Gillham (2003) this is an ideal duration for an interview. The researcher is allowed enough time to put the participants at ease, to explain the purpose of the study to them again, to ascertain whether they are still willing to participate and to get the consent of the participants to have the interviews recorded. This time allocation also allows for the actual interview to be conducted and concluded at a leisurely pace.

At the time when I was handing out the consent letters I explained to each of the participants that I would like to record our conversations. The first participant had no problems with me recording the conversation. However the second and third participants were not comfortable with their interviews being recorded. In spite of my explanations and reassurances that the recordings will not be played to anyone and that they would be kept by the University of KwaZulu-Natal safely for five years and thereafter destroyed, they still did not acquiesce. I had no other choice but to take notes during these interviews. The transcriptions of these interviews had to be typed up as soon as possible after the interviews had been conducted in order for me to remember as much detail as I could. I have to admit that having experienced both recording an interview and making field notes during an interview, the former is far preferable. Recording interviews allows for continuity of the conversation, greater detail in the interview and more importantly eye-contact, encouragement and a natural feel about the interaction.

Another factor which could have impacted on the interviews was the time. I had planned that the initial meeting would last about an hour. During this time I again explained the purpose of the interview and the questions I would ask. I would also ask them permission to record the interview. I would only thereafter proceed with the actual interview. Later, when I had the transcripts, another meeting of about 30 minutes took place. This was to verify that the transcripts reflected the narratives correctly and to clarify any points which might have not been clarified during the initial interview session.

The required 90 minutes could have had a number of effects on the participants. The timing of the interview was very important. If the interview was scheduled during their working hours this could have had a negative impact on their participation such as working in the time whilst at the interview, having their salaries docked. Alternately if the interview took place after working hours, they might be tired and pressed for time because of the demands of their domestic obligations. Fortunately, and I can only put this down to the ethos of the school, the managers of the participants were more than willing to allow the participants time off work, without reprisal.

Selection of participants to be interviewed

I particularly wanted to study the group of group of women who work at the school because they tend to be forgotten because of the physical work which the male general assistance employed at school do. There are only nine female general assistants employed at school and the work they do makes for the smoother running of the school. I felt that because of the historical marginalisation of women, particularly African women in South Africa that their stories would be very interesting to tell. They would have been exposed to inferior quality schooling, limited access to higher education if they matriculated, and lack of choices in selecting employment should they not have matriculated, and lower remuneration than men for their labour without any recourse to address this discrimination. These women would have been teenagers when South Africa became a democracy. The participants did not seem to have benefitted from the educational opportunities which have been put in place in South Africa post 1994.

It is difficult for an individual researcher like me, working on a small scale research project to actually find a “true random sample” as Bell (1997, p.126) recommends. The group of women I spoke to have job descriptions which include the following: making tea and cleaning the staffroom and attached facilities, working in the school’s coffee shop, working in the laundry of the hostel, setting up venues for events held at the school, controlling the records of learners who are late for school, controlling the entry and exit of people on the school campus, security on the campus. Fortunately, according to Merriam, Le Compte and Preissle, Marshall and Rossman as cited in Henning (2005, p.71), this group of women qualify as a purposive sample because one can describe the selected group as “desirable participants.” These women are not representative of the general population of women and therefore the findings of this study will not be generaliseable. This purposive sample suited this study because it allowed me to look at certain theories and explore certain themes.

Ethical considerations

According to the Helsinki Declaration of 1972 ethical clearance has to be obtained from an ethics committee when people (or animals) are the target of research.

The relevant clearances have been granted by the University Ethics Panel, (refer to p.4).

The researcher has to bear in mind that the study should not in any way do harm or injustice to the participants according to Leedy and Ormrod (as cited in Maree, 2007). This implies that the researcher will at all times act with respect and sympathy when interacting with participants. Should the situation arise where debriefing after an interview is required then the necessary professional help must be sought.

When people are asked to participate in studies like mine it is very important that the researcher informs the participants of their “rights”. I informed the participants of the purpose of this study, their choice to participate or not and that I would not divulge their identities, their right to choose a pseudonym, and their right to withdraw from this study at any time without reproach. I realised that these women would be baring their souls to me. I reassured them that I would not break their confidence in me. One participant wished not to reveal her identity and I asked her to choose a pseudonym of her liking. Two participants chose not to have their interviews recorded. One of the women I approached to participate in the interview decided that she was not comfortable with being part of research. I think that possibly the most conflicting part for me during this research process was when one of the participants decided to withdraw from this study. Her explanation for unwillingness to participate appeared to be based on her beliefs and cultural customs. It is a known fact, according to Bell (1997, p.126), that researchers are reliant on the “goodwill and availability” of participants. Bell acknowledges that researchers may be forced to interview anyone who is available and willing to do so at the time of research.

Analyses of data

Reissmann (1993) is of the opinion that narrative analysis is almost intuitive and recurring themes will emerge. Yet, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.253) the prospect of comparing responses to the other participants in a study becomes a challenge. Probably because of the flexibility that semi-structured interviews allowed participants' responses vary vastly.

The analysis of the stories told during the interviews is not only an attempt to draw together diverse events, happenings and human actions into themes according to Polkinghorne (1995), but also to identify the relationship between the various themes. All this effort is expended in the hopes of achieving a coherent account of the data collected. Polkinghorne (1995, p.153) notes that during interviews "people strive to organise their temporal experience into meaningful wholes and to use the narrative form as a pattern for uniting the events of their lives." These are the recurring patterns which emerge.

When I analysed the stories which the participants told me the themes which emerged were inter alia single parent homes, the death of a loved one, incomplete schooling, culture and gender issues, urbanisation and unemployment, aspirations for the future and the desire to improve their education.

Themes can best be explained as sets of patterns. There appears to be no agreed upon method in narrative analysis to identify themes from patterns. According to Gillham (2003) organising the content of the interview could involve:

- sifting through the transcripts of the interviews and highlighting substantive statements
- identifying and organising the key points into categories or under headings.

This identifying process or categorising should be entered on an analysis grid. (Refer to appendix 4, p.102). This can be done either by ticking under the categories next to the participants' names or by writing down the actual words spoken under each relevant category. This will eventually form the basis of the final analysis and the writing up of the data collected. It should be remembered that it is a good idea to weave the actual words of the participants into the data because it indicates authenticity.

Not only did I have to identify common themes, trends and patterns but I had to be aware of my own subjectivity and bias when doing this. Dingwall is of the opinion that although interviews are "quick and cheap" they are "constructed events" and therefore the researcher must be aware of the role that she plays in accessing information (as cited by Miller, Dingwall and Charmatz, 1999, p.249). Neuman, (2000, p.75) says that, "...it is therefore important that the researcher takes time to reflect, re-examines and analyses personal points of view and feelings as part of the process of studying others."

Narrative analysis is a time consuming process. The transcripts of the interviews have to be scrutinised a number of times. The most obvious themes will jump at the researcher but more covert themes may take a little longer to identify.

When analysing the data the researcher also needs to take into account her subjective interpretation of the data and avoiding making inferences and generalisations which exceed the limits of the data collected.

Challenges

Fortunately I did anticipate and foresee a few challenges which I would have to address and overcome. According to Bell (1997) a major advantage of the interview process is its adaptability.

I am an educator at the school where these general assistants are employed. This could have had an influence on the interview process and also on the information elicited. I have known these women for a number of years. I do not have an employer/employee

relationship with them. We are colleagues. None-the-less I realised that a potential power position could come into play. I tried to alleviate this by asking the participants to choose the venue and the time which suited them for the interview. Some of these women live in the environs of the school.

It was interesting to see the venues which they chose for interviews. They all felt that they wanted to be interviewed on the school campus. Some of the venues did not lend themselves to conversations being recorded and/or privacy. So the interviews had to be re-scheduled and convened at a more suitable venue. I was really hoping that they would choose to conduct the interviews in their homes because it would have allowed me some insight into their home context/background. Unfortunately this was not to be. I think this was because I am a white middleclass woman and the participants would have been exposing too much of themselves without knowing much about me.

Another possible hurdle I would have had to overcome was the issue of language. The interviews were conducted in English – not the participants' mother tongue. As mentioned before, I have worked with these women for a number of years and I know that they are able to express themselves quite adequately in English. I know that when one speaks about emotional issues the need to express oneself in one's mother tongue becomes very real. Fortunately for me, when one of the women used her interview to reveal emotional events which she had carried with her since she was ten years old, her voice became emotional and quiet but she did continue to speak in English. Should she have resorted to her mother tongue, Xhosa, I would have encouraged her to do so. After the interview I would have had to get her consent to make use of a mutually acceptable interpreter, when the transcripts were typed up, to ensure the authenticity of the interview. Or later when she was not so emotional, I could have asked the participant to translate the Xhosa parts to ensure her anonymity and to respect her rights to confidentiality.

I was very careful not to foster any hopes in the hearts and minds of the participants. I did not want to in some way create the impression that I was offering participants a means to

further education and training opportunities as a reward for their participation in this study. The only deviation from this decision occurred when a participant revealed a great emotional trauma. After the interview I arranged for her to access counselling with the psychologist whom the school recommends to the educators, learners and parents. This psychologist, a woman, agreed to counsel the woman pro bono. Another participant requested help with her written English which I willingly offered. I also suggested that she join the school library to take out books to read which would also help her with her English.

The actual semi-structured interview was not a time consuming method of collecting data. I think that the bane of the interviews is taking notes as opposed to recording the interview and then the typing up the transcripts of the interviews. Getting the transcripts of the interviews could have been time consuming (should I have decided to undertake this task personally). Instead it was costly (because I made use of a professional transcript typist). I had to monitor carefully that the transcripts in fact reflected what was said during the interviews. It is imperative that the interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview has taken place, for the purposes of authenticity and accuracy.

I am aware that aspects of the interview which provided vital information was going to be difficult to bring out in the transcripts. These aspects included the non-verbal, facial and body expressions which occurred during the interview. Where appropriate, I tried to incorporate some of these expressions at the start of a question so that there would be a record of this in the transcripts. I made some brief notes during the interview. I had to bear in mind that writing notes could be distracting to the participant.

Interviews should have a spontaneous feel about them but in so doing they could easily be derailed, especially when the interview sets off in a direction which is not relevant to the intended study. During the interview I had to be wary and guard against this and bring the interview back on track.

Despite the fact that narratives accessed through interviews can and do have their limitations I am still of the opinion that this was the most suitable approach for the purposes on my research.

CHAPTER 4

Five narratives

In order to protect the identity of the participants and the people mentioned in their narratives I have changed their names.

Nana's story.

Nana elected to initially have the interview in the school's coffee shop. But because of the nature of coffee shops people walk in and out all the time and so there was no privacy. After some prompting from me Nana decided to have the interview in the reading room of the Media Centre at school. This move did ensure a certain amount of privacy but it was also interrupted because one of the librarians decided that she should enter the room, despite the request for privacy, to fetch something. I felt really bad for Nana because she was quite emotional at the time when the librarian entered the room. (I believe that as a result of Nana's experiences with this interview process two other participants in this study were influenced to decide to not have their interviews with me recorded).

Nana is a 24 year old who works in the coffee shop at school. She is the second child of four born to the Majados and the eldest daughter. She attended Winston Park Senior Primary School from Grade 1 to grade 7. "Well my dad's boss sent us there." This particular school is situated in an affluent, predominantly White suburban part of greater Durban. The family stayed on the property of the parents' "construction/businessman" employer. Mr. Majado, Nana's father's job entailed doing whatever his employer required him to do - a sometimes clerk of works, driver, interpreter, negotiator with the trade union, house sitter. Nana's mother was employed as a domestic worker until the time of her death. She died soon after the birth of her fourth child. Nana was only eight.

Nana speaks very fondly of a teacher at the school. “The only teacher who I could say was my favourite teacher was Mrs. Kotze. She actually did very everything for us. She gave me so many things, like uniforms...” (Nana became very emotional at this point.)

Nana attended West Ridge High School because in her own words she “...wasn’t as bright...” It appears that her father made the decision to send her to this school which traditionally was for children who had learning problems. This school made provision for learners to leave school with some type of skill e.g. panel beating, hairdressing etc. She attended this school until Grade 11 (without having to repeat any grade). She excelled in Hairdressing. “In Hairdressing I normally get 99%.” She also studied Travel and Tourism at this school and also fared well in this subject. “Because it is I found it actually more interesting for me. If I look there were more opportunities. It was one of the teachers at West Ridge who taught us Tourism. So he said because I am very good in Tourism and it wasn’t the only thing I could do. I could also do Hairdressing.”

As a result of the death of her mother when she was still at primary school many of the domestic duties fell on her shoulders because she was the eldest daughter. “Yes. I actually found it very hard. Because I couldn’t study. They cry. They need this and you actually can’t concentrate. Because if they you don’t do what they want my dad would come back and shout at me. It was like I was under too much pressure and I could actually say that I was under stress. Because I couldn’t concentrate. Um... I didn’t know what I did wrong or what I did right.”

Her father decided to withdraw her from this school at the end of her Grade 11 year, this despite the fact that she was chosen to be a prefect. Nana had hoped that her father would send her to Pinetown Technical College which was closer to their home in Gillitts. She could continue to study Travel and Tourism at this college.

“So as soon as I decided that, ‘Oh I am going to study’ my Dad says, ‘Oh no you can’t! You have to help me out.’ Because there is too many of us. There’s five.” Soon after her enrollment at the College and during her Grade 12 year she was forced to leave. The

reason given was "...so my Dad couldn't afford to take me further. Actually I was cut off." She had to look after her siblings. (Nana became very emotional at this part of the story).

"My mother passed away."

"So it's me and my dad. So, well as usually, ladies do not have that opportunity to study. So I did what my dad wanted me to do. Yes. I couldn't go over my dad's wishes as so many black people do. When their father tells their daughter what to do I have to do it."

She was forced to stay at home and run the household and look after her siblings and help them with their school work. "I now help my brother. My brother he is now in Grade 11 at Illanga High School. And well so it was my life..." (Her brother is at present attending the University of Technology in Durban). Whilst her siblings were at school she "...got a job. Which was, I was cleaning for my dad's boss. I worked there for two years."

Her father's boss relocated to Cape Town and the family were forced to relocate to Clermont, a township adjoining New Germany just outside Durban.

Nana found herself temporary employment at Pick 'n Pay. "I was a packer. They didn't pay much." It appears that whilst she was employed at Pick 'n Pay they recognised that she was a bright, quick learner. "Actually they did because they spoke to my dad. He said, 'that's none of their business.' " Pick 'n Pay wanted to offer Nana permanent employment and the chance to study. But , "...they would not do that without my dad's permission. So that's the problem." Her father did not see the value of educating her.

Whilst she was employed at Pick 'n Pay she met a young man there and became pregnant. "After the baby I stayed at home which was also very difficult because the father of the baby ran away so I have to look after the baby." She was very lonely and found herself isolated from her family. Her father was outraged that she had become pregnant as a teenager. "If I talk to...if I talk to my dad he would say something funny. Words like I mean he would insult me. It ended up like I had no family."

With a child to support and the alienation in the family she felt she needed to find employment. “Start again and look for the job. That how it ended up. But at the end of the day I knew that I was wrong ...So...”

In her quest to find employment she met Jabulani Sithole, a worker at school during 2002. “At first Jabu talked to me... like we started off being friends and then we ended off being boyfriend and girlfriend.” Jabulani suggested that she approach Wayne the caterer who supplied food to the school hostel dwellers and for school functions. “So one day I came here (to school) and I saw Wayne. Jabu introduced me to Wayne. And then after that I stayed there (on campus accommodation) with Jabu. No not long and then here comes a baby again!” (Her pleasure in this is obvious. Her whole face lights up.) “So then I fell pregnant while Wayne was thinking of employing me. So I said to Wayne, ‘No, I’ll think about it again next year.’ ”

Wayne agreed that they would talk about employing her the following year. When Wayne approached her again she was very keen but, “And then I said ...and talked to Jabu ...and he said, ‘No why you want the job from Wayne?’ And I said, ‘Well you can’t look after me for the rest of my life!’ And he said, ‘So why do you think I can’t? Because I am a man...!’ ”

She was not influenced by Jabulani’s attitude and took up an offer of work with Peppers and Pans. She started off washing dishes. Later Wayne said, “Because now you have learned something can you do something for yourself without me following you?”

She was delighted and accepted the opportunity. “So one day he challenged me. He made me cook the pies. So I cooked the pies and he says, ‘Wow!’ So the next day he says that I must cook that burgers eh ...which they call them patties. So he says then that ‘I can change you. No more washing the dishes now. You are going to do what the other staff do!’ ”

Wayne then expanded his business and took over the school coffee shop. Nana was then transferred to work there. “So he said, ‘Now, I am changing you to go to the coffee shop.’ So I asked him, ‘What is the coffee shop like?’ He said, ‘No, you will find out for yourself!’ ” She was very excited to have the work in the coffee shop. She worked with two other women and they have had a wonderful working relationship. “So I saw Chrissie there and Cynthia which worked out nicely.” The coffee shop has since been taken over by another company. They continued to employ Nana (but unfortunately Chrissie and Cynthia were retrenched). This new company did not find the coffee shop lucrative and have not renewed their contract with the school. Nana faces the prospect of unemployment again.

Her relationship with Jabulani has also proven to be problematic and she has moved off the school campus to Merebank which has proved to be a very dangerous area. She has been mugged and robbed en route to work and she and her children regularly hide under the bed when they hear gunshots being fired outside their house. She sees her accommodation as disastrous. The rift in the family still exists. “My dad does not have anything to do with me. Okay; he doesn’t care what I do now. So I decided it’s fine.” She admits that she needs to do something to change her life.

Nana’s future plans entail registering with Unisa next year to pursue her dream of studying Travel and Tourism. “I am actually thinking of carrying on next year. Furthering my studies. I will work and I will do it.” The determination and conviction in her voice is awesome. “I am old enough. I can’t actually work here for the rest of my life. So I have to think and see what I can do.” She hopes to open a Bed and Breakfast one day.

Gloria’s story

This interview was recorded.

Gloria, a 33 year old mother of four children, elected to be interviewed in one of the functions venues at the school. She is a friendly, hard-working woman who at the time of

the interview was greatly concerned about the well-being of some of the other general assistants who are employed by the school. A number of these people were facing possible retrenchment. The Governing Body of the school has decided that they wanted to out-source the maintenance and cleaning of the school. Gloria, who previously has been a victim of unemployment and retrenchment, is therefore empathic towards her colleagues' plight.

Gloria grew up in Mount Frere, Transkei. Her mother remained at home whilst her father worked in Johannesburg on the mines. She attended the local school having passed all her grades up to Grade 9 at Excemene Junior Secondary School. Then she attended the Senior High School. She is one of four siblings. Her elder brother, now "managing one of the companies in Joburg," completed his schooling and so did her eldest sister who is now married and stays at home. Her youngest sister died a few years ago. She looks after and supports her sibling's children.

It appears that when Gloria had completed Grade 11 she "fell in love with someone" and fell pregnant. Her mother's reaction was, 'No! I can't do anything now ... because you choose your life. You must raise your kid... your, your child. You must raise your, your child, yes.' Her father who was away working at the time of her pregnancy "was very angry about me what I did." It appears that although her mother wanted her to complete her schooling she felt that Gloria had taken a decision not to do so when she fell pregnant. Mr. Sembe was angry with Gloria and supported his wife's decision that their daughter had to face up to the responsibility of raising her child and forfeit school.

Mr. Sembe died when Gloria's son was a year old.

Gloria and her boyfriend raised their son. She stayed at home to raise her "kid" whilst her boyfriend went out to work. When her son was two years old her boyfriend died. Gloria faced great financial stress. She was still alienated from her parents because of her teenage pregnancy and she decided to relocate to Durban where her eldest sister was living. Her eldest sister was working as a domestic worker at the time. She stayed with

her sister for about two weeks before she found a job at the Kwikspar in Berea Road where she worked for six years. She worked at the “deli counter”. This position entailed serving customers and making burgers. She was retrenched in 2000.

Two years of hardship ensued because she was unable to secure another job. During this time Gloria met the father of her six year old daughter. However the relationship did not last. “No the other one was not good for me. I was not treat the way...” (sic). She then decided that perhaps she would be better off concentrating on finding a permanent job and to look after her children.

On the day that she was dropping off her curriculum vitae at all the restaurants in Musgrave Centre she met someone who worked at the school and he suggested that she approach the caterer, Wayne, for a job. Because she had experience in food preparation Wayne offered her the position of chef’s assistant. This entailed helping to prepare food for the learners who stayed in the hostel and also for school and external functions. She held this position for a year. During this time she learned that an Education Department paid position as a general assistant was available at the school.

She applied for this position and was successful. Her job now entails setting up the various school venues for functions. These functions could vary from school reunions, principals’ meetings, parents’ evenings, to coaches having a drink and snacks after a match. Amongst her many duties she has to see to she has to ensure that venues are clean, that there are enough chairs, tables, linen, toilet paper, crockery, cutlery etc. available for the functions and that the food arrives from the kitchen on time and is served as per request. This is no mean feat because at certain times of the year like Founders’ Day weekend there can be as many as ten different functions on the school campus. The nature of her job requires that she has to be on duty beyond the conventional 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. working day. She gets paid overtime and after the functions she is driven home to Cato Manor where she now stays with her four children. Gloria does not mind the extra work and overtime because, as a single parent of four, she needs the money to raise her and her sister’s children.

In 2005, after she had secured permanent employment with the Education Department, her life changed for the better. She had the reassurance of a secure job, with perks like a pension, medical aid, a possibility of a housing subsidy and all the school holidays. She regularly takes her two children and her deceased younger sister's two children to the "rural areas" of the Transkei to visit their maternal grandmother.

This job gave her the financial means to pick up her studies again. She enrolled at the Tekweni College at Congella and has completed five of her subjects to get her matriculation certificate. Her "vision" is, "One day I see myself I'm owning my own business. Catering! The way I love to cook the food." She has taken subjects which will stand her in good stead for running her business, namely Business Economics, Economics and Marketing. She has been experiencing difficulty with the subject English. At the end of the interview Gloria asked me whether I would help her to improve her English. I suggested that she join the school library to take out books to read. She also requested that I correct her written English. I have agreed to do this.

Lucy's story

This interview was recorded.

This participant elected to make use of the pseudonym Lucy. The interview took place in the recreational room of the hostel of the school. Lucy chose the venue. We sat at a table alongside each other. I had the presence of mind to take water, sweets and tissues with me to the interview. These items came in handy especially during the emotional moments.

Lucy is a pretty, reserved young woman of 26. I have always viewed her as a real lady. She is petite, well-dressed and very feminine. She likes to call everyone "darling". She works in the laundry at the school where she checks that the contents of the laundry bags

reflect what has been entered on the list accompanying it. She also undertakes minor sewing repair jobs like sewing on buttons and badges.

Lucy is also from Mount Frere, Transkei. She is the eldest child and has two sisters. Her parents were separated and she was raised by her grandmother and mother. She has no memory as a child of her father ever being home. Her father died soon after the birth of her ten year old sibling.

Her earliest memory is of begging her mother to get up early on a Sunday morning so that she could go to church. Lucy says that she gave her life to the Lord when she was in Grade two.

She was very happy at school but failed Grade 11 because of her poor mark in English. She excelled at Mathematics and Science which were taught by the principal of the school. He inspired her to believe that if she put her head into a task, she would be successful. She had aspirations of going to university to study either Engineering or Human Resources. She passed her Grade 12 “but not very well” and could not access tertiary education.

Despite the support from her mother and grandmother to try and improve her marks by returning to school there was no money for such indulgence. Lucy had to face the disappointment of not going to university and the prospect of abandoning her dreams in order to find employment. Her mother was unemployed at the time and felt that “it was expected” of Lucy as the eldest to find employment to support her mother and sibling who was still at school and the other about a year old.

She decided to go to Durban to find employment because job opportunities in the Transkei are very limited. Once in Durban she battled to find employment and had to settle for casual positions which paid as little as R20 or R 30 per day. This barely covered her rent and transport to work. She felt “so stranded in Durban.” After a long while she managed to find casual employment with the school caterer, Wayne. This meant that

whenever Wayne had a large catering project and he required more staff she would be employed.

She spoke to the Director of the hostel, Mr. Woods and “begged him” for a position. He was under the impression that she was permanently employed by the caterer. “God was good to me” and she was offered a temporary job in the laundry.

She and her family were overjoyed at her good fortune. However, “When I got my money I make sure that I don’t play with it.” (sic). She “pushed” her sister through high school and then got her into a “welding college.” Despite this qualification her sibling has been unemployed for four years.

She has also utilised her money to build a house, “...but is too hard. I was only build one room and I take furniture.” It appears that she has bought items on a hire purchase basis for this house.

When one of the general assistants at the school retired Lucy was offered this vacant position. She now has a regular income with the prospects of a medical aid, pension and housing subsidy and the school holidays. She has built her mother a secure house in Umzimkulu in KwaZulu-Natal and ensured that her sibling completed high school successfully and accessed some form of qualification. The youngest sibling is in grade two and has proved to be problematic. Sizwe keeps late hours, has stolen money and has threatened her mother with violence. Lucy has on occasion taken her sister into her home at Umlazi, a township south of Durban, but this has proved to be a disaster. Weekdays when Lucy was at work Sizwe, “ran around everywhere.” Lucy is desperate to find a solution which will ensure her siblings safety and education. Sizwe’s ill-discipline has had a physical affect on her mother’s health. Lucy fears that her mother will “have something like a stroke.” Lucy is sleep deprived because of worrying.

Lucy has been enrolled at a Pretoria based Bible College for the past three years. Because of her studies, progress and interest in her church they have permitted her to perform certain clerical functions like the unveiling of tombstones.

Lucy is childless and has no boyfriend. She is of the opinion that a boyfriend will pressure her to do things which she as a Christian will not be comfortable with. She wants no distractions from her religious studies and from helping to support her mother and also to complete the house which she is building.

She feels that because she has honoured her mother and siblings she has suffered as a person. She feels that because she has not had the money like other young women on our staff do, to spend on fancy hairstyles and smart clothes, this has put her at a disadvantage. Her ambivalence about men surfaces when she told me that men only like women who are well-dressed and have beautiful hairstyles. She is of the opinion that a boyfriend will “cost money” and will make her “do things” which are not compatible with her beliefs or her responsibility towards her family.

Cynthia’s story

This interview was not recorded.

Cynthia elected to be interviewed in the recreational lounge of the school hostel. We sat at a table which she had covered with a pretty tablecloth and pointed this out to me at the start of the interview. Cynthia was the one participant who appeared to be the keenest to speak to me. It was almost as if she was counting down the time towards the interview. Prior to the initiation of the interview she was very relaxed, like she always is. I was forced to take down notes. This was not an easy task at all. The moment Cynthia started talking she began to shake profusely. I felt that I had to put her at ease somehow and put my hand on her arm. This meant that I could not take down notes. She did not stop shaking until the end of the interview. During the interview she revealed events which she witnessed when she was ten which explained her nervousness and behaviour.

Cynthia has been associated with the school for at least ten years. She is a very friendly, helpful person. She always gave me the impression that she was quietly confident and easy going. Cynthia is 35 years old and was born in Tsolo, in the Transkei. She is the youngest, by a number of years, of three daughters. Both her elder sisters completed high school. One went on to become a secretary and the other a nurse. The mother was always a stay-at-home mother whilst her father worked as a builder wherever he could find work. This meant that he was often away from home. Cynthia recalls that when he was home he drank excessively and was always angry.

She was happy at school despite the fact that she had to repeat Grade 5. She really enjoyed English and History at high school. Her spoken English is in fact very good and she speaks without much of an accent. Unfortunately she did not pass Grade 12 and has never tried to pick up her studies. Cynthia's says her passion is music and talking to people. She had hoped to follow in her idol's footsteps (Noleen Maholwana Sangqu of SABC 3 *Talk* fame.) According to Cynthia, Noleen started off her career as a radio announcer/deejay on the local radio station in the Transkei. She still hopes that she can realise this dream one day.

Because she had failed Grade 12 her father told her that he did not have money to waste and she was unable to re-do her matriculation year. Instead, she went to Cape Town where a maternal aunt was working, to look for employment. She had hoped to earn enough money so that she could send this home to her mother. Her father, who at this stage had decided that he was too old to work, had come home to stay permanently. She was not successful in securing a job because she had no skills like typing or computers and she could only find temporary employment as a domestic worker. Whilst she was in Cape Town she gave birth to her first child, a son. After four years in the Cape she decided to relocate to Durban where her sisters were living.

Her aunt, Mayvis, who had worked at the school for more than thirty years, spoke to the then Head Master. She was offered a job in the school's coffee shop where she worked

very happily for a number of years. During this time she gave birth to her second son. The school then decided that they wanted to out-source the coffee shop and the new owners of the coffee shop did not want to employ her. She was retrenched much to the unhappiness of the teaching staff.

She found herself unemployed for seven months until the school offered her a four day job in the boarding school's laundry. Her job entails checking that the contents of the bags which will be sent to the laundry are in fact correctly recorded. When the clothes are returned she checks that this is in order and then places these in the individual learner's lockers for collection. She has managed to get work with one of the teaching staff as a domestic worker on her off days.

She has two children aged eleven and three. She is not married nor does she want to be.

When I was concluding the interview and thanking her for her participation and sharing her story, Cynthia interrupted me and told me that there is something that she wanted to say. She raised her face to the ceiling, closed her eyes, with tears streaming down her cheeks and in an altered voice so soft I could hardly hear what she was saying she told me that when she was ten she witnessed her father physically abusing her mother. This abuse of her mother apparently became a common occurrence. According to Cynthia she felt sure that this was the reason why she failed Grade 5 and later on her Grade 12.

She could not speak to anyone in her family or at school about these events and in fact I was the first person she has told. She felt that these events so influenced her that after much thought and discussion she decided that she was not prepared to trust any man. She only needed a man because she wanted to have children.

I was really shocked and taken by surprise to be the confidante of this woman. I also felt that in some way I had to do something to help her. I happened to have a friend who is a retired medical doctor who has done some counseling for the Open Door Crisis Centre and who happens to be from the Transkei originally. I contacted her and without

divulging what Cynthia had told me, asked her whether she was prepared to speak to Cynthia. She agreed to do so. I also spoke to the school's resident psychologist without divulging what Cynthia had told me and asked her whether she would be prepared to counsel Cynthia. She was also willing to do so. I gave Cynthia both these women's contact details. She made the choice to speak to the school psychologist. The last time I heard they were meeting regularly at the school on Friday afternoons.

Lindiwe's story

Lindiwe is a lively, intelligent woman who is 27 years old. She works at the school as a security guard. Her interview could not be recorded because of the nature of her job. There were just too many interruptions and the sound of the passing traffic interfered with the quality of the recording.

She works 12 hour shifts from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. or vice versa. When she is on duty during the day her job "officially" entails recording the entry and exit of visitors and learners of the school grounds, handing out late slips to learners who arrive at school after the bell has rung and controlling access to the on-campus parking area. But Lindiwe's job is much more than this. Mothers leave their children's forgotten sport kit bags, lunch, cellular phone, school fees with her. She knows every learner in the school and is trusted to deliver all and sundry to them. When she works night shift her duties alter slightly. Not only does she have to control the entry and exit of people and cars on to the school campus but she also has to walk around the school property at particular times to ensure security.

Lindiwe grew up "in the rural areas" of KwaZulu-Natal in the district of Melmoth. Her father she described as being a livestock farmer/businessman/landowner. Her mother did not work. She is of the opinion that the family were well off. She is the youngest of three children. She has an older brother who has taken over the family farm. He has also been fortunate enough to buy more land and the farm is flourishing. Her sister studied to become a nursing sister and now works at Life's Westville Hospital.

Lindiwe attended the local junior school and “really enjoyed” her days there. Because “there was no decent high school in the district” where the family farm is situated she, like her siblings, “went to Dlangezwa High School close to Empangeni”. Her parents arranged for her to board at the school. Once there she became a member of the debating team and also the choir. This meant that she would often not go home for weekends because she would be involved with extra-mural activities.

She “really enjoyed” the subjects English and Geography and wanted to become an educator when she left school. When Lindiwe was in Grade 11 a very charming, “handsome teacher came to teach History and Business Economics” at the school. It was customary for learners to clean the classrooms before or after school. This male educator, soon after his arrival, had no shortage in volunteers - all girls - to clean his classroom and of course, Lindiwe was one of them. She became pregnant by this educator.

She hid her pregnancy from her parents and returned to school at the start her Grade 12 year. At the first opportunity she got she approached the male educator and informed him that he was the father of the unborn child. He was outraged and accused her of plotting to destroy him and threatened to go the principal and her parents and expose her “as a troublemaker” and a loose woman. He later on had a change of heart. If she did not identify him as the father of the child he would ensure that she and the child would be cared for. Because pregnant learners at school were quite common, albeit not as common at Dlangezwa High School as elsewhere, the educators and the members of management did not appear to notice Lindiwe’s condition.

Desperate and ready to believe this man was going to deliver on his promises she left school at the end of the first term of her Grade 12 year. She had to break the news to her parents that she was pregnant. Lindiwe’s parents and siblings were outraged that she had betrayed them in this manner. Lindiwe assured her parents that the father of the child would contact them soon to make “arrangements”. Her father threatened to go to school

to find this educator and beat him up. Mrs. Zondo and her daughter managed to persuade him not to do so. The charming male educator never delivered on his promises.

In June of that year, Lindiwe gave birth to a boy but unfortunately this child died soon afterwards. She was devastated. Her world was upside down. She felt as if she “was going to go mad”. She felt despondent and even contemplated killing herself. After much thought and talking to her mother she came to the conclusion that her teenage pregnancy should not be the cause of her not completing school. Her parents, with the help of her sister, decided that she should be given another opportunity to try and complete her schooling.

Her parents and siblings decided that it would be best that she relocate to KwaMashu, a township North of Durban, where her sister was living at the time with an aunt. Lindiwe has managed to complete her Grade 12 through correspondence with Intec College.

Lindiwe’s aunt Miriam worked as a char in an office building. A security company based in Johannesburg called Axon, decided to open up a branch in Durban. They chose to have their offices in the building which Aunt Miriam cleaned. She approached the supervisor and told him of her niece, Lindiwe. Mr. Nel invited Lindiwe for an interview. She was employed as a guard.

She had to attend a month long course where her basic fitness was tested as well as her spoken English. She was taught basic self-defence, to recognise suspicious items, to role play potential situations like dealing with a “difficult” member of the public, how to communicate on various intercom, wireless and walkie- talkie apparatus. She was given a certificate to attest to her successful completion of this course. Lindiwe has been stationed at the school for about five years.

She still lives with her aunt in KwaMashu. She has been enrolled at Unisa for a Bachelor of Education for the last three years. It is her dream to become an educator.

Although she has a boyfriend named Bongani she has not succumbed to his demands that she should have his baby. She feels that she cannot disappoint her family in this way again. Besides she is determined that she will not lose sight of her goals because of a man again.

CHAPTER 5

Findings and conclusions

As a result of careful scrutiny and use of an analysis grid (refer to p.102) to identify common themes or categories a variety of recurring themes emerged. It is clear that some of the situational, dispositional and institutional barriers to education and training have been experienced by these women at one stage in their lives they have managed to address. It has to be noted that some barriers can be relevant to more than one category. I will discuss each in detail.

Situational

Examples of situational factors according to Ahl (2006) are lack of time and/or interest and not achieving the results.

The ideas which Maslow has put forward on human motivation have been the most obvious to pick out. Each of the participants attested to their desire to find permanent employment, a secure home and to look after their children, siblings and elderly parents. Four of the candidates, as a result of secure jobs, can now think about meeting their needs of self-actualisation in the form of completing their studies and achieving their dreams. Only one candidate has not shown any desire to achieve self-actualisation in the form of further education. I think that she was in desperate need of counseling because of the emotional scars she has carried with her since she was a ten year old. Once she has dealt with her childhood trauma she may be more open to this.

A great deal has been said about motivation in this study. I am not convinced that any one single theory of motivation operates at any one time in a person's behaviour. Maslow's theory that only one need at a time can be acted upon is surely too simplistic for the reality of the lives of these women. I feel more comfortable with Alderer's version on

human motivation that many needs exist simultaneously and that people can cope with these should they put their mind to it.

I am not personally convinced that all the assumptions/myths which Carré (2000), Eschenmann (2003), Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) and Tight (1999) have suggested with regard to adults as learners are in fact true of the participants. On the contrary, four of the participants have willingly embraced adult/continuing/lifelong education. Three of these women have undertaken studies in the hopes of advancing their careers and goals. Lucy has embarked on theological courses, not to advance her career as such, but I think for self-actualisation. These women have also shown that they have the ability to make good decisions about what they want to study and they know what they have to do to advance their careers. (The analysis grid on p. 102 has reference).

Four of the participants in this study have faced extended periods unemployment. When they have been employed they have had family obligations to fulfil which eliminated the availability of funds for education. If they had access to the funding available through the Skills Development Levy Act their lives could have changed. Instead of seeing only to their basic needs such as finding a secure house and putting food on the table, they could have experienced some advancement through pursuing education and training. From the interviews conducted for this study this last point turns out not to be the case.

As suggested by Mezirow's theory of transformative learning, all these women in this study have experienced events which forced them to reflect on and change the way they were thinking and behaving. Some of these crises were leaving school without completing Grade 12; as a teenage parent having to fend for herself and her child; the abandonment and anger of parents, facing the untimely death of a boyfriend and breadwinner; urbanisation, unemployment and poverty. It is interesting that four of the participants have come to the conclusion that it is the men with whom they have associated, be it fathers or boyfriends, who have been the cause of a great deal of

difficulty and hardship in their lives. They have all decided that perhaps, for the time being, they should concentrate on the well-being of themselves and their children.

Knowles's theory of self-directed learning has been very evident in all the participants who have decided to take up learning events. Perhaps this is as Knowles has suggested, that learning is more effective when learners take the first step. The women have found the institutions which offer the courses which interest them in the hopes of achieving their goals. It appears that the participants have achieved success in these learning events. "Learners are motivated by their own purposes rather than by external sources" as suggested by Knowles (1975, p.20).

Four of the women who participated in this study, have all found themselves in circumstances where they had to support their parents, or extended families who live in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal and the Transkei, and or siblings who are presently completing their schooling. Only two participants have fathers who are still alive. (Refer to grid analysis on p.102)

Dispositional

Examples of dispositional factors according to Ahl (2006) are age, lack of confidence to succeed in specific studies, negative school experiences and identifying with a group which does not value education.

All the participants were very aware of the impact that especially culture and gender had on their lives but this differed from individual to individual. It appears that the findings of researchers like Clark, de la Rey, Mama, and Ortner (all cited in Magwaza, 2006), have relevance to this study. They have all written about the concept of culture having conflicting meanings for women.

Nana had no choice but to accept her father's decision to withdraw her from Pinetown Technical College when she was in her matriculation year. She had to look after the family home and her siblings. This action by her father appears to uphold the findings of Greaney (1996). It is often the eldest daughters who are withdrawn from school to look after their siblings and to carry out domestic duties. Nana managed to get temporary work at Pick 'n Pay. Her supervisor realised that she was a quick learner who could think rationally. They approached her father and wanted to enroll her in a learnership. Her father refused his permission. Mr. Majado's attitude fits in with the suggestion which Ortner (as cited in Magwaza, 2006), made that within some African contexts not much value is placed on women's development.

Nana has accepted this because as a girl she felt that she had no right to hope that she would be educated. Her brother was afforded the opportunity to complete school. Her brother attended the then Durban University of Technology to study Marketing. Mama's (as cited in Magwaza, 2006), opinion that society has a different script for men and for women - that men have rights to recognition and resources which women do not have, appears to have application to this study. Mama's claim that where men have rights, recognition and resources, women are deprived of these is borne out in this study.

Nana had to bear the brunt of her father's disdain when she became pregnant. This was so unbearable that she left home. Her attitude was that she brought this upon herself because she had become pregnant and she had to deal with it as best she could. Nana has also been disappointed in the partners she has chosen for herself and presently has decided to focus on her and her children's future without a male companion.

Nana's story seems to support the ideas of researchers like Mama (as cited in Magwaza, 2006) and Hill Collins (as cited by Ken, 2007). It is predominantly the men in the South who decide what is acceptable practice for women under the guise of tradition and culture. This is merely a ruse to ensure their dominance, power and authority over women.

Lucy has experienced a very real lack of contact with men. She had no relationship with her father and grew up with her sister, mother and grandmother. She holds the opinion that men will not find her attractive because she does not wear smart clothes and have a fancy hairstyle. She has used her money to build a home for herself and her mother and to further her theological studies. Greaney (1996) found that sons usually look after their parents and that there is a widespread belief that money should not be wasted on educating daughters. As Lucy came from a family of girls and she was the eldest it became her duty to support her mother.

Cynthia used the interview session as an opportunity to release emotion. Cynthia is a product of an abusive, alcoholic father and a submissive mother. She has carried this legacy with her for 25 years. Witherall and Noddings are quoted as saying, "... telling stories can be cathartic and liberating" (Dhunpath, 2000, p.546). She does not trust men and has not warmed to the idea of permanent male company. She is very suspicious of men and prefers to live alone with her two sons.

Gloria, despite her teenage pregnancy, the death of her boyfriend at such a young age, and enduring two lengthy stints of unemployment, appears to be the most unwilling to be stereotyped. She has grabbed all the opportunities that have come her way since she has arrived at school. She refuses to be categorised as part of an in or out group hence her admission that the father of her last born child did not treat her well so she banished him from her life. She is raising four children on her own. Her actions seemingly uphold the sentiments of hooks (as cited in Ken, 2007). She argues that people who have been oppressed by gender, race and class must recognise that this actually holds advantages for them. It gives them the opportunity to use this experience to speak out. Smuts, as noted by Magwaza (2006), has also found that urban women in South Africa are aware of their subordinate positions as dictated by their cultural heritages and are beginning to challenge and redefine factors which add to oppressive behaviour towards them.

Lindiwe, as an adult woman, appears to have made a happy compromise between the events of her earlier experiences with men and her life.

Three of the participants originated from the rural areas of the Transkei, one from KwaZulu-Natal and one from the outskirts of Durban. They all have siblings. Lucy is the only participant who is the eldest and who has only sisters as siblings. Three of the participants' mothers worked as domestic workers. Gloria and Lindiwe had stay-at-home mothers. Four of the participants had fathers who were involved with the family to a certain extent. Nana's father stayed with the family on his employer's property. Gloria's father worked away from home but returned annually on leave from the mines. They also kept in contact by letter. Cynthia's father was a builder and would live wherever his work took him. He returned to the family home during the December to January builders' leave period. She remembers him as drunk and physically abusive towards her mother. One participant, Lucy, has no recollection of her father. Her parents separated when she was very young and she has no memory of him living with her mother and the family. (Refer to the analysis grid on p.102)

Lindiwe, on the other hand, came from a stable home where they were not struggling financially. Like Cynthia, she is the youngest child of the family.

It appears that the absence of their fathers in the home has made some of the women feel that they can also raise families without a male featuring prominently.

Three of the participants are themselves single parents. All of the participants expressed their general unhappiness about African men and the way they have treated them.

One participant, Cynthia, indicated that she never really wanted a man permanently in her life because of the way her father treated her mother. She only needed a man because she wanted to have children. She has an eleven year old and a three year old. She is raising her two sons on her own.

Another participant, Gloria, spoke very fondly of her deceased boyfriend and her subsequent disappointment in the types of men she has met in Durban. She is raising her and her deceased sister's children on her own. The father of her second child did not treat her with the respect she deemed fit and she got rid of him.

The father of Nana's eldest child "ran away" when he heard that she was pregnant. Her daughter is now eight. The father of her second child, a boy, works at the school. They are no longer together because "he is like a dog and I am like a cat. The way we fight all the time." She has moved out of the school accommodation to raise her children on her own.

Lucy has chosen to remain chaste because of her religious convictions. She also has decided that her money would be more wisely spent paying for her and her siblings' education, on building and furnishing her mother's and her own house instead of spending it on clothes and hairstyles to attract men.

Lindiwe was impregnated by an educator at the school which she attended. He reneged on his promises to look after her and their child. The child died soon after birth. Although she has a boyfriend she has no intention of settling down. She has set her mind on completing her education.

Three out of the five women namely Gloria, Nana and Lindiwe, interviewed for this study attested to the fact that they became mothers as adolescents. This resulted in Gloria's parents expressing their disappointment in her behaviour and asking her to leave their home. She went to stay with her boyfriend. He looked after her and their son until his death two years later. Gloria's relationship with her family improved after the birth of her child and even more so when her boyfriend died. She visits her widowed mother annually. She takes all her children along to visit their grandmother.

Nana's father spent his time verbally abusing her and making her life a misery. She eventually felt obliged to leave her parental home. She still to this day does not have a good relationship with her father.

Lindiwe's parents were originally outraged by her pregnancy but supported her through this episode in her life. They felt a great deal of compassion towards her especially after her child died. She has a good relationship with her parents.

In the age of information, and access to all kinds of government roll-outs, like the contraceptive pill, condoms and family planning clinics. It is unnecessary that about 71 000 women (as suggested by Lehola, 2008), become mothers as teenagers. Lehola (2008) has indicated that up to 25% of young women in Africa become mothers as teenagers. These findings are of real concern to me.

Three of the five participants in this study do not have National Senior Certificates which means that they have not and will not easily access jobs which provide the type of on-the-job training which will result in qualifications and progression to more skilled jobs. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (2008) has found that 61% of the unemployed have school qualifications lower than a Grade 12. Four of the five participants in this study have endured extended bouts of unemployment. (Refer to the analysis grid on p.102).

All of the participants have experienced Mezirow's 'disorienting dilemmas' that is something happened which made them realise that what they have always assumed to be true and what they have experienced, heard or read no longer appears to be so. Examples are realising that one's father is an abusive alcoholic instead of a loving and caring provider for the family and choosing to talk about it; moving to the city assuming easy employment opportunities and facing unemployment; deciding that the father of your child, despite being a good provider, did not respect you as a woman and choosing to end the relationship. It is evident that the participants have reviewed their assumptions by reflecting, questioning and examining the origins and the consequences of these. They have opened themselves to opportunities to change the ways they thought and behaved.

From the discussions held with the five women, four have indicated that they were motivated to improve their skills or qualifications and three have embarked on learning activities to achieve this. Only one candidate has indicated that she has no interest in accessing any further learning. She is probably the ideal example of associating learning as a negative experience, having failed two grades at school. Accessing learning events has become possible for three of the participants only because they have steady employment. They now have the means to fund their studies themselves.

The interviewed women in this study do have goals which they want to achieve especially with regard to their “career” advancement. These goals appear to be supporting Maslow’s ideas of self-actualisation. But, unlike Maslow’s proposition that lower level needs need to be met before higher ones can be addressed, these women have had to deal with many needs simultaneously. Three participants in this study, in particular, have shown elements of Knowles’s self-directed learning. One has embraced courses in theology, the other commerce and another has studied through Unisa (University of South Africa) for the last three years.

Institutional

Examples of institutional factors according to Ahl (2006) are the lack of educational opportunities at work, the lack of information about what to study, the lack of finances, use of inappropriate teaching methods for adults and the lack of opportunities when qualified.

What role, if any, has legislation played in making learning and skills upgrades available to these women? Or is the opinion of Cleaves Mosse (1993) correct? Legislation is good but not the only solution. Of greater importance is the perception of women in society which needs to be challenged and changed. Is it because of ignorance or a lack of access to finance, as Indabawa and Mpofu (2006) have suggested, that the participants have not pursued formal learning opportunities? Or is it because South Africa, to date, has no

“organised department” which encompasses all aspects of adult education to meet the needs of adults, as Walters (2006) suggests.

As a result of subject choices at school, four of the participants in this study did not have competencies to allow them access to institutions of education nor did they have skills to access the job market easily. The lack of a national adult education advisory structure which could offer assistance and guidance to adults to access information about study options open to them is very concerning. The institutional barriers to learning as identified by Ahl (2006) and the situational barriers as identified by Indabawa and Mporfu (2006) are clearly shown. The possibility exists that the women may undertake courses which may not serve their needs at all. This will depend on their interpretation of their needs which may not be economic. It appears that some of myths of adults as learners as suggested by Carré (2000), Eschenmann (2000), Tight (1999) and Jamine (as cited in Ross 2008) are correct. Adults do not always make good decisions about their learning paths.

Of concern to me is that most of these women studied “inappropriate” subjects whilst at school. It is surely a travesty of justice when a person studies and passes Mathematics and Physical Science at Grade 12 level only to work as a seamstress as in the case of Lucy. She has undertaken further studies in theology in the hopes that the Methodist Church will eventually allow her to perform cultural/religious rituals. She is aware that at present there is no prospect of permanent employment with this organisation. So she continues to complete courses in theology for the love of it.

Nana who had studied Hairdressing at West Ridge High School in Durban had the opportunity to eke out a livelihood by plying this trade. However, despite the fact that she already has viable skills which she could exploit, she has set her heart on buying and running a Bed and Breakfast. She thinks that the way forward to achieve this dream is to complete a diploma in Travel and Tourism through Unisa. From personal experience I have to confess that this aspect of service/hospitality provision, namely owning/running a

Bed and Breakfast, has to be one of the most challenging and costly endeavours for an individual to break into and to make a livelihood.

Gloria maintains that her love for food has led her to what she really wants to do in life, namely to cater. With this in mind she has studied subjects towards her matriculation which will help her in her future planned business. She hopes to cater for our school and realises that she will have to improve her spoken English if she is to liaise with educators and parents with regard to catering requirements.

It would appear that Cynthia has carried too many “wounds” as Wojecki (2007) would describe it, having failed two grades whilst at school. Cynthia is of the opinion that, because of her exposure to physical and alcohol abuse from ten years of age until she was twenty, she associates school or learning experiences with failure. Ecclestone (2007) has suggested that adults’ learning identities are moulded by childhood and subsequent learning events. Cynthia was the only candidate who did not express any desire to complete her schooling or to access any other formal learning. (Refer to the analysis grid on p.102). I hope that once she has had the chance to speak through her “issues” with the school psychologist she will change her mind.

Lindiwe has enrolled with Unisa and has completed a number of modules towards the completion of her Bachelor of Education.

The three women who came from the Transkei all thought that employment opportunities would be greater in the cities of Cape Town and Durban. They all stated that job opportunities in the Transkei were almost non-existent. According to Lewis (2002) job creation in the semi-skilled and unskilled labour category is inadequate in the rural areas. However, all the participants in this study spoke of periods of unemployment especially as a result of urbanisation

Because of a lack in marketable skills, four of the women had to resort to accepting poorly paid jobs like domestic work or casual labour. Lindiwe was fortunate that her

parents were able to pay for her to get her matriculation through correspondence which allowed her to access a job which provided on-the-job training. Wayne, the owner of the catering company Peppers and Pans and the school caterer, has been instrumental in bringing four of these women to the school campus and providing them with temporary employment and in the case of two of them they have been offered permanent employment with the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department. Because of the financial constraints of unemployment which four of the participants experienced their sole purpose was to find a secure home for their families and to provide them with food. Pursuing their educational ideals was of no importance at this time in their lives. (Refer to the analysis grid on p.102).

Conclusions

In this study I looked at what motivates adults to learn and the barriers associated with further education and training which five African women working as general assistants at a school have experienced. I looked at the origins of the barriers which the participants identified through the telling of their stories about their school and work lives.

To conclude this study I will have to reflect on the key research questions.

What motivated the women in this study to take up formal learning?

I am of the opinion that, in order for motivation of adults who live in the South to be fully understood, more research has to be conducted. As Brookfield (1995) has suggested more cross cultural research should be conducted so that the dominance of the North's opinion is not the only source of reference. The differences of class, cultures, ethnicity, personality, the way people think, styles of learning and learning patterns, life experiences and gender among adults living in the South lack research.

I found it quite surprising that three of the participants in this study have in fact become involved in improving their education despite the barriers they have had to deal with. These women shared with me the reasons why they did not complete their initial education. These were amongst others forced removal from school to attend to the domestic duties in the home as a result of a parent's death, caring for younger siblings, repeated failure at school, and adolescent pregnancy. They also provided me with the reasons why they wanted to further their education. The belief exists among some of them that a Senior Certificate will allow them the chance to fulfil their aspirations. Their aspirations do not just revolve around providing basic needs such as food, shelter and security for themselves and their children but also becoming successful businesswomen, or qualifying as an educator or becoming a spiritual leader in the community and church. Their determination to succeed is awesome.

I can not help but feel that if there were an established adult education department which existed to help all adult learners in all aspects of the situational, dispositional or institutional barriers many more people, especially women, would be involved in education/learning/training events.

I am of the opinion that the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department should approach the general assistants in their employment in order to have their skills formally recognised so that they can use these credits to put towards certificates and/or diplomas. This would make an interesting topic to explore for a doctoral thesis.

What barriers do working African women face in accessing formal educational opportunities?

The barriers which these African women faced were challenging and difficult to overcome. They faced:

- moving from the Transkei and rural KwaZulu-Natal to Durban;
- the inability to find permanent employment for long stretches of time;

- hours of employment and lack of support of studies by employer;
- having to complete their initial schooling before accessing courses specific to their desired careers;
- the belief in their own ability to succeed;
- safe, secure and affordable accommodation close to good schools and close to their place of employment;
- raising their children without the financial support and presence of their children's fathers and or other family members;
- the where and when of the courses selected to study;
- finding the extra money to fund their formal learning endeavours;
- to finding the time as working mothers to study.

Did these barriers result from their initial schooling or from (an)other source(s)?

I think that most of the barriers the participants have faced have their origins from not completing their initial schooling. If the participants did not have their initial schooling interrupted because of teenage pregnancy or poor results they may have had the opportunity to realise their ambitions careerwise. However, I am of the opinion that the the greatest stumbling block for the participants would have been lack of access to funding of their studies.

During the interviews conducted with the participant group of women in this study they all revealed that they have encountered most, if not all, of the barriers to embracing formal learning events. It seems like a travesty of justice that in the "new" South Africa the transformation which was promised in political parley appears not to have transpired. Changes in legislation and policies may have occurred but, real, effective, affordable, accessible programmes addressing the needs of ordinary people, like the participants in this study, are conspicuously absent. It is no secret that the Department of Education and The Department of Labour face many challenges still.

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APPENDIX 1

14 Park Cliff
422 Currie Road
Musgrave
Durban
12 February 2008

Dear Sir

I would like to inform you that I will be interviewing some employees of Durban High School. I am collecting data for my dissertation entitled: *Narratives of barriers to formal education opportunities of female general assistants at a Durban school.*

Interviews will take place after working hours. I will explain to the group of women the purpose of these interviews, their choice to participate or to withdraw at any stage should they have a change of heart and that I will not divulge their names, should this be their choice. I will ask them for their signed consent.

I thank you for your support in this regard.

Yours faithfully

J.S. du Preez

APPENDIX 2

14 Park Cliff
422 Currie Road
Musgrave
Durban
14 August 2008

Dear

I am studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and part of this course is to research a topic. I have chosen the women at this school because I am really interested in your stories about your lives whilst you were at school and what happened to you after you left school. You can check with my supervisor, Anne Harley at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus (033 2606269) if you want to make sure about this study.

Should you not want people to know your identity I will also ask you to choose a name other than your own so that your identity will be secure. Only you and I will know who you are. I will ask you a few questions about after you left school and about your work now and whether you are at present studying. This will take about an hour of your time. I do not think that I will have to interview you more than twice over a two week period.

I will record (on a tape recorder) our interview because it will be easier for me to speak to you and to write very accurately about your story. If you do not feel comfortable about our conversation being recorded I will make notes of our conversation. When I have written your story I will destroy the tape or the notes of your story. The interview will be

typed up so that I can use your story. These papers will be kept in a safe place and will eventually be shredded.

I want you to know that you do not have to talk to me. Even if you want to do so now but later on you decide that you do not want to have your story told you can withdraw and I will not use your story. I will not be cross with you if you do this.

This letter is to show that you have given me permission to talk to you and you understand what I will be doing with your story.

Yours faithfully
J.S.du Preez

Informed consent document.

I, _____

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time should I wish so.

Signature: _____

Date : _____

APPENDIX 3

The Instrument: The Interview.

Welcome to this interview.

Thank you for agreeing to speak to me.

If you have any doubts about this talk that you and I will have, just tell me and I will respect your wishes and I will stop.

I would like to record our conversation.

This will make it easier for me to write more accurately about your story.

I will also be able to listen to you instead of writing down everything that you say and not look at you.

Do you agree to talk to me with this machine on?

If the participant says no I will switch the tape recorder off and make field notes.

I am going to use what you tell me for my university work and I will not use your name if you do not want me to.

Instead I will use another name so that no one will know that you told me these things.

Choose a name for yourself if you do not want me to use your real name.

Name selected.

I am first going to ask you a few questions about your life, and then about your education, and then about the work you do now.

There is no right or wrong answer.

If you don't feel comfortable answering a question, please tell me. OK?

Do you still feel all right to talk to me?

Interview begins.

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

(I hope that the participants will tell me how old they are, the number of children she has, if any, what her family background is like etc. if this is not divulged I can ask further questions.)

I will then summarise briefly what was revealed to affirm what the participant has said.

Now I am going to ask you about your school experiences.

2. Tell me about school?

(I hope that the participants will tell me about the area they went to school, their friends, how they got to school, their favourite teachers and subjects, why this was so etc. Should this not be forthcoming I can ask further probing questions.)

Depending on the response in question 1 I will ask:

3. What was your mother's/ grandmother's/ aunt's / sister's (or other dominant female in the participants life) attitude toward you going to school? Or what was your father's/ grandfather's/ uncle's/ brother's (or other dominant male in the participant's life) attitude toward you going to school?

(Depending on their response to male/female attitude to girls acquiring education within their homes I can ask more probing questions like: Why they held these attitudes, how did they become aware of these how did these attitudes influence their own ideas, decisions and activities.)

I would now like to talk what you did after you left school.

4. Tell me what you wanted to be when you completed school?

Should the information as to why or why not this/these dream(s) was/ were not achieved not be provided in their narratives I can ask further questions This would hopefully elicit data about why they left school -if they did not matriculate, whether they subsequently have tried to go back to school or study further, and or what has prevented them from doing so, and how these challenges have affected their lives.)

I will then summarise briefly what was revealed to affirm what the participant had said.

Thank you for your honesty. I really appreciate this.

5. Can you please tell me about your work experiences?

(Here I would like to know about the jobs they have had, what the positions entailed, whether these jobs provided/ included skills upgrades, whether they participated in training/learning/ development, if not why not and how they came to be at this school.)

A brief summary of the overall interview will be made.

6. What would you still like to tell me about yourself that we have not spoken about today?

I thank you for your time. I really appreciate you talking to me.

If the participant requested anonymity at the start of the interview...

7. Would you still like me to keep your name a secret?

After the interview is typed up I would like to meet with you again.

I want make sure that I have written your story correctly.

You have helped me a great deal.

Thank you.

Appendix 4: Analysis Grid

Categories

Name of participant	Age	Single parent homes	Family unit As child	Life tragedy	School success	Highest grade passed	Aspirations	Teenage pregnancy	Culture and gender
Nana	26	♂	Father Brother and sister	Mother died when she was 8	Prefect Hairdressing Travel and tourism	Gr 11	Travel and tourism	16	Removed from school to look after siblings. When offered further training father opposed Father verbally abused her when she became pregnant Accepts that she is on her own and must look out for herself now
Gloria	33	♀	Brother Sister Gloria Sister(deceased)	Father died when baby was 2 Youngest sister died		Gr 11	Caterer	17	No longer welcome at home when became pregnant
Lucy	26	♀	Lucy Sister sister	No interaction with me Reborn Christian at 8	Maths and Science	Gr 12	Engineer or Human Resource officer		Eldest offspring supported mother build house pay for siblings to complete school and to access some skills training
Cynthia	35	♀	Sister Sister Cynthia	Witnessed her mother being physically abused by father	English and History	Failed and repeated Gr 5 Did not pass grade 12	Radio announcer /deejay		Father dominant. Feared father and avoided him. Father abused mother and alcohol.
Lindiwe	27	♀♂	Brother sister Lindiwe	New born baby died	English Geography	Left school in Gr .12 but completed by correspondence	Educator	17	Nothing identified

Name of respondent	Present position	Skills training	Family unit	Education plans	Motivations for this	Future plans	Unemployment	Urbanisation
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Analysis grid

Name of respondent	Present position	Skills training	Family unit	Education plans	Motivations for this	Future plans	Unemployment	Urbanisation
Nana	Wairton Fast food chef	On the job training At Kwikspar. Peppers and Pans Catering	Daughter Son (two different fathers) No man in her life now	Diploma through UNISA Travel and Tourism (2009)	Good school for children. University fees	Start a B&B		
Gloria	Venues supervisor	On the job training Peppers and Pans Catering	Son Daughter (two different fathers) Supports niece and nephew No man in her life now	One more subject to complete Gr 12 (2009)	Good school for children. University fees	Functions co-ordinator	Yes- after death of boyfriend and retrenchment	Transkei to Durban
Lucy	Seamstress	On the job training Peppers and Pans Catering. Mothers' committee taught sewing skills	No children. No man in her life now.	theological studies and C complete studies	To live out her promise made when she was 8	Complete and furnish house	Upon arrival in Durban	Transkei to Durban
Cynthia	Laundry assistant domestic worker	On the job training From Lucy	(Two children aged 11 and 3 two different fathers) No man in her life now	To be a deejay.	Eliminate retrenchment Good school for children Build house	No plans.	Upon arrival in Cape Town and Durban Also as a result of retrenchment	Transkei to Cape Town to Durban
Lindiwe	Security guard	Attended a moth long course in preparation of present job	None	Educator	Complete her B. Ed and to teach	Make amend for the mistakes of her youth	None	Melmoth to Durban