TEACHERS TEACHING IN ADVERSARIAL CONDITIONS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Moses Krishnamurthi Varathaiah declare that

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(ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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This dissertation is submitted with / without my approval.

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Professor Labby Ramrathan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the concepts of adversity, the facets of adversity and the nature of adversity and how teachers cope under these adversarial conditions. Adversity is a phenomenon that is challenging to grasp yet it affects people daily. In this study, "those people" are the teachers whom I have engaged with. Adversity comes in different forms and under different circumstances and is very much a part of every persons life. These forms include physical structures, emotional inter-relationships and social interaction with teachers, learners and the community. Adversity in the context of this study means to have a great measure of misfortune, hardships, difficulty, danger, harsh conditions and hard times as these have negative connotations to it.

The participants in this study share, impart, reveal and disclose both their personal experiences at home, with their families and professional experiences at school with the main stakeholders being the learners. The professional experience of adversity includes teacher intensification, for example, more administrative work, large class sizes, teaching second and third language learners, lack of promotion opportunities, educators with HIV/ AIDS, lack of educational resources such as computers and overhead projectors, changing curriculum, multicultural educational challenges, more meetings during school time and school fund raising. Educators salaries and their qualifications were another issue that needed to be addressed. Teachers reflect on their efforts to pursue tertiary studies, the cost they have incurred and the sacrifices they have made to achieve their diplomas and degrees. With this in mind teachers find that the remuneration they receive for the sacrifices they have made certainly do not match the efforts of their endeavors. Years of studying and the intellectual capacity needed to acquire a teaching diploma and degree remain unrewarded. Teachers continue to compare the salaries of employees in the private sector to those of the public sector. Teaching therefore, seems to more of a service than that of a 'job'. The financial rewards for teachers continue to allude them. The state does not provide sufficient incentives for teachers to remain in the profession. Therefore, many teachers look for 'greener pastures' .Teachers find employment outside the teaching profession in the private sector or even

emigrate to cities like London to seek better financial rewards. Teachers acknowledge that to teach, one requires passion and dedication and zeal for it.

This study concentrates on how teachers cope, manage, handle and deal with such conditions in the school setting. These conditions include high volumes of administration, learner apathy, miscommunication with senior management and the employer, handling difficult learners and parents and coping with limited resources. This study reveals how teachers survive these difficult conditions. It further explores the reasons and factors that motivate these teachers to continue teaching.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Preface: Adversity. Can we overcome the challenges in education?

I start this dissertation with an extract from my interviews with one of my respondents. I adopt this unconventional approach in order to highlight that under adverse teaching conditions, I was heartened to find teachers who still care and are prepared to make sacrifices for children and education at large. The following narrative, is the story of Kay, one of my participants who currently is a senior teacher at Parkin Primary. She has taught for thirty-six years and has acted as the Junior Primary Head of Department.

Her story reflects her decision to become a teacher despite the challenges she faced. She reflects on her school career and the influence of an educator in her life. She too, wanted to make a difference in the lives of the pupils under her care. This is her story.

Today, Kay[1] reflects on her own life. She recalls Monday, 3 March 1958 when she was in class two. Kay was hungry, cold and in pain. She left home very early that morning without having breakfast, with nothing in the pantry for lunch. The heartache, trauma, sadness, distress and anguish that accompanied her hunger cannot really be explained. Kay attended school with the intention and main purpose of receiving a sound education. However being physically distressed with hunger she had no thoughts of learning arithmetic and English. Mrs Perumal[2], the patient teacher with a heart of gold empathised with me. "Why are you so inattentive today, Kay?" she said to me. "I am hungry, cold and in pain," she said. Mrs Perumal reached out to Kay taking special care to ensure that Kay's physiological needs were met. "I will never forget Mrs Perumal." Kay said. "She was a 'special teacher'. Caring teachers, who in the face of adversity display their humanity, are worth their 'ounce of gold.' "Today, I have become a 'caring teacher' just like Mrs Perumal, who in the face of adversity, such as having an overcrowded class,overburdened administrative work, and the meagre salary of an educator) take time off to

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[1] Names of the participants have been changed in order to protect their identity

[2] Pseudonyms of other characters in this study are also used.

show that they care." In the face of hardships, difficulties and hard times, Mrs Perumal, my class two teacher showed concern and so do I.

Kay realised that it was the timely intervention of Mrs Perumal teacher that changed her thought process. Thought process in this context refers to teachers thinking about their craft always. Great teachers explore ways of how to go the extra mile to help indigent learners who struggle emotionally, academically and lack confidence. She realised that although her situation was not ideal, this particular teacher played a significant role in her life to change that thought process. Kay's thinking was that if this teacher played this life changing role, she too wanted to be someone that had a positive influence on the lives of learners.

Kay's story is not an isolated singular story. Several teachers that I have been acquainted with have similar stories. This study takes, as its core, the experiences of such teachers, who, despite the difficulties they experiences in their teaching life, still have the tenacity, care and will to go on teaching. Hence the focus and purpose of this study is to explore the adversarial teaching contexts that teachers face and how some teachers, despite these contexts, continue to offer their caring professionalism in promoting teaching and learning. Caring professionalism simply refers to teachers who have a compassionate heart to aid the less fortunate to fulfil their dreams. In addition, caring professionalism, are teachers who show compassion and empathy. Teachers display their expertise, skill, proficiency and specialisation in their field.

Included in my study is literature on teacher attrition and the morale of teachers that suggests teachers are leaving, and wanting to leave teaching because of reasons such as; HIV –AIDS, (Human Immuno Virus- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) low teacher morale, job dissatisfaction, work stress, career pathing   promotion possibilities and teacher intensification in respect of administrative work. (Badcock-Walters, 2001; Ramrathan, 2002, Human Science Research Council, 2005). The reasons presented for wanting to leave teaching suggests an adversarial nature of the current context for teaching. Despite these adversarial contexts for teaching, the majority of teachers continue to teach . The focus is on understanding why teachers continue to teach despite these adversarial contexts ..

Adversity through times of change

"I am not sure how much longer I was willing to face the insurmountable and overwhelming burden of added administration, learner apathy, miscommunication with senior management and feelings of dissatisfaction that I experience on a daily basis. The school does not want to make improvements to bring about quality education." These are the words of one of my participants that give voice to the title of Chapter One, Adversity through times of change.

In order to get a better understanding of this study, there is a need to have a clear understanding of what adversity is all about. Adversity, according to Funk and Wagnalls (1985, p.12) Dictionary is a condition of hardship or affliction. Using this broad based definition, adversity in the context of this study means to have a great measure of misfortune, hardships, difficulty, danger, harsh conditions and hard times. The understanding for the purpose of this study has been elicited from interpretation of the various literature that I have consulted and which are presented in more detail in the literature section of this study. Bixler (1952, p.1), argues that "When it is examined carefully the load of adversity sometimes reveals its jewels to the observant eye." But only after one has gone through the adversarial conditions do we find the negative connotation turning into positive inspiration. And it is here that this study takes off. According to Green, Levine and Associates (1985:1), "There is one future. Opportunity is implicit in adversity. Hard times have produced some of education's greatest stories." It was envisaged that through this study, further great stories of teachers have shed light on and perhaps increase the inspirational levels of teachers to go on doing what they enjoy doing.

In her book on "…What keeps teachers going in spite of everything" Nieto (2003) states that despite the adversity that teachers face, one of the most important reasons that teachers remain in the profession was that students themselves and teachers made a contributory, meaningful and worthwhile endeavour to future generations. She adds that all teachers are researchers.This was good as all teachers need to learn if they are to improve their careers and the need for them to adapt to the changes that they face every day. Teachers can leave the profession and move to greener pastures but despite all the challenges they face, teachers have remained in the profession.

Neito (2003) states that, "Teaching is the loneliest of profession." Neito(2003) adds that teaching consists of dealing with learners / pupils. At times there was minimal connection between

colleagues during the workday. Teachers are so engrossed in running from one task to another that they do not have enough time to speak to their colleagues. Reflections of the day only take place in the comfort of their own homes.

'In search of home'-practices of the self in selected teacher narratives, Pillay and Govinden (2007) examine how some teachers work creatively in their adversarial constraints of our South African education system. Adversarial issues such as teacher attrition where low morale, work load, job security and teacher migration suggests something of the dire straits in which education is located. However, Pillay and Govinden (2007) present counter-narratives of teacher success, resistance and inventiveness, exploring the teachers lives and their narratives through the theme of home and homelessness. Faced with near despair, that significant attempts, by these teachers to redefine themselves during adversity. In these moments of creative agency, teachers are brave enough to give expression to their true selves in spite of institutional demands that point them in another direction.

Pillay and Govinden (2007) presented three teacher narratives, each with their own adversarial challenges, struggles and dilemmas, but rather than allowing these adversarial challenges to overpower them, they become recipients as agents of change, refusing to be victims but rather to be victors.

Trust within these two accounts of teachers continuing to teach despite their challenges, this study contributes to the upward emergence of the person in the teacher that makes teaching a commitment.

Purpose of study

The purpose, therefore, of this study was to explore how and why teachers continue to teach within adversarial teaching contexts. The notion of adversarial as it relates to this study was articulated in a section on conceptual framework within this proposal.

Key Research Questions

A.   What are the nature and facets of adversarial context teachers teach in? B.) What impact do adversarial conditions have on effective teaching? C) How do teachers teach in such adversarial teaching contexts?

Rationale

As a unionist (and being in leadership), my interest lies in teachers performing their work with passion, zeal, tenacity and with love. To look at teachers work in adversarial contexts and how they are assessed for teaching in conditions that are not conducive to teaching in the South African school context provided me with the capacity to engage teachers, unions and departmental offices on teachers interest and concerns relating to their work as teachers.

 Contextually in South Africa, transformation is taking place at a rapid pace. Teachers have had the resilience and tenacity to try and overcome these obstacles. Key South African researchers (Adler and Reed, 2002) suggest that the reform demands, exacerbated by the pressure to radically change the apartheid educational order and the punishing time frames for developing and implementing new curricula representing a new democratic order, have produced overwhelming challenges for teacher education and development. Other writers such as (Hargreaves, 1994, Neito, 2003) are also of the opinion that the nature and demands of the job of a teacher has changed profoundly over the years. Neito (2003) adds that "Good teachers think deeply and often about the craft of teaching and the process of learning as a way of managing the demands and challenges of teaching. Teachers are not simply technicians who know how to write good lessons and use collaborative groups effectively, they are engaged every day in intellectual work."

Methodology

In this study, I have adopted a narrative inquiry methodology (Clandinin & Connelly,2000),which is situated in the interpretive paradigm. It is a qualitative approach. I discuss my narrative inquiry methodology in more detail in chapter three of this dissertation. Adopting a qualitative approach would have assisted and helped me to obtain an in depth

understanding of teacher's experiences of adversity and how they overcame this challenge. The narrative approach that I have chosen is aptly described in Clandinin and Connelly (2000,p.20) as "a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places and in social interaction." In this study the participants have engaged together to relive and tell our stories and experiences. By allowing each of the participants to tell and share their stories, each of the participants was able to emotionally reflect and engage in their past lives. The participants would be able to therapeutically and transparently contribute to their understanding of how adversity has helped them to grow and mature as individuals. This process was both rewarding and enriching not only for the participants but for the study as well.

Validity and reliability

The idea of validity and reliability as it concerns this study is located in the trustworthiness of the data produced to develop the narratives. In establishing this issue of trustworthiness, it is essential for the research audience to be able to see what has been done, what decisions have been taken, why certain procedures have been followed and how certain interpretations, recommendations and conclusions have been reached (Mishler,1990). Hence, care was taken to establish this trustworthiness through several processes. First, the interviews were held over a period of time. Each of the interviews clarified what the previous interview revealed and built upon that clarification. This contributed to the first level of establishing trustworthiness of data produced. The second level of establishing trustworthiness of data was in the creation of the narratives for each of the participants. The narratives were given to the respective participants for their corrections, additions and clarifications. Participants were at liberty to correct, disagree and alter whatever they felt was not in keeping with the content of the interviews that they had undertaken. However, each of the participants agreed that the interviews were conducted very thoroughly and honestly. None of the participants selected to change, delete or add any information to what was already presented to them. This added rigour to my study.

Some ethical considerations taken in producing the data

According to Henning (2009, p73) "respondents need to be given informed consent to participate." This meant that the participants were fully informed about the research and in which the interview was going to be used. The interviewees were told that their participation in this research was on the basis of anonymity. They were afforded the opportunity to withdraw from

the study / research at any given time, if they so desired. The clause of confidentiality and issues of ethics were maintained throughout this research. More details of how this was maintained are presented in chapter 3.

Limitations of the study

As this research was about adversarial conditions, the teachers take this to mean many different things. The limitation here was that only teachers from one school were interviewed. Their opinions, responses and their answers are very specific to their reality and their interpretation of their reality. Deep descriptions of their perspective of their experience and interpretations formed the basis of analysis.

This study was conducted using a relatively small sample size of three teachers drawn from one primary school. It was restricted in terms of its transferability to other contexts or settings or to the general population in that I cannot make generalisations about adversity in other contexts and how teachers in those other contexts handle issues of adversities. This study was small in scope but in- depth. While the specifics of the study cannot be generalised, the approach to the analysis of the management of adversity in school contexts could well be applied fruitfully to other schools and institutional settings.

Exploring adversity through narrative inquiry.

Chapter two expands on scholarly conversations regarding adversity. I have attempted to explore the different views and opinions on adversity both nationally and internationally and what keeps teachers going despite facing all these challenges. In this study I would have looked at the definition as adopted by Green, Levine and Associates(1985,p.1) and show that opportunity is implicit in adversity whilst also believing that during hard and difficult times, have produced some of education's greatest stories. My participants are also of that same belief that the best results are borne out of adversity.

Chapter three is the methodology chapter. The narrative inquiry that I used in this study will be discussed. This chapter outlines the research design, the conceptual framework, the research setting, the background of the school, why teachers are dedicated and learners are facing harsh realities, selection of the participants, sampling, validity and reliability, limitations and ethical issues.

In chapters four, I would look at the data of the three participants and how conditions of an adversarial nature affected them and how they made changes to their individual circumstances to overcome their adversarial nature. I would look at analysing the data of the three participants and put their thoughts, experiences, challenges and ideas into perspective.

In chapter five, I would also draw conclusions from this analysis and make recommendations to a future researcher to pursue further research on adversarial nature but based on the learners home conditions, to look at the learners socio –economic conditions, look at single parents raising up their children and ensuring that their children get a decent education and other related issues; I also examine the limitations of this study in respect of this follow up research.

CHAPTER 2

1. Introduction: What researchers say about adversity

In the previous chapter, I provided an insight of adversity during times of change. In this chapter I present a landscape of the literature related to teaching in adversarial teaching context. The literature included an exploration of the concept adversarial and makes a case for how this concept was used in this study. I discussed the different meanings of adversity and how, despite challenging conditions, teachers are motivated to continue teaching under these circumstances. The word adversity has many different meanings and connotations. Adversity was often regarded as being synonymous with affliction, hardship, difficulty and harsh conditions under which teachers performed their duties.

In this chapter, I reflected on the relevant literature in relation to three key aspects of the study, expanding on three crucial and vital research questions. They included: what was the **nature and facets of adversarial context teachers teach in** and **the impact adversarial conditions have on effective teaching. I then discuss how teachers teach in such adversarial teaching contexts.**

According to Claxton (1989, p.2), "For all those who think that we are still stuck with a form of schooling that is frustrating to teachers and that fails to deliver a satisfactory start in life to at least a sizeable proportion of its clientele, the question is :Where to tap? Is it curriculum development? In- service training? Selection? Teacher training? Better management? Better salaries for teachers? Revised forms of assessment?" There are many areas that bring about adversity. Ramrathan (2007) stated that curriculum changes have been brought about due to various influences. Influences could be in the fields of politics, culture, language and the economy. He reveals that the political changes in South Africa, at the onset of democracy has seen new policies and changes to the education system. The views of Ramrathan (2007) have been supported by Harley and Wedekind (2002) who also link national political visions and national curricula that called for change in South Africa This.show that it comes in different forms but it affects all teachers. Parker and Adler (2005) concur by stating that in South Africa, reform demands are exacerbated by the pressure to radically change the apartheid educational order and the punishing time frames for developing and implementing new curricula which represents a new democratic order, have produced overwhelming challenges for teacher education and development. Robinson (J.O.E. 2003) is in agreement with Claxton (1998) when she states, "The changing local context too

is having a major impact on the daily lives of teachers. In South Africa these local forces are manifested in workplace realities that have fundamentally changed over the last 10 years."

Hargreaves (1994, p.117), makes the following claim, "Whatever else might be said about teaching, few would disagree that the nature and demands of the job have changed profoundly over the years. For better or worse, teaching is not what it used to be."

Pillay and Govinden (J.O.E.2007) highlight the constraints of our South African education system such as teacher attrition, where low morale, work load, job security and teacher migration, suggests something of the dire straits in which education is located in the post – apartheid era." Attrition means hardships that educators go through which includes low morale and continuous increase in their workload (as mentioned previously).

Despite having to work in these conditions, teachers continue to strive to perform and work assiduously in order to meet the requirements of their job descriptions. In many cases while teachers highlight their plight they do not surrender but rather soldier on and try to make the best of their demanding situations. As one participant of this study succinctly puts it "We try to do more with less". Researchers have made similar revelations as I discuss below.

Neito (2003, p.67) asserts that "teachers keep going in spite of everything" and maintains that in most cases teachers do not give up, they retain their determination, strength of mind, will power, resolve, purpose and fortitude to give off their best at all times. The enthusiasm displayed by my participants also reflect their eagerness, interest, keenness, fervour, passion that the situation for teachers was even more difficult in that change involves more challenges, requires more adept understanding of different contextual factors and more diligence and zeal that allows them to continue from day to day despite their challenges. Neito (2003, p.120) state that "Teachers do indeed change lives everyday" in South Africa and indeed all parts of the world in the teaching and learning process.

2. Nature and Facets of Adversity

2.1. Educational Environment and Adversity

Samuel (2009) maintains that the climate in a school influences the educational environment, its guidelines and procedures. Sen (2006) agrees that our sense of belonging in any educational terrain is important. Goodson (1992) also prioritises that classrooms are 'special places.' They are places that we are all familiar with. The classroom is the environment where constructive learning must take place.

Some of the nature and facets of adversity that I have examined and explored are decision making, intensification, the new curriculum and its demands, the transition from apartheid education to a democratic dispensation, large class sizes, strike action by educators, limited resources including staff, teacher supply and demand and the issue of HIV /AIDS as adversarial factors. I also highlight the effect that some of these have on the delivery of quality teaching and learning in the classroom.

2.1.1. Decision Making

The South African Education system has delegated from the Department of Education. Many times decisions are taken unilaterally, without any consultation with those that are affected by these changes. Educators, although considered professionals with the required qualifications do not have the voice to address their numerous grievances. Said (1981) states that although educators are considered professionals, we are truly amateurs when it comes to decision making. These decisions must bet implemented, Members of the Department's policy and curriculum division (whether qualified or not) make critical decisions that affect the smooth running of the schools. Educators would love to be a part of the decision making process because ultimately they are the ones that have to enforce all the policies and curriculum of the Department of Education.

2.1.2 Intensification

According to Larsen as cited in Hargreaves (1994, p.118), intensification,"....represents one of the most tangible ways in which the work privileges of educated workers are eroded." Hargreaves(1994,p.118), adds to the intensification thesis by claiming, "More than this, it is claimed, teacher's work has become increasingly intensified, with teachers expected to respond to greater pressures and comply with multiple innovations under conditions that are

at best stable and at worst deteriorating." In addition to that, other claims made on teacher intensification by Hargreaves (1994,p.118) are:

- It leads to reduced time for relaxation during the working day, including no time at all for lunch.

- Intensification leads to lack of time to retool one's skills and keep up with one's field.

- Intensification created chronic and persistent overload (as compared to the temporary overload that was sometimes experienced in meeting deadlines) which reduced areas of personal discretion, inhibits involvement in and control over longer term planning, and fosters dependency on externally produced materials and expertise.

- Intensification leads to reduction in the quality of service, as corners are cut to save on time.

- Intensification leads to enforced diversification of expertise and responsibility to cover personnel shortages, which in turn created excessive dependency on outside expertise and further reductions in the quality of service.

- Intensification was voluntarily supported by many teachers and misrecognised as professionalism.

The above factors showed how teacher intensification has increased over the years adding to the adversity that teachers faced. This compromised the quality of education being offered. Teachers work has definitely increased in terms of additional paperwork. According to Hargreaves (1994, p.125), "Fifteen years ago I didn't have paperwork. Fifteen years ago the paperwork I had I created for myself. With the paperwork we are getting now, I like to give it up myself. If I didn't enjoy it with the kids so much, I would". Many teachers across the spectrum share similar sentiments because the demands are greater now than previously. The Department of Education has increased the volume of paperwork for educators. This increase in paperwork showed a lot of duplication and repetition. The Department of Education should conduct in service training with the main purpose of empowering the educators with practical skills and knowledge which allows for a smooth transition to the new system and curricula.   However, without access to proper facilities and learning materials such as libraries, laboratories and computers, effective implementation would be limited. Information systems in education should be streamlined and standardised across provincial departments to allow for uniform, quick capturing and accessing of data.

Hargreaves (1994, p. 34) equated adversity to teacher intensification. He associates intensification with teachers having to contend with a mountain of additional paperwork. The participants in this study confirmed that there was often repetition of administrative work and sometimes the compilation of the same work has to be done in triplicate which adds to their frustration.

According to Larsen as cited in Hargreaves (1994, p.118), intensification,"…..represents one of the most tangible ways in which the work privileges of educated workers are eroded." In addition to that, other claims made on teacher intensification are:

- It leads to reduced time for relaxation during the working day, including no time at all for lunch.

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- Intensification leads to reduction in the quality of service, as corners are cut to save on time.

- Intensification leads to enforced diversification of expertise and responsibility to cover personnel shortages, which can in turn create excessive dependency on outside expertise and further reductions in the quality of service.

- Intensification is voluntarily supported by many teachers and misrecognised as professionalism.

The above factors show how teacher intensification has increased over the years to the detriment of quality education being offered. A teacher's experience was cited in Hargreaves (1994, p.123), "I find my workload much heavier than it used to be. I just think that although there are times that I knew that I need to stop, I can't. I have to get things done. So I think that part of it was the changing expectations of teachers. Large class sizes – I have 29 – and when you figure that goes from a Special Education kid, to enrichment, to ESL, it's a lot of kids that you always seem to be on the tear. I think there's more social work going on. If we wrote teacher's descriptions ten years ago,

twenty years ago and now, they are vastly different. The participants made similar claims
to Hargreaves in that with these large classes, there is reduced output of educators as they
cannot complete their set tasks on time. Hargreaves(1994,p.137) succinctly states that,
"...when preparation time was used in the context of mandated or contrived collegiality
and collaborative planning, this created a proliferation of meetings and additional work
that intensified teachers 'work still further, and subjected them to further administrative
control instead of releasing them to develop things themselves."

2.1.3. **Demands of the New Curriculum**

According to Ramrathan (2007) curriculum changes have been brought about due to various
influences. Influences could be in the fields of politics, culture, language and the economy.
He reveals that the political changes in South Africa, at the onset of democracy have seen
new policies and changes to the education system. The views of Ramrathan (2007) have been
supported by Harley and Wedekind (2002) who also link national political visions and
national curricula that called for change in South Africa. South Africa has seen a change in
the curriculum in the form of Curriculum 2005 on a scale that was unparalleled in the history
of curriculum change. The curriculum change has contributed greatly to teacher adversity. I
discuss the curriculum according the themes below.

- What constitutes curriculum instruction?

- Why is there a need for a change in the curriculum?

- How has the change in the curriculum been cascaded to teachers?

- What implications have the new curriculum changes had on teachers work?

- How does the teacher feel regarding the implementation of these new curriculum changes?

 There are serious repercussions when implementation takes place. The fruits of these
changes are evident in the end result such as the annual national assessments (2011) for the
grades three and six and senior certificate examination results.

2.1.3.1 **What constitutes curriculum instruction?**

Carl (2005) states that the curriculum refers to the syllabus, list of subjects, topics and text-
subject content and skills as well as the manner of teaching and assessment. This definition of
the curriculum is further supported by Nkomo (2000) who refers to the curriculum in terms of

activity and experience as well as teaching and learning experiences provided by schools, the outcomes of learning, learning programmes, assessment, methodology, planned learning and rationale for educational programmes. According to Nkomo (2000), the creators and guardians of knowledge are the same people deciding on what learners should learn and responsible for developing and delivering learning programmes.

Harley and Wedekind (2002) lay down the future facing teachers in embracing the new outcomes-based education, an integrated knowledge system, eight learning areas from Grades 1 to 9 and the promotion of learner-centred pedagogy. Curriculum instruction would involve implementing this policy into practice.

2.1.3.2. **Why is there a need for a change in the curriculum?**

Nkomo (2000) makes it clear that when a society, such as South Africa, finds itself lagging behind other countries in the global market,politicians use educational reform to question the validity of what it taught and how it was taught. A new government inevitably engaged in educational reform instituting change in curriculum reform. Attention was seldom given to systematic change but to how the curriculum is delivered. The participants agreed that there had to be change to cater for the diversity that was in our classrooms but like Nkomo (2000, page 4) states .... "there has to be systematic change."

According to Harley and Wedekind (2002) teacher's work has been influenced by the eradication of differences in the curriculum and the purging of the curriculum from being racially offensive, sexist and outdated content and a focus on assessment.

2.1.3.3. **How has the change in the curriculum been cascaded to teachers?**

According to Carl (2005) it was important to be able to cascade the information about curriculum changes efficiently to teachers in order that they may be able to teach proficiently. The participants agree with Carl because as my participants argue that they must have the know how in order to activate their teaching, learning and assessment so they can be as productive in the classroom as possible. It is important to measure to what extent teachers have been trained to teach the curriculum and the price that they pay for accommodating curriculum changes instituted by policy makers. Harley and Wedekind (2002) add that teachers do not receive sufficient training to ensure that they are well equipped to enter the

classroom and implement curriculum changes efficiently. The department and policy makers who have been far removed from the classroom expect the teacher to continue with their instruction in the classroom despite the limited training offered to them (Nkomo, 2000).These factors add to the adversity that teachers are currently facing.

New approaches to designing curricula should equip learners with the skills to access and manage knowledge rather than just imbibe it (Carl, 2005). Carl (2005) highlights the fact that those in authority who expect rigid implementation of the curriculum have not had contact with the learners or teachers at school level. He views the central role of teachers in curriculum change as implementers rather than consultants of change and says that teachers are regarded as the 'recipients of the curriculum only.' He mentions that throughout our teaching careers, it has been evident that the curriculum is merely developed so that teachers can apply it. It has been a bureaucratic, top-down implementation process (Carl, 2005).

Carl (2005) mentions that it is the educators function to apply what has been developed by the 'specialists.' However, educators are required as partners in the curriculum process. He provides an example of the exclusion of teachers from the process of curriculum change which was Curriculum 2005 and NCS (10-12) 2006 that was developed at a national level. Teachers were involved only and during application at a school and classroom level. The question to pose was whether 'the voice of the teacher was heard or consulted' or whether the voice of the teacher remains a 'voice in the wilderness' (Carl, 2005). According to Carl (2005) the voice of the teacher was unheard, unutilised and not listened to. It made me question when the authorities would deem it necessary to listen to the voice of the teacher when it involves teachers work.

2.1.3.4 **What implications has the new curriculum had on teachers work?**

According to Republic of South Africa (2000) the norms and standards qualify the seven roles of teachers that include teachers as implementers, recipients or partners of the curriculum development process.

"These seven roles, namely those of (1) learning mediator, (2) interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials, (3) leader, administrator and manager, (4) scholar, researcher and lifelong learner, (5) community, citizenship and pastoral role, (6) assessor, (7) learning area and subject specialist, give a good indication of what the national education department expects from teachers regarding their possible curriculum functions (Carl, 2005).

Carl (2005) questions whether these roles are meant to become operative only when the curriculum s implemented in the classroom, or do they in fact point towards teachers' potentially broader curriculum functions? He questions whether these roles implied that teachers are regarded as merely "recipients" of the curriculum, or as partners in the curriculum development process?

Harley and Wedekind (2002) also summed up the traditional role of teaching by illustrating it with the views of a senior teacher in a rural secondary school. Her experience was with passive learners, formal subject teaching, grouped seating, teacher-centredness, exam driven, rote learning and chalkboard writing due to a lack of resources. The new curriculum required learning areas, group seating, large spaces, learner-centredness to construct knowledge and effective active learner lateral responses with the teacher as 'facilitator' rather than 'teacher.' Teachers were now required to actively involve learners in the learning process inside and outside the classroom, help them discover things for themselves, encourage them to ask questions, investigate, solve problems, experiment, involve learners in differentiated learning experiences and provide a learning environment that is stimulating and non-threatening. This change affected teachers work depending on their access to resources as well as shortcomings in teachers' and learners' command of English and a lack of adequate support and training.

In addition, Scott and Freeman-Moir (2002) also illustrated the work of teachers reflecting traditional models. They say that models have been drawn up by policy-managers and politicians who seek to drive schools and teachers towards a new future.

According to Scott and Freeman- Moir (2002) there are many stakeholders that resisted change. They mention that this type of resistance continued unless teachers are allowed to actively participate as employees in the areas of research in adopting new learning technologies. They maintained that teachers needed more time and mental space so that they can become involved in the process of changing their roles and practice. As we would see later the participants in this study are in total agreement with Scott and Freeman and point out that the changes in the curriculum without proper training to implement these changes are putting extreme pressure on the teachers themselves to deliver quality education in the classroom.

2.1.3.5. **How do teachers feel about implementing these new curriculum changes?**

The involvement and participation of teachers in curriculum development would definitely make a difference in influencing teacher's work (Carl, 2005). Carl (2005) highlights the role of teachers in facing the challenges of curriculum development. He questions to what extent teachers have been approached to participate in the process of curriculum change in South Africa. He says that we must examine the level of consultation and dialogue that teachers have been engaged with during this process of change. I agreed with Carl that as a teacher I was very disillusioned that we as teachers have not been included extensively during this process of change. (Carl, 2005) states that teachers do not have a formal platform or opportunity where their voices can be heard.

According to Carl (2005), the Bernstein model looks at the relationship between meaning-making processes on different levels of the education system and to what level teachers are involved.

> "Meaning is given to knowledge that has been produced, mostly by education authorities and curriculum writers. Schools and teachers are, however, not normally involved in this process. If teachers are regarded as partners in curriculum change in order that they may take ownership thereof, they must also be involved within this level of discourse as active agents and role-players. Experience curriculum change as a "top down" process must apply that which was developed elsewhere by education authorities without having acquired any access to consultation" (Carl, 2005).

Carl (2005) uses the Bernstein model to show that the authorities have not felt the need to talk to teachers about what affected their everyday lives of teachers work in implementing the curriculum. He summed up the findings of a research project that questioned the opportunity given to teachers to participate in curriculum development. The research project reveals that many teachers agree that teachers must become involved in curriculum decision making outside the classroom and have accessibility to consultation. 89,6% of teachers felt the need to be involved at a national level and 93,5% wished to become involved at a provincial level.

Coenders (2008) adds that more often than not, the role of the stakeholders, who are the educators, are often ignored. He says that we must admit that educators are the real

driving force in any innovation. The presentation of new curriculum changes drawn up by specialists required educators to update their knowledge and skills.

According to Carl (2005) if educators are given an opportunity to become involved in curriculum changes, they would have accepted changes more positively, have experienced and made contact with learners, accepted ownership of the development of the curriculum, made the paradigm shift easier, understood new concepts better and would have agreed to implement changes more smoothly.

Coenders (2008) also highlights the fact that the belief of educators influences the implementation of a curriculum. A new curriculum should have taken into account educators prior knowledge and beliefs. By co-developing and using the curriculum material strengthen and develop their pedagogical content knowledge. The consultation of teachers about curriculum content may reveal that teachers want different forms of assessment, application of learning, the removal of topics from the curriculum, more time allocation, the reduction of overload of the school curriculum that overburdens the student, whilst a full teaching load in the current school practice leaves insufficient time for developing learning materials. Teachers are more than capable of combining teaching and writing curriculum materials which will prove very valuable. Teachers who are in direct contact with students know what fascinates them and how they learn and think, are aware of their experiences and how they acquire knowledge and skills. Change agents need to be aware of what teachers know, what they can do and what they believe in (Coenders, 2008).

Adler and Reed (2002) strengthen the case that revealed that teacher' work would change if they are able to convert their conceptual knowledge into practice. These authors acknowledge that teacher's delivery in the classroom would improve if they have a broad and an in-depth knowledge of the subject they are teaching, a knowledge of the curriculum in their subject area, a knowledge of how learners come to know their subject and how contextual factors influence conditions.

We must question the lack of opportunity afforded to teachers in allowing themselves to be heard. According to Carl (2005) many officials who shape curriculum changes have not been in the classroom for many years and have no idea what the teachers of today are faced with. It would seem that practising teachers would design different systems to bring about a new measure of discipline as well as skills. He highlights the fact that curriculum change was too prescriptive and leaves the teacher with little opportunity for creativity in his/her work. Coenders (2008) mentions that curriculum reform is a process so that teachers can shape their own professional growth. If the curriculum developers ignore teacher's knowledge,

beliefs and skills in developing a new curriculum, teachers most likely will not implement the curriculum as intended.

In this section, I have attempted to highlight the implications of curriculum instruction on teacher's work. I have also brought to light the need for the change in the curriculum, the manner in which teachers have been trained in the curriculum by the Department of Education officials, and the absence of teacher involvement in curriculum development. From the above discussion it was clear that curriculum issues and especially lack of consultation in curriculum development and change creates serious adversity for teachers in the everyday practice of their expected duties.

In relation to the adversity discussed above that teachers are now faced with, it had taken its toll on the quality of teaching. According to Hargreaves (1994, p.137) "Shortage of time to do and develop things that would enrich their work was a common complaint of teachers and was a key component of the intensification process." Teachers do not have enough time to plan lessons due to other administrative burdens, they find it more difficult to dedicate enough time on researching new content and methods of approach and as a result in many cases teachers are recycling material and approaches already used. This inevitably compromises the quality of teaching rendered in the classroom. They are not as effective in the classroom as they would have been if they had sufficient time to plan and prepare their lessons. Research conducted by Hargreaves (1994) in UK schools reveal similar findings.

The time allocation for each learning area was insufficient to do justice to help and assist all learners especially when there are large classes. The changes to the curriculum have increased the outcomes and in many cases reduced the amount of time for each learning area. A study by Irma and Kgwete (2007, p.6) found, " The teachers mentioned that a high number of students in the classroom made it difficult for them to adequately teach in inclusive classrooms. They indicated that their department heads expected them to complete a specified volume of work within a given time period while simultaneously assisting students who are experiencing barriers to learning." Further, the teachers indicated that they experienced difficulties in giving individual attention to students with slower work tempos while managing their classrooms.

2.1.4. **The transition from apartheid education to a democratic dispensation**.

Many educators have experienced difficulty with the transition from the apartheid education to the democratic dispensation. Many educators were used to working with learners from their own racial group but since the advent of democracy, this scenario has changed dramatically. Many educators have had to make some dramatic adjustments to accommodate this change.

According to Jansen as cited in Lewin, Samuel and Sayed (2002,p.120),

"It is a story told repeatedly in the many critiques of apartheid education policy that the teacher was conceived as a state functionary with limited autonomy. The sole requirements of teachers were bureaucratic and political compliance with state education. Compliance was ensured through a complex of instruments, including a school wide and individual teacher through inspection, a rigid syllabus outlining content, objectives and methods of teaching, and a hierarchy of internal(such as the principal) and external(such as routine visits by departmental officials) control."

Jansen as cited in Lewin, Samuel and Sayed (2002, p.121) adds that, "Teachers, in the democratic ideal, were going to be knowledge – producers; they would take charge of their own classrooms; they would initiate discussion; they would select libratory content knowledge for the curriculum; they would empower learners; they would change the world. ………..teachers were regarded as liberators, but policy had to create liberating environments within which teachers could be supported and developed. But were these images sustainable?"

Recently media reports have highlighted a backlash in racial tolerance in public schooling.(The Natal Mercury, p.3, 2011) claimed that learners at Riverdene Secondary School implied that teachers were racially abusive, they were unhappy with the principal and disillusioned with the ablution facilities. Learners therefore went on a rampage and began to vandalise the school, breaking windows, burning tyres and a classroom, and damaged the principal's car.

Although we have entered seventeen years of democracy, there are still many challenges that teachers face in terms of racial diversity. Many educators are not trained in our ethnic languages but are teaching learners who cannot speak, read or even understand the English

language. This scenario created many challenges for both the educator and the learner. This posed a lot of challenge for the educator to communicate with these learners and vice versa. Parker(2007,p.18) states the following, "In spite of all this activity on the policy and structural fronts during this second phase, there was, at the level of the school and classrooms, little improvement in the quality of education available to the majority of the population."

Morrow (2007) added that many educational institutions are not willing to change from their apartheid traditions and have not embraced transformation. Another issue that comes out from Morrow's literature is that too many teachers do not have the competences, or the willingness to implement these departmental policies. As a result we are living in a hallucinatory world of nightmares.

According to Crouch (2002, p.47 as cited in Lewin, Samuel and Sayed), "The teachers work force in South Africa have undergone turbulent change in the last few years as a result of a variety of factors. These included the merger of the old departments of education, the different approaches adopted by provincial governments to retrenchments and recruitment related to needs and financial resources, changes in the framework for teachers' qualifications, and the reorganisation of teacher education provision."

Samuel (2002, p.254) as cited in Lewin, Samuel and Sayed, states,

> "The post apartheid South Africa was fraught with as many of the complexities and contradictions that characterised any society, whether in the feudal medieval times, or in the euphoric afterglow of a non – bloody revolution in South Africa. In the quest to represent the birth of a new democracy, there tends to be an over – romanticised view of a dream come true. This usually was depicted as an abandonment of the horrors of the past and a forging forward into the future: a flat two dimensional analysis of political emancipation being equated with all other forms of liberation."

Both these systems have had their challenges and shortfalls.

According to the Government Gazette (2007, Education Labour Relation Council, p.4) the following claim is made, "Teachers are the largest single occupational group and profession in the country. Their role has strategic importance for the intellectual, moral and cultural preparation of our people. They work in extremely complex and difficult conditions, largely due to the pervasive legacies of

apartheid, but also as a result of the new policies needed to bring about change in
education."

Teachers are the cornerstone of well established societies. However, since the advent of our
democracy, we have realized that changes are necessary. To make changes must not be borne
out of emotions but rather it must be made from educationally sound decisions. According to
Hargreaves (1994, p.9), "…teaching is changing and about choices and challenges facing
teachers as we move into the postmodern age."

Hargreaves further maintains that teachers have found themselves in an extra-ordinary
situation where changes result in adversity. In South Africa one can argue that the situation
for educators was even more difficult in that change involves more challenges, required more
adept understanding of different contextual factors and more diligence in the teaching and
learning process. My discussion above depicts that educators are facing many challenges,
trials, tribulations and hardships in exercising their duty of educating the nation. These
adversities are sure to have an impact on the teaching and learning process and directly on
teachers themselves.

Educators are always under pressure to perform at the optimum but circumstances under
which the participants teach, brings about varying degrees of adversity including their health.
Educators in recent times have had much challenge with their health which is stress related.
The impact was that there are many educators that get absent and this puts much pressure on
those that are in school. According to Harrison(2011,p.1)," Teaching is about "pushing
students to the threshold of their minds" and being a teacher is about "giving of one's faith
and love". However with the adversity that teachers' faced in trying to achieve this, teacher's
attempts are taking its toll on their health. According to Harrison(2011, p.1), "96 per cent of
teachers, school leaders and lecturers who responded to a Teacher Support Network poll say
their workload had a negative effect on their health and wellbeing." Symptoms described in
the survey of e-newsletter readers include increased alcohol consumption, lack of sleep,
relationship problems, overeating, under eating, stress, anxiety, exhaustion, low self-esteem
and in some cases thoughts of suicide."

Teachers responding in the Harrison article(2011,p.4) states, "I was feeling totally
overwhelmed by the workload and working 60+ hours a week just to hang on by finger nails.
I have actually contemplated suicide as a way out because the situation is making me so
miserable" said one man who completed the poll. "Due to stress I have to take anti-

depressants, I grind my teeth every night and have been diagnosed with IBS [Irritable Bowel Syndrome] - if not something more serious," explained one woman. One teacher said she was diagnosed with a permanent condition thanks to the stress of becoming a Deputy Head. She had to take drugs for the rest of her life. These statistics were taken from an overseas country but it was also relevant in the South African context. Many teachers have suffered with many different health issues in the climate of all the policy changes that have taken place. These are real issues that teachers have had in terms of their health as we look at the examples below.

According to Harrison (2011, p.1), "Extra hours, excess paperwork, overly high expectations and unsympathetic management are listed among the reasons why the workload was so high." The problem was so bad that many are off sick from work, are considering leaving the profession or have already left. These are some of the pertinent issues and challenges that teachers have had to face and the consequences thereof regarding their ill health. The transition from an apartheid education system to a democratic one brings with new challenges and stresses for teachers and with limited training and orientation there are repercussions in terms of teachers health.

The problems are not just health related. Many say that their personal relationships are also affected. "I have seen my family grow up without me" said one respondent. "It has had a serious impact on the personal relationship I have with my wife and family," complained one man. A lot of respondents say they can feel their personalities have changed as a result of their workload, particularly men.

"There was a time when the prospect of a day spent teaching would lift my spirits," said one man. "Today, I look in the mirror and I am disgusted at what I see." "Tearful, moody, over two stone weight gain from comfort eating, always tired, apathetic, fearful for the future with the realization that I have potentially 30 more years of this," said another man. "I was always the go to girl" explains one woman. "I rarely talk now. I cry a lot, and hug my children a lot, which to two teenage boys was not 'cool'.

Teachers also complained of backaches and other related issues. According to Alleyne (2011,p.1), " A survey had shown that two-thirds of workers in primary school and early years have received treatment for back and joint problems as a result of working in child-sized environments More than two-thirds of those taking part in the survey had taken time off because of work related joint or back pain. Ms Taylor said: "There's an attitude that it's part of the job – they accept back pain and take painkillers to keep going."It's taboo to complain.

People don't want to be seen as whining or letting their team down. I don't know who's been planning these classrooms, but no one's thought about this issue properly."

Neito (2003, p.78) states that teaching can be the loneliest of professions causing emotional ill health because your colleagues do not trust you. In South Africa the transition and integration of schools have not been automatic and issues of trust still prevail in many schools. This creates undue pressure and stresses which results in ill health.

2.1.5. Limited Resources

According to Bangou and Wong (2009, p.158 as cited in Kubota and Lin), "Technology ......has exacerbated the racial and class divides by allowing those with resources to benefit from technology and those who are poor to be denied access."

Ryder and Campbell (1988, p.184) states,"Who is responsible for designing resource material and for integrating information technology?" Teachers at Parkin Primary have no access to laptops, ipods or iphones which are gadgets that many advantaged schools have the privilege of using. Access to the internet was a privilege that the very same staff members are restricted from using. Teaching at Parkin Primary would be much more progressive if teachers had access to technology. There would be a greater effectiveness of teaching and mentoring. It would be an advantage if visual learning can be used in the classrooms. Power point presentations by teachers and students would indicate that teachers at Parkin Primary are keeping abreast with national and international trends. Classroom notes can be highlighted on a power point presentation as learners can effectively read and summarise them. .Technological gadgets are now replacing textbooks and libraries.

The absence or lack of resources contributed to teacher adversity and added to the already heavy burden that teachers are expected to carry. Morrow (2007) argues that conscientious teachers are chronically overloaded and the absence of proper teaching tools served to intensify the difficulty that teachers faced. This compromises the delivery of quality education in the classroom.

2.1.6. **Teacher supply and demand**

Crouch and Lewin (2003) revealed that the educator workforce in South Africa had changed for many different reasons since the onset of democracy. The changes, they revealed, included the merger of old departments of education inherited through apartheid (House of Representatives, House of Delegates, House of Assemby and Bantu Education).

According to Crouch and Lewin (2003) the different approaches by provincial governments to deal with these changes include retrenchment which would put pressure on the demand for more educators and recruitment –the ability to supply more educators. The challenge when dealing with the above changes was the accuracy of data that was used when educators have to be dismissed or the reliability of data when educators need to be hired. One puts into the debate the validity and reliability of data supplied to the department when these changes have to be implemented. Crouch and Lewin (2003) revealed that many changes are related to needs, financial resources; changes in framework for teacher's qualifications and the re-organization of teacher education provision that had been created by the apartheid legacy as mentioned above.

According to Crouch(2002, p.47 as cited in Lewin, Samuel and Sayed), "The teachers work force in South Africa had been undergoing turbulent change in the last few years as a result of a variety of factors. These included the merger of the old education departments of education, the different approaches adopted by provincial governments to retrenchments and recruitment related to needs and financial resources, changes in the framework for teachers' qualifications, and the reorganisation of teacher education provision. The onset of the Human Immuno Virus / Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic was now adding a new dimension to the turmoil experienced so far and had implications both for the supply and demand for teachers."

Changes that have occurred since 1994-the onset of democracy, according to Chisholm (2009) have had to be absorbed through matching the supply of educators with the demand so that there are neither shortages nor an oversupply of educators. This was a challenge that faced researchers and policy makers. Again, the argument concerning the validity of statistics at any given point of time must be questioned.   Chisholm (2009) revealed that when policy was introduced at any stage, it needed to inform the decision makers by the available research on supply and demand at that specific time. The conclusion she drew was that research done in one period with the findings available can no longer be applied when pressures of that period no longer exist. Available data at any given point in

time can therefore not be sustained at different periods and applied at different stages of the education process. The change that took place precipitated updated data at every level and change of the education process.

Crouch and Lewin (2003) strengthened this argument highlighting the fact that data used had its own limitations. The limitations according to Chisholm (2009) have shown that matching and modelling the demand and supply of teachers was a complex exercise. She says that the results depended on the assumptions of the data given timeously, which had to inform planning that it was a long way off. It may be concluded that assumptions are subjective and can never ever provide truly accurate statistics, but may come close to providing or predicting future needs. It may be logistically impossible to provide one hundred percent accurate data concerning teacher demand and supply.

Ramrathan (2007, p.71) makes the following claim, "Teacher supply may not meet the needs of schooling in the very near future. How are schools going to respond to this situation? Can we afford to make mismatched appointments of under -qualified teachers?" Currently many teachers are allocated learning areas (previously subjects) which they have not studied for. In a Department circular of 2007, teachers are expected to teach all learning areas in the primary school as well as move from either the junior primary department(foundation phase) to the senior primary department(the intermediate phase) and vice versa to teach. The Departments reasoning was that all teachers are qualified to teach in all grades (grade one to grade seven), irrespective of what qualification one has. This situation always brings about despondency as teachers do not know what learning areas and how many learning areas they are to teach. Some educators can teach up to four learning areas which in realistic terms mean extra work, including preparation. If this was the prerogative of the Department of Education that teachers can teach anything, then we must question the purpose of specialist training. Educators who are not trained or qualified in a particular learning area and who are forced to teach these subjects feel insecure, anxious and apprehensive. They have to spend many hours preparing for these lessons since they do not have a ready working knowledge of the subject material. This used up time that can/should be spent on other duties. As a result these educators become overwhelmed with the work-load and struggle to cope with the demands of the school day.

According to Crouch and Lewin (2003), it was estimated that 30% of new educators left during the first two years and 40% left during the first four years. Crouch and Lewin (2003) have categorised those who left into three groups, including those who are best

educated, very young and very old. If this study was to be accepted, then we must assume that beginner teachers soon seek greener pastures elsewhere (including overseas) or there are those who take early retirement. In comparison, Ramrathan (2003) revealed the declining rate of teacher attrition at an average rate of 4% of teachers leaving the system. The demand, he says was that 3116 teachers are needed continually to replace those exiting from the system.

According to Lewin, Sayed and Samuel (2002, p.368), "This position implies that the post – apartheid government's educational policies are a betrayal of the ideals and goals that have underpinned the anti – apartheid struggle." They added that this position in terms of teacher education was considered a loss in a number of ways. Some of these pertinent issues are the failure to overcome inequalities in teacher education and re- deployment as well as the conditions of service to achieve equity and redress. These are some concerns that have affected the profession in terms of growth and the backlash were that there are many competent educators are always under pressure to cope with more than they normally can handle. The participants in this study also believe that there was an immediate need to overhaul the planning section to look at ways of attracting new personnel into the profession.

According to Irma and Kgwete(2007, p.4), "Teachers indicated insufficient human resources as one of the challenges of inclusive education, as well as one of the main starting points for support for teachers in inclusive education. They mentioned that the small number of teachers and support staff in the school interfered with the provision of quality education in the inclusive school. Similarly, there is a need to employ more teachers in the school, as their workload left them overly burdened. The teachers expressed a need for administrative staff, teacher assistants, and general helpers in their classrooms. As a result of the increased workload due to insufficient human resources teachers become tired, frustrated and disillusioned in the completion of their expected responsibilities. This in turn had a negative impact on the quality of work they produced in the school setting.

According to the Journal of Education (2005, p.3) "Attrition itself may be responsible for lowering the morale of employees who remain in an organisation. Low morale may be result of the effects of attrition – such as the disruption of performance and social and communication patterns – and may lead to more attrition."

According to Journal of Education (2007), the size and shape of teacher education as targeted by the Department of Education focused on three levels of skills that included general

education, providing early schooling, childhood development and abet(adult basic education and training). The supply for human resource development further targets higher educational training and the demand for human resources look at skills from employers in private and public sectors. This information was an indication of the priorities as set out by the Department of Education.

Crouch and Lewin (2003, p.369) reveal that teacher supply and demand in South Africa are shaped by:

- The nature of the South African teacher force and changes that have occurred since 1995;

- The pattern of income amongst teachers;

- The characteristics of teacher turnover;

- Forecasts of teacher demand are generated under various assumptions and

- Attention was drawn to the implications that flowed from the uneven incidence of HIV /AIDS on teacher supply and demand.

The Government Gazette (2007) investigated ways of increasing the number of new entrants to initial teacher education, improving the success rate and encouraging more newly qualified teachers to teach. Further to this, the department was committed to investing resources in the initial education of teachers through an expanded programme of funding for student teachers who once qualified entered into service contracts with Provincial education departments. The Government Gazette (2007) has revealed that a strong, responsible and appropriate marketing campaign to raise the visibility, attraction and challenge of teaching as career for the best and brightest young people. It also reveals the plans of the department to invest large funds in loan and bursary programmes for student teachers. The Government Gazette (2007) revealed that the selection of these teachers are based on academic and personal criteria.

Ramrathan (2003, p.74) also highlights the crisis that arises from a shortage of teachers. He mentions that the shortage of teachers would arise due to changing patterns in pupil enrolment in KZN and its influence on the number of teachers required. Ramrathan (2003, p.74) also looks at the phenomenon of teacher attrition through resignation and death

as well as the output of teachers entering the supply through educational institutional providers.

Ramrathan (2003, p.75) revealed that the primary phase has decreased due to infant mortality rate resulting in the decrease of teachers needed in the primary schooling system. He revealed that the enrolment rate patterns are symptomatic of the drop out rate of learners who are responsible for caring for siblings. There was a high failure rate among secondary school pupils that may not provide accurate predictions.

Ramrathan (2003, p.75) through his research stated that teachers resigned for many different reasons that was related to psychological stress from teaching in the new challenging education system, disillusionment with policy change and unstable regulatory frameworks that are imposed on the teaching force. The reasons could also include as researched by Ramrathan (2003) better financial rewards and prospects outside the teaching profession.

The issue of teacher supply and demand raises several areas of concern that could potentially contribute to adversarial teaching contexts. The literature reviewed in this section reveals that adversarial conditions relating to teacher supply and demand could include inappropriately skilled and competent teachers teaching subjects that they may not have been trained for, taking larger than normal class sizes, supporting colleagues that are ill and who can no longer perform their responsibilities as teachers, and the threat of having a diminished teaching force.

Further new teachers needed to be constantly orientated by the more experienced teachers. When teachers leave the system, they are often not immediately replaced and existing teachers need to carry the extra load. This means teaching across a wide spectrum of disciplines which involves more preparation and other administration. This affects the quality of teaching as the teacher is not in a position to perform optimally.

Schools in rural areas are often understaffed and under-resourced; subsequently, teachers feel hard-pressed to provide the necessary support for all the children in their classrooms. Thus, children with special needs often are construed by teachers as an additional stressor.

2.1.7. **The issue of HIV / AIDS**

According to Buchel and Hoberg(2003), literature has highlighted the devastating impact that HIV /AIDS had and is still having on the education system in South Africa and that the most profound affects of HIV /AIDS are concentrated in education. Principals and educators in South Africa faced and are still facing the daunting task of providing quality education with an increasingly ill, absent and demoralised teacher corps, to increasingly ill and disrupted learners and AIDS orphans who are often not able to benefit from education because of dismal living conditions.

According to Bachel and Hoberg(2003) South Africa not only has the highest number of HIV-positive people in the world, between 6.29 and 6.57 million, but also the largest number of AIDS orphans, namely 2.3 million and this figure is expected to rise to 3.1 million by 2010 (Health-e News Service 2005:1; UNAIDS:2004:61). Moreover, in 2004 more than 4000 teachers died of HIV/AIDS complications and a further 45,000 (12.5% of the teacher workforce) was reported to be HIV-positive (Khangale 2005:1). A quarter of the deceased teachers were between 30 and 40 (Caelers 2005:5), pointing to a looming management disaster, because of future educators shortages caused the impact of HIV/AIDS on teacher provision. De Bruin (2003:1) finds that the mortality rate of female educators aged between 30 and 40 increased by 70%.

The research done by Crouch and Lewin (2003) looks at the attrition related to HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS orphans would require special attention which would necessitate the supply of more teachers. The approximate number of educators' as forecast by Crouch and Lewin (2003) due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic reveal that there would be a yearly shortage of 38000 and subsequently 48000 teachers. Ramrathan (2003) reveals that early death is also related to HIV/AIDS pandemic to those who are 20-25 years who are sexually active. More jobs therefore become available as a result of illness and death from AIDS. A reflection on the HIV/AIDS statistics has been drawn from a sampling of local teachers by Crouch and Lewin (2003) and Ramrathan (2003). It would be very difficult, therefore to provide exact figures of educator shortage as it was not the prerogative of the teacher to reveal their HIV status. Due to the sampling being done, it would be difficult therefore to forecast teacher shortage as a result of the lack of volunteered information on the HIV status of teachers. This adds to the problem of supply and demand discussed in the previous section.

The HIV pandemic also seriously affects learner's which adds to the adversity that teachers subsequently have to face.

According to Buchel and Hoberg(2003, p.3),

The loss of these female educators means that not only was education losing educators, but also South Africa was losing, educators, mothers and daughters leaving behind young and often sick orphaned learners, who lacked nurturing and care. These orphaned learners, often display disruptive behaviour and disrupt school- learner absenteeism also increases since learners that are affected by HIV/AIDS are not able to attend school regularly (Pela 2001:1, cited in Buchel and Hoberg). The above situations add to teacher adversity and escalate the challenges that teachers are facing at schools.

One of the participants had a learner (who was six years old) who had to take care of his mother who was diagnosed with HIV / AIDS. This learner had to help his mother with household chores before coming to school. He was not able to concentrate in class and when the educator investigated why he was always sleeping in class, he told the educator of his plight. Measures were taken to help this learner. This is one example of how teachers are managing the adversity that they are faced with on daily basis. In the analysis section I present other such scenarios where teachers use extraordinary measures to cope with adversarial conditions. There are many more such stories of adversity that teachers have to deal with.

2.2. Coping and management of adversity in the classroom

Carrim (2003, p.315) states that teachers maintain that there were many challenges implementing Curriculum 2005. According to Mattson and Harley (2003, p.284),

"The key finding of the curriculum 2005 review commissioned by then Education Minister Kader Asmal- that the essence of learning and teaching is being lost in mechanical deference to a poorly understood Curriculum 2005 – echoes the conclusion reached by much policy analysis and classroom –based research: that education policy in South Africa is distressingly out of touch with school and classroom realities, and that it should be revised."

These challenges included "a lack of resources, inadequate training, overloaded by policies, attempting to enact educational reforms in schools." Teachers have found it very challenging

to work in an environment with a lack of resources and schools face many challenges with financial constraints. At various intervals the curriculum was either streamlined or altered without adequate preparation of the teacher for the classroom. Teachers are therefore overwhelmed by multiple pages of information to be translated into practice in the classroom. This first requires interpretation and then application. Educational reforms in schools are difficult and can become complicated due to large class sizes, language barriers and financial challenges. In spite of these challenges, teachers are coping and are able to deliver the curriculum to learners.

In order to be able to keep abreast with the changes in curriculum, teachers are encouraged to attend workshops. Here, they receive instruction, guidance, advice and support about how they should go about implementing the new curriculum. By following the guidelines that are meted out to teachers, they are better able to cope with the ways and means to follow the new curriculum in the classroom. Teachers are also encouraged to network in clusters to encourage the standardization and the uniformed implementation of the new curriculum. Teachers require support from all stakeholders to implement the new curriculum. They included the learners who were subjected to peer assessment and group assessment, other teachers, the management, school governing body and principal. According to Fraser, Kennedy (2007, p.8) "There is increased focus on Continuous Professional Development(C.P.D.) and the importance of in service education and continuing professional development for the teaching profession was increasingly acknowledged in countries throughout the world."

According to Coolahan (2002, as cited in Fraser and Kennedy), it is also recognised internationally that teacher development was often best promoted within the context of school development, with more and more schools and staff being encouraged to engage in collaborative development planning. Coolahan (2002) added that teachers in clusters may collaborate on professional learning and development activities.

Training (in the form of workshops and in service) was provided to teachers to help them better understand inclusive education and to empower them with skills that helped them meet students' diverse needs. In addition, volunteers (such as retired remedial teachers, nurses, and parents) provided support services in these schools. Other government departments are also involved in the pilot schools to provide necessary services.

Adversity regarding large classes show that educators use creative teaching strategies like dividing the learners into groups to cater for the shortfalls in resources. The educator

normally allows learners with exceptional educational abilities to sit next to a learner who is generally weak and disinterested in his /her work. According to Irma and Kgwete(2007,p4) "This is peer group learning.."

According to the Journal of Education (2011) there are certain strategies that educators can use to enable them to cope despite these challenges. Some of these include:

- Use an educator's notebook – take notes while you are monitoring pair or group learning. Common errors can be reviewed.

- Encourage competition – establish a fun and a competitive atmosphere within the class. Divide the class into teams. Teams can earn points for certain accomplishments whilst losing points for noise and behaviour.

- Establish trust – Learn all the learners names and do your best to get to know each of your learners. Also tell the learners something about yourself.

Teachers work has changed dramatically over the years. Adversity was something that teachers have had to cope with – many teachers have adapted successfully whilst there are teachers that have not embraced this level of transformation and continue to struggle with it. Helsby (2000, p.69) was in agreement with Hargreaves (1994) that teacher intensification has increased dramatically. He added that "Evidence of teachers' increasing workloads was not new, nor was it peculiar to the English context. It is however, widely recognized that this general intensification of working life can have adverse effects upon teachers' professionalism, as increased paperwork, more frequent administrative meetings and other bureaucratic requirements sap teachers' energy and increasingly divert them from the core professional task of teaching."

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According to the Journal of Education (2011) the inference was that although educators are teaching large classes which has numerous challenges, educators have many coping skills to deal with these challenges

- High Energy: Classes with many learners may be noisy, but they are fun and exciting.

- Timing: Classes go by quickly in a large class, and you will rarely catch yourself looking at the clock. You will regularly find yourself with extra activities that you did not complete that you can save and use in your next class.

- Participation: There is always someone who was willing to answer questions even if they are just guessing. Make sure to take answers from a variety of learners.
  The Journal of Education (2009, p.3) add that, "In South Africa, it is imperative to think about different ways to support teachers in coping with the challenges of an inclusive classroom." According to Irma and Kgwete (2007, p.6), "Research suggests various teacher supports." Boyer and Gillespie (2000) mention that some countries have addressed the issue of support through task forces, long-term studies, short-term professional development, and even shorter-term pay incentives. Arbeiter and Hartley (2002) suggest that the support that teachers need includes appropriate training (i.e., pre-service and in-service), as well as community and parental involvement. South Africa's White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (Department of National Education, 2001) points out strengthened school-based support services and district support teams made up of staff from provincial districts. This approach will be a win –win situation for all if the theory can be implemented into practice.

- The National Policy for Teacher Education Development states that:

All teachers need to enhance their skills, not necessarily qualifications, for the delivery of the new curriculum. A large majority needs to strengthen their subject knowledge base, pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills. All teachers need to acquire skills in recognising, identifying and addressing barriers to learning and creating inclusive teaching

and enabling teaching and learning. According to Neito (2003,p.121), teachers agree that "having a community of practice (teacher cluster groups which allows educators to network) would be a positive incentive to keep going." This practice brings about a sense of belonging to the profession. Dan Lortie (as cited in Neito2003, p.121) states that, "a professional community of practice would not benefit just individual teachers but the profession as a whole."

Pillay and Govinden (2007, p.10) examine how teachers work creatively to overcome the challenges of adversity. Pillay and Govinden (2007, p.8)present counter narratives of teacher success, resistance and inventiveness, exploring the teachers' lives and their narratives through the theme of home and homelessness. The teacher narratives show how they overcome adversities by using moments of creativeness and to be brave enough to give expression to their true selves in spite of institutional demands that point them in another direction. Pillay and Govinden (2007, p.8) advocates, through the voice of their participants, "... to see teachers redefine themselves" against all the challenges that they are faced with. This redefining includes being creative in the classroom and also taking moments to discover who they really are.

Pillay and Govinden (2007, pp. 8 -12) presented three teachers narratives – each with its own adversarial challenges, struggles and dilemmas but deep down they had the willpower to believe that they would overcome any obstacle that was placed in front of them. These teachers refused to be victims but rather they choose to be victors.

Neito (2003, p.124) states that despite the adversity that teachers face, one of the most important reasons that teachers remain in the profession was that learners and teachers make a contributory, meaningful and worthwhile endeavour to future generations. In spite of the adversarial conditions that teachers face, they normally go beyond the call of duty because of the power and influence they have on future generations.

Neito (2003, p.124), states that, "Rethinking professional development means changing how teachers think and are prepared for the profession including policy changes and changing the conditions in which they continue to learn throughout their careers." The changes to policy must include changing certain practices like According to Neito (2003, p.124), ".....there's a need to recruit more diverse teaching population." This will help alleviate the many current challenges that educators are currently faced with. "The cultural congruency between

teachers and learners is no guarantee that students will learn better or more effectively, but having a teaching force that is more representative of our general population will certainly help" Neito(2003, p.125). This practice can allow an improvement in the behavioural patterns of the learners as well.

Policy should always be led by needs but according to Lewin, Samuel and Sayed (2002, p.369) "this is not always the case." Moletsane (2003, p.39) states that, "In South Africa, like elsewhere in the world, multiple and complex demands are often placed on teachers and schools. It is expected that schools, through teachers, ought to respond to the changing socio –political and educational contexts in the country and globally. Response by government has seen a plethora of policy changes, including curriculum transformation inundating the country's education system in the past decade." According to Hindle (as cited in Lewin, Samuel and Sayed,2002,p.327) "The proposed new salary change and grading structure for education that has been developed under the auspicious of the Education Labour Relations Council has a number of significant changes......The main improvement was that of the career path in teaching and learning." Excellent teachers can remain in the class whilst allowing for the teacher to progress to a senior or a master teacher. The participant of this study believes that this recourse and plan of action by the Department of Education will benefit the profession as a whole. Excellent teachers believe that their talents were not recognised and rewarded in the past due to the fact that only a few promotion opportunities exist. The new policy addresses this problem and adds a fresh sense of morale.Knowing that this policy was in place allowed the teachers to cope much better than in the past. The participants shared similar views.

Goodlad(1990, p.202) as cited in Moletsane(2003) "maintains that society has placed much expectations that teachers have to adhere to. For example, society can and should be able to believe that teachers can make a difference in our children's lives. As such, we should be able to comfortably entrust our children to teachers, based on the assumptions that they are of good moral character; are well qualified; have adequate content knowledge and pedagogical skills; are motivated to provide the best education they can; and are able and willing to effectively run the schools and classrooms in which they teach."

Goodlad (1990, p.202) as cited in Moletsane (2003), argued that teachers felt that there should be a reciprocation whereby teachers expect society to also show them respect – some examples of this respect includes the following matters "by rewarding and paying them

adequately, investing in their personal and professional development, and providing them with a working environment that was conducive to the effective execution of their duties."

Within these frameworks, these implementation practices had to ensure that there was a major re-organization for the National and Provincial Departments of Education. However, within all these policy changes within the Education Department, there were still many problematic areas that needed to be rectified. The most important of these problematic issues is that there was very little improvement in the quality of education that was being passed on to the learners. This is still happening today. The foundations of our democracy have still not produced the desired results that we have anticipated for our learners and our schools.

Teachers cope and according to Neito (2003, p.128), "Maintaining and enjoyment and passion for teaching can be attributed to the love and respect we have for our learners and our personal need to remain intellectually alive. While teachers continue to be plagued by the adversarial conditions in school settings they implement coping strategies in order to continue with their daily tasks. The principal reason lies in of the manner in which teachers view their jobs. The participants that were interviewed shared feelings and emotions of being passionate and maintained an enjoyment and respect and love for the learners. I end this section by quoting from an interview with one of the participant: "Teaching is not just a profession; it is our calling; it is a mission."

2.2. Conclusion

In this chapter, my key research questions have been informed by local and international literature that addresses the nature and facets of adversarial context teachers teach in, the impact that adversarial conditions have on effective teaching and how teachers teach in such adversarial teaching contexts.

While this section has highlighted the negativities and problems that beleaguer the teaching fraternity, it also points to the many ways that teachers are able to handle these problems both internationally and locally. It is encouraging to note that in spite of the adversities discussed above teachers can make positive differences in the education of our children.

The next chapter provides us with insight into the methodology of narrative inquiry uses in this study.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter I present the research design employed in conducting this study. The design presents the various elements constituting the process through which the data was produced, arguing for its relevance, coherence and credibility. The design includes arguments made for the selection and decisions taken with respect to the methodology, the participants, the instruments used and the process of producing the data through the selected instruments. Briefly, the design chosen includes the choice of narrative inquiry as the methodology guiding the production of the data and interviews and the made instrument used in the collection and production of data, the details of which are presented in the ensuing sections of this chapter. To recap, the focus of this study is to explore the nature of adversarial context that teachers experience as teachers. The study was guided by the following research questions:

A. What is the nature and facets of adversarial context teachers teach in? B.) What impact do adversarial conditions have on effective teaching? C.) How do teachers teach in such adversarial teaching contexts?

In attempting to answer these questions, the study employed a qualitative approach, within an interpretivist paradigm, to understand the narrative of teachers as they faced and overcame adversarial teaching contexts in order to illuminate issues of adversity within the context of schooling and teaching and how teachers responds to these issues. The reasons for these choices are presented in the sections that follow.

3.2. Paradigm

The narrative inquiry will be done through the interpretive paradigm. According to Clandinin and Connely (2000, p2), "educational research holds that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives." Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that the narrative inquiry was about understanding experience. It successfully captures personal and human dimensions that cannot be quantified into dry facts and numerical data. They further argue that "Narrative inquirers" allow one to think in a more detailed way about the general construct of continuity in an individual's life. They add that continuity becomes a

narrative construction that opens up a floodgate of ideas and possibilities." Teachers' tend to define stories as a part of history they created. They also feel that they have a chance to recreate and make their own history. This was aptly stated by Geerts as cited in Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.4), "The narrative inquiry was a reflective piece of inquiry and its contribution as to bring about new ways of thinking, reflection and change. He adds that there was change – change in the world, change in the inquiry, changes in the inquirer, change in the point of view and change in the outcomes." It was within this discourse of narrative inquiry that makes it appropriate to locate this study within an interpretivist paradigm.

Proponents of interpretivism, such as Clandinin and Connelly(2000) suggests that interpretivism was centrally focused on understanding and meaning making, bounded by a social context and located within a time period. In this study, the focus was establishing what teachers understood to be adversarial to their work and to understand what meaning these adversarial context brought to their teaching and their responses to such situations. Hence the choice of locating this study within an interpretivist paradigm was driven by the nature of the study and the methodological choice that was made.

3.3. Narrative inquiry as the methodology of choice for this study

According to Cortazzi (1993, p.5), "The study of teachers' narratives – teachers' stories of their own experiences- is increasingly being seen as central to the study of teachers' thinking, culture and behaviour." Therefore, in this research the methodology that was used was the narrative inquiry. In addition to this definition of narrative inquiry, Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p.45) adding their voice by stating that, "The narrative inquiry is flourishing, it is everywhere." They added that stories are exacted by people in terms of their behaviour at any given point in their life. Stories encapsulate us all our lives and it is a natural phenomena to discuss and write about it. People love stories. Therefore this study will try to replicate exactly what these participants want to say, with a no holds barred approach for translating their issues, challenges, difficulties, trials, tribulations and hardships into storylines. These teachers and many more are unsung heroes / heroines - despite the challenges that they have faced, have managed to make a difference in the lives of many learners that they have taught. Carrim(2002) states that teachers tend to make and perceive more about their lived experiences. This approach allowed teachers to make self discovery of the social evils and social justice that encompass our society, especially where the learner was concerned, and to take decisive action and bring remediation to those areas of concern.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.19) stated the following, "Experience happens narratively. Narrative inquiry is a form of narrative experience. Therefore educational experience should be studied narratively." This methodology also encapsulates the difficulties that teachers experience in the classroom, in the staffroom and even outside the class.

This paradigm was located within an interpretivist context.

3.4. **Some definitions of narrative inquiry**

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.1), "why choose a narrative inquiry?" The response was that a narrative inquiry was about telling stories. Participants are given this opportunity to engage in their own stories. Their response regarding the narrative was for one's own inquiry and their understanding of teaching, teacher knowledge and teacher learning. This dissertation was also to find out about how teachers' have adapted to the changing nature of teaching and how these changes are being implemented. Narrative inquiry gives teachers' a chance to be part of history as this allows them to talk about their experiences along the way. These experiences paved the way for future educators not to make the same mistakes but to learn from it and adapt accordingly.

Narrative described our journey through life. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) add that narrative or stories make our lives a play at home and work within a particular setting. Thus, in this context, participants are given the choice to examine a particular context such as apartheid and post apartheid experience of teaching and the challenges that were experienced by the participants during these times as well as implementation of policies.

(Clandinin, 2006 ,p.46) states, "Narrative inquiry allows us to work with one another in different settings. What we hear about others' stories is important." All stories have different emotions running through them such as success, failures, achievements, highs and lows – this is due to the risk that we take in life and the choices that we make that has an influence on our final outcome.

By constant reflection, we can examine our attitudes, personality and values that we have carried into our profession and how we can adapt to bring about a level of influence to the learners.

3.5 **Research setting**

A primary school was selected as the research site for this study. The study focuses on teachers' experiences of teaching in adversarial contexts. Hence, it was important to find a school where teachers were experiencing adversarial teaching context. One sure way to establish this was to find a school that was in a physical state commensurate with some form of adversity. I am currently teaching in a such as school and therefore the choice of this school was most appropriate based on access, convenience, and the willingness of teachers to participate in this research. In this school the principal consented to the research as well as three teachers from that school agreed to be participants. Being a primary or secondary school did not matter nor was the geographic location as the study focused on a broad conception of adversarial context and as experienced by teachers.

3.5.1. **Background of this school**

The name of this school has been given a pseudonym so as to protect the identity of the school, teachers and the learners. The pseudonym Parken primary school was used for this particular study.

This school was situated in a low socio economic area where most of the learners live in abject poverty. The school was about forty years old with attention being given to academic programme, sports programme as well as much fund raising having to take place to keep the schools kitty afloat. Many learners cannot afford to bring lunch to school as well as basic stationery. To compound this problem, there has been an increase in the number of thefts in recent times at the school. Many teachers have been disillusioned with recent events regarding these break- ins as this puts them on the back foot to fund raise for the same projects. The school was flooded in 1987 and almost all the teachers' lost all of their academic work with most of the records of the schools history being lost in that particular flood. The buildings were damaged and the teachers' were transferred to other local schools in the area.

After new underground pipes were installed by the Municipality to prevent further floods from taking place, the school was re-opened again and the teachers that were transferred were asked to resume their careers at this school. Currently, the school buildings are in a very poor condition to teach in. Previously, the learners were taught in platoon classes under trees. In the classes that teachers have taught in, there are many ceilings that are on the verge of falling

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down and the maintenance have to be shelved because there are no funds to address these repairs. These classes are designed to accommodate at least thirty five learners very comfortably but the learner population in each class runs up to about forty eight and in some classes up to fifty.

The learners that come to this particular school are from township areas like Ntuzuma, Kwa – Mashu and Lindelani, and some come from informal settlement and temporary marquees that have been assigned to families that have lost their homes. Some of these people have since been moved to other localities.

3.6. Process of data production

Data for the study was produced through semi-structured interviews with individual participants. A second data production process involved conversations amongst the three participants in a form of a focus group guided by open ended questions to the group. According to (Mason, 2002, p.76), "Interviews are one of the most commonly recognised forms of qualitative research methods." I used semi-structured interviews extensively in this study to gather data. Semi-structured interviews have a relatively informal style, for example, face-to-face interviewing takes the form of a conversation or discussion rather than a formal question and answer format. Burgess (1984) calls this type of interview, conversation with a purpose. This approach fitted my study since the intention was to allow the respondents to tell their story. These approaches of data production allowed me to interview the participants on an individual basis initially and then as a group.

I did not follow a complete and sequenced script of questions but rather designed the interviews to have a fluid and flexible structure that allowed the respondents freedom to speak about their experiences.

The interviews took place over a two month period on separate occasions. The duration of the first interview was approximately half an hour and the second and subsequent interviews were at different times and duration, depending on availability and preparedness of the respondents to talk. Subsequent interviews were needed to clarify, gain more information and review hunches and hypotheses developed from previous interviews. This process of data production was useful in clearly understanding the teacher articulation of their experiences in order to construct the narratives for completeness as well as for coherence and logical flow. Narrative writings are detailed as it captures, through stories, sequences of events, emotions,

plots, outcomes and characters. In this study I turned my questions into story telling invitations. This involved careful planning of the interview schedule where questions were constructed in an open-ended manner and framed so as to elicit narratives. This approach proved most useful in that it produced rich illustrations and stories from the respondents.

After the semi-structured interview process with individual participants, I organised a focus group session where all three participants participated in an open ended interview questioning. This was done to elicit deeper understanding of the contextual realities of the school situation that framed the adversarial nature as explicated by each of these teachers as each one conversed about their experiences and feelings, built upon other teachers' experiences and feelings or extended on their experiences through sharing.

3.7. Validity, reliability and process of data analysis

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), "There are many different types of validity and reliability."

The idea of validity and reliability as it relates to this study is located in the trustworthiness of the data produced to develop the narratives. According to (Mishler,1990, p.25), "In establishing this issue of trustworthiness, it is essential for the research audience to be able to see what has been done, what decisions have been taken, why certain procedures have been followed and how certain interpretations, recommendations and conclusions have been reached." Hence, care was taken to establish this trustworthiness through several processes.

  First, the interviews were conducted over a period of time and a series of interviews were conducted. Each successive interview clarified what the previous interview revealed and built upon that clarification. This contributed to the first level of establishing trustworthiness of data produced. The second level of establishing trustworthiness of data was in the creation of the narratives for each of the participants. The narratives were given to the respective participants for their corrections, additions and clarifications. The third level of establishing trustworthiness was located in the way the analysis was approached. The analysis was based upon both a content analysis and a discourse analysis of the narratives constructed. Content analysis as Cohen,et,al(2007,p.87) draws attention "...to consider the form of the reporting of the research" with specific attention being given to the academic audience that is going to be the voice of reason to the report of the content analysis. The participants discussed many issues that they felt was of an adversarial nature. Most of these issues by the participants were

common on as they had moved on in terms of their careers. Some issues of commonality were promotions, large class sizes, language barriers, competing demands from both parents and school managers. Other issues that were discussed that brought about much adversity were the curriculum, educational changes that included teacher supply and demand, teacher work load, teacher health and industrial action. Physical issues included safety in the classroom(some classrooms have ceilings hanging precariously for a number of years and these class rooms are designed to fit at least thirty five learners but some classes have forty five and above. There will be one or two exceptions were classes have at least thirty five learners.)

According to (Harris,1991, p.47) "Discourse analysis or discourse studies is a general term for a number of approaches to analysing data including the written, spoken and a fully articulated theory of linguistic informational content." According to Cohen,et,al (2007), "Discourse can be regarded as sets of linguistic material that is coherent in organisation and content and enable people to construct meaning in social context." The three participants all agree that for the process to move forward there has to be forward thinking.

Hence, my influence was limited to establishing categories and themes that guided the analysis as well as in the discussions emerging from these findings. In this way, the conclusions drawn were from the narratives.

3.8. Limitations

As this research was about adversarial conditions, the teachers took this to mean many different things. The limitation here was that only teachers from one school were interviewed. There opinions, responses and their answers are very subjective.

This study was conducted using a relatively small sample size of three teachers drawn from one primary school. It was restricted in terms of its transferability to other contexts or settings or to the general population in that I cannot make generalisations about adversity in other contexts and how teachers in these contexts handle these adversities. While the specifics of the study cannot be generalised, the approach to the analysis of the management of adversity in school contexts could well be applied fruitfully to other school and institutional settings.

Another limitation is whether these participants can really narrate their stories without being subjective? These teachers can narrate what good they may have contributed to ensure they have had successful careers, but what about the personal challenges they may experienced along the way that they might not necessarily want to engage in? Can these teachers also reflect on their own data?

3.9. Ethical Issues

Henning (2009, p73) states that "respondents need to be given informed consent to participate." Bertram (2003) too, highlights the importance of ethics in research, especially when dealing with people. Informed consent has been defined by Diener and Crandall, as cited in Cohen,et.al.(2007), "as the procedures in which individuals choose to participate in an investigation after being informed of the facts that would likely influence their decision."

This means that the participants were fully informed about the research and in which the interview was going to be used. According to Cohen,et.al.(2007,p.51), "A major ethical dilemma was that which requires researchers to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by truth."

According to Cohen, et.al.(2007,p.51), "......there was a set of initial considerations that researchers should address in planning research. These are:

- Informed consent

- Gaining access to and acceptance in the research setting

- Problems and dilemmas confronting the researcher, including matters of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, betrayal and deception.

  In terms of this research, participants were always told about the issues regarding informed consent, conducting the interviews at a convenient time based on their availability, considerations regarding their privacy and conditions of anonymity. The interviewees were told that their participation in this research was voluntary and they were able to withdraw from the study / research at any given time, if they so desire. The clause of confidentiality was maintained throughout this research.

To this end, and to adhere to the clause of confidentiality, suitable pseudonyms were used as chosen by the participants. The pseudonyms of Kay, Shaista and Priscilla were used for the participants as well as the name of the school was changed to Parkin Primary School.

Clandinin (2006,p.50) states, "for those of us wanting to learn to engage in narrative inquiry, we need to imagine ethics as being about negotiation, respect, mutuality and openness to multiple voices." My understanding of this was to place value and meaning on the life stories of others. In doing this, I did not engage my participants to answer questions that brought stress, lack of respect or embarrassment to them.

I selected my participants very carefully, knowing that they were seasoned teachers who brought about a level of maturity, were clear thinkers and had a willingness to participate in this study.

Marshall and Rossman (2006,p.81) agree that participants make huge sacrifices when they give of their time, knowledge and skill to have engaged in this research process. They add that the researcher needs to give some kind of feedback to the participants or being a good listener to any issues that are relevant to this study.

According to Henning (2009, p73) "respondents need to be given informed consent to participate." This means that the participants were be fully informed about the research and in which the interview was going to be used. The interviewees were also told that their participation in this research was on the basis of anonymity. They are able to withdraw from the study / research at any given time, if they so desire. The clause of confidentiality was maintained throughout this research.

. Time and experiences are synonymous with this profession as teachers influence the better part of society. Every person should have passed at some stage of his/ her life through the hands of an educator.

3.10. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter presented the research design employed in this study and argued for the choices made within the design. In summary, the design was located within an interpretivist paradigm and narrative inquiry was argued for as the most appropriate methodology for the study. The study was located within a primary school chosen on the basis of known

adversarial teaching context, access and willingness of the school and participants to participate in this study. Interviews were the main means of producing the data. Some limitations were identified in the research design and ethical issues were adhered to. The next chapter present an account of the data by the participants on adversarial teaching context within schools.

According to Henning (2009, p73) states that "respondents need to be given informed consent to participate." This means that the participants were fully informed about the research and in which the interview was going to be used. The interviewees were told that their participation in this research were based on anonymity. They were able to withdraw from the study / research at any given time, if they so desire. The clause of confidentiality was maintained throughout this research.

These stories about these teachers will be able to see whether they have in fact made changes, first to themselves, than creating a piece of history to see whether they really have made a difference to the learners under their care.

CHAPTER FOUR: TEACHERS JOURNEY THROUGH ADVERSITY

4.1. HOW DO TEACHERS TEACH IN SUCH ADVERSARIAL CONDITIONS?

After reflecting on the literature review of what the different writers said about adversarial conditions in chapter two and the methodological design in chapter three, the emphasis would now shift to the data produced from the three participants. In this chapter the narratives of the three participating teachers are presented. The narratives have been constructed based on the interviews held with these teachers and written in the form of the third person narration. In constructing the narratives, the interview transcripts of all three participants were read repeatedly in order to get a better sense of the data. Through this reading a thorough understanding of the data and many common issues began to emerge. These common issues then became the markers in the construction of the narratives. The common themes relate to the nature of adversarial conditions and experiences that teachers' consider and identify in their lives as teachers; the impact of these adversarial conditions, and their responses to these conditions and experiences. In writing the narratives, there appears to be some level of similarity in the components of the narratives. This way of writing the narratives provided a clearer way for the analysis in that the categories for analysis could be identified and written about. The analysis of the narratives follows at the end of this chapter.

I introduced each of the participants with a little background history of their families, how they have progressed in this profession and the adversarial conditions that they have experienced. In addition I also focussed on what they are currently experiencing. Despite their circumstances they managed to prevail and continued to teach. Each of the participants related issues of adversarial conditions that they have experienced and how they are overcame it. Adversarial issues are common among the three participants and these issues will be analysed at the end of this chapter. The names of the participants and the school are both fictitious to protect the anonymity of the participants and the school in this study.

The term adversity was explored thoroughly in the literature chapter; however, the notion of adversity in this study was seen through the lens of the teachers' perspective. The teachers identify what they consider as adverse and present their experiences of working through their constructions of adversity. The study was conducted in a school which experienced much adversity due the school being flooded. It was 21 July 1987, the sky

looked black and they were dark clouds shadowing the earth. The sky opened and poured out its wrath upon the earth. Parkin Primary School became the victim of the earth's wrath, a natural disaster. The school had to be closed with all the records (both the office as well as all the staff was lost). The teachers and the learners were transferred to other local schools way back in 1987 to allow the school's rebuilding process. After many months of waiting, repairs and anxious moments the school was re-opened a few years later. In terms of the repairs, the teachers that were placed at that school stated that these repairs were of a substandard nature. This school has many classrooms, together with the staffroom, have ceilings that can collapse at anytime. This can be a danger to both the teachers and the learners. The narratives of these participants show that this concept of adversity still exists and there is always a huge battle to overcome adversity at this school. The school was always in need of things (such as photocopiers and a c.d. machine to run out worksheets) to be done in respect of maintenance (some classes and the staffroom have ceilings that are on the verge of collapse, many windows are broken and this entices many thefts of valuables which has happened to many educators at this school according to the participants. The three participants agree that most of the learner population come from disadvantaged communities and most staff members have to address these social issues first before engaging with the academic and the sports programme and other related adversarial issues. Some of these social issues that have to be contented with include learners coming from poor socio- economic backgrounds, dysfunctional families, parents that are unemployed, learners whose parents suffer with H.I.V. and A.I.D.S., emotional insecurity(living with other family members such as aunts or uncles other than their own family members)

4.2. Kay's narrative

Kay lives in a bustling suburb, a melting pot of cultures, religions and diverse needs. This is Overport, the suburb in which Kay was born. She then moved to the more serene, close-knit and tranquil community called Asherville. Some of the neighbours here were Mr Pillay, Mrs Govender and Mr Naidoo. Kay had no contact with the Khumalo's, the Nkosi's or the Augustine's due to the Group Areas Act of 1950 that was introduced by the National Party that came into existed in 1948.These suburbs are centralised towards the city and the north and south of Durban. It became quite convenient for Kay to travel to the inner city.

Kay comes from a family of two brothers and two sisters; one of whom is late. Her dad himself wanted to be a teacher but chose to be a driver to earn a higher salary. Her mum

was married at the age of eighteen and was a housewife. Her mum experienced tragedy at the age of eleven due to the death of both her parents. She had to relocate and live with her aunt and uncle. Kay mentioned that although her mum lived with her aunt and uncle, it is not the same like living with your biological parents. There is always that feeling of suspicion and apprehension. She was sometimes ostracised. Having experienced these difficulties and adversarial conditions first hand, her mum had wished that her children do not traverse the same path and encouraged all her children had some professional qualification in order to change their lifestyles.

Kay went to a primary school within the neighbourhood where she excelled in Mathematics, Science and Physical Education. She also had a love for sports where she excelled in athletics and netball. She progressed on to a secondary school where she had an affinity for Art, Biology and Bookkeeping. She was appointed the swimming captain of the school team as well as participating in tennis and netball. These moments of success had provided her the motivation to strive for excellence and to overcome difficulties by keeping her sights on the outcomes of her engagement. Her goal and motivation to succeed was instrumental in fulfilling her mothers' wishes.

Her dream was to be a Dietician. This dream had to become a distant thought as this course of study was not offered to non- whites. Kay was really disappointed that her dream to become a dietician was suppressed because of the laws of the land that governed the country. Although this dream was suppressed, the quiet steely determination to make something of her life gave her hope and encouragement to continue and pursue her second dream of becoming a teacher encouraged largely by her mother and father. This choice was made easier through the financial incentives in the form of bursaries to become a teacher. The external drive in the form of a bursary provided opportunities for independent studies free of financial burden to others.

During the interview, she mentioned that even the discriminatory laws that were in place were not going to allow her to be dependant on her father and her other siblings for financial assistance. She was going to ensure that she fulfilled the dream that her late mum envisaged for her, and to become an independent individual so that she does not experience the same kinds of difficulties that her mother endured whilst being in the care of her uncle and aunt.

As a young student, she did not understand properly the laws that governed the country but realised that there was to be many challenges and adversarial conditions when

she went into the teaching profession. However, her desire to succeed based on her dreams, aspirations and   independence, became her guiding line in her pursuit to becoming a professional.

Kay was in charge of the schools summary register for about two years at Parkin Primary School (a pseudonym) – her current school. This register was compiled for the entire school and officials from the Department of Education as well as the principal can see immediately how the attendance in each class was. Classes that had irregular attendance could come under the spotlight. The principal could then look at the class registers and this allowed her to see which learners were frequently absent. Measures could then be put in place to address this issue of irregular attendance. Kay had to ensure that her figures were accurate for each class. Sometimes problems arise when learners come in very late and the morning attendance was compiled and this summary register was already filled in.

Kay has to do these figures all over again which was time consuming and taxing. It becomes worse when she was not informed by a form teacher that a learner has arrived late. This figure is entered in the class register and not the summary register. Her totals do not work out at the end of each month. The onus is on her to go back to check each register until she finds the error. These figures are then used by the school management to report to the Department of Education and upon which funding and resources are determined for the school. This additional responsibility that has far reaching implications that could involve funding, staffing and integrity places a heavy burden on Kay as she would become accountable for the reports that are produced. When the figures are correct and there is no come back from the Department of Education, this responsibility becomes part of the chores that teachers do engage with. However, when there are audits and problems arise with these figures and there are questions raised about the correctness of the figures, then Kay considers it adversarial as it questions her integrity. She has to rely on other to provide the information, but the reprimand is on her irrespective of the source of the problem – usually the other teachers. She feels that these kinds of responsibilities be given to a teacher for a limited duration only and that all teachers should have turns in taking this responsibility so that they have an understanding of what was required and the gravity of its implications. Thus experience of adversity episodes was crucial to understanding and responding. Teaching is different. Kay believes that teachers must become agents of change – personally and professionally, we must be open up to new information and transformation.

Having started her career as a teacher under the apartheid system when schooling for the different race groups were under the administration of the different Houses within Parliament, that is (House of Delegates for Indians, House of Representatives for Coloureds and House of Assembly for Whites) her notion of what normal teaching load and class size was, was very different from the reality that she now faces in the integrated education system under one government department. She worked with large class sizes and taught children from different races, cultures and language backgrounds. She considers this adversarial as she now has to work extremely hard to cope with more than 45 learners in her class, from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Her preparation for teaching has become more difficult and she struggles getting through the learners from non -English speaking backgrounds. She has to be very careful about what examples she chooses in her lessons as it may conflict with some of the different cultures learners embrace. Her drive to succeed in her teaching despite these circumstances forced her to explore other ways of teaching. She relied on other teachers for assistance and comfort. Tea and lunch breaks were times when she would engage in discussions with colleagues regarding her teaching situation and this brought comfort to her knowing that she is not alone in this and that it has become a way of life for most teachers and in most schools. These discussions and further engagement in professional development activities, like learning clusters, workshops and self- reading, provided her deeper insights on how to cope with large classes, language issues and cultural issues.

In her discussions with colleagues and other professionals, curriculum matters recurrently permeated the discussion. As with other teachers Kay also had difficulty with the manner in which the Education Department cascaded changes in the curriculum to teachers and the constant shift in approach and content. Kay mentioned that there were three fundamental changes to the curriculum in the epoch of her teaching career which included Curriculum 2005, NCS and now CAPS. While Kay supports lifelong learning she feels that the constant change in the curriculum what she terms "changing the goal-posts" added to her mounting adversarial teaching conditions. The curriculum often required larger learning areas, group seating, learner-centredness and learner self development and discovery. The climate and environment of Parkin Primary did not readily make these situations viable.

The large class sizes produced other adversarial conditions for Kay. Lack of sufficient attention to all learners in the overcrowded class provided opportunities for groups

to emerge. Thokozani, Blessing and Purity are a part of this over-crowded class. They have diverse needs. Thokozani comes from a child-headed house-hold, Blessing lives with foster parents and Purity has just found out that at a young age of twelve, she is pregnant. Kay has to ponder on different means and ways in which she can be of help to these three learners. They represent the multi-challenging needs of all those in Parkin Primary School. They become very disruptive and inattentive due to the challenges they face on an ongoing basis.

Bullies emerge rampantly and it becomes difficult to control this form of behaviour, largely because these bullies are encouraged by others in the group. Senzo has on many occasions stolen money from the younger learners in order to service his drug habit. His friends support him in this and the younger learners are subject to this intolerable behaviour. Some of these bullies are older – age wise as well as stronger than most of the learners that are in their class. Control, discipline and bullying tendencies makes Kay's teaching experiences adversarial because the site of the classroom becomes a hostile environment for teaching and for other learners in the class. She recognised that this situation can get out of control in an instant. If she ignored this situation, she would have lost in her attempts to teach if she did not do something to manage the bullies. She attempted to manage the bullies by making them feel important in class and outside class by allocating them to leadership tasks. Senzo has now been given the task of being Class Monitor so that he can learn some responsibility and become accountable for this leadership role he has been assigned. This task would include taking responsibility for controlling the class whilst Kay is away attending to other school matters. Taking leadership responsibilities was one strategy that worked for Kay in addressing adversarial school conditions. *The bullies were now being bullied*.

Kay mentioned several other activities within her class life that presented as adversarial to her. These include arrogance by learners, ill-discipline and lack of motivation in learners. Working through these issues is a daily struggle but becomes routine and acceptable after a while. It becomes part of the class culture and teachers blend into this reality to manage the stress and tension that these kinds of attitudes bring with.

Outside of class life, Kay argues that there are several issues that present as adversarial to her as a teacher. These include the relationship with the School Governing Body and notions of trust related to their activities; lack of adequate promotional opportunities and notions of favouritism related to promotions; and the inconsiderate demands placed by parents and the lack of support to the child's education. All of these are discouraging to teachers and impacts on her drive to give off her best in these areas of

concern. Avoidance is a key strategy that Kay uses in managing these tensions. As far as possible, Kay minimises on discussions with her colleagues on these issues as deep and prolonged engagements tend to insight heightened awareness of the hostility that these issues bring to her.

4.3. Shaista's narrative

Shaista will be used for the name of the second participant. She also lived in the suburb of Overport. Her neighbours included Mr Timol, Mrs Khan and Mr Govender. She didn't have Mr Khumalo, Mrs Nomvete and Mr Etienne as neighbours due to the Group Areas Act. She now has to teach classes that are integrated. She never knew what integration was back then. Shaista comes from a big, happy and humble family of thirteen. They were six girls, five boys and mum and dad. Her dad was an ordained Hindu priest. He worked at a chemist. Her mum was a home executive. Shaista experienced adversity when she chose her marriage partner. He had come from a Muslim background whilst she came from a predominantly Hindu background. (This issue will be discussed further in the data). Both her eldest brother and eldest sister were teachers. Her four older sisters took care of the house hold chores. One of her brothers was a bricklayer whilst her other brothers were all clerks. Shaista was the youngest member of this family. Mum said, "We are so proud of you Shaista, for taking the role of head prefect at your school. You also go over and above this and become the house and sports captain. You have excelled in whatever you have chosen to do." These sentiments spoken to her by her mum made Shaista more determined to take on leadership roles throughout her life. She was a member of the school choir as well as the debating team. In her secondary school she held the position of a prefect and a representative on the Student Representative Council. Here again, her parents beamed with pride.

"My family could not afford designer clothes, expensive cars or luxury holiday" said Shaista. We have come from an average economic background. Springfield College of Education offered bursaries to potential students. Following in this path would help my family ease their economic burden and any -way her sister opted for teaching motivating Shaista to follow suit. She remarked that teaching was a noble profession. Shaista also spent time tutoring her niece so that motivated her even more to help and assist other children. "Wow, aunty, I am amazed at how you explain these concepts to me " were the words echoed to Shaista by her niece. These words strengthened her desire to become a teacher.

Shaista was accustomed to being given the curriculum to teach her subjects under the apartheid system and she enjoyed her teaching. However, with the changes to the school curriculum within the OBE framework, Shaista felt overwhelmed by the enormity of the changes that were required of teachers. The teachers constantly complained, "Oh, so many learning areas, so many learning outcomes, assessment standards and specific outcomes. How are we going to keep pace with these changes that are so constant" she said.

The most significant change was that of designing the curriculum based on the new school curriculum policies and the changing demographics of the learner population within her school. There were so many demands made of her in terms of the curriculum and her teaching from different individuals and sectors, including the Head of Department at the school level, the department officials, learners and parents, and this melting pot of demands presented itself as a hostile environment for her. She was not able to please everyone, including herself, as she was very unsure of what was expected. The continuing changes after the introduction of the new OBE curriculum did not add any relief. This hostile context just prevailed over a long period with no end in sight. All she could do was to follow others during the school and became part of the collective in responding to the curriculum changes required. She felt safe in numbers and just prodded along taking each day at a time. It's now nearly a decade and teachers are still responding to large scale changes with ongoing and sometime competing demands. While she has made great efforts to learn about these changes and implement it with honesty and commitment, she was only able to bear this context of on going change with the assistance of others in her school and social circles. Knowledge that she is not alone in it and that there are support systems available to assist teachers is what kept her going as the alternative was to leave the profession and find alternate employment, which she felt was not a good option as it would have meant her giving up on her passion of being a teacher and the joy of developing a child. Shaista felt that she was a mere recipient of the curriculum with no voice and felt that she was not involved in the process of curriculum change. She also shared similar sentiments as Kay in that she felt that she do not receive sufficient training to ensure that she was well equipped to enter the classroom and implement curriculum changes efficiently.

Shaista believes that some of the issues that have been shown in the paragraph above are issues of an adversarial nature. She believes that, and contributing to this notion of adversarial context, there is very little opportunities for teacher's upward mobility and this suppresses the mood of teachers. She believed that if teachers are given the opportunity to take on promotion posts, then at least their efforts of deeply engaging in educational

development was recognised and this would certainly spur teachers' will to continue teaching and perform much better. Her grouse was that too many management members are in those positions for far too long and sometimes changes should be made to give others an opportunity to influence what happens at the level of school. Promotional posts should not span a lifetime, but rather on a limited period, to allow for new visions, new working environments and complete removal of unlimited power imposed over teachers by managers who feel safe in their lifelong tenure as managers.

Another issue that brings about adversarial condition is teachers affected by HIV/AIDS. The adversarial nature here is that when these teachers get really sick, and they absent themselves for long periods of time. Shaista says that other teachers, including herself, become very emotional especially when the reality hits in that one of their colleagues is suffering with this disease. This emotional stress associated with the imminent death of a colleague creates a hallow school environment, full of expectations that they will lose a colleague. A further issue related to HIV/AIDS is that of serving relief all the time when these educators are absent for long periods of time. Relief teachers are asked to teach these classes so that learners do not miss out on work. This is in spite of teachers carrying their own heavy loads says Shaista. This puts undue pressure not only on the teachers but the learners under the whip because teachers carrying their own load have to assist this teacher's classes so that the learners do not miss out on much learning time.

Teachers suffered from burnout because of this. Little can be done about this situation as emotions tend to take the better of everyone concerned. Shaista accepts this as part of her emotional and caring life.

When looking at the school from a structural perspective, this school was damaged by a raging flood in 1987. All of the teachers' records as well as the school records were lost. The teachers were moved to neighbouring schools during this act of nature. The school was rebuilt but the workmanship was very shoddy. The effects of this poor workmanship can be seen throughout the school and becomes more distinct as the years progress. Many classrooms are dilapidated and in some cases the ceilings are damaged so badly that there is every possibility that it can come crashing down. The teacher's attention is divided between teaching and taking note of whether the ceiling is going to fall at any given time. Shaista says that it is a frightening thought if the ceiling were to collapse and the learners are inside when this happens. Another problem that arises from this scenario is that the most learners have much financial difficulty and most do not pay school fees; hence not much can be done in

terms of school repairs. So in essence everybody is waiting for some sort of tragedy to happen before repairs can be conducted. Shaista believes that the teachers are caught in a catch twenty two situation, meaning that if they fundraise, then the teaching is compromised. Teachers on this staff have chosen to teach and just let this adversarial scene play out despite making numerous efforts to fund raise. Even with the fund raising drives / efforts, the amount collected is insufficient to complete major repairs. She adds that as much as teachers want the school to function at its optimal level, this becomes increasingly difficult. The Deputy principal's office has major cracks on the wall and these walls could collapse at any time and this is a disaster waiting to happen. Shaista says that she hopes and prays that nothing, absolutely nothing must happen to either her colleagues or the learners. Although the conditions are of an adversarial nature, she is also of the opinion that all members of the staff must always remain focused to the task at hand and not lose sight of the learners.

The other issue is that these classes are designed for approximately thirty five learners to be seated comfortably but most classes have on average, about forty five to fifty learners. This makes it very difficult for both the teacher and the learners especially. Coupled with the class sizes, these classrooms get extremely hot and the conditions become unbearable. Teachers and learners become restless. The learners become continuously disruptive asking to leave the classroom to go and drink water. To alleviate this problem of the blistering weather patterns, the staff went on some fund raising drives to purchase industrial fans for each class.

Shaista says that the material condition within the school presents itself as adversarial to her. She claimed that the teachers are on a double edged sword and any decision taken in respect of improving the material conditions of the school would result in some disaster. Health and safety issues are compromised by the deteriorating material conditions, and if fund raising becomes a focus to address the health and safety issues, then learning becomes compromised and vice versa. In attempting to manage this hostile environment, Shaista claimed that she stays focused on her teaching and make partial attempts at fund raising to assist and to alleviate pressing problems.

4.4. Priscilla's narrative

Growing up in a suburb so far away from the city centre of Durban was different. 'Living and growing up in the South Coast of Durban, my family found themselves drawn together in a very close-knit community. We celebrated our triumphs and successes together and mourned our tragedies and losses together. We were united and strong as a community." My family comprises two brothers, one sister, her mum and dad. Priscilla's dad worked in his father's laundry business, which was situated on the South Coast. Her father consumed alcohol for many years and this became an irritation that her family suffered. She wanted to become a teacher but was not sure if she would be able to complete this course of study as her father was not well, coupled with his alcoholic habits. He earned very little but tried to provide a decent standard of living. Her mother was a house wife. Priscilla believed that she had a divine calling to become a teacher. This calling was reinforced through her reflections on being a learner where she identified one of her teachers as being her inspiration and whom she regarded as her role model. Mrs Pillay displayed her passion as a teacher. Her determination, drive and inspiration motivated Priscilla to one day become just like Mrs Pillay.

This participant felt that there are a number of factors that determine the adversarial conditions that this school environment presents. One of the issues that always come to the fore is the number of learners per class. "We have such large class sizes and how do we cope" said Priscilla.

The Department of Education would like to have the figure ideally set at 1:32 (one teacher for every thirty two learners). This was well and good in theory BUT in practical terms, it was a far cry from the reality. The average ratio per unit in this particular school was around forty five. Some class units have more than fifty learners. Priscilla felt that with these large numbers per class, coupled with the fact that we have second language learners, it was extremely difficult to give individual attention to the learners who are not coping in that particular grade.

In addition the large number of learners per class leads to discipline issues where learners take advantage of the situation and become ill- disciplined and disrespectful towards teachers. This has become the norm in recent times. The lack of discipline, especially those that take advantage of lack of attention by teachers, creates a lot of stress on her. She was

unable to manage this stress because of the situation being compounded by the learners' rights and legal issues relating to corporal punishment. She felt powerless in this large class and can only do a fraction of what she intended to do. She felt betrayed by the context of teaching and believes that it has become a hostile context, both to her personal calling as well as to her daily life as a teacher. This betrayal was something that she has to go through as a life of a teacher in this current context. Her motivation to go on was based on her belief that she was doing something positive to, at least, some learners and that she could make a difference to these few learners. She was very much troubled by her inability to do the same to all her learners due to the contextual realities that plays itself out currently at most public schools.

Priscilla adds that there are many barriers to teaching and learning and she regards these barriers as contributing to the adversarial nature of teaching that she experiences. The most noticeable is the one related to the language of instruction of teaching and learning at school. Most learners are either second language or even third language English speaking learners.

The English medium schools are compelled to accommodate Isi-zulu learners as many of these learners struggle with the written English language. She felt that this is a good pattern to be followed as most countries have English as a medium of communication. She felt that there are standards that are needed to ensure that this method of communication is fully integrated into the school set up. This has a backlash for both the learner as well as the educators. She adds that this is in no way an indictment on either the learner or the educator. Sadly, she admits that to give individual attention is to sacrifice the other learners in the class. However, at times this is necessary. There is always someone that has to take the rap for the learners' poor performances. The educators are the ultimate sacrifice regarding these poor performances although the participants state that there are too many learners per class and other related factors. This kind of situation requires a different kind of pedagogy, one that she struggles with. No training and development of teachers has focused on this kind of pedagogy as training and professional development activities that teachers engage with are largely related to administrative, content, and curriculum. Teaching within a context of multiple language competence has not been a focus of any professional development activities for teachers. Hence, teachers have to rely on other means of developing their skills to teach learners from different linguistic backgrounds. Priscilla relies on instincts to guide her teaching in this multi-linguistic context. In addition, she relies on other teachers suggestions and trial and error methods have been most beneficial to her. The realisation of

not being able to get through to her learners presents itself as a challenge as well as a hostile environment for Priscilla as she feels violated as a teacher and therefore considers herself not being worthy of being a teacher. Once again, the knowledge that the little she does in developing some learners, provides her with the will to continue. She believes that she is contributing to the divine call of developing learners – not to the extent that she would haveliked to.

Priscilla adds that another condition that creates adversity is that of teacher supply and demand in recent years. Although the Department and the Education system has made great strides in managing this situation by putting in place programmes for upgrading and re-skilling teachers, the employment of under-qualified teachers is an on-going practice, largely because there is this inability of attracting appropriately qualified teachers as needed by schools. Unqualified teachers take on temporary posts and are there for short periods and this makes the situation very tentative. What needs to be done is long term development as well as proper planning and management must take place regarding the temporary teachers.

The adversarial nature relating to teacher supply and demand is that schools are continually employing unqualified teachers and that the permanent members of staff have to continuously help those teachers who are not qualified and in a lot of cases have to help with discipline within their classes as well as content and teaching materials. This brings about adversarial conditions for all teachers as all teachers have to carry their own load as well as help those who are under-qualified and cannot manage and maintain discipline in their classes.

Priscilla believes that in the wave of massive change that the school education system had gone through, her identity and professional control has been lost. One such change is that of the curriculum. She believes that the curriculum is changed too often with very little training given to teachers to implement these massive changes. Teachers are expected to implement the new changes and are often held accountable when not implemented in the manner it was envisaged by developers. She further believes that others associated with school education (that is, parents, community and learners) have been given far too much of rights. This is enshrined in the Constitution as well as the Bill of Rights. She believes that the profession has changed from a respected one to one of complete anarchy. The parents and the learners are given too much rights and this has tarnished the image of the profession resulting in the under-valuing of teaching as a whole. When asked to substantiate, she stated that there

are far too many incidents and newspaper reports that tarnish the image of this noble profession.

This loss of identity and professional control has reduced her focus to just planning and teaching with very little to no focus on the well-being of the learner as a whole. This, she considers as tragic to the school education system and feels marginalised. Learners do not respect their teachers and their attitudes have changed. Most learners know that even if they do not complete their set tasks, assignments, projects and do not learn for their tests and examinations, they will still pass. They have an indifferent attitude and teachers cannot do much about this kind of attitude. The progression process from one grade to another has compounded this kind of attitudes by learners, hence an indifferent care attitude.

The volume of administrative work has increased tremendously. In the words of Hargreaves (1994), he addresses this issue as teacher intensification. The volume has given teachers no chance of having a decent conversation without the volume of work becoming a part of the dreaded conversation. Teachers have many role functions as they have to be financial officers (collect all school fund, excursion monies, continuous fund raising as the school needs funds to be keep afloat), teachers have to be nurses as many learners get injured – teachers are not well equipped to deal with this, teachers give pastoral care. In short, teachers have to be versatile, with heavy administrative responsibilities and operate within a highly accountable and regulated environment, and this is what Priscilla means by loss of identity as a teacher.

4.5. Data analysis and emerging findings

According to Lewin, Samuel and Sayed (2002, p.9), "Schooling is remembered by most of us as a mixed bag of experiences". The participants' experiences of their notion of adversarial teaching contexts presents an illuminating context of teaching in change, where episodes of change and episodes of teachers' teaching experiences in the change context, at most times conflicts and in this conflicts, the complexities of teaching and of being a teacher is revealed from multiple perspectives. In this section of the data chapter, key emerging findings are presented together with discussion of these findings. The analysis involved explicating incident that relate to what constitutes adversarial events in the lives of teachers and are grouped as themes for coherence. The discussions also include some iterations of how these teachers overcame some of the adversarial conditions of teaching and continue to do so in spite of them. There themes are arranges into broader categories relating to personal issues, professional issues, educational challenges and physical issues and have been based on the

constructed narratives of each of the participants as well as data produced through the focus group conversation.

4.5.1. Category1: Adversity related to personal issues as a teacher

Adversities experienced in teachers' personal upbringing

Within this theme it was found that teachers personal life experiences of adversity helps teachers to recognise, deal with and overcome adverse situations. All three participants experienced adversity as they were growing up. These tough conditions that they encountered allowed and equipped them with the necessary skills to deal with their current situations. The participants turned their negative energy into something meaningful that has helped shape and alter their thinking (thought processes). This in turn, has contoured their careers allowing them to make meaningful contributions to society. The three participants are also of the view that no matter where you are at or at which school you teach, you must hold on to the belief that your contributions are valuable, worthy and lasting. In this way it will give learners hope where there is hopelessness in a hurting world. They believe that everyone experiences adversity at some stage of their careers to allow one to grow, mature and develop emotionally and spiritually.

Kay's mother remarked, "I had to get up every morning, set my tasks for the day, arrange my own transport and find different ways and means of surviving." This adverse experience of living with her aunt and uncle led her mother through a path of independence, of self-will and freedom. This type of autonomy was not through choice, not obligatory but through force, there was no other way. Kay was determined to follow the same path and course of her mother. To be strong willed, to persevere and never quit.

Kay, Shaista and Priscilla all seemed to be surrounded by the same friends, played the same games such as 'three tins' and 'hide and go seek', socialised with aunts and uncles that all seemed to follow the same type of customs and traditions. "We did not think that anything was wrong with our upbringing," said Shaista casually. "Not being able to co-exist with other racial groups was not abnormal or unusual to us at all," said Priscilla. "For us, 'these abnormal laws of apartheid were just normal to us as children." It was the morning of 27 April 1994, when millions of people queued to have these laws been abolished. Kay, Shaista and Priscilla remembered that day like it was yesterday. Their eyes lit up as they spoke of the optimism of the new South Africa. However, now that we are seventeen years into

democracy, the change to adapt has been slow, steady and that much more difficult to embrace. They are indeed grateful for this opportunity of liberty and freedom to be faced with meting out a multi-cultural education. They believe that all children need to be educated, irrespective of race, colour and creed. "All children must have an equal chance to life," they all echo.

Shaista expressed to Priscilla and Kay (during the focus group conversation) how difficult life would have been not only for her but their families if they were not given a bursary. In the case of Shaista, her family's financial situation, the large family size and the kind of job that her father was doing provided much hardship to the family. Her parents and sibling wanted her to get respect (economic class issue) by becoming a teacher and joining a noble profession demonstrates the kind of difficulty that the family had to endure and a will to change that image. In Priscilla's case family finance was an issue, due in part by a large family as well as her father working within a family business and his alcoholism. To change this situation, the children were encouraged to pursue their studies, and Priscilla realised that teaching was the most attractive because of the bursary that she would receive if she chooses teaching as a career. The will to find a way out of their personal issues has been the driving force to identify, deal with and overcome adversity. This will and determination played out in their lives as teachers. The three participants also believe that their lives would have been totally different if they were not given the bursary.

Shaista' s other adversity also included her choice of partner that she married. She was a Hindu and she married a Muslim. Her father was a Hindu priest and was dead against her marrying her husband of another faith. He did not want to do anything with her wedding and did not offer his blessings. She went against her fathers wishes and married her husband. Her father was upset and angered by her actions. After many unpleasant encounters with her father, she picked up some courage to approach him and asked him to give her marriage a chance. This was not something that was easy but she felt that there had to be some breakthrough between her father and her. She abided her time with this adversarial situation. This adversarial situation played a significant role in helping her to set up as an educator. This incident made her teach with tough love. She had to instil discipline but also allowed to meet the needs of the learners through the medium of love. He later forgave his daughter and made peace with both his son –in –law and his daughter just before his death.

Priscilla's father was an alcoholic. An alcoholic needs no introduction when it comes to his behaviour. He was a completely different individual, like on opposite ends of the

pendulum, when he was either drunk or when he was sober and this was reflected in his behaviour towards his wife and his children. She was not sure which dad will pitch up at home – the loving, caring, compassionate sober dad or will it be the ruthless, foul mouth, stubborn, alcoholic dad. She used to be terrified when it was the latter. Priscilla's avenue to stay far away from an alcoholic dad channelled her energy into praying for him. She was aware of the fact that she could not change her fathers behavioural pattern but that God could. She prayed for well over twenty years before results could be seen in her father. He eventually gave up the addiction of alcohol and turned his life around. This early patterns of her life allowed her to develop a spirit of tenacity and a tender spirit – these two qualities that were necessary for her teaching career. She believed in the principle of never giving up but also to love what you are doing.

4.5.1.1. Maintenance of integrity and identity

Maintenance of teachers' integrity and identity is a key driver to teachers overcoming adversarial issues related to teaching and schooling

In her teaching career, Kay had to rely on other teachers to provide accurate information so as not to put her in an adverse situation where her integrity would be questioned. She was quick to suggest that if all teachers are exposed to the need for accurate information and in the absence of this accurate information, the implications thereof, then the adversity associated with her integrity would be prevented or minimised.

Shaista and Priscilla are also overwhelmed in maintaining their high values and integrity. Both these educators believe that as an educator, if you cannot be honest and truthful with yourself and the learners, then you are wasting your time. Teaching is about being honest, open and transparent. To achieve this one cannot compromise your integrity.

4.5.1.2. Self-reliance in curriculum learning

It is a Wednesday morning and we are all summoned to meet at the Teacher's centre to be introduced to the new curriculum. Armed with curiosity and an enthusiasm to learn the a,b,c's of the new curriculum, we arrive early for a thorough attempt of being able to cascade the information efficiently to our learner. Mr Ronald paces through the first hour with a difficult effort of reading a thick manual of fifty pages. "We had a good English reading lesson," said Shaista. "What a waste of our time," said Kay. "We are more than able to read

this manual at our own leisure", said Priscilla. "It is time for us to break for tea, and we look forward to some tea and scones. This is a part of the workshop we seem to enjoy." "It will take us more than one or two days to absorb all this information that is loaded in these manuals," agree all my participants." Reading is definitely not training. There are no answers to our questions or alternative methods of implementing these various learning outcomes, specific outcomes or critical outcomes. Despite all of this, we are obliged to implement the curriculum." Resources, to back up the change of curriculum, are not given pre-eminence. These sentiments and experiences of learning about new curriculum initiatives add to the participants' approach to curriculum innovation, changes or additions that allow them to transcend the difficulties that most teachers experience and express when it comes to further development with respect to curriculum changes. The participants reliance on themselves to learn new things and to take the initiatives to engage with issues that concern them relating to curriculum assist them to overcome the adversities that they can easily identify in their daily lives as teachers. The issue of self-reliance is a key attribute of teacher professionalism, an attribute that is spoken or written about but seldom enacted as a way of life as a teacher.

4.5.1.3. Teachers aspiration to excel

Keeping in sight the expected outcomes of teachers' aspirations, this study has found the guiding light to overcome perceived and expected adversarial contexts. In the case of Kay she wanted to excel in all the things that she embarked upon. Having this outcome in sight, she found ways to manage the journey through her experience, even though she found parts of the journey adversarial. In Shaistas case, she was fortunate enough to have her sister to assist her in her vocation and so was provided a head start to excel in her chosen vocation. Priscilla had to rely on her instinct and her personal relationship with the almighty God to be able to determine her future even though there were many obstacles, challenges of adversity that she had to overcome.

4.5.1.4. Concluding comments on personal issues that promote teacher motivation

Taking leadership and providing leadership opportunities to individuals that create hostile conditions have been found to be a useful strategy to bear some adversarial contexts that teachers find themselves in. All three participants agree that the more you involve yourself in school activities, the more your chances are of not really focusing on the conditions at hand but to embrace these conditions. Priscilla admitted that these conditions of

adversity allowed her to teach with a lot of compassion. The other two teachers agreed and they added that they too have done the same over their respective careers.

Blending into the reality of the situation was a strategy that teachers use in order to manage the hostile, adversarial classroom context by accepting that these kinds of learner attitude and behaviour as part of the classroom culture.

4.5.2. Category 2: Situational issues related to adversity

4.5.2.1. Promotions possibilities amongst teachers

The lack of promotional prospects for teachers impacts on teachers' motivation to do their best and contribute to the development of school education. Kay, Shaista and Priscilla believe that their work as teachers may not be recognised through promotion prospects as these are almost non-existant. However, despite knowing this, their zest to do the best overshadows promotional opportunities. All three participants believe that promotions should be reviewed as this leads too many industrious colleagues not getting a well deserved promotion because so many occupy that position for such a long period of time. This disadvantages those educators that are below them. In recent times all three participants believe that teachers feel marginalised and portray defeatism when their efforts go un- noticed especially when they handle difficult tasks. The three agree that these irritation increases or they become incensed when colleagues, who have fewer years of experience, are given these posts ahead of their senior colleagues. This has happened time and time again.

Kay believes that, "that promotions can be very subjective especially during the selection process. It allows for nepotism and unfairness. Highly Irritated, she adds that the selection panel comprises of personnel with little or no knowledge, interest or experience with the needs of the school. The selection process differs from school to school. Unions are given too much power to interfere with the process."

 While promotions were seen by the participants as something that would give them some form of motivation to continue doing what they like best, some feels that promotions can become a stumbling block. Priscilla, for example, feels that persons in promotional post are like life time appointees and this creates a stalemate context where power cannot be challenged. The only time that this can be changed is through retirement, medical boarding, death or if the person is guilty of sexual misconduct or any misdemeanour that is contrary to

Departmental policies or regulations. The promotion in context is the seed for conflict of ideas on progress as they, quite often, obstruct innovation and initiatives of teachers who want to make a difference. This obstructionist view of persons in promotional post are seen as adversarial to progressive teachers who want to make a difference to learners and the school as a system of education. Master teachers and senior teachers as additional promotional posts are now available and more teachers can now be promoted within the teaching systems without necessarily being taken out of the classroom situation and where they can exercise their classroom leadership within their subject discipline. This, to some extent reduces the adversity associated with issues of motivation. However, the lifelong and sometimes obstructionist stance that some school managers take, based on their promotional positions, is still an issue that teachers need to overcome.

4.5.2.2. Large class sizes

The three educators agree that there are too many learners in each class unit. Kay concurs with both her colleagues, Priscilla and Shaista that, "The design of the classrooms are very small to accommodate the large number of learners that are in each class unit. Large class sizes are not educationally sound." This is so because learner's weaknesses and strengths cannot be identified. This gives rise to behavioural and learning problems and difficulties. The Department of Education would like an ideal equation of one educator for thirty two learners. This is only in the policy but in theory this is a far cry from this reality. The participants agree that at Parkin Primary, there are too many learners per unit. Some units have around forty- five whilst others have over fifty. Kay, Shaista and Priscilla all agree that it becomes very difficult to give individual attention to learners that are struggling. The other factor is that there are no remedial classes with a specialist remedial teacher to help these learners. In previous years, remedial educators and school psychologists were attached to schools to help and assist the learners who were struggling with their work. This set up allowed educators work in conjunction with these specialist educators to identify and remediate specific learning disabilities. "This does not happen enough nowadays" says Priscilla.

Large classes have seen many educators complaining about the behavioural patterns of the learners which have been detrimental to the teaching / learning process. The following incident is all too common in many schools in recent years. One morning, during the lunch break, Shaista came into the staffroom all flustered. She had witnessed a grade three learner hit one of her colleagues. When that teacher had taken the offender to the office, the members

of management could not do much in terms of helping her colleague. The excuse for not helping her colleague was that "their hands are tied, we cannot do much." During the following week, the offender was again caught lashing out at another educator. Shaista was really saddened by the state of affairs when these incidents had occurred. The question she raised was, "Who will be the next victim to experience this level of abuse? Priscilla added that, "In the absence of a discipline policy, there are no repercussions to unruly behaviour by learners."   The notion of what normal teaching load and class size was, was very different from the reality that she now faces in the integrated education system under one government department said Kay. She worked with large class sizes and taught children from different races, cultures and language backgrounds. She considers this adversarial as she now has to work extremely hard to cope with more than 45 learners in her class, from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Her preparation for teaching has become more difficult and she struggles getting through the learners from non -English speaking backgrounds. She has to be very careful about what examples she chooses in her lessons as it may conflict with some of the different cultures learners embrace. Her drive to succeed in her teaching despite these circumstances forced her to explore other ways of teaching.

The other two participants agree that the large classes have become a stumbling factor to meet the Department of Educations notion of quality public education. These participants state that it has become very difficult to give learners individual attention to remediate their learning disability and the large classes is a contributory factor adding to their woes.

The classrooms at Parkin Primary School are designed to accommodate at least thirty five learners comfortably. Due to the large number of learners per unit at this school, space does become a huge problem to accommodate between forty five and fifty two learners per unit. (This is an average number per unit.) The participants agree that some classes can be left without an educator for a few weeks. They add, to alleviate this practice, they need to at least do something about this and a relief roster is drawn to help these learners with the different learning areas. This is done so that these learners do not miss out on too much of work. In this regard, the educators are very accommodating to help out these learners. Accommodating situations at school seems to be one way of managing such adversarial situations of large class sizes and associated problems of discipline, lack of adequate attention to learners and absenteeism.

<center>4.5.2.3.**Language Barriers**</center>

Kay disconsolately tells Priscilla and Shaista that, "the second language learners are having much difficulty in comprehending simple instructions. There is a major comprehension block. It has become extremely difficult and challenging for us educators."

Shaista adds that, "They get confused easily and are misunderstood at times. They require strong support from school and home. This is not forthcoming at home as most learners speak their mother tongue language. "We cannot deny this fact. It is real. It is true."

Priscilla adds to this conversation by stating that, "We as educators have to complete some basic courses to help our self and the learners. We cannot afford to be ignorant."

  Kay adds that, "It is difficult for both the educator and the learners but we have to cope with the adversity that we find our self in." No amount of complaining is going to change this situation. We have to become positive, no matter how difficult the situation is." This is done by several intervention methods, largely self-driven. For example, Kay separates the learners in the class in more and less fluent speakers of English. Those that are less affluent speakers of English, she organises additional classes in the mornings on twice a week. While this process of separation may be seen as divisional and counter to proponents of multilingualism, this kind of intervention has worked for Kay. Others (Priscilla and Shaista) use other techniques, like drilling, peer group support and additional reading programmes, to assist less fluent English speaking learners and these strategies have now become a usual (part of the teaching engagement) way of intervention and not seen as additional work by them. The way that these teachers manage this kind of perceived adversity is by considering additional support teaching activities as part of their normal course of teaching and consequently pay little attention to workload issue. The three colleagues agree that there is more adversity now than ever before. The second language that both learners and educators have to incorporate into their schedules is demanding and challenging.

<center>**4.5.3. Category 3: Profession issues related to adversity**</center>

<center>**4.5.3.1. Educational changes**</center>

Competing demands are creating adverse conditions for teachers. Teachers have taught under different educational systems, each with creating a haven for adversarial conditions. The

participants have moved from teaching under the apartheid regime to democracy. There are many changes that teachers can expect.

Kay, who is the oldest participant, shares with Shaista and Priscilla that teaching during the apartheid years had some measure of merit as weak learners were sent to remedial classes. This also helped them cope much better with these learners as specific learning disabilities were remediated. The educator was able to also assist these learners as measures of help and assistance, from the remedial educator, was given to help these learners. Kay tells Shaista and Priscilla that she was able to help these learners but not any more. It is increasingly difficult as the remedial educators are non existent at schools these days. Individual attention becomes increasingly difficult as there are large class numbers per unit which makes it extremely difficult to manoeuvre as well as teacher intensification, which results in more paperwork.

Kay explains to her colleagues that, "the demographics of teaching has changed drastically. There are more learners that are being promoted to the next grade without a clear understanding of the material from the current academic year. This results in many learners showing high levels of incompetency, which results in high levels of illiteracy. Priscilla, Kay and Shaista manage this adversity by using similar methods of engaging learners through drill methods (there has been an improvement in the learners progress) as well as peer group learning(learner helps learner) to accommodate these educational changes. Kay, Priscilla and Shaista all adopt these methods to help alleviate some of the challenges that learners and teachers face.

4.5.3.2. Teacher supply and demand

Teacher supply has not kept in line with the changing nature of the job description. Teaching has not kept up with the demand that it is currently engaged in. More individuals are attracted to other vocations due to the poor salaries that an educator earns. In addition, most teachers that qualify have much difficulty in maintaining discipline. In most eyes, educators can do no right. This is an illusion as every person has to go through the hands of an educator before they can venture out for their chosen vocation. "Currently there is a grave need for more qualified educators to fill in the vacancies and gaps that have been created by those that have either resigned, taken medical boarding, retired or even died" says Priscilla. She adds that the newcomers do not want to get involved in the extra- curricular activities that are arranged by

the school. This ultimately puts added pressure for the experienced educators to continue with the set activities that the school engages in.

Kay's contribution to this important issue of teacher supply and demand is that, "Many teachers have been infected with HIV / AIDS - hence there are high levels of absenteeism. Once again the dedicated teachers have to bear the brunt of this absenteeism.

Shaista's view was that the Departments Planning Section should get this right as there are many qualified teachers that are either sitting at home and do not have a job. The Planning section must take charge about where it wants to place the teachers in respect of their qualification. In this regard the participants believe that more teachers need to be trained to accommodate the large learner population. Training must be practical and must be hands on with some level of competence. Many programmes are held for the sake of having these programmes, workshops and meetings with no thought being given to the quality of these programmes and workshops

4.5.3.3. Teacher workload

When the working load of educators is discussed, reference is often made to 'favourable working hours', as well as benefits of school holidays. However, as letters from educators to the media reveal (Cape Times 07/ 09 / 04; Star 17 / 09 / 04), in addition to tutoring educators have to be available after hours and over weekends for extramural activities such as sport, parents' evening, school functions and training sessions, and spend time at home on preparation, marking and paperwork.

"The workload now creates a ripple effect on teachers health",Kay states with a melancholy heart. The volume of teachers work has increased tremendously. Teachers do not have much time for themselves. All three participants agree that the workload now has increased. Priscilla adds that this is due to much duplication with regard to all the paperwork, which can be quite annoying at times. Shaista states that although there is so much paperwork that needs to be completed, it needs to be addressed by the different role players. She adds that if the teachers do not carry out their work in triplicate, then one can be called up for insubordination. (This is always used as a threat.)

4.5.3.4. Teacher health

Priscilla and Kay are of the opinion that the changing demographics of teaching have changed so much that it has adversely affected their health. Shaista concurs that one of the main reasons for this deterioration is self inflicting. She adds that to prevent from suffering with health related issues, there has to be a complete change from within the perspective of the educator. This change has to be genuine to accommodate and implement the new curriculum, policies and regulations. The current climate of overloaded classes, ill –discipline of learners, learners given more rights than educators, lack of assistance from the management of the school and language barriers between learners and educators have been contributory factors that have had an impact on their health and health related issues. Besides these health issues that takes its toll on their physical health, the three participants all agree that there is a more pressing issue of the HIV /AIDS pandemic that has a ripple effect, not only on the learners but the teachers.

According to Hall et al. (2005, p.4) they state the following, "Besides the usual attrition that occurs in any organisation, HIV / AIDS might lead to additional attrition among educators because morbidity and mortality contribute to stressful working conditions. This in turn creates more workplace stress if the workload is intensified as a result. Because of matches between the profiles of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA) and those of South African educators - (an average age of 32). South African educators are seen as a high – risk group." This study shows that there are many educators (especially African female) are suffering with HIV / AIDS

Priscilla states that it is all in the mindset and that is the first thing that one needs to look at in the current climate of education. Change your mindset and most of your battle is won. Another tool that she uses to her advantage to keep a sense of sanity is through prayer. She believes that prayer does change things. Kay and Shaista state that one needs to go for regular medical check ups and, follow a plan of action, from the medical reports obtained.

4.5.3.5. Strike action by teachers – conditions of service

South African education is still in a similar situation – we do not have a clear sense of purpose and direction, we have failed to win public support (due to much industrial action – strike action-(2007 -06-01 to the 2007 -06 -21) being the biggest strike action in our country). Another strike action occurred in the month of August 2010. These strikes had a direct bearing on the conditions of service that teachers have had to endure over many years. The three participants are in agreement that educators have been short changed in terms of financial remuneration, promotions and recognition of service. This means that after every fifteen, twenty, twenty five, and thirty plus years definitely deserves some recognition. The participants are unanimous that strikes cripple the very nature of our democratic society. They believe that the negotiators that belong to the different unions should be able to resolve issues of salary increase and conditions of service amicably. They add that the government negotiators should come with reasonable increases and not with a high handed attitude. Shaista states, "having worked for thirty-six, I find it very disappointing, unacceptable and inadequate that the package that I will receive after all these years of teaching, I will incur many penalties that will rob me of the package that I deserve." This statement by Shaista adds to her adversity displaying her sense of disillusionment and unhappiness by decreased remuneration in this regard. She feels robbed and stripped of her worth that she has worked so hard for during the course of her career.

. In this study, both Shaista and Kay fall in to this category of early retirement. As mentioned above, Shaista especially has voiced her opinion with regard to the package that she will receive after retirement. When she reflects on the reasons that she has come to the decision of early retirement, she mentioned that the adverse conditions as mentioned in this study has led her to this decision. The early retirement of Shaista due to the existing adverse conditions that prevail at Parkin Primary School is indeed a huge loss to the teaching fraternity .Shaista can be categorized as a loyal, dedicated, passionate teacher who has been affected adversely by the challenging conditions at Parkin Primary. Shaista represents loyal teachers locally and nationally that has decided to step out of the profession. She has come to the end of the road amidst the demanding, taxing, testing, difficult and exigent conditions that this study seeks to highlight. Her examination of these conditions and their impact on her has steered her to this conclusion. Another reason that she wants to take early retirement is

because of her husbands ill health. There is no one else to look after him and so this early retirement is the right option for her to take and to care for her ailing husband.

4.5.4. Category 4: Physical issues related to adversarial contexts within schools

4.5.4.1. Classroom and school facilities

The classrooms and the staff room, together with the toilets have structural damage. The ceilings can collapse at any given time. The participants are uneasy about this as both their lives as well as the learners lives are at stake in case of a disaster. The question that arises is, "who is to blame?" Shaista adds that there were other forms of adversity which included structural damages to the classroom and the toilets. She was not sure whether to worry about the ceiling collapsing on the learners and her or to focus on the job at hand.

Kay states that most classrooms have been damaged by the floods. The educators have continued to teach despite these adversarial circumstances that they are faced with on a daily basis. Most learners do not even carry basic stationery like pens, pencils rulers, erasers and colour or felt pens. Most learners do not even prepare well for their tests, projects and assignments – learner apathy.

4.5.4.2. Safety and health issues

Priscilla, Kay and Shaista are all dedicated to the cause of fulfilling their ambitions of allowing their purpose and destiny to take precedence in their lives. They have thoroughly enjoyed their careers up to this point but that feeling that educators are given a raw deal allows them to express a tinge of sadness. Noise distractions within the classroom causes strain on the educator to minimise the noise so that some teaching can take place. The current climate of overloaded classes, ill –discipline of learners, learners given more rights than educators, lack of assistance from the management of the school and language barriers between learners and educators have been contributory factors that have had an impact on their health and health related issues. Some of the coping mechanisms were discussed previously which included changing one's mindset, having times of prayer and refreshing and going for regular medical check-ups.

4.5.4.3. Different education systems – apartheid or democracy

All three participants worked under different education systems that were in South Africa. All agree that during the apartheid years, there were many challenges and adversarial conditions that they had faced. Kay added that the Nationalist Government with all its discriminatory laws and practices were not easy to handle. However, Kay adds that during this time there was a common syllabus provided for the House of Delegates and House of Representative teachers. She adds that this was a good guide line for teachers to practice their trade. There were not many workshops for teachers back then. Shaista knew that during the apartheid days that although this practice was wrong, she had to adhere to it as this was a vocation she had always wanted to practice. In her heart, she states that she felt a melancholy in knowing that some learners were being prejudiced because of the colour of their skin but this made her all the more determined to help, mentor and become a role model to these learners.

Priscilla was also subject to this level of discrimination but also realized that her love for children was to be an overwhelming factor for her to move forward in this profession. She confesses that she wanted to go beyond the call of duty to make a strong claim that she was not after financial gain but to ensure that she too becomes a role model, a mentor and friend that learners could look up to. The three participants are of similar belief that although teaching has become difficult in recent years, there will be nothing that stops them from ensuring that every learner is treated with respect and dignity. To hold their ends up, all learners will be given opportunity to become involved in class 'chores' and extra levels of responsibility. 'Chores' included taking charge of the textbooks, cleaning the chalkboard, putting up charts and ensure that the classroom was neat and tidy at all times.

All three participants believe that to teach under the different education systems in our country was something that was unique but at the same time, brings with it different conditions of adversity, challenges, trials and difficulties. These issues of discrimination still exist in the new dispensation but the key factor is that teachers need to keep going in spite of all these challenges and conditions of adversity.

4.5.5.Conclusion

 The participants all agree that the dynamics of teaching has changed drastically. The conditions of service have not got any better. Educators have embraced these changes in the line of duty. According to the J.O.E.(2009) in "South Africa, as elsewhere, there is growing demand for the reorganisation of teachers' work in order to enhance school performance. An extensive international literature on teachers' work addresses the form in which teachers' work is regulated, the reorganization of teachers' collective and individual power and the consequences of these for teacher's working lives."

CHAPTER 5

5.1. Conclusion and recommendations from this study

This study set out to show that adversarial contexts exist in many different ways and forms for educators. In addition to this aspect of the study, I go on to show that despite the many facets of adversity that teachers face, there is always a reason to overcome such adversity. This study shows that teachers thrive in adversarial conditions so that they can play a more fulfilling role to pass on their expertise, knowledge, skill and values to the next generation. In addressing these issues, we must be mindful of the fact that this task gets difficult as the years roll on.

The three key aspects of the study, expanding on three crucial and vital research questions. They include , a)What is the nature and facets of adversarial context teachers teach in, b) What impact do adversarial conditions have on effective teaching and c) How do teachers teach in such adversarial teaching contexts?

Neito(2003) and Pillay and Govinden (2007) concur and show that there are many adversarial conditions that confront teachers on a daily basis but teachers are rising up to bring this profession to what everybody once knew what it was and that is – a noble profession. I have highlighted the many different aspects of adversity that teachers face but despite these odds there are many teachers who teach with passion, zeal and fervour. This study has highlighted what teachers consider as adversarial to their teaching and are categoried within three broad categories relating to personal issues, situational issues relating to their teaching, professional issues that produced adversarial context for working and physical issues that contribute to adversarial context within which teachers work in. Each of these categories outline how teachers experience and feels about these adversarial issues and indicate how these teachers overcome these adversarial issues in pursuant of a greater goal of educating learners despite these adversities. The study suggests that individual teachers who have a greater goal aspiration beyond just the classroom and school, are the ones that have less difficulties with adversarial situations that teachers are normally faced with. Keeping their focus on this greater goal allows them the space, intellect and drive to overcome obstacles in their teaching endeavour. Pillay and Govinden(2007) show that there is implicit opportunity in adversity and the human spirit always an overcoming the odds due to the deep

natured spirit that they carry. Obviously, there will be the odd one or two that will maintain their spirit of negativity.

5.2. Implications from this study

There are many teachers that bring about core values, skills and creative ability to help nurture these learners to become product members of society and allow that cycle to grow. However, it must be said that the profession needs to undergo a radical metamorphosis to ensure that it brings back credibility as in the past. Right now at this stage, with all the challenges that teachers are facing, many wants some respite. Teachers want to be remunerated according to their qualifications as comparisons are continuously made with the private sector.

Another major implication for this study was to show the different communities that there are teachers that would go an extra mile to ensure that they help learners. However, there are those who believe otherwise. Teachers have in the past, present and no doubt in the future realise that whatever contribution they make today, has a lasting effect and a lifetime of change to the generations that follow. Therefore, even in the midst of adversity, teachers realise that there is potential and opportunity for the generations that will follow.

It is evident from this study that these participants are always thinking about ways of how they can mould and shape the lives of the generations that follow.

5.3. Recommendation for addressing teaching in adversarial contexts and for further research

I would also draw conclusions from this analysis and make recommendations to a future researcher to pursue further research on adversarial nature but based on the learners home conditions, to look at the learners socio –economic conditions, look at single parents raising up their children and ensuring that their children get a decent education and other related issues; I also examine the limitations of this study in respect of this follow up research. The limitations of the follow up study is to decide which schools to survey – to look at the location of the school/s and whether these schools lie in the rural or urban areas.

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APPENDIX A

1. When you considered teaching as a career, what were the reasons that encouraged your to become a teacher?
2. Now that you have been teaching for a while, how do you feel about being a teacher?
3. What were some of the outstanding highlights of being a teacher?
4. Do you have some concerns about being a teacher now?
5. What are these concerns and why do you have these concerns?
6. Describe the current context within which you teach.
7. What keeps you going as a teacher in this context?
8. Why do you want to continue teaching within the context that you have described?

APPENDIX B _ FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What kind of coping strategies do you use to compensate for large class sizes, second language learners and limited language skills?

2. How has the curriculum contributed to the challenges that we find in the education system at the moment?

3. Do you feel that there is a huge difference between the apartheid era and the democratic dispensation in respect of how the Department of Education is run and what are some of the urgent and pressing issues that needs to be addressed immediately?

4. What, if any, changes would you like to see being addressed by the different role players to see an improvement in the education set up?

5. Do you think that the parents and the learners have more rights than the teachers? (This issue was looked at from the perspective of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.)

6. How had these adversarial issues have an effect on your health?

7. Do you think policy is always implemented into practice? An example is of pupil ratio (32:1). There are many such issues that can be policy (theory) but has challenges in practical terms. Can you think of other such examples?

Appendix C--Informed consent by the principal and the participants.

Ethical clearance

Turn it in certificate

Editor's report