

**UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN PROVIDING WELFARE
CARE FOR LEARNERS: A TEACHER'S SELF-STUDY**

BY

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DECLARATION - PLAGIARISM

I, **RAGINI MOODLEY**, declare that

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This thesis is submitted with/without my approval.

.....

DR KATHLEEN PITHOUSE-MORGAN

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADF	Anti- Drug Forum
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
CSTL	Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Programme
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DET	Department of Education and Training
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HOD	House of Delegates
HoD	Head of Department
LO	Life Orientation
MiET	Media in Education Trust
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSNP	National School Nutritional Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OVC	Orphaned and vulnerable children
PED	Provincial Education Department
PGSES	Psychological Guidance Services and Education Support
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SMT	Staff Management Team
STAR	Supportive Teachers Assets and Resilience
TB	Tuberculosis

ABSTRACT

This self-study research focused on the role of the teacher in relation to providing welfare care. I considered welfare care from a theoretical perspective of *Ubuntu*, which allowed me to see that, in enacting welfare care, it is imperative that teachers acknowledge and bring out the human element in themselves and others. I was the central participant in this self-study, together with three professional colleagues at my school. My critical friends, my fellow students, participated by sparking new ideas and helping me to gain other perspective. I used the memory-work self-study method to recall my lived experiences and explore my motivation for providing welfare care. Multiple data sources, such as letters, cards, photographs and my reflective journal, provided evidence to assist me in understanding my passion for welfare care. Three main themes arose from my memory stories: *a) attentiveness; b) empathy; c) encouragement; and d) nurturing*. I went on to explore how my fellow teachers and I were enacting welfare care at my school. Conversations with my teacher participants demonstrated that teachers were enacting welfare care at my school by: *a) connecting nutrition with learning; b) making provision for school uniforms and stationery for learners; c) bringing on board sponsors, NGOs, religious organisations and businesses as a support base; d) providing sports, games and excursions; and e) attending to the medical, emotional and social development needs of learners*. Using collage as an arts-based self-study technique, I found that teachers can be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners through: *a) community support and engagement; b) continuing professional teacher development for psychosocial and emotional support; and c) teacher leadership for welfare care*. Overall, this study has highlighted how teachers are spending a great deal of time and energy in making provision for meeting learners' basic needs such as nutrition, school uniforms and stationery, and medical care. This study has enabled me to acknowledge that learners and teachers are likely to perform better if these basic needs could be met for all learners through more extensive programmes involving all relevant stakeholders. Through this self-study, I have also realised that teachers, school management and other stakeholders need adequate knowledge and skills for enacting welfare care. Most significantly, this study has confirmed for me that enacting welfare care requires teachers to be compassionate and understanding and to show empathy towards learners.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

According to Grant, Jason and Lawrence (2010, p. 92), there are two types of care within the teaching and learning environment, “pedagogical care” and “welfare care”. They explain that pedagogical care involves taking care of learners’ educational needs and providing a positive teaching and learning environment. Welfare care involves taking care of learners’ other basic needs, namely their social, emotional and physical needs. Thus, the concept of welfare care, as explained by Grant et al., (2010) falls within the “community, citizenship and pastoral role”, which is one of the “collective roles of teachers in a school” as mandated by the South African *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2011, pp. 52- 53). According to the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications*, a competent teacher should be able to “demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and an empowering environment for learners and to respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators” (DHET, 2011, p. 52). South African teachers are expected to deal with multiple roles. These include community, citizenship and pastoral responsibilities in a collaborative effort with their colleagues, learners, and parents/guardians. This makes teaching more demanding and more complex. In my experience, learners come to school carrying many social problems that I as a teacher have to address prior to starting my actual teaching. This means that I feel obligated to attend to the welfare care needs of learners.

This chapter will address the following aspects: the focus and purpose of my study, the need for welfare care for learners at my school, relevant background information regarding the contexts within which teachers are engaging with welfare care in South Africa, my research questions, key concepts and theoretical perspective, the research paradigm and my methodological approach. Finally, I offer an overview of the thesis.

Focus and Purpose of the Study

While developing my Master’s research proposal, I was introduced at a research support workshop to haiku poetry writing as a way to express the focus of my research (see Samaras, 2011). Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry. The lines do not rhyme; instead, they follow a pattern. Each line of the poem is composed of words that make up a certain number of

syllables. In creating the haiku poem, I had to brainstorm key words related to my research focus. My initial idea for my research focus was “Exploring how poverty impacts on teachers’ work”. I expressed my focus in the haiku poem as follows (see Figure 1.1):

Teacher’s position

Correlating poverty

To help learners’ needs

In composing these three lines, I was trying to emphasise that teaching is not only about educating learners academically, but also about trying to assist and develop them holistically. That means taking care of their educational needs and their other basic needs such as emotional, social, physical and psychological needs. In assuming these multiple roles for learners, the teacher needs to be understanding, caring and comforting. As expressed in my haiku poem, I believe that my position as a teacher needs to correlate with learners’ needs. I have found that as teachers we need to take cognisance of the various challenges our learners are faced with, as many come to school „carrying this baggage“. Most of the learners I teach come from poverty-stricken backgrounds and in my experience this can hamper their performance at school. Therefore, by virtue of being an important stakeholder in the lives of learners, it is important for me as a teacher to help learners to meet their basic needs within the teaching and learning environment.

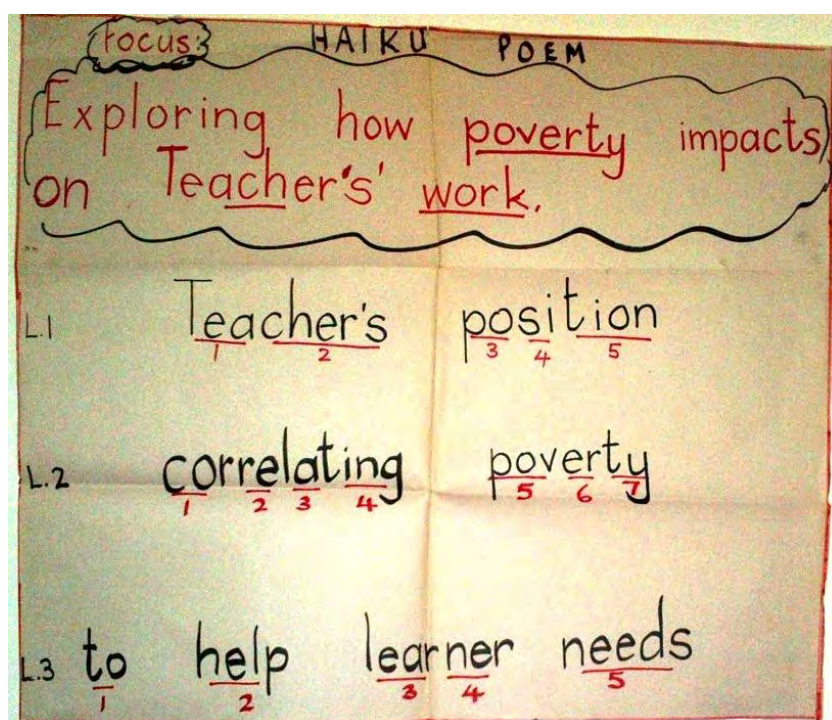


Figure 1.1 My haiku poem: Exploring how poverty impacts on teachers’ work

In discussing my haiku poem with my supervisor and my fellow Masters' students, my research focus evolved from "*Exploring how poverty impacts on teachers' work*" to "*The role of the teacher in providing welfare care for learners*". Hence, through this self-study, I intend to gain a better understanding of my role as a teacher in relation to providing welfare care. Moreover, my aim is to better understand welfare care as it is being enacted by me and my fellow teachers at my school. I hope that this will help me and others to better understand the role of teachers in relation to welfare care. The purpose of this research is therefore to learn from my experience and to consider how I and other practising teachers can become better prepared and supported to respond to the needs of learners by providing welfare care.

The Need for Welfare Care in My School Context

The concept of welfare care is of interest to me as a teacher because the context within which I teach draws a large number of learners from homes experiencing tremendous hardships. These hardships are due to factors such as unemployment, the HIV and AIDS pandemic and extreme poverty, resulting in no food at home and unhealthy living conditions. From experience, these learners often attend school because they regard schools as places of safety and some may get love, food and medical attention at school. Many learners see schools as a way out of poverty and hardship. As a teacher, I am faced with this situation all the time and I am very passionate about assisting learners who are experiencing these problems.

I have found that being a teacher in this context is fraught with many challenges and constraints. Similarly, teachers at schools that serve impoverished communities in our province of KwaZulu-Natal interviewed by Grant et al. (2010, p. 88) explained that "people are poor, there is no food to eat" and "some of the learners do not bring lunch to school and the teachers have to help out". This scenario also depicts the reality at my school. My school is categorised as a Section 21 school. This means that in such schools the School Governing Body (SGB) is required to monitor funds received, keep records of money spent and prepare a budget for next year (Department of Education, 2003). The distribution of school funds to schools is based on schools' ranking as determined by the national quintile. My school is ranked quintile 4. Hence quintile 4 receives 15% school funds as determined by the national quintile (Department of Education, 2006 b, Section 109 and Figure 2). Thus, together with colleagues at my school, we arrange for lunch from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as a large number of children come to school without bringing lunch. Many of these learners cannot concentrate in class because of hunger. The South African Department of

Basic Education (DBE) has acknowledged that “hunger and malnutrition are amongst the barriers to optimum participation in education” (2013, p. 11). Consequently, “the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) was supposed to be initiated in all nine provinces in 1994” (the Media in Education Trust Africa [MiET] Africa, 2009, p. 119). According to the DBE (2013), the NSNP programme reached an average of 2 035 034 learners in public schools in KwaZulu-Natal during 2012-2013. However, this programme has not reached all schools where children are experiencing hunger, as it has not yet been implemented at the school where I teach. Nevertheless, we have managed to organise a school nutrition programme that is sponsored by a few religious organisations. This initiative was undertaken by me and my colleagues. We have managed to secure porridge and sandwiches for our learners on a daily basis. Teachers, together with some of our parents, prepare these meals and feed our learners. In addition, a vegetable garden has been planted at the school to help feed some learners and their families at home. The garden is tended by teachers and parents.

Moreover, my school is situated in an area largely comprising of low-cost households. Furthermore, at our school, pupil absenteeism is a problem because they do not have school uniforms, shoes or stationery. As Fleish (2007, p.52) illustrates, “Paballo, missed the first month of school...because his mother did not have money to buy school uniforms, pens, pencils and paper.” According to Grant et al. (2010, p. 88) “school tracksuits are donated to the needy learners by teachers”. Similarly, at my school, teachers make a collection of school clothing to distribute to learners who come to school without uniforms and sometimes with torn clothes. Added to this is the fact that many parents are unable to pay school fees for learners. This results in teachers at our school engaging in fund raising, in order to keep the school afloat. As explained above, my school is a Section 21, quintile 4 township school. As a result we are regarded as „privileged“ and therefore do not qualify for no fees status. Coupled with the issue of quintile ranking are the problems of receiving and accessing the funds.

Understanding the Contexts within which Teachers are Engaging with Welfare Care

The Policy Context

Within South Africa, there are policies that relate to the teachers’ provision of welfare care for learners. The South African Council of Educators (SACE) *Code of Professional Ethics* (2001) stipulates that all teachers should recognise “the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner” (p. 2). As discussed above, the *Minimum Requirements for*

Teacher Education Qualifications (DHET, 2011, pp. 52- 53) obliges teachers to collectively perform a “community, citizenship and pastoral role”. The *National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for Learners and Educators in Public Schools, and Students and Educators in Further Education and Training Institutions* (Department of Education [DoE], 1999) mandates that teachers should provide appropriate care for learners in the context of the HIV and AIDS pandemic.

In addition, in 2008, South Africa adopted *The Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) Programme*, which is a Southern African Development Community (SADC) initiative to address the following areas to support learning. These are: nutritional support; health promotion; infrastructure water and sanitation; safety and protection; social welfare services; psychosocial support; material support; curriculum support; co-curricular support (DBE, 2010).

According to the Department of Basic Education and MIET Africa (2010b, p. 3), “the vision of the CSTL Programme is that the educational rights of vulnerable children in South Africa are realised through schools becoming inclusive centres of learning, care and support”. As part of the CSTL programme, the *National School Nutrition Programme* (NSNP) aims to: “improve children’s learning ability through school feeding; promote healthy lifestyles through nutrition education; and support development of food gardens in schools” (DBE, 2013).

The CSTL programme advocates the mainstreaming of care and support in schools by assigning roles to teachers, for example: “class teachers identifying and assessing vulnerable learners, talking to vulnerable learners about the challenges they face, conducting home visits where necessary and informing the [school management] of specific help needed by individual learners” (DBE & the MiET Africa 2010a, p. 19). However, there is an acknowledgement that many teachers already feel “over-extended” and that they might not feel able to integrate welfare care into their daily work (DBE & MiET Africa 2010a, p. 19). I therefore ask this pertinent question regarding the provision of welfare care by practising teachers. Do these teachers feel adequately trained and supported to provide such care? Many South African teachers are constantly faced with learners who experience tremendous hardships and are overwhelmed by challenges in life (MiET Africa, 2009; Wood & Goba, 2011). These teachers can feel helpless to assist these learners because they are not trained to be social workers, psychologists or nurses.

The Social Context

In the South African context, Grant et al. (2010, p. 92) highlight the “ethics of care in schools, as one of the most important factors that addresses what it is to be a human being”. They argue that the social conditions of a community dictate the social context of a school and this, in turn, places an enormous demand on teachers to provide welfare care for learners. In South Africa, the importance of this role, referred to in policy documents as the pastoral role (DHET, 2011), cannot be underestimated, especially around issues related to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. HIV positive learners need extra care to be provided by teachers in making their lives more comfortable at schools (MiET Africa, 2009). As Ebersöhn and Ferreira (2011, p. 1) explain, “in HIV/AIDS circumstances the benefits of school life are restricted as children become burdened with bereavement, stigma, additional care responsibilities and compound effects of poverty”. At the same time, Cluver, Gardner and Operario (2007, p. 761) caution that “AIDS-orphaned children are at a heightened risk of mental health problems, and may experience particularly debilitating symptoms of depression, post-traumatic stress and suicidal ideation”. This idea is supported by Delport, Strydom, Theron and Geyer (2011) who stated that “South Africa is likely to lose multiple educators due to low morale, stress, depression, demotivation, and the general challenges associated with the rampant effects of the pandemic” (p. 121).

The MiET Africa (2009, p.106) highlights that learners whose lives are affected by HIV and AIDS can experience behavioural problems, with some learners becoming either aggressive or withdrawn. In schools where there are no trained counsellors available, it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to provide emotional care for these learners (Jairam, 2009). Emotional care is thus a significant part of welfare care. Jairam (2009, p. 129) explains that “teachers can offer support by identifying and responding to the needs of learners as teacher counsellors”. She explains that, prior to engaging in this process, these teachers need to examine their own attitudes, belief, feelings and personal characteristics. Jairam (2009) outlines specific character traits for teachers in assisting learners. Teachers need to be patient, understanding, adaptable, caring, accepting, non-judgemental, show a genuine interest in people, show empathy and be good listeners in order to be a successful teacher-counsellors.

Because of the social contexts of many schools, teachers within these contexts secure sponsorships, donations and financial assistance from community social networks, NGOs,

sporting and religious organisations to assist schools in providing welfare care for their learners (Grant et al., 2010; the MiET Africa, 2009). This helps to strengthen resources and programmes for vulnerable children. Thus, for effective welfare care to be implemented, teachers need to engage in collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders such as NGOs, businesses and sponsors. As Khanare (2009, p. 98) affirms, “Local organisations and associations are central to the survival of the school”. Furthermore, as Khanare (2009, p. 96) illustrates, “some of the teachers will even go as far as paying the school fees”. Likewise, an observation made by a female teacher highlighted the plight of her learners attending school from poverty-stricken homes during winter. These learners attend school bare feet, they are not properly fed because of their physique and also their uniforms are torn. This is a painful sight to witness and this has motivated her [the teacher] to help her learners” coming from poverty (Ebersohn and Ferreira, 2011).

It is through these initiatives made by committed and caring teachers, as well as other stakeholders, that the ethics of care at schools are sustained. As a teacher interviewed by Grant et al. (2010, p. 89) explained, this care allows some learners to view school “as a safe haven” as it “provides them with an unspoken sense of hope”. Nieto (2003, p. 63) points out that “hope is what invigorates teachers who face their students with courage and commitment everyday”. Thus, teachers can begin to see this caring role as a way to deal with hardships and challenges in their learners’ lives. As the DBE and the MiET Africa (2010a) explain:

Many educators who do get involved in care and support activities report a big change in their relationships with their learners. This in itself can provide job satisfaction, as educators may feel less overwhelmed by the challenges they face in the classroom. (p. 19).

In my understanding, this positive emotion can help build teachers’ self-esteem and encourages them to provide welfare care.

However, taking on these additional roles can take a toll on teachers and hence also affect their personal lives. The number of roles and responsibilities teachers are expected to perform in providing care for all learners can become tiresome and take up much of their time. The burdens brought by having to fulfill these multiple roles can be a downside of an ethics of care (Meyiwa, 2014). Additionally, in some instances teachers’ own lives become affected by the negative experiences of their learners. Teachers have explained they become emotionally disturbed by grieving children who have lost one or both parents (Wood & Goba, 2011). Also

some teachers are finding that they have less time to complete the prescribed curriculum in class since they have to tend to children who are sick or children who need assistance (Wood & Goba, 2011).

The Teacher Development Context

Ebersöhn and Ferreira (2011, p. 2) point out that “although the latest South African teacher training curricula include psychosocial support competencies, this was not the case during the training of most teachers who are currently in practice”. Furthermore, research suggests that, on the whole, not enough has been done to support and develop South Africa teachers in relation to the challenges of providing welfare care and that those programmes that have been offered have often failed to address the lived realities facing teachers and learners (Delpont et al., 2011; Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011; Wood & Goba, 2011).

Ebersöhn and Ferreira (2011, p. 1) confirm that at some schools in South Africa teachers are being supported in promoting resilience by participating in the Supportive Teachers, Assets and Resilience (STAR) projects. This has helped to develop schools as “safe environments and a buffer against adversity” (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011, p. 2). Through these projects, teachers have established networks and formed partnerships with learners and their families in order to offer support to needy families. Teachers have also formed partnerships with community organisations, businesses and government departments to promote resilience. Learners at these schools have benefited from these partnerships by receiving food parcels, school uniforms and shoes (Ebersohn & Ferreira, 2011). Within these schools, teachers have used school-based resources and also engaged outside services to access health and social services, as well as emotional support. In addition, indigent families have been referred to the relevant social development organisations to access social grants information: “Teachers were proactive and distributed application forms to supplement household income” (Ebersohn & Ferriera, 2011, p 10). Teachers also used this support to develop capacity by “training parents on HIV and AIDS counselling and parenting empowerment in trauma” (Ebersohn & Ferreira, 2011, p. 13). Teachers were thus regarded as protective resources to provide psychosocial support.

Furthermore, participatory approaches, as outlined in HEAIDS (2010) have been found to be one of the suitable methods to equip South African teachers to deal with challenges around HIV and AIDS. Arts-based participatory approaches, such as photo stories or posters, story-

telling or participatory video making, can assist teachers by „learning through doing“ (HEAIDS, 2010).

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. How have my lived experiences contributed to my passion to provide welfare care for learners?

In exploring this question, I consider how I, as a teacher, have become motivated and passionate in providing welfare care. This journey is seen as a holistic one and thus, in responding to this question, I explore what has led me to this position of wanting to provide welfare care for learners, as well as my understanding of my role as an active care giver and my belief that the “ethics of care” (Waghid & Smeyers, 2011, p. 5) in schools, cannot be negotiated.

2. How are we, as practising teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?

The aim of this question is to better understand welfare care as it is being enacted by me and my fellow teachers at my school. I hope that this will help me and others to better understand the role of teachers in relation to welfare care. In addressing this question, I engage in collective self-study (as discussed in Chapter Two) through discussions with practising teachers to look at teachers *taking action* in finding ways to identify and respond to the various needs of learners “from the ground up” (Mitchell, Weber, & Pithouse, 2009, p. 128). At the same time, I also look at how collaborative partnerships between professional colleagues and various other stakeholders contribute to teachers becoming active caregivers at my school.

3. How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?

The purpose of this question is to learn from our (mine and my colleagues“) experiences as active caregivers and to look at what additional support is needed for us to become even more committed and better prepared to respond to the needs of learners in providing welfare care. In responding to this question, I facilitate an arts-based method, namely a collage activity, with my professional colleagues to gain their perspectives on this question.

Key Concepts of Welfare Care and Pastoral Care

For the purpose of this research, I am making use of the terms *welfare care* and *pastoral care* since both concepts involve responding to learners' needs. According to Hearn, Campbell-Pope, House, and Cross (2006), "Pastoral care involves counselling and develops empathetic relationships so that people in schools are nurtured into wholesome maturity" (p. 1). Similarly, the definition of *pastoral* as derived from the Collins English dictionary (2000) involves providing support and comfort for patients in health care facilities or religious support for people in times of need or distress. This is usually done by pastors or nurses who can be referred to as pastoral managers. In schools, the caregiving actions of providing care to learners are usually provided by a teacher. This includes providing emotional and social support, offering medical and behaviour support (Hearn et al., 2006). Grant et al. (2010) explain that *welfare care* relates to teachers working to meet learners' basic needs, thus ensuring that the physical, social and emotional conditions under which these learners grow and learn are satisfactory. Although the terms welfare care and pastoral care might differ slightly with regard to the context within they are undertaken, both terms are similar since the process involves giving advice or support to those in need with the emphasis on improving their current life circumstances. It is therefore my understanding that providing welfare care for learners involves giving personal advice and support as opposed to simply teaching.

Both of these terms, pastoral care and welfare care, cover a variety of roles and responsibilities that teachers are expected to enact at schools. This places a heavy demand on teachers because they are required to perform multiple roles including being caregivers, counsellors, doctors, mothers and fathers. From my experience, I have found the most important role is being an active care giver to learners. I believe that welfare care and pastoral care cannot be neglected and hence teachers with such responsibilities ought to have the necessary skills, knowledge and support to provide effective pastoral or welfare care for their learners.

***Ubuntu* as a Theoretical Perspective**

The term *Ubuntu* denotes a particular Southern African theoretical or philosophical perspective (Mkhize, 2004). According to Waghid and Smeyers (2011), *Ubuntu* as a theoretical perspective highlights the connectedness of the self in relation to others. Teaching involves interaction between people. It is for this reason that Waghid and Smeyers (2011, p. 4) affirm, "Interaction with other people makes individuals better people. They learn how to

treat other people with respect and dignity”. Furthermore, Waghid and Smeyers (2011) link *Ubuntu* to the theoretical perspective of humanism and to the concept of a humanising pedagogy. Allender and Allender (2006, p. 14) argue that “educators need to be humanistic”. Likewise, Meyiwa (2014, p. 355) explains that *Ubuntu* involves “doing good that is expected of human beings”. Further, she describes the practice of *Ubuntu* as a source of energy and resilience to assist people in need (Meyiwe, 2014). In my understanding, the practice of *Ubuntu* entails showing respect, love and empathy (feeling the same way as others feel) towards learners as fellow human beings. All learners are in need of care, therefore teachers need to be empathetic, caring and understanding when taking care of the needs of all their learners. Similarly, Waghid and Smeyers (2011) explain that this pedagogic approach highlights “an ethics of care” (p. 5) and thus “education [is] conceived...in terms of [relationships] between [people]..., care, integrity and trust are of the utmost importance” (p.5). Hence, understanding welfare care from a theoretical perspective of *Ubuntu* enables me to realise that the practice of *Ubuntu* is a challenging concept to live up to.

According to Mkhize (2004), the term *Ubuntu* can be interpreted as humanness. He explains this as a process of becoming, thus highlighting relationships between human beings. This includes their immediate surroundings and the environment within which they are interacting. This is an on-going process. Furthermore, Mkhize (2004, p. 5) describes “the human being as a „community of selves.” From my understanding, I am of the belief that the community of selves refers to a group or groups of individuals within a person’s environment who are committed to one another, thus engaging in an on-going relationship in pursuit of a common goal. Through this relationship they can accomplish things which they would not be able to accomplish otherwise. For example, Mkhize (2004) explains how parents can rely on their entire communities to assist in raising their children.

A theoretical perspective of *Ubuntu* allows one to see that, in enacting welfare care, it is imperative that teachers be humanistic; they need to acknowledge and bring out the human element in themselves and others. Learners in need of welfare care can become withdrawn and sometimes are not able to discuss their concerns with their parents or other family members and therefore teachers need to create an environment where their learners can feel free to confide in them or comfortable to discuss sensitive issues. Teachers need to be sympathetic, caring and understanding and to show empathy towards these learners. They need to try to feel what their learners feel. This might help these learners to start realising

that schools are places where they can get love, medical attention, food and most importantly, a sense of hope.

Research Paradigm and Methodological Approach

This study is located within an *interpretive paradigm* with a *qualitative* approach. This approach allows us to understand human experience. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), an interpretative study focuses on understanding the subjective world of human experiences. Qualitative researchers aim to explore and understand phenomena by exploring lived experiences and therefore the researcher cannot be separated from the research (Maree & Westhuisen, 2007).

The methodology that I employ is self-study of educational practice. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two. Mitchell et al. (2009, p, 119) state that self-study involves “studying one’s own practice, knowledge and values”. This means that I am researching myself, with the intention of wanting to better understand welfare care as a key aspect of my professional practice. I have selected this methodology because I realise that it can enhance and develop a teacher’s personal and professional growth and contribute to public knowledge about teaching and learning (Samaras, 2011).

Pithouse, Mitchell and Masinga (2009, p. 240) explain that “self-study is a way for teachers, teacher educators and other practitioners to study ourselves in action in our professional contexts.” They maintain that by researching our actions on a daily basis, teachers can use a variety of methods and strategies to generate data and thus learn more about ourselves as teachers and our teaching environments (Pithouse, Mitchell & Masinga, 2009). In addition Pithouse, Mitchell and Masinga (2009, p. 240) affirm, “the very process of self-study itself changes its practitioners and their situations.” They explain that the nature of this process allows teachers to view ourselves from new perspectives, enabling us to take action which might bring about change in our own professional practice and contexts. Through an interactive process of researching, teaching and learning, the information generated can be used to understand the viewpoints of those people involved, such as learners, colleagues, parents and guardians.

It is important to note that the researcher is not alone on this self-study journey; it also involves collaborative relationships which can lead to collaborative learning within

professional learning communities (Samaras, Hicks & Berger, 2004). It is for this reason I acknowledge the importance of critical friends (Samaras, 2011). My critical friends are my fellow students who are also conducting their Master's research in the specialisation of Teacher Development Studies. As outlined in Chapter Two, through interactive discussions and the sharing of ideas with these critical friends, I have encountered valuable ideas and information relating to my research topic. Their contributions during our shared discussions have helped me to stay motivated and focused.

Conclusion and Overview of the Thesis

Chapter One

In Chapter One I have outlined the focus, purpose and context of the study and the need for welfare care for learners. I have elaborated on my understanding of the role of teachers in providing welfare care and on the importance of this role as referred to in the South African policy documents as the *pastoral role* (DHET, 2011). I have also listed and explained the three research questions that inform my study. In addition, I have explained the key concepts and theoretical perspective that are central in understanding my topic. The methodological approach and the research paradigm was also outlined and identified. It is important to note that I have not written a separate literature review chapter. Following the advice of Nash (2004), I have integrated references to others' work into the evolving storyline of the thesis in an attempt to achieve a "balance between expressing [my] own ideas and referring to others for support, clarification, and improvement" (p. 66).

Chapter Two

The following aspects are discussed in Chapter Two: an explanation of the methodological aspects of the study, a portrayal of my school context and my participants' role in this study. Furthermore, a clarification of my research methods, namely, memory-work self-study, collective self-study and arts-based self-study are outlined. Thereafter, I describe the multiple data sources that I have employed. Next, I explained certain challenges experienced during my research journey. In conclusion, I consider issues of ethics and trustworthiness.

Chapter Three

In Chapter Three, I focused on my first research question. In responding to this question, I describe my lived experiences through recounting positive and negative memory stories from my early schooling up to my present position as a teacher. Next, I re-examine my

remembered experiences of learning and teaching to recognise themes to assist me in better understanding how these experiences have contributed to me becoming passionate in providing welfare care for learners. Then I discuss the following themes in response to my first research question: *a) attentiveness; b) empathy; c) encouragement; and d) nurturing.*

Chapter Four

In Chapter Four, I engage with my second research question: *How are we as practising teachers currently enacting welfare care at my school?* I look at how teachers in my school are identifying and responding to the welfare care needs of learners. I show how teachers are enacting welfare care by: *a) connecting nutrition with learning; b) making provision for school uniforms and stationery for learners; c) bringing on board sponsors, NGOs, religious organisations and businesses as a support base; d) providing sports, games and excursions; and e) attending to the medical, emotional and social development needs of learners.* This chapter demonstrates how teachers are expected to deal with the multiple welfare care responsibilities in addition to performing our basic role of teaching. Furthermore, the chapter reveals that teachers need help and support in providing welfare care.

Chapter Five

In Chapter Five, I look at how teachers can be better supported in enacting welfare care. I describe how I used the arts-based mode of collage-making to stimulate and make meaning of deliberations with my teacher participants in answer to my third research question: *How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?* I identify and discuss three noteworthy themes that emerged from the collage-making and the exchanges with my colleagues *a) community support and engagement; b) continuing professional teacher development for psychosocial and emotional support; and c) teacher leadership for welfare care.*

Chapter Six

The final chapter (Chapter Six) offers a review of the whole thesis. I deliberate on my learning about enacting welfare care for learners. I also consider most importantly what I have learned from my self-study research. I consider how this has deepened my self-understanding and learning in relation to improving my role as a caregiver. To conclude this chapter, I consider how my learning could assist in improving my practice in providing a supportive and caring environment for learners at our school when enacting welfare care.

and others to better understand how teachers can become better prepared, motivated and supported in this regard.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this self-study I seek to better understand my role as a teacher in relation to providing welfare care for learners. I hope that this study will assist me and other education stakeholders to better understand what these role demands of teachers and how teachers might be better supported to enact this role.

In the previous chapter, I explained the importance of the study for me and why the study is also significant for other stakeholders and role players within our South African school environment. I also elaborated on policy, social and teacher development contexts in South Africa as they pertain to the focus of my study. The three research questions that inform my study were explained. I went on to clarify the key concepts that are central to understanding my topic. Furthermore, I outlined my methodological approach and discussed my theoretical perspective and the research paradigm. I concluded the chapter (Chapter One) with a review of the thesis.

This chapter, Chapter Two, focuses on the methodological aspects of the study. I begin by discussing my methodological approach. I then depict my school context. I go on to explain how and why I involved participants in this study. I also explain my research methods, namely, memory-work self-study, collective self-study and arts-based self-study. To follow, I describe the multiple data sources that I have used. Next, I consider the challenges I experienced during my research journey. Then I discuss issues of ethics and trustworthiness.

Research Methodology

In this study, I have employed self-study methodology to explore my enactment of providing welfare care for learners at my school. Hamilton and Pinnegar (as cited in Pithouse, Mitchell & Weber, 2009, p. 44) describe self-study as “the study of one’s self, one’s actions, one’s ideas, as well as the „not self”. Thus, self-study involves inquiry into your own life, your own lived experience and your identity. Pithouse et al. (2009, p. 45) refer to, “self-study [as] using [different] methods that facilitate a stepping back”. Thus, with self-study we need to look at ourselves from different perspectives as we interact with others. Self-study can help us as teachers to gain a sense of self-knowledge and self-understanding, thus helping us to

recognise our strengths, to improve on our weaknesses and also find solutions for challenges. According to Hamachek (as cited in Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p.175), this “self-knowledge is the core to a teacher’s effective practice and development”.

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) highlight the significance of reflection in relation to looking back at thoughts and experiences as an important element that can inform teacher development. Pithouse et al. (2009) explain that self-study as a form of teacher development can encourage teachers to become more reflective in their thinking. In reflecting, you can see how to change something. When thinking becomes more reflective, it makes teachers more aware of their practice, which is valuable for teacher development (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010). A teacher cited in Pithouse et al (2009, p. 56) illustrates the value of teachers’ self-reflection: “My self-study inquiry helped me to reflect on my teaching and to look at ways that I could improve my teaching”. Similarly, I believe that for teaching and learning to be transformed, it should start with teachers transforming themselves through knowing who they are and what it is that drives or hinders their professional practice. I have found that by constantly questioning our practice as teachers, we can look more closely at something, not only at face value. It can make us aware when change is needed and that this change might bring about a solution to problems. This, in turn, can help us with our future development within the teaching profession. This means that we need to be observant for areas of change in order to develop ourselves personally and professionally.

I selected self-study as an appropriate methodological approach for my study because through the self-study process, teachers can become more knowledgeable when it comes to improving their practice (LaBoskey, 2004). My understanding of self-study is to research one’s self with the intention of wanting to better understand one’s practice in order to bring about positive changes. I anticipated that a self-study methodology would allow me to enhance my personal and professional growth and, at the same time, contribute to public knowledge about teachers’ enactment of welfare care for learners.

As Samaras (2011) explains, self-study involves interaction and this can be done with the help of colleagues within a teacher’s professional context. In order to allow my self-study research to be interactive, I engaged in collective self-study as I wanted to obtain the perspectives of some of the teachers with whom I work (see Chapter Four and Chapter Five). I anticipated that this would enable me to see things differently and to notice things that I

might have overlooked. Likewise, Bullough and Pinnegar (as cited in Mitchell et al., 2009, p. 123) affirm “even though we study ourselves, we need to engage in dialogue that will allow us to look through other people’s eyes to gain perspectives beyond the self and different vantage points”.

I have also worked with who were my fellow Master’s students in the specialisation of Teacher Development Studies. We were all engaging in self-study research but taking on different topics. Through our group meetings and our links on electronic media, we have created a close working relationship and have supported each other in our research. Throughout this self-study journey, I have been encouraged by my critical friends as they have sparked new ideas and helped me to gain other perspectives in understanding my topic. As I worked with my critical friends, I came to see that “critical friends have the potential for creating opportunities to obtain alternatives perspectives” (Samaras, 2011, p. 43).

The following extract illustrates the encouragement I received from my critical friends:

I had found that the data which I received from one of my participant’s [Peniel’s] collage was difficult to analyse. I could not understand why she had included a picture of a doctor. I approached my participant again to provide clarifications on the picture chosen. But, when I presented this collage to my critical friends, the discussion assisted to broaden my understanding and several other ideas emerged thereafter. Some of the comments were: “This teacher needs to be supported by providing medical care for the learners, considering that many learners do not have the financial means to get medical help. They see schools as a place where they can get medical assistance. Therefore schools need to provide this service to learners from disadvantaged communities”. (Journal entry, 30 September 2014)

Research Context

My research context was the primary school where I teach. The school caters for learners from Grade R (Pre-school), Grades 1 to 3 (Foundation Phase), Grades 4 and 5 (Intermediate Phase) to Grades 6 and 7 (Senior Phase). Our school is situated in a formal residential area largely comprising of low-income households. Many families are unemployed and rely on meagre income and social grants to sustain their households. It is from these low-cost housing we draw our learners from. My school is an Ex- House of Delegates (ex-HOD), section 21, quintile 4 schools. Govender, (2005, p. 17) explains, “An Ex-HOD school refers to an Indian school that was run prior to 1994 along racial lines. Similarly, the affairs of Indian people were managed in Parliament by the House of Delegates (HOD). The distribution of schools funds as determined by the national quintile is based on the following:

Quintile 1 = 35 %

Quintile 2 = 25 %

Quintile 3 = 20 %

Quintile 4 = 15 %

Quintile 5 = 5 %.

(Department of Education, 2006 b, Section 109 and Figure 2)

According to the quintile system, schools ranked 1 and 2 receive the bulk of the funding in terms of the Norms and Standards for Funding Schools. (DBE, 2013, p. 8). This system of ranking and funding was made available to cater for learners coming from poverty-stricken families. Such schools (1 and 2) are considered to cater for learners coming from homes that experience poverty and unemployment. As a result, our school is regarded as privileged and therefore does not qualify for quintile 1 or 2 ranking. However, this categorisation did not take into consideration that my school is situated in a community largely comprising of low to middle income households. It is from these low cost housing and informal shack dwelling we draw our learners. Most families are unemployed and those who work rely on a meagre income. Social grants are an important contributor to household income to sustain their livelihood. The result of an incorrect categorisation has led to my school being disadvantaged to the detriment of learners, teaching staff and the community. Coupled with the issue of incorrect categorization and quintile ranking are the problems of increased burden on the teachers’ workload. Teachers have to engage in fundraising activities as part of their work at school, in order to keep the school afloat.

The staff comprises 22 teachers; there is one Black African teacher and the rest are Indian. The classrooms in which we teach are in need of repair. There are window panes missing, some doors do not have locks, and some ceilings boards are missing, resulting in classrooms leaking on rainy days. There is also poor lighting due to old and faulty electrical wires and cables. In addition, there is a shortage of furniture, textbooks, teaching aids, teaching and learning support materials (such as workbooks from the Department of Basic Education). At times, children are forced to share chairs with other children or they have to sit on the floor to get their work done. This is not conducive to effective teaching and learning. The number of toilets is insufficient for our learners (20 toilets for 700 learners), resulting in constant blockages and sewerage problems. The grass in and around our school grounds is overgrown and this poses a threat for learners who use the playgrounds during the breaks because of the danger of getting bitten by snakes and rats.

However, our school does have a Media Centre, which consists of a library and a computer room. The library has been upgraded recently through sponsorships from various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The learners have been allowed to borrow books and this initiative has benefitted our learners since many of them are unable to visit the local library as it is situated quite far from where they live. Unfortunately, the computers have not been in operation due to the lack of funds at our school. We are awaiting donations from computer companies to employ personnel to teach learners on how to use these computers. In my experience, I have found that some teachers at my school are not computer literate; hence they still prefer the traditional method of handwriting for their assessment tests and also for the computation of learners' marks on their mark sheets.

At our school, 60 % of our learners come from predominantly English speaking families and 40 % of our learners are isiZulu speaking. The medium of instruction at school is English as the Home Language, with isiZulu and Afrikaans as the First Additional Languages.

The teacher-learner ratio is 1:35 in the Foundation Phase and 1:50 in the Intermediate and Senior Phases. Due to the high non-payment (80%) of school fees by parents, we cannot employ additional staff (Governing Body personnel) to ensure smaller numbers of learners in a class. This has impacted on the quality of teaching and learning at our school. Many of our learners' parents and guardians depend on a social grant to sustain them. These families

experience tremendous hardships and therefore cannot afford to pay their children's school fees. As a result of this, the school receives about 20 % school fees from the entire school population of about 700 learners.

Research Participants

I am the central participant in this self-study, together with three professional colleagues at my school. In the course of the research I also engaged in informal discussions with two of the sponsors who support our welfare care programmes at the school.

Professional Colleagues

I selected three teachers who have had first-hand experience of working with indigent learners at our school. They are two females and a male teacher. They are all Indians with an age range of 45 to 55 and are experienced teachers. I selected these three participants because I have worked with them and have seen their commitment, passion and dedication towards indigent learners. They go the extra mile to ensure that these children are not left behind. They are directly involved in assisting these learners at school. They are involved in the distribution of lunch and porridge at school (the feeding scheme), school uniforms, and food hampers. They also offer counselling to traumatised and affected learners and are responsible for securing sponsorships from businesses and NGOs.

Because I am aware that my role as the researcher and as a master teacher with many years of experience at my school could possibly be intimidating, I tried to make my fellow teachers feel comfortable. I explained that despite my passion and commitment in enacting welfare care, I wanted them to reflect on and share both positive and negative moments of enacting welfare care. It was emphasised to them that I was not looking only for the „lighter side“ but that they were also free to share the „dark side“ and the negative experiences they encountered while enacting welfare care.

During the course of my study, I also held informal conversations with two of the sponsors who support our welfare care activities. With their permission, I noted these conversations in my research journal. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, these conversations with the sponsors helped me in answering my second research question: *How are we, as practising teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?*

Self-Study Research Methods

Research Question 1:

How have my lived experiences contributed to my passion to provide welfare care for learners?

The method I used to generate data for this question was memory-work self-study (Samaras, 2011). This process involves exploring your own memories of past experiences. As Onyx and Small (2001, p. 779) explain, “Memory-work is only possible if the subject and the object of the research are one and the same person”. Thus the researcher is also a participant in the research because the researcher has lived through these events or episodes that are being studied. Memory-work is a reflexive process of tapping into a person’s past. To illustrate, O’ Connor (2009, p. 53) explains: “I attempt to „unwrap” my lived experience through a process of reflection that involves acquiring knowledge from memory”. Thus, memory-work can help teachers to develop by helping them to understand and learn from their lived experience (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Research Question 2:

How are we, as practicing teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?

To respond to this question, I used collective self-study approach. As Samaras (2011, p. 99) explains, “Self-study can be conducted by an individual or a school team”. In order to understand how teachers negotiate their experiences in enacting welfare care for learners at my school, I chose to use the collective self-study method and worked collaboratively with some of my colleagues.

Research Question 3:

How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?

To respond to this question, I used the arts-based mode of collage-making to elicit data. This helped to make meaning of discussions with my teacher participants. Samaras and Freese (as cited in Samaras, 2011, p. 100) highlight that the “arts-based self-study method, promotes and provokes self-reflection, critical analysis, and dialogue about improving one’s teaching through the arts”. Likewise, Butler-Kisber (2008) affirms that arts-based research can produce a sensory response and this can assist to generate meanings in very concrete ways. At the same time, she explains that arts-based forms of inquiry can help us researchers with our thinking by allowing us to work in a non-linear way.

Data Sources

Journal Entries

Masinga (2012) highlights that keeping journals allows researchers to jot down positive or negative thoughts, feelings, incidents and events. Journal writing can thus be an important tool for self-reflection (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Keeping a journal helped me record notes and comments regarding my experiences of enacting welfare care. In addition, the writing of memory stories in my journal allowed me to look back and reflect on my past lived experience (O'Connor, 2009). This provided a lens to gain a better understanding of how I have become passionate about providing welfare care for learners. Journal writing also helped me to express my ideas about my other data sources such as collages and photographs.

However, I found that the process of writing journal entries is not an easy task. Journal writing was not a writing strategy that was taught to me at school (Masinga, 2012). I learned that the process of reflecting through journal writing is a difficult one, especially if one is not trained to do this exercise or if I was still trying to complete the day's plan of work. There were also times when the process generated negative feelings such as frustrations and feelings of being overworked and exhausted.

Artefacts

Allender and Manke (2004, p. 21) point out that "artefacts [can serve] as anchors for [self-study] work". This means that artefacts can provide tangible evidence of a teacher's lived experiences and practices (Allender & Manke, 2004). Using artefacts has assisted me to be lead and directed on this path of my self-study journey. It was a catalyst to recall and describe significant events and people. I have found that although artefacts come from the past, they formed part of my ongoing self-study journey. In addition, Allender & Manke (2004, p. 20) note that "artefacts can be brought out after many years in order to allow the researcher to reminisce on and re-examine the past". Artefacts that I have used to elicit and represent key experiences and people that have influenced my journey have included photographs, greeting cards, a letter, and a trophy (see Chapter Three).

As Mitchell et al (2009, p. 119) affirm, "The use of visual approaches to self-study can literally help us to see things differently". It is within this context that I have used

photographs as artefacts to create knowledge and to convey understanding. Further, Mitchell et al. (2009) explain that the use of visual methods such as photographs in self-study can serve as an effective prompt for critical reflection and can encourage participants to engage in a dialogue and express emotions. In addition to using my own photographs as artefacts to reflect on my personal and professional experiences, I asked my teacher participants to bring photographs as artefacts to enhance our discussions of the welfare care activities that take place in our school (see Chapter Four). In this way, I was not only afforded the opportunity of hearing about their experiences, but I was also allowed a window into the ways in which they enacted welfare care with these learners, as captured in the photographs and through their comments. With the permission of my colleagues, I have drawn on these photographs as data sources in responding to my second research question.

Discussions with Teacher Participants

The First Meeting

After the selection of the three teacher participants, we had an informal group meeting. Our discussion took place in a casual and relaxed atmosphere. At this meeting, the participants seemed excited and were looking forward to share their experiences about providing welfare care for learners. The purpose of this meeting was to inform them how they would be personally involved in the research. I gave a detailed description of the research process, as well as the research expectations. I encouraged them to ask questions in order to allay any fears and concerns. At the same time, I addressed the issue of consent and ethical issues and participants were assured of confidentiality and that the data obtained from the research would be used only with their approval and consent. They were told that their participation in the study was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any given time if they felt uncomfortable or wished to do so, as this agreement was not binding. For ethical reasons, I asked them to sign a consent form. At this meeting, I also asked permission to audio record our discussions. In addition, I gave each participant a hand-out informing them about possible questions we would be discussing:

- Explain what action is taken by educators to provide welfare care for our learners.
- Explain the role of educators as caregivers.
- Do you counsel your learners according to different needs (social, emotional, psychological and physical)?

- Did you get any assistance from NGO's, businesses and sponsors? Discuss their roles in assisting learners with the different needs.

I had initially planned to continue to meet all three of my teacher participants together in group meetings at school. However, due to time constraints and the non-availability of all participants at one given time, I went on to meet each participant individually. I met each teacher participant another two times. I had to use my own vehicle to conduct our discussions at my participant's homes. The school in which I teach is not a safe place after school hours. We do not have the funds to employ security after school. Thus we do not feel safe on the school premises after hours.

The Second Meeting

The second meeting was to talk with each teacher participant about his or her role as an active caregiver, as well as the role of businesses and NGOs and various stakeholders in supporting teachers. These sessions were held at the participants' homes. I observed that my participants seemed to feel comfortable and free to talk as they were in the comfort of their homes. The questions from the hand-out given to them in our first meeting were used to prompt our discussions in this session.

Through the participants' responses, I was able to ascertain and better understand the type of work that they do in order to assist indigent learners at our school. This helped me to gain more insight into what action is being undertaken. I was also able to relate their experiences to mine. At times, there were sensitive issues raised in the discussion and some of the participants became very emotional. I could hear the changes in their voices and this showed me how they felt. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) explain that in self-study all voices of the participants should not be just raised but heard. I felt that I was able to play a valuable supportive role by listening to my colleagues' experiences. It was also important for me to show that I shared their concerns and that I too cared about our learners' wellbeing.

Having these sessions audio-recorded helped me to store, replay and transcribe the discussions. Transcription commenced immediately after each discussion and was a time consuming exercise. However, the benefit of listening again and again to the recorded sessions was that it was like having a "third ear" (Masinga, 2012, p. 127) as I gained new insights each time I listened to our discussions.

The Third Meeting

In this meeting, each participant discussed the additional support still needed by teachers at our school to enact welfare care(as presented in Chapter Five).Each teacher participant explained her or his collage to me (as discussed below).

Collages

I chose to use collage as a form of a visual representation to analyse my lived experiences and memories in response to my first research question (see Chapter Three), as well as to respond to my third research question (see Chapter Five). As Khanare(2009, p, 97) explains, “a collage is not just a cut and paste exercise”, but can elicit information needed on the lived experiences of teachers enacting welfare care for learners. Likewise Diaz (as cited in Gerstenblatt, 2013, p. 296) claims that “visual arts can open up dialogue among diverse people, offer insights and reflection and provide new ways to critique a subject”. This means that serious thought needs to be given to how to work with collage, as it can be used to engage participants in dialogue, learning and reflecting.

As a research participant myself, I thought that it would be a good idea to create a collage myself before I attempted this exercise with my participants. Here I was following the advice of Khanare (2009, p. 97) who suggests: “before the activity begins, a clear explanation for the process has to be provided and a readymade example of a collage should be given to the participants”. At first, when I was compiling the collage (in response to my third research question), I was a bit hesitant as to what should be included because our school is so deprived at so many levels. I realised that my participants were likely to experience a similar dilemma in creating their own collages.

At the end of our second meeting I gave each participant magazines, scissors, Pritt (glue), and chart paper (A3 size) to prepare a collage. I asked participants to peruse magazines and pick out relevant pictures and words that they could find to describe the additional support that they as practising teachers still needed to become better supported in enacting welfare care. This corresponds with the view of Khanare (2009, p. 97), who advises that “that including words in a collage offer an opportunity to give more meaning to the collage”. I gave my colleagues the following topics for the collage:

What support do we as teachers **still need** at school in order to perform this caring role towards our learners?

Or

What **additional assistance** can we as teachers be given in order to be **better supported** to provide a caring role for learners at our school?

Thereafter I explained to the participants what the collage-making would mean for me in terms of providing relevant data. I also gave the participants the following questions as possible prompts for our later discussions on the collage:

- How did you feel doing this activity?
- What did this activity mean for you?
- Please explain your collage.
- What part of this collage represents how you as a teacher can become better prepared and committed to learners' needs by providing welfare care?
- Do any of the pictures on the collage signify a critical moment or incident that may have occurred whilst you were taking action in helping these learners?
- Do any of these words on the collage signify a critical moment or incident that may have occurred in your role as an active care-giver?
- Is there any picture or word that stands out from your collage?

Each participant seemed excited and keen to undertake this exercise. I asked my participants to complete their collages at home. Following Masinga's (2013) example, I anticipated that this would allow the participants privacy and to work at their leisure, this giving them the opportunity to feel free to think about what they wanted to include in their collages. We also negotiated a time frame regarding the date of completion. All participants were keen on completing this activity in two weeks.

Thereafter, at our third meeting, individual discussions followed based on the participants' collages and the questions I had given them (see Chapter Five).

Table 2.1 illustrates my self-study research design:

Table 2.1 Self-Study Research Design

<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Self-Study Method</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Data Sources (Evidence)</u>
<i>How have my lived experiences contributed to my passion to provide welfare care for learners?</i>	Memory work self-study	School/Home	Self	* My journal entries * My artefacts(e.g. photographs, letters, cards)
<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Self-Study Method</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Data Sources (Evidence)</u>
<i>2.How are we, as practising teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?</i>	Collective self-study	School	* Self *Three professional colleagues *Two sponsors	* My journal entries * Artefacts (colleagues' photographs and my photographs) * Audio-recorded discussions with colleagues * Informal discussions with sponsors (noted in my research journal)

<u>Research Question</u>	<u>Self-Study Method</u>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Data Sources (Evidence)</u>
<i>3. How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?</i>	Arts-based self-study	School	* Self *Three professional colleagues	*Collages * Audio-recorded discussions with colleagues

Research Challenges

During the course of my research journey, I had to overcome a number of challenges. One of these challenges was making time to meet my participants. As explained above, initially I had planned for us to meet as a group at school, but this did not happen because not all the participants were available at the same time. Therefore, discussions with individual participants took place at my participants' homes after school hours in the evenings, after six and sometimes up until nine o'clock at night. Many times we had to cancel prior appointments because of family commitments and responsibilities which needed urgent attention. I had to fit in with what was convenient for my participants. Driving back home was a serious challenge for me as a female travelling late at night. I used to pray for safe travelling every time I drove back home.

Another challenge was that while I was conducting my research, unions called teachers to embark on a Work-to-Rule campaign. Work-to-Rule meant teachers were present at school for the duration of school hours, but no teaching took place. Teachers merely „baby-sat“ their learners, ensuring that discipline was maintained in class. As a result of this campaign, the normal operations of the school were disrupted for about six weeks. Some of my participants were not available to assist me with my research until the campaign was over. I had to respect their decision as their participation was of a voluntary nature. This was a setback in meeting my deadlines.

One of my biggest challenges was using the computer. I am old-school; I feel more comfortable with writing than using a computer. Engaging in my Master's studies has forced me to learn to use the computer. At first, all I could do was to type a document. Initially, I used to have problems saving documents and more often than not, I would lose my saved documents. This had posed serious problems because I had to re-type and this took many hours. At times, I felt embarrassed to ask my colleagues to assist because this showed my incompetence. Also having only one computer at home was problematic because I had to wait for my sons (who are currently studying) to finish their work. This meant me engaging in my Master's studies late at night and into the early hours of the morning.

In addition, my tendency to always put other people first resulted in me having less time to engage in my studies. At times, being an active caregiver for my learners took up many hours to assist those with hardships and challenges and hence resulted in my work not getting completed as scheduled. Also, the many competing demands on my time took a toll on my health and I became sick and had to be hospitalised.

However, on days when I felt demotivated or felt like „throwing in the towel“ my supervisor together with my critical friends were always there to motivate and encourage me. They made an effort to call or check up on me. This helped me through my „dark days“ to pull myself together and to gain confidence to continue with my research. Their support made me feel valued and respected.

Ethical Issues

Permission to conduct the research was sought from the school principal, the school governing body and the Department of Basic Education. In addressing ethical issues, I tried at all times to follow the advice of Murray and Beglar (2009) who explain that no physical harm or emotional stress should come to the participants as a result of taking part in the research. As explained above, there were times during our discussions when my participants became emotional and so I tried to be a supportive listener and to show that I had heard their concerns.

I also had to ensure that the participants' anonymity was maintained. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) remind us that the essence of anonymity is the guarantee that the

participant's information provided in no way reveals their identity. I therefore used pseudonyms to protect the identity of my participants.

Ethical issues also needed to be addressed when using photographs. I received permission from my principal to use photographs taken at school. Furthermore, I asked my siblings permission to include my parents' photograph (see Chapter Three). Where people's faces could be seen in the school photographs, I added star shapes to the photographs to protect the identity of people pictured in the photographs (see Chapter Four).

Trustworthiness

In order to ensure trustworthiness in self-study research, it is important to use multiple methods of data generation. This helps to gain a variety of different perspectives on what is being studied (Pinnegar&Hamilton, 2009). Therefore, for the purpose of this study I employed the following self-study methods: memory-work self-study, collective self-study and arts-based self-study. As explained above, I also used multiple data sources. Furthermore, Feldman (2003) highlights the importance of being explicit about how data is generated and analysed to enhance trustworthiness in self-study research. Therefore, in this chapter and in subsequent chapters, I have explained my research process in detail. In addition, to enhance trustworthiness, I shared the ideas that I have presented in Chapter Four and Five with my teacher participants to check whether this was in line with what they had meant to communicate during our discussions.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented my research process. I began by explaining my choice of a self-study methodology. I then described my school context. I went on to discuss how participants played a role in this study. I also clarified the self-study research methods I used to address each research question. I then discussed my data sources. Next, I explained how I managed to deal with particular challenges that I experienced during my research journey. Finally, I discussed issues of ethics and trustworthiness.

In reflecting on what I have learned about self-study methodology through this research journey, I have realised that I found that the use of artefacts in particular helped to lead and direct me on the path of self-study by assisting me to recall and describe significant events and people. Although artefacts come from the past, they formed part of my ongoing self-

study journey. Another important learning was about the role of others in my self-study research also, regular contact with and support from my critical friends enabled me to remain focussed with my research despite the challenges that I faced. Discussions with teacher participants helped me to establish the „dark side“ and some reflection on „insider personality“ on welfare care.

In the next chapter, chapter Three, I address the first research question that informs my study: *How have my lived experiences contributed to my passion to provide welfare care for learners?* I present memory stories of my lived experiences throughout my educational journey. I explain how looking back and writing about these events helped me to recall and review situations and people that played a significant role in motivating me to become a passionate and committed caregiver.

CHAPTER THREE:

HOW I HAVE BECOME MOTIVATED AND PASSIONATE IN PROVIDING WELFARE CARE

Introduction

Through this study, I hope to gain insight into welfare care for learners, as it is being provided by me and my fellow teachers at school. I anticipate that this study will assist me and other education stakeholders to better understand what this role asks of teachers and how teachers might be better supported to enact welfare care for learners.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the methodological aspects of my self-study research. I outlined my self-study methodological approach, described my school context and explained my selection of research participants. Furthermore, I introduced the research methods and clarified my data sources. I described challenges that I experienced during my research journey and I discussed issues of ethics and trustworthiness.

In this I use memory work self-study (Samaras, 2011) as a research method in order to recall and reflect on significant memories. According to Pithouse-Morgan, Mitchell and Pillay (2012, p. 2), “memory-work is emerging as a significant research method within the South African educational context”. Further, Pithouse-Morgan et al. (2012) explain that working with memory as a research method can facilitate teachers’ personal and professional development. Memory-work involves a person reflecting on her past and presents in order to gain new insight into a particular research topic or question (Pithouse-Morgan et al., 2012). I have found this is a process of going back over something in different ways and of reviewing one’s own experiences from new perspectives, and with an awareness of the present. This helps to connect the past with the present and the future. My focus in this chapter is on my first research question: *How have my lived experiences contributed to my passion to provide welfare care for learners?*

In response to this question, I present memory stories of my lived experiences from my educational life. I also explore the reasons for my self-motivation and passion in providing welfare care as a teacher. The lens of my research is aimed at early schooling, my primary schooling, my role models, my secondary school days, my entry into the tertiary world, my entry into the work place, as well as entry into the teaching profession and my present

teaching experience. I consider how this process of becoming passionate about providing welfare care is scaffold by past events, experiences and people. I take the reader on a journey of discovery whereby I recount positive and negative experiences that I have encountered as a learner and as a teacher.

Taking on a journey of my life experiences, I began the memory-work self-study process by constructing a concept map (see Figure 3.1), which I “created using hand-drawn sketches...in a non-linear and visual format by...to show [my]... ideas in their embryonic stage” (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010, p. 4).



Figure 3.1 A Concept Map: Going Back in Time...

The concept map guided me in identifying possible data sources for my memory-work, such as letters, cards, photographs and my reflective journal. These multiple data sources provided tangible evidence from the past and present to assist me in understanding my passion for welfare care. I looked at photographs, as well as cards and messages from my learners, which have inspired and motivated me. I reflected on my journal entries and certain episodes from my lived experiences that have had an impact on my passion for providing welfare care. I also recalled people who have made a significant impact in some way on my development as a passionate teacher.

My Never Ending Journey to Becoming a Passionate and Caring Teacher

In this exploration of my memories, I recall my school days (nursery school, primary school, secondary), my tertiary education and my teaching career. Through this exploration, I have come to realise that teaching is a lifelong learning experience, both inside and outside of school.

My Nursery School Days

I started attending nursery school (pre-school) at the age of five in 1969. My parents were not financially well off enough to send me to an accredited nursery school. Therefore, we were taught in a small house, which accommodated many children. We sat on the floor and wrote on slates. However, I still have fond memories of our teacher. She was a very caring person, who represented a motherly figure and always ensured that we were happy. She used to hug us and make us feel comfortable and safe. I remember that we often sang songs, and recited nursery rhymes.

Life at Primary School

My entry into the formal schooling system in 1970 coincided with the height of the reign of the Nationalist government and its apartheid legislation. Due to the draconian apartheid laws, schools were racially segregated. The legislation of the Group Areas Act resulted in racially demarcated residential areas. Therefore, people of the same race group lived together and their children attended the school within that area. In my area, which was zoned as an Indian area, large numbers of children were crammed into a few classrooms. Our school was overcrowded and there was not enough space to accommodate all learners at the same time. Consequently, we had to learn outside the classroom under trees on blistering hot days and even on rainy days. The absentee rate on cold or rainy days was high.

Since our schools were overcrowded, we had platoon classes, which we referred to as “afternoon school”. This meant that some of us started school later in the day. I remember that we would be tired by the time school started, since many of us came to school early in the mornings with our siblings. We often fell asleep waiting under the trees to start afternoon school.

Nevertheless, even in cold, rainy and miserable weather, I looked forward to going to school because of the cheerful times we shared with our teachers and our friends. Our teachers would always be there to take care of us. If we came to school with wet clothing on rainy days, they would try to find us dry clothes. Sometimes we would also be given a cup of tea and a sandwich to ensure that we were comfortable to start our lessons. I felt very content to beat school. Looking back, I can now see that in my work as a teacher, I am practising what my primary schoolteachers used to do for us. These kind gestures that emanated from my former teachers have taught me that, as a teacher, I need to be caring and have a loving attitude towards my learners.

I remember how, on hot days, we used to play many games such as “castle”(similar to hop scotch), “soup” and “hoopoe “with our friends. In the game called “soup “all the children are given names of vegetable and they are seated in a row. When a certain vegetable name is called out by the teacher, all those learners who were given that particular vegetable name run in a line holding each other’s hands around a beacon and then come back to their original places. When the teachers says the word “soup” then all the learners hold their hands will run together in a line around their beacon. These learners represent the different kinds of vegetables needed to cook soup. These games encourage all learners to socialise with each other. They also encourage teamwork, discipline and allow learners to forget their problems. I can still recall the cheerful times and joy we shared with each other. This brought us closer to each other. I can now see how the games encouraged children to socialise with each other, especially during lunch breaks. These joyful memories still linger in my mind. As a teacher, I have introduced some of these games to my learners. I have found that many of my learners actually enjoy these games as much as I did. Many of them have said, “We cannot wait to play these games”.

Life at that time for my family was difficult because we were not well off financially. Both my parents worked hard to keep „the flames burning at home“. My siblings and I walked to school, which was a long way from home. In spite of these hardships, I still managed to obtain a good pass at primary school. My parents always instilled in us the value of a high-quality education and, looking back, I realise that I have made them proud by becoming a teacher.

My Parents were my Role Models



Figure 3.2 A Treasured Photograph of My Parents

Looking at the above photograph of my parents (Figure 3.2) reminds me that they were my role models and were instrumental in inculcating values and morals in my character. At times, my dad was strict as he believed in discipline. He would always ensure that my school work was properly done and that I passed all my grades. Although he used harsh measures in order to reprimand me (he used a cane to hit me if I was naughty or if I did not perform well at school), today I appreciate what he did. My dad shared with us that he had had to leave school at an early age; he did not complete his schooling because his parents did not have the money to send him to school. He told himself that once he had his own children he would make sure that they would receive a good education irrespective of whether he had the money or not. Therefore, I now realise that he was strict because he wanted me to do well at school and to obtain excellent results. He believed that this would allow me to obtain a professional job and to become financially independent.

My mother was a very friendly person who always ensured that she did not hurt other peoples' feelings. She always taught me the following: "If there is a war, you should be the last soldier to leave". This means that if someone has a problem, you should be there for them and only think about yourself last. She taught me to show unconditional love and to be passionate in whatever you are doing. I now see that it is through these simple lessons in life

that she moulded and built my character. Like Varathaiah's mother, my mother showed "dedication to family life, devotion to bringing up children with love, care humanity, warmth and support" (Varathaiah, 2010, p.51). I will always be grateful to my mum for instilling these good values in me. She was always there whenever I needed support and comfort.

Unfortunately, I lost both my parents at a young age (my dad when I was 16 years old and my mum when I was 20). This was a real blow for me, as these two people were the most important people in my life. However, this traumatic loss helped me to become even more determined to fulfil my parents' dream for me, which was to become a teacher.

My Secondary School Days

I started my secondary schooling in 1978. My secondary school was also situated in a predominately Indian area. At that time, each race group had a different department of education. The House of Delegates (HoD) controlled Indian schools and mandated teachers to teach according to a prescribed curriculum.

Some of the learners at the school came from middleclass families, but the majority of learners came from low income families. The school catered for about 1 000 learners. The school was a modern building with about 50 class rooms, as well as specialist rooms such as a physical science and biology laboratory, a home economics room, a typing room, woodwork and technical drawing room, a library and a physical education storeroom. We also had a school guidance counsellor to assist learners who were experiencing hardships such as poverty and those who had emotional, psychological and social problems. Unfortunately, in my experience, many schools today do not have the luxury of having a school guidance counsellor due to financial cutbacks by the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

Looking back, I can see that the teachers seem to have been adequately trained to teach specialist subjects and therefore a variety of subjects was offered to us learners in Grade 10 (then Standard 8). In order to accommodate learners who were underachieving, the school offered some learners subjects on the practical grades (lower grade) so that these learners would be able to pass.

During my time at secondary school, most of the teachers at my school were very authoritarian. Suransky-Dekker (1998, p. 295) affirms, “The authority of teachers and principals...reflected the apartheid regime which was hierarchical and punitive”. In my experience, this not only affected the interpersonal relationships between teachers and learners, but it also impacted on the manner in which the curriculum was devised and selected. Teachers were seen as the „reservoirs of facts“, which meant that learners had to slavishly accept these facts without questioning. The only way of learning concepts in these classes was through drill work and memorisation, active learning and learner-centred pedagogy was not practised at our school. Seeking clarity, in the form of posing questions to the teachers, was regarded as showing disrespect for the teacher. This was a way in which teachers’ power and authority was maintained.

In order to preserve this form of authority, corporal punishment was practiced. During the apartheid era, it was widely believed that in order for children to learn and listen they must be punished (Porteus, Vally & Ruth, 2001). In my experience, corporal punishment was used to try to get children to learn. I remember how learners were physically abused and also ridiculed and mocked by some teachers in front of their peers; this was embarrassing, especially for the boys, because some of these boys were as old as our teachers. These teachers used humiliation as a weapon. At the same time, I believe that these beatings made learners feel worthless, unloved, shamed and disrespected, which could make it difficult for them to achieve a positive sense of self later on. As a teacher now myself, I feel this is an unacceptable approach to teaching and learning as it creates a great deal of hostility between teachers and learners. It is the opposite of what teachers should be doing at schools.

I recall that life at school was tough for many learners who came from poor homes. Some of the learners did not have the proper school uniform because their parents could not afford it. However, I remember that in spite of this, most learners came very neatly dressed and well-groomed to school. I believe that this helped to set the tone of the school. I recall an incident on a cold winter’s day when a teacher angrily told a learner, “Remove your jacket because this is not part of the school uniform.” The learner explained to the teacher that he did not have a school jersey or blazer and that he had worn the jacket instead because it was cold. The teacher said he was not interested in excuses or silly stories and yelled at the learner to leave the classroom or remove his jacket. The learner tried to explain again that both his parents were unemployed and therefore he did not have a school jersey or a blazer. The

teacher was furious and went up to the learner and tried to pull his jacket off. Still, the learner did not remove the jacket. This teacher ended up slapping the learner in front of the entire class. This was embarrassing for our classmate. I felt sorry for that learner as he was a victim of circumstances beyond his control. Unfortunately, none of us could assist him, because we too scared of being victimised by this teacher. Eventually the learner was so embarrassed that he decided that every time that particular teacher entered our class he would go out. This resulted in our friend losing out on instruction time and eventually dropping out of school before the year end.

There is another incident that I remember clearly because it was an agonising and traumatic experience that took place in our history class when I was in Grade 10 (then Standard 8). My history teacher nicknamed “Mr Simba the lion” (Mr S), was in his early forties. He seldom laughed or joked and was always unfriendly towards us. The learners would try not to get into trouble with him. We made sure that we did not miss history lessons. He used to inflict corporal punishment on us and even used the cane at times.

At my school, the learners went to subject rooms, meaning that the subject teachers did not come to us. I will never forget the day when we were told to remain in our classroom for Mr S instead of going to his room. It was one of those very hot summer days at the beginning of the new school term in February. We waited for about 15 minutes and there was no sign of Mr S coming to us. Then, realising that something was wrong; we decided that we should go down to the history classroom. As we entered, Mr S yelled at us, “Why are you so late for your history lesson? When we tried to explain that we were told to remain in our classroom and that he would be coming to us, he immediately replied, “Shut up, and do not tell lies”. Mr S refused to listen to any one of us. He was furious and he took out his watch and put it on the table and then he pulled out his belt to hit us. Every time he raised his voice and screamed, “I’m not listening to you and your stupid excuses. You do as I say” and he hit the table with his belt. His action sent shivers down my spine. I was praying that he would not lash out at us with the belt that he was brandishing around the classroom. The vibrations of the belt hitting on the table echoed throughout the classroom.

The punishment was further exacerbated by the fact that Mr S chased us from his classroom and detained us after school until five o’clock. At that time, we were not allowed to question a teacher even when we felt he was wrong. This was seen as a sign of disrespect and two-way

communication between teachers and learners was non-existent. Being detained until five o'clock caused serious problems for many of us because our parents were working and this meant that we had household chores to perform after school. Furthermore, some learners lived far away from the school and they had to travel long distances to get home and were also hungry. However, we had to „bite the bullet“ and remain in school until five o'clock. Even after so many years later, I cannot forget this distressing experience.

Looking back at my high school days, I recall that some teachers were „cold“ towards their learners. They seemed to lack interpersonal skills, and this for me is a crucial element in creating and maintaining a positive working climate between learners and teachers. These teachers would enter the class, instruct us to take out our books and thereafter the learning of concepts was done through drill work and memorisation. These lessons were *teacher-centred* (teacher dominated lessons) rather than *learner-centred* (allowing learners freedom and greater responsibility in their learning). These teachers seemed to be only interested in getting on with the „order of the day“. Similarly, Makhanya (2010) in her self-study highlights: “If you showed that you needed a little more explanation or if you did not understand certain concepts, you were punished and the teacher would shout at you” (p. 26). At times, our teachers would label us “morons”, “dumb” and “useless” in front of our friends. This was humiliating and embarrassing for many of us. I now realise that these painful experiences have motivated me to treat my learners with respect and dignity and to try to create a positive classroom climate for my learners. In this way, I have been able to convert these dreadful experiences into valuable learning, which has helped me in my development as a teacher.

My Entry into the World of Tertiary Education



Figure 3.3 *A Photograph of My Graduation Cap*

The artefact of the graduation cap (see Figure 3.3) is a constant reminder of the confidence and encouragement I received from having people who really believed in me. I am a proud teacher today and have not forgotten the people who laid the foundation for my education. It was through these people that I gained confidence.

I remember that from a very young age I used to play „school games“ with my friends, with me being the teacher and my friends being the learners. This is where I imagined that I would be a teacher one day. I used to imitate some of my teachers when I played with my friends. Looking back, I can also recall positive memories of my nursery school, especially my nursery school teacher, and some of my other teachers who made a positive impact in my life.

The constant encouragement from my family to pursue a career in teaching motivated me as well. Furthermore, in my community, teachers were highly respected individuals and teaching was regarded as one of the best paid jobs. It had dawned on me that someday it would become my responsibility to help my mother financially. I also wanted to make her proud by being the first person in the family to become a teacher.

Therefore, I was so eager to become a teacher because this was my childhood ambition. Nevertheless, my entry into teacher training college in 1983 was not an easy road. Due to a lack of finances, I was forced to study away from home in another province because this was

a condition of the study bursary that I received. On the other hand, being awarded this bursary motivated me because it relieved me of the financial burden to study.

My initial year at college was challenging. At times I wanted to „throw in the towel“ and head back home. I missed my family. I also had to find my own accommodation, which meant paying for my boarding and lodging. But, in spite of this, I felt I could not give up my childhood ambition and I was not prepared to let my mum down. Through those days of hardships, I approached the registrar of the college and pleaded my case regarding accommodation at the college. Eventually, I was given accommodation. After that, I thought to myself, “If I could get through this, then what is it that I cannot achieve?” Looking back, I regard this experience as a turning point in my life. It gave me the opportunity to live my dreams and not to allow obstacles to stifle my development as a teacher and a person.

During my training as a Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3) teacher, I had the opportunity to interact with my fellow students and my lecturers. Some lecturers were caring, compassionate, friendly and sympathetic. The social culture that prevailed in these lecture rooms helped to lay the foundation in creating a culture of learning at college. I was fortunate to have the opportunity of explaining myself to my lecturers, especially with regards to my assignments, tutorials and practice teaching. (However, this was different when I later enrolled for my Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree, which was through correspondence learning. I had no idea who my lecturers were and even the person who marked my work was someone whom I had not met or interacted with.)

At college, I studied numerous subjects and some were interesting, particularly Sociology, Psychology, Methods of Infant Teaching (Didactics), Environmental Studies, Physical Education, Numeracy, Languages and Audio-Visual Aids and Technology. These are some of the many subjects which formed the basis upon which my teaching was built. Likewise, I can see how other subjects such as Education, Remedial Education, Psychology, Methods of Infant Health Care and Teaching and Practical Teaching helped to prepare me to become a teacher by emphasising the holistic development of the child. The concept of pastoral care was first introduced to me at college. Today this concept forms one of the collective roles of teachers in a school (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2011). At college, I was alerted to the fact that, as a teacher, I would be expected to act as a „parent“ for

my learners (*in loco parentis*). This involves being a parent to my learners, in the absence of their parents or guardians.

Apart from gaining an understanding of the theoretical knowledge and background of the holistic development of learners at college, the issue of enacting welfare care for learners was highlighted during my teaching practice experiences. This is where I began to understand that all children are unique and should be treated and viewed differently, especially when catering for their individual needs. Teaching practice involved student teachers visiting schools for periods of six weeks at a time. This is where we as student teachers were exposed to the „real“ school environment in order to get first-hand experience of teaching and learning. This was my first time where I was a „real“ teacher and had the opportunity of interacting and engaging with learners, mentor teachers and learners“ parents within the teaching and learning environment. I had the opportunity to see how the „plant operates“. I was expected to teach lessons, under the guidance of experienced teachers. I was assigned to experienced teachers who were my mentors; they took me under their wings and help to develop me into a future teacher. In particular, I recall a mentor teacher who highlighted the importance of enacting welfare care at schools. She made me realise that when problems arose in the classroom, I could revisit my childhood memories or look back at the way I was taught as a learner and try to apply different methods or strategies, in order to bring out a positive result in dealing with the problem.

However, I recall that we students agreed that the time we spent in schools to gain first-hand experiences within the classroom was insufficient. We felt that this would not prepare us as newly qualified teachers adequately for realities of the classroom, especially when it came to supporting learners and handling problems. Looking back at our discussions has made me realise that student teachers need to spend enough time within the classroom in order to be well equipped in providing assistance to their learners when they become qualified teachers.

I remember that some of our lecturers shared their experiences gained while still teaching at schools. They outlined strategies and solutions that had worked for them in assisting learners regarding pastoral care or welfare care. This was beneficial since many of them had had first-hand experiences in enacting welfare care for learners in schools. For me, these lecturers were well situated to offer advice since they possessed a wealth of experience regarding the holistic development of the child.

I still can remember one of my particularly memorable lecturers. She was characterised by us students as being sensitive, caring and understanding. Correspondingly, Teven (2013, p. 159) points out, “A vital requisite to effective teaching is the establishing a climate of warmth, understanding and caring within the classroom”. I recall how Mrs F would express her warmth, compassion, and friendliness to us students. She was always ready to assist with whenever help was needed because she understood that we students were away from home. She was a motherly figure who taught us to believe in ourselves and not to give up even though at times many of us wanted to „throw in the towel“ and just return home because we were homesick. She would relate her own experiences as a student, which were not different from ours. She portrayed a sense of caring and this encouraged me to complete my studies and to go on to obtain my teaching qualification.

Entering the Work Place

I was under the impression that once I had qualified as a teacher I would be placed at a school near my home. Unfortunately, since I was a recipient of a state bursary this was not the case,. The conditions stipulated that I was to teach away from home and was only eligible to come back home after three years. I had to pay back my bursary in service. Had I been financially well off then I might have been able to start my teaching career at a school closer to home.

My first placement was in 1986 at a primary school. The school was situated in an Indian area and was well resourced in terms of having a library, textbooks for the learners and teaching resources. The building and the gardens were well maintained. Many learners came from middleclass families. The school curriculum was prescribed by the House of Delegates (HOD).

Sadly, the first hour at this school proved challenging. I was informed by the principal that he had informed the staffing department at the HOD that he had requested a teacher for a Senior Primary post at his school. I was not trained for this post since I was qualified to teach learners in the Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3), but the school had a vacancy in the Senior Primary Phase (Grades 4 to 7). Before I could tell the principal about my decision regarding my acceptance or rejection of the post, I was informed that if I did not accept this post, then he would ask the HOD to send another, more suitable candidate. This would mean that I would be without a job. I was given a few minutes to make a decision. In the mayhem of

those 15 minutes, it dawned on me that all my training in the Foundation Phase was about to „fly out the window“. However, as I thought about mum back home, I realised I had no option but to accept this new post with fear and trepidation. Refusing this post would have created financial difficulties since I had to pay off the bursary. Therefore, I accepted this post in the Senior Primary phase.

Fortunately, the principal was caring and a father-like figure. The teachers and the School Management Team (SMT) were also helpful, sympathetic and accommodating. They understood my predicament; they rallied around me and assisted me within the new phase. Through their support, I was adopted into the new phase and taken under their wing. This calming and reassuring reaction from my new colleagues motivated me to move on and accept the challenge of teaching in the Senior Primary phase. I was really impressed by the support I received from the whole school, even though one of the hurdles I had to overcome was that, as a newly qualified teacher, I was placed on probation as a temporary teacher for six months. During this period, I was mentored by the Head of Department, as well as other teachers. My colleagues were very supportive and were always there to assist me. With the positive support I received from my colleagues I managed to get through this probation period with confidence. Thereafter, I was appointed as a permanent teacher.

Although my colleagues were very supportive in terms of the academic domain (what Grant, Jasson and Lawrence [2010, p. 92] refer to as “pedagogical care”), and despite my training at college and teaching practice at schools, I felt deskilled and unfulfilled because I was not fully equipped to assist learners who were faced with social welfare problems. Through my interaction with my learners, I found a need to assist learners in this area since many of them came from homes where their parents did not spend much time with their children. Parents who worked long hours or owned businesses far from their homes left home very early in the mornings and returned home late at night. This resulted in some learners only seeing their parents over weekends. Some of these learners ended up underperforming and eventually dropped out of school. I also found that some learners engaged in anti-social behaviour and were caught smoking at school or truanting. Some even ended up in gang fights.

Although I was a young teacher, in my early 20[’]s, I wanted to make a difference in my learners’ lives. I managed to assist by offering support and love. During my breaks, I used to chat with learners to establish a positive relationship and a good rapport. I found that some

had special talents and so I created opportunities for them to showcase these talents. They performed dance movements, drama sketches and role plays. Some of these events were included in the annual school concert and this made the learners feel special and important. This helped to boost their confidence and I came to realise that they just needed to be assured that they were special. These learners ended up becoming role models and team leaders for other learners at school. Some even went on to pursue a career in drama and acting.

Moreover, I also found that many children enjoyed playing sport. This prodded me to use this avenue to give them a sense of hope and to build their self-esteem. In this way, I helped them to showcase their talents and was able to praise and award them during our assemblies. Some of them even took part in the school teams and eventually went on to the next level, as a result representing their province or even the country (see Figure 3.4). Thus, part of my role as a caregiver for these learners (providing them with love, showing them empathy and believing in them as learners) was to give these learners the opportunity to realise their talents and skills. At times, some of these learners told me that they regarded school as a safe place, and saw it as a home away from home.

CSA honours top women

DEENA PILLAY

PROTEAS star batsman AB de Villiers might have scooped the majority of the awards at Cricket South Africa's annual awards banquet last week, but it was also a special occasion for women's cricket and Proteas quick bowler Shabnim Ismail, KZN's Dinesha Devnarain and Durban teacher Ragini Moodley.

Ismail, 26, of Cravenby in Cape Town, won the Women's Cricketer of the Year Award, Devnarain walked off with the Provincial Cricketer of the Year and Moodley was named as KFC Mini Cricket Development Coach of the Year.

Ismail, who plays her domestic cricket for Western Province, has been with the Proteas' squad since 2007.

The medium-fast bowler who ends down her deliveries at a cracking 120km/h, said the award was one of her greatest achievements thus far.

"I was one of three nominees for the award. Both Marizanne Kapp and Rene van Niekerk are all-rounders in the Proteas' women's squad and were worthy of the award. However, I was quietly confident because of the great season I had last year," said Ismail.

She said one of her highlights in the pitch was making the semi-finals at last year's T20 World Cup in England.

"We lost to England but it was still a special moment because it was the first time South Africa made the semi-final stage of the competition. We drew a lot of inspiration from the match and went on to win third place overall."

"I believe that match was the turning point for women's cricket and you can expect a lot more from us next time around."

On a personal note, she rates



SHABNIM ISMAIL
DENISHA DEVNARAIN
RAGINI MOODLEY

SELECTED AWARD WINNERS

AB de Villiers
SA Cricketer of the Year
ODI Cricketer of the Year
SA Players' Player of the Year
SA Fans' Player of the Year
So Good Award (for record-breaking fastest ODI century)

Hashim Amla
Test Cricketer of the Year

Morne van Wyk
T20 Cricketer of the Year

Rilee Rossouw
SA Newcomer of the Year

Shabnim Ismail
Women's Cricketer of the Year

Dinesha Devnarain
Provincial Cricketer of the Year

Ragini Moodley
Development Coach of the Year

at Lords – the home of cricket in England.

"England walloped us on that occasion but I had a good day with the ball, taking three wickets for 30 odd runs in 10 overs," said the second-year Human Resources Management student.

The KZN women's squad head coach also played for the team as opening bowler and number three batter. She had a great season with both bat and ball and kept the squad in fine fettle – averaging 64.5 with the bat (highest score: 121 no) and she took 16 wickets.

She said she was writing an exam last week and could not attend the awards ceremony.

"I was up against nominated cricketers from all nine provinces

with the schools' mini cricket programme.

"As a teacher I know the dangers that young children are exposed to and I saw sport as a way of making a positive difference in their lives," said Moodley.

Over the many years she has spent with the KFC mini cricket set up, Moodley has seen many talented cricket stars pass through the programme, among them Dolphins' players Jonathan Vandersaar, Cody Chetty and women's cricket stars Trisha Chetty and Dinesha Devnarain.

Volunteers

She said she would not have won the award had it not been for

Figure 3.4. Women in Action

Figure 3.4 shows an article which appeared in the local newspaper called the Post (dated: 10 – 14 June 2015). The journalist highlights the achievements of some women who have excelled in cricket at the highest level, that is, representing their country. One of these young women was part of the mini cricket team that I coached.

My Current Teaching Experience: Becoming a Teacher who goes Beyond the Call of Duty

Currently, I am a Grade 2 class teacher. I also teach Grade 4 learners in Life Orientation (LO). I have been teaching for the past 28 years and am now regarded as a “Master Teacher”. Collective Agreement 1, (2008, p. 4) explains, “Master Teacher is a Senior Teaching and Learning Specialist based at a school that is able to give guidance to less experienced educators and also to ensure that the education of learners is promoted in the proper manner”. Having taught in both the Senior Phase and the Foundation Phase, I have found that teaching in the Foundation Phase is such a pleasure and joy because most of these learners enter school for the first time, not knowing how to read, to hold a pencil or crayon correctly or how to perform mathematical calculations. For many of them, this is the first time that they are entering a formal educational institution. At the end of the Foundation Phase, many of these learners are able to read, to write sentences and to perform mathematical calculations using the four basic number operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division). It is at this stage in a child’s life where the foundation for learning is set. Thus, I have found teaching in this phase to be a rewarding experience.

The community around my school is regarded as disadvantaged because many people are living in abject poverty. Many of them are living in makeshift tin homes and they do not have running water or proper ablution facilities. As a result of HIV and AIDS, some of our learners come from child-headed households where they take on the role of being the guardian and breadwinner in the family. Some children come from homes where their parents are dependent on drugs or alcohol, and many parents are unemployed and thus have to rely on a state grant to sustain their livelihood. These children experience tremendous hardships.

As a result of the high level of unemployment within the community, many parents are unable to pay their children’s school fees. The lack of funds places a burden on teachers who have to spend time fixing leaking taps, broken window panes and seeing to the general

repairs of the school. Also the grass on the school grounds is overgrown and poses a threat for our learners on hot days to play on the grounds because of the danger of snakes. Teachers try to get sponsors and engage in fund raising activities in order to keep the school afloat. These additional tasks have resulted in teachers becoming tired and distressed as a result of the multiple roles they have to fulfil. Hargreaves (1994) warn us that teachers are central to education and due consideration needs to be afforded to them in order for schools to be effective.

As Ntshoe and Selesho (2014, p. 476) explain, “quintiles in the South African schooling context refer to the classification of schools in terms of whether they charge school fees and how much they are expected to charge”. Schools that have been ranked as quintile 1 or 2 have been declared “no fee” schools. Quintile 1 and 2 ranked schools receive the bulk of the funding allocation from the DBE; whereas schools ranked as 4 and 5 receive just a proportion of this (Ntshoe & Selesho, 2014). Our school is ranked as quintile 4. As explained in Chapter One, this ranking has impacted on my school in a negative way in that the school receives less funding from the DBE and has to rely on the impoverished school community to pay school fees to cover the running costs of the school. The school also does not qualify for the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Teachers in turn have to bear the burden of this reduced funding as the poverty levels of the surrounding community means that the funds raised through school fees are minimal and teachers have to fill in the gap through fund raising. Very often the cry of teachers is, “I am doing everything else besides teaching”. This is an indication of the „dark side“ of enacting welfare care, which can lead to teachers feeling overburdened and exhausted as a result of performing multiple roles.

The Makarapha

In my current position as a teacher, I am expected to go beyond the call of duty. The *Makarapha* (Figure 3.4) is an artefact that represents the multiple roles which I, as a teacher, assume, on a daily basis. This is apart from my core duty of teaching. The *Makarapha* is a kind of hat usually worn by soccer fans. It shows one’s loyalty to a particular team. It also affords the wearer protection from missiles thrown at sporting matches, which was the original reason for it being worn. Looking at the *Makarapha* has prompted me to reflect on the seven collective roles of teachers in school (DHET, 2011). I decorated my *Makarapha* to show how my job as a teacher extends far beyond educating learners (academically or intellectually) at schools. It has number of branches representing the various roles that, I

need to assume as a teacher. According to Dewey (1934) education is a holistic process of helping learners to grow morally and physically, as well as intellectually. Similarly, I believe that I need to develop my learners holistically, by taking care of their social, emotional, physical needs. The hat is a representation of my experience as a teacher taking on the many roles. It has been created from my past and is thus part of my continuing self-study journey. Each branch has a different name, indicating that teachers have been called upon to manage the role of a nurse, a counsellor, a friend, a caregiver and a parent. Therefore, I would like to believe that teaching should be regarded as „the mother of all professions“.



Figure 3.5. The Makarapha: I Sit Here with Many Caps

Motivation to Keep Going

I am passionate about sport and (as explained above), I have found that sport can form an integral part in a child's life, especially when it comes to nurturing and developing the child holistically. Through my experiences as a coach in various sporting codes, namely, netball, soccer, cricket and mini cricket, I have found that sport does not only teach learners how to play a game; it can also teach life skills, such as teamwork, discipline and respect for others. It can enable children to realise their potential, help to build their confidence and strengths, unearth their talents and serve as a stress reliever. Moreover, sport can even assist those children who are not academically inclined and are failing to meet the required standard set by the DBE.

I have found that for learners who are experiencing hardships, sport can serve as an outlet for relieving stress and anger. Many of the learners at our school do not have the time to play games after school as they are required to do household chores (such as collecting firewood and water, cooking meals). Furthermore, some of them need to take care of their siblings or to look after their sick parents after school. In my experience, I have realised that sport at school can serve as a multifunctional tool for these learners. Lynch (2013) argues that physical activities can help calm a person's worries and clear their minds. Similarly, I have found that sport can be: a stress reliever; a time when these children can forget about their hardships and misery; an avenue for enjoyment and socialising with their peers; an opportunity to showcase their talents and build their self-esteem.

At times, I have found that some of our learners can seem to be attention seeking and they appear ill-disciplined and disruptive at school. I feel that they engage in anti-social behaviour in order to get noticed because they need support, care, encouragement and attention. For this reason, I believe this kind of behaviour is no fault of the child and therefore, as their teacher, I need to step in and take them under my wing and provide them with love, support and care.

I begin by trying to develop a relationship of trust with them. I have to try to win their confidence by helping them to understand that it is normal to go through hardships in life. In order to show empathy, I relate some of my early childhood experiences that are similar to theirs. In this way, I am able to connect with these children and get them to confide in me. This seems to help them to realise that they are not alone with their problems because I as their teacher have undergone similar experiences. However, I do not force them to talk about

their hardships; instead, I invite them to confide in me as and when they are ready to do so. I do not want to bring about more emotional damage in their lives.

At the same time, I have found that many learners who come from disadvantaged homes are talented in sport, but they often do not have money to buy basic foods, let alone a cricket ball or bat. Therefore, I have volunteered my services to these learners to help coach them in sport. This has been so rewarding for me. Some of these learners have gone on to gain sport scholarships to well-resourced schools. Some of them have even gone on further to make a living out of sport by becoming coaches of different sporting codes.

As a token of appreciation, I was presented with a trophy (Figure 3.6) by some of these learners. Whenever I view this token of appreciation, it is a constant reminder of the joy and love I received from these learners from teaching them to play sport. This experience has encouraged me to continue to assist learners in this way. Looking at this token from these learners truly inspires me to never give up on providing welfare care.



Figure 3.6. A Token of Appreciation from Learners

Words of Inspiration

I also draw inspiration and the motivation from the messages that are written in letters from my learners (see Figure 3.7) or greeting cards made for me by my learners (see Figure 3.8). These messages are tangible mementos that express the learners' appreciation for a job well accomplished. In my view, these offer a true reflection of how learners feel or have felt. Whenever I am faced with challenges and just feel like „throwing in the towel“, I go back and read these messages. This self-appreciation leads to healing, which ultimately enhances my passion and motivation to serve these learners.

Figure 3.7 is a copy of a letter written to me by a former learner who was a recipient of welfare care at my school. I asked him to share his experiences as a learner in the form of a letter. In this letter, my former learner expresses his gratitude and appreciation to me, as his Grade 1 teacher, for providing a solid foundation and moulding him to become a teacher today. He explains that initially he was scared of leaving home and entering into new surroundings at school. But he soon realised that I became a „mother“ to him in the absence of his own. He was no longer scared. He explains that the impact I made on him and his life was immeasurable. Furthermore, he mentions that I treated all the children in class equally and was concerned with developing the learners both academically and holistically. My former learner notes that I was sympathetic, caring, encouraging and always went the extra mile to attend to my learners' needs and always ensured the classroom was warm, inviting and educational. He highlights the need for teachers to enact pastoral care (welfare care), especially for learners like him, coming from a disadvantaged community. He explains that because this experience had a positive impact on him he decided to pursue a career in teaching. He writes that looks on me as a positive role model. He also would like to teach his learners some of the lessons I taught him because these were beneficial to him in learning about good values in life.

As a learner, school was quite challenging, especially the in the earlier years. There were various factors that contributed toward my academic, social, emotional and psychological development. There was always a lot going on at the primary school

In grade 1, I was assigned to Mrs. R. Moodley's class. I was pretty anxious and scared about having a new teacher. In fact, I was petrified. As time went by, I became familiar with her and took to her. The impact Mrs. Moodley had on my life was immeasurable and insurmountable. As a learner at the early years of schooling, I needed someone to nurture me, tend to my individual and personal needs. I looked to her as a mother figure in the absence of my mother, and she did well taking care of each child in her class. She was very interested in our development, not only educationally, but socially and emotionally. Educators must embody various traits and characteristics so that they will be able to influence and lead their learners. They also become role-models. Mrs. Moodley was very sympathetic and affectionate in her teaching practices. She always tended to our needs and always went the extra mile to ensure that our classroom was warm, inviting and educational. I clearly remember a day when Mrs. Moodley did an exercise in class where we all had to bring biscuits to class and decorate it with different colors of icing... **THE**

SCHOOL is situated nearby an impoverished area. So she decided to teach us about sharing and its importance. Mam decided to share the biscuits between us all and also bring to class some of her own to make sure that we all had biscuits to decorate and later on, eat. This lesson took root in my heart even until this day, as I am now entering my 4th year, Bachelor of Education. A lesson that will always stay with me and a lesson that I will also impart to my learners. This is just a simple example of how, Mrs. Moodley has impacted my life by strongly engaging a pastoral role, by caring for us like a mother would. Something that's truly scarce in the teaching profession today. Those qualities are to be emulated and embodied because children are delicate and fragile to handle. Only a certain type of person can truly become a "teacher". Mrs. Moodley taught not only intellect, but also valuable life lessons that I hold dear to my heart. Her warm, encouraging & bright smile always brightened up my day. I hated school at first because of being in an unfamiliar surrounding, but because of her personality, character & vigor, I became comfortable and began to love school. Evidently, she has impacted in my life as I have decided to take up teaching as my profession. I felt welcome, I saw an environment that was conducive to teaching and learning, despite the financial constraints of the school & it was a very lovely learning experience from my point of view. I will always appreciate you, Mam, God richly bless you for making a huge impact in my life and for being so amazing, and even until this day you are still teaching in the classroom you taught me in, and you are still going strong and making a difference in the lives of many.

God bless you & thanks

Figure 3.7. A Letter from a Former Learner – “Going the Extra Mile”

Figure 3.8 is a copy of a birthday card that I received from a learner. In the card, the learner wrote:

Remember we are always there for you. All I want to say is Happy Birthday and enjoy your day. Mam! I love u.

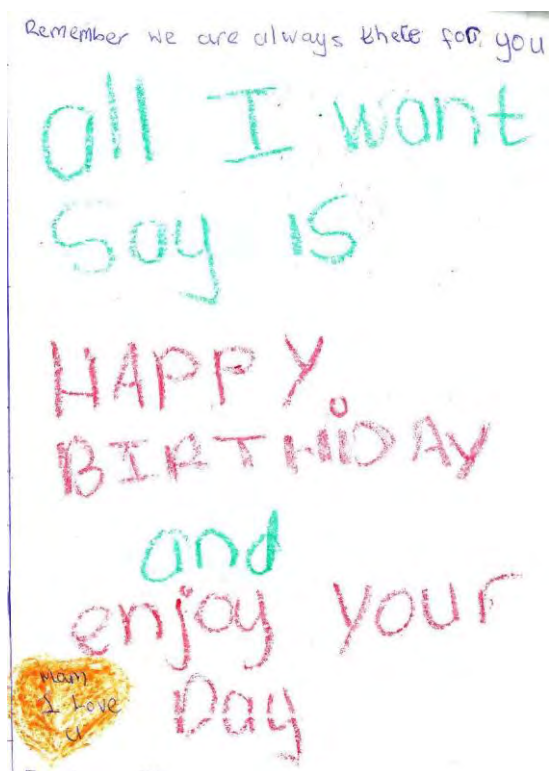


Figure 3. 8. A Special Birthday Card from a Learner

Providing Food parcels and Toiletries

Witnessing the abject poverty of some of my learners spurred me on to help. Seeing children come to schools poor that they could not even afford a toothbrush broke my heart. I felt sad and I was determined to do something about it. I believe this is a feeling that came from the heart. I saw many of our learners coming to school with sores that had not been treated; others had no uniforms or stationery. Enough was enough. I knew I had to do something. Fortunately, I, together with the assistance of some other dedicated teachers have managed to appeal to various businesses, religious organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)to assist learners with food parcels, school uniforms and shoes, stationery and porridge (see Figures 3.8 and 3.9). We have also extended a helping hand to the learners' parents and guardians. This experience is enriching and it uplifts me to try to make a difference in learners' lives. Seeing the joy and hearing positive comments received from both parents/guardians and learners spur me on to assist them. I still remember hearing a comment made by one of the parents on the day we were handing out food hampers:

"Thank you mam, for this food hamper, we were actually praying to God for our next meal." (Journalentry, 1 December 2012).

These words really touched me and I promised the parent that any time he needed assistance he could always call on me for help. I reassured him that he would be taken care of, especially because I knew that he had young children to feed. I have now realised that this is just the start for these learners to become healthier and freer and to grow as people, or at least not be further deprived. What I would like to instil is that these learners who are being served will one day, in turn, serve others as well.



Figure 3.9. “Vaseline: No More Dry Skin”



Figure 3.10. “Porridge, our Life saver!!!!”

Making Meaning of my Personal Experiences

In this section of the chapter, I reconsider my remembered experiences of learning and teaching (as I have related them in the first section of this chapter) to try and identify themes to assist me in better understanding how these experiences have contributed to me becoming passionate in providing welfare care for learners. Looking back at my memory stories, I can see how my journey as a learner and as a teacher has been shaped by a series of events, experiences and interaction with others. Some of these experiences instilled values such as empathy, paying attention, nurturing, and encouraging others.

As a Foundation Phase teacher, I often find it appropriate to use visual representations when I need to explain meanings to my learners. According to Hamilton and Pinnegar (2009), collage-making can move self-study researchers to a freer mode where they may re-live noteworthy experiences. Therefore I chose to create a collage as a form of a visual representation to re-examine my memory stories (see Figure 3.11). In creating the collage and discussing it with my supervisor and critical friends, I identified the following themes in response to my first research question: *a) attentiveness; b) empathy; c) encouragement; and d) nurturing.*

Attentiveness



Figure 3.12 *Paying Attention to my Learners*

Figure 3.12 shows a section of my collage that focuses on “Paying attention”. Being attentive means paying close attention to someone or something. This requires becoming mindful, observant and to be on the lookout when it comes to my learners. I need to stay focused and committed, especially concentrating on and understanding the backgrounds and context that learners are coming from. Likewise, Vilakazi (2013) recalls in her self-study that by engaging with community organisations, health practitioners, social workers and Social Development representatives she was able to make life a little easier for orphans and vulnerable children in her school. The children in her school were assisted in obtaining food parcels, clothing and finally social grants to sustain their livelihood.

As I look back at my educational journey, I can recall some pleasant and some unpleasant experiences. I was fortunate to be taught by some teachers who paid attention to me and to my schoolwork. As a learner, I regarded these teachers as positive role models that I could emulate. For example, I can remember how on rainy days a few of our teachers at primary school would always be there to take care of us and make us feel comfortable. Similarly, Vilakazi (2013, p. 63) explains, “Being encouraged by my teachers helped me to develop self-

motivation to overlook all these challenges; therefore I was able to succeed”. This kind of attentiveness is evidenced in the following extract from my memory stories:

If we came to school with wet clothing on rainy days, they would try to find us dry clothes. Sometimes we would also be given a cup of tea and a sandwich to ensure that we were comfortable to start our lessons. I felt very content to be at school. (Journal entry, 20 October 2012)

Looking back, I can now see that I am practising what my primary school teachers used to do for us. I now realise that, as Nieto (2003, p. 24) argues, “teachers bring their experiences, their identities, values, beliefs, attitudes, hang-ups, biases, dreams and hopes” with them into their classrooms. The way I teach is influenced by the way I was taught. As Allender and Allender (2006, p. 15) explain, “we are all too likely to revert to the ways of our teachers who taught us – maybe for good, but usually for the not so good”. These kind gestures that emanated from my teachers have taught me that, as a teacher, I need to be caring and have a loving attitude towards my learners. It is important for teachers to understand where their learners are coming from (Masinga, 2009). Paying attention to my learners and understanding the contexts these learners are coming from can assist me in developing a child in a holistic manner.

However, I can remember that some of my high school teachers did not pay attention to the learners. These teachers appeared to be uncaring, unapproachable and inattentive. They did not seem interested in our backgrounds and the contexts we came from. In my view, this resulted in many learners dropping out of school and some not even completing their schooling. This is an example from my memory stories:

I recall an incident on a cold winter’s day when a teacher angrily told a learner, “Remove your jacket because this is not part of the school uniform.” The learner explained to the teacher that he did not have a school jersey or blazer and that he had worn the jacket instead because it was cold. The teacher said he was not interested in excuses or silly stories and yelled at the learner to leave the classroom or remove his jacket. The learner tried to explain again that both his parents were unemployed and therefore he did not have a school jersey or a blazer. The teacher was furious and went up to the learner and tried to pull his jacket off.

From recalling experiences such as this, I have realised as a teacher, I should *pay attention to my learners*, and especially in trying to understand their backgrounds and contexts. This will

make it easier to assist these learners. I will be in a better position to help my learners to deal with problems and to find solutions at an early stage.

At the same time, our learners come from diverse backgrounds and so the issue of individual needs and uniqueness cannot be overlooked. Each child needs to be treated according to his or her own individual needs. Likewise, Allender and Allender (2006) highlight that paying attention to learners' individuality and uniqueness is key element to humanistic teaching. Therefore, a child should not all be treated with „one size fits all“ remedies.

Through working with learners from diverse contexts and backgrounds, I have realised that it is important for me understand their basic needs. This includes understanding their family backgrounds, the social and economic conditions under which they live, as well as their emotional, physical and physiological needs. I have realised that I need to listen to my learners before enforcing disciplinary measures or verbally chastising them. Listening to my learners can help me to nurture and develop them holistically (Ndaleni, 2013). Contrary to this, as a learner myself, in high school, I did not have an opportunity to speak out or „voice my opinion“ as I was afraid of being humiliated in front of the class. Teachers used to punish us harshly, verbally as well as physically. I was brought up at high school with the notion that „children should only be seen and not heard“. For instance:

When we tried to explain that we were told to remain in our classroom and that he would be coming to us, he immediately replied, “Shut up, and do not tell lies”. Mr S refused to listen to any one of us. He was furious and he took out his watch and put it on the table and then he pulled out his belt to hit us. Every time he raised his voice and screamed, “I’m not listening to you and your stupid excuses. You do as I say”, he hit the table with his belt. His action sent shivers down my spine.

Looking back, I can see that many of us were indoctrinated by the thought that teachers were the only ones who had knowledge and that as learners we were not allowed to question them, even if we knew the answer (Kunene, 2009). This was demotivating, as it forced us to accept things that we were not in favour of. It was situations such as these that made learners lack confidence. This lack of confidence has also affected my experience as a teacher as I am very sceptical about raising a concern or an issue with my School Management Team (SMT) since I am afraid that what I raise might be seen as irrelevant or not important. Similarly, Makhanya (2010, p. 38) explains, “Even if I knew the answer, I was scared to voice it as, if I

was wrong, I would be punished. I now see that this has been a barrier to me as I have lacked confidence and self-esteem in my learning and teaching”.

On the other hand, my parents constantly paid attention to me. Indeed, during my teenage years, I sometimes felt that they were being over-protective. However, now I can appreciate that whenever I was faced with challenges they would try to guide and support me. They inspired me to become well educated and I remember them as my role models.

Empathy

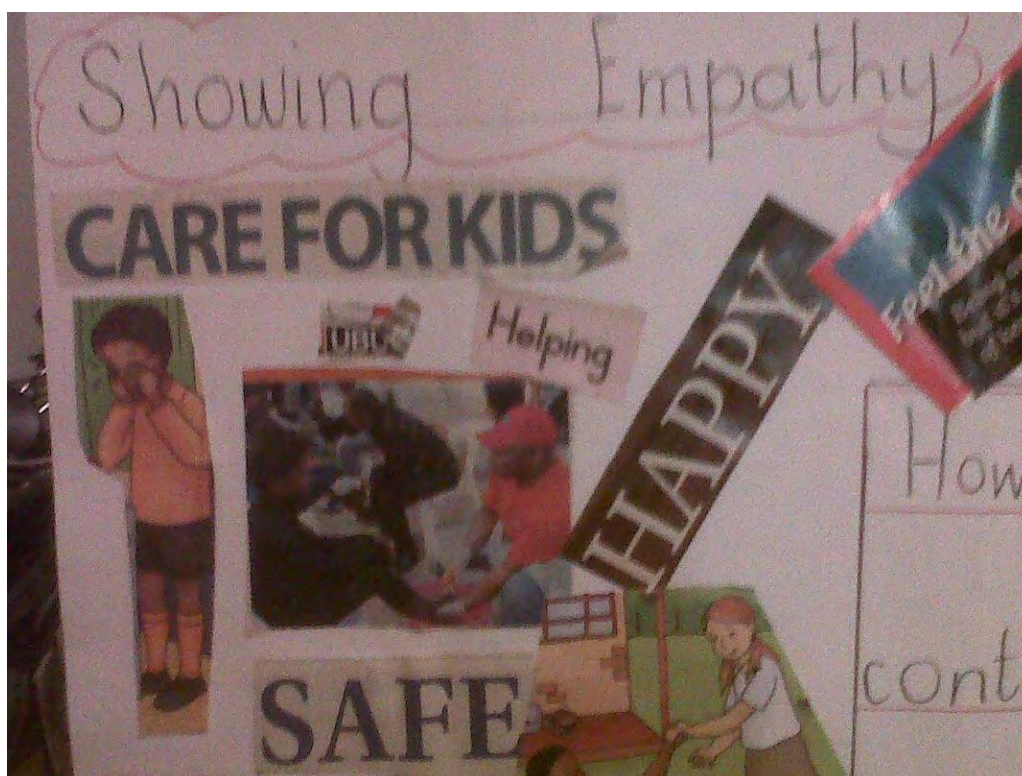


Figure 3.13 *“I feel the same way as you do ... !!!”*

Figure 3.13 shows a section of my collage that focuses on “Showing empathy”. According to Weeks (2012):

Empathy is described as seeing the world through the eyes of another, to develop the ability to imagine what someone else is thinking and feeling, listening with the ears of another and to imagine feeling with the heart of another. To understand one another, to live and feel things in the same way.(p. 119)

Likewise, Ioannidou and Konstantikaki (as cited in Weeks, 2012, p. 119) describe empathy as the “capacity” to share and understand another’s “state of mind” or emotion. In my

understanding, empathy involves „putting you into another person’s shoes“ or „seeing the world through someone else’s eyes“. It is an attempt to understand one another.

As I was growing up, I was fortunate to be raised by parents who always shared their experiences and knowledge of good values. I remember how empathy was instilled in me by my mother. I was constantly reminded to “put you in the next person’s situation”. This means being sympathetic, caring and to be understanding when assisting people who are experiencing problems.

Looking back, I can see how my commitment to showing love, respect and empathy for learners and my fellow beings has stemmed from my upbringing. I have been taught that I need to show compassion and be understanding towards my learners. In my view, these characteristics are responsible for cementing good teacher-learner relationships. Weeks (2012, p. 119) notes, “empathy and confidence are the basis on which effective relationships and communication can be built”. Teachers need to show compassion towards their learners; they need to undergo the similar emotions and feeling as those of their learners.

Unfortunately, this did not happen during my high school days, some of my teachers were not empathetic towards us learners. If some of us showed that we did not understand the learning concepts, the teacher would embarrass us in front of our friends. As I recalled:

Our teachers would label as “morons”, “dumb” and “useless” in front of our friends. This was humiliating and embarrassing for many of us.

Moreover, if learners did not do their homework, due to them not having text books or the necessary stationery requirements (such as writing materials, books and text books) in class, they would be punished. Some of our teachers did not understand the situations and homes that learners were coming from. Many parents were unemployed and some worked hard just to put food on the table and could not find the money to pay school fees and buy necessary school requirements for their children. It is sad to say that some of these teachers showed no empathy for learners in that situation.

Furman (2005, p. 103) believes “being empathetic is a central skill that allows social work practitioners to start where the client is”. In the same way, showing empathy towards my learners is a key factor in bolstering good learner-teacher relationships. It is here where the concept of mutual trust can be developed between teachers and their learners. Children will

feel more comfortable to discuss problems with their teachers when mutual trust exists between the teacher and the learner. This can make a difference in a child's life. Jairam (2009, p. 130) highlights, "[t]he significance of empathy in relation to providing counselling for learners and hence understanding the learner by „putting yourself in the learner's shoes"".

Moreover, children are often too young to manage a crisis situation and therefore look upon the teacher for hope and comfort. In order for the school to be regarded as safe places, teachers within these environments need to be attentive and to respond empathetically to learners who are faced with challenges (Jairam, 2009). In schools where there is a lack of trained personnel such as social workers, guidance counsellors and psychologists to assist learners, teachers are expected to create a caring environment to foster and promote a culture of learning at schools (Jairam, 2009; Weeks, 2012). Within such schools, teachers need to draw on their social and community support networks (Khanare, 2009; Weeks, 2012).

As a young practising teacher, I was fortunate to have had a caring and understanding the SMT. Looking back, I can see how this support contributed to me becoming a passionate and empathetic teacher:

The teachers and the School Management Team (SMT) were also helpful, sympathetic and accommodating. They understood my predicament; they rallied around me and assisted me completely within the new phase. Through their support, I was adopted into the new phase and taken under their wing. This calming and reassuring reaction from my new colleagues motivated me to move on and accept the challenge of teaching in the Senior Primary phase.

Reflecting on my memories of schooling and teaching has helped me to realise the importance of having empathetic teachers. Parents or guardians entrust teachers to take proper care of their children whilst they are away. With this in mind, no child should be treated unfairly, traumatised or frightened at school and teachers need to treat learners with dignity and respect. I agree with Allender and Allender (2006, p. 14) who argue that "educators need to be humanistic". My journey to becoming an empathetic teacher has been shaped by a series of events, experiences and interactions with others. For me, serving as an empathetic teacher is part of "Ubuntu". According to Waghid and Smeyers (2011), the theoretical perspective of *Ubuntu* highlights the connectedness of the self in relation to others. Understanding my role as a teacher in enacting welfare care for learners enables me to

show love, respect and empathy towards learners as fellow human beings. Teaching in the spirit of *Ubuntu* means that we need to try to feel what our learners feel and to take action for change for the better (Ndaleni, 2013).

Encouragement

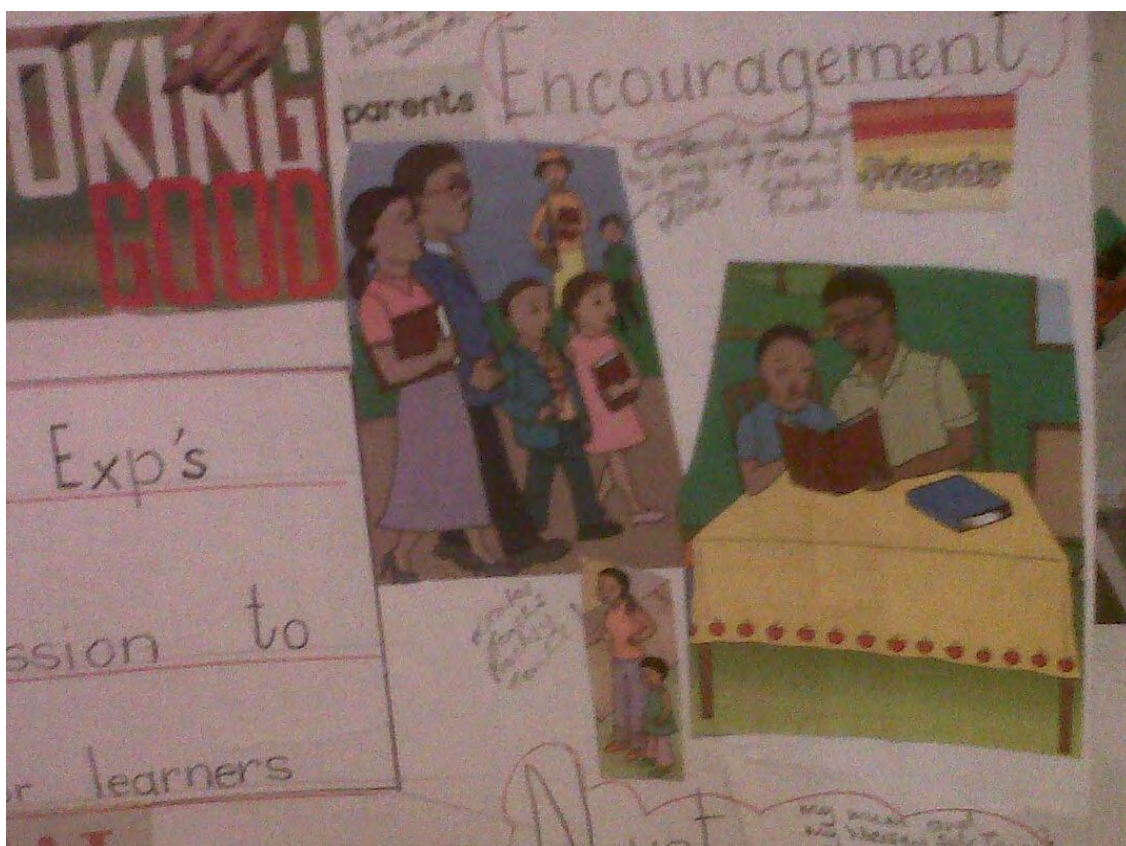


Figure 3.14 “Moving along the right path”

Figure 3.14 portrays a section of my collage that focuses on “*Encouragement*”. From my experience, I have found encouragement to be a means of support, especially to learners who might otherwise see themselves as failures in society or those who are experiencing tremendous hardships. This can assist in raising motivation, morale and hope.

Fortunately, I have had the opportunity of being encouraged during my educational journey by many people who showed an interest in my growth and development. Many people played an important role in my educational progress. An important person who constantly encouraged me to keep moving on and not to despair or to give up was my mother and another such person was one of my lecturers. I realise that these people wanted the best for me and encouraged me to the fullest. I remember my mum would always say: “Correction

does much but Encouragement does more”. She motivated me to always try my best and to do well at school and college. She would advise me in this way: “education is the only key that can open doors for a person”. This means a person who is educated will have many opportunities regarding their career choices and job opportunities, whereas a person who has not completed her or his schooling would have to settle for or accept menial jobs and might not have a noble career. I remember my mother’s words clearly: “Work hard and do well, my child. Do not worry; I will be fine while you are studying away from home. There is no reason for you to leave college and return home, I know one day you will make us all proud by becoming a teacher”. I can clearly remember these words, which made a lasting impression; therefore I have not forgotten my mother’s words. Likewise, Vilakazi (2013, p. 58) draws attention to the role played by her late school principal who encouraged her to continue studying: “She encouraged me to register for a Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA)”. Similarly, I have realised that my mother also wanted the best for me and encouraged me to the fullest. These words of encouragement paid off when I graduated and became a teacher after three years.

My memory stories show how certain people have had a positive influence on me. These people have influenced my goals, values and outlook on life. It is through the qualities that they possessed that I have become motivated and passionate in providing encouragement for my learners. In addition, some of my teachers and lecturers encouraged me to realise that I had the potential and the wisdom to achieve what I had planned and set out to do. In particular, I recall the encouragement I received from one of my lecturers while I was a student at teacher training college:

Mrs F would express her warmth, compassion, and friendliness to us students. She was always ready to assist with whenever help was needed because she understood that we students were away from home. She was a motherly figure who taught us to believe in ourselves and not to give up even though at times many of us wanted to „throw in the towel” and just return home because we were homesick. She would relate her own experiences as a student, which were not very different from ours. The sense of caring she portrayed encouraged me to complete my studies and to obtain my teaching qualification.

The encouragement I received from my mother and my lecturer gave me the courage to continue with my studies and become a qualified teacher.

Nurturing

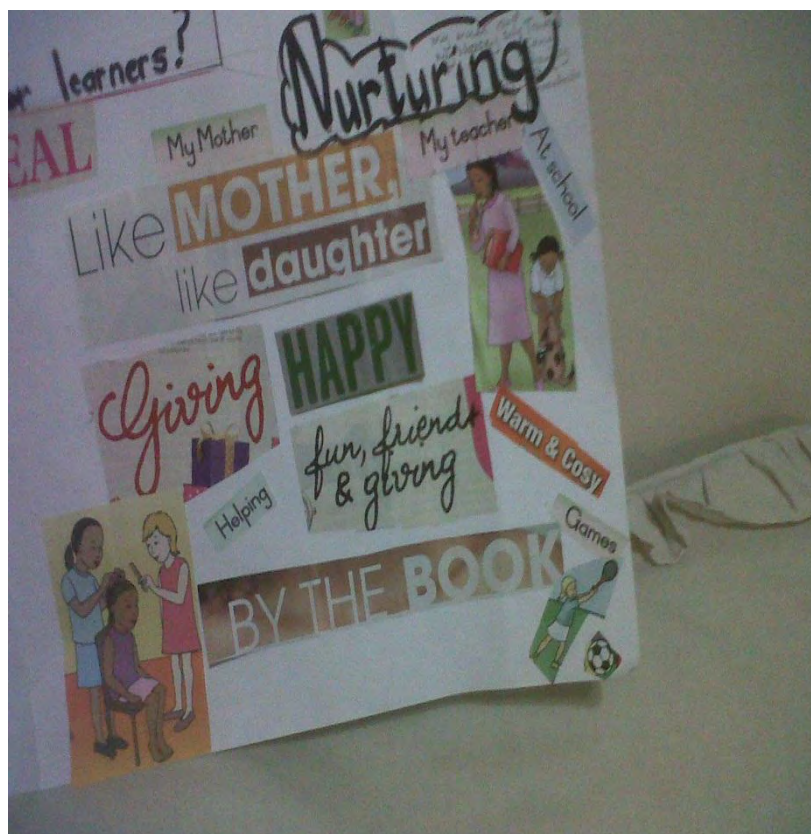


Figure 3.15“Like mother like daughter....”

My memory stories reveal how my mother always portrayed a warm, caring and sympathetic figure. For me, I feel the saying, „like mother, like daughter „is appropriate in describing my mother and me. Likewise, Vilakazi (2013) draws our attention to the supportive role her grandmother played in nurturing her in her early learning experiences:

Seeing my grandmother’s photograph in the context of my research brings sadness but, at the same time, I am so thankful that she devoted her time to helping me to value education. My memories of her encouragement give me energy to keep on being a lifelong learner. (p. 16)

Similarly I can identify my mother as someone who constantly nurtured me ensuring that I was always protected and comfortable. From her experience, I realised that I too, can show such love to my colleagues and learners by guiding and inspiring them as though they were my own family. My mother would always stress that I should always be there whenever someone was in need of assistance:

My mother was a very friendly person who always ensured that she did not hurt other peoples’ feelings. She always taught me the following: “If there is a war, you should

be the last soldier to leave”. This means that if someone has a problem, you should be there for them and only think about yourself last. She taught me to show unconditional love and to be passionate in whatever you are doing. I now see that it is through these simple lessons in life that she moulded and built my character.

In addition, my memory stories of my early childhood reveal that my nursery school teacher also helped to lay the foundation in building a nurturing working relationship with my learners. Looking back, I still can remember she always ensured that her learners were comfortable, happy, and friendly. She was like a „mother“ to all of us. She would also be there to meet and greet us with a smile on her face and would hug us. The environment was warm and cosy; she sang songs and played games with us. This helped me to realise that people who showed an interest in my growth from early childhood up until now have positively contributed to my development as a teacher. I can also see how my educational journey as a teacher has been shaped by my interactions with my nursery school teacher. From this experience, I realise that my nursery school teacher had a positive influence on my lifelong learning. Her nurturing and caring relationship helped me to succeed and to become a teacher myself. Likewise, Allender and Allender (2006) highlight how the attitudes that teachers portray to learners can encourage their learning.

Conclusion

In writing this chapter, I have come to understand that the process of my becoming motivated and passionate about enacting welfare care for learners has been shaped by important people and events. In this chapter I have used memory-work self-study which has helped me to reflect on my past and present life and this has helped me to gain new insight into my research topic. Reviewing my own experiences has assisted me to connect the past to the present. Furthermore, I have found that by re-assessing my remembered experiences of teaching and learning I have organised these events into themes to assist me to better understand how these experiences have contributed to me becoming passionate in providing welfare care for learners. This chapter reveals that motivation and encouragement from others has led me to want to provide welfare care for my learners. Likewise, I also wish to motivate and encourage my fellow teachers to become even more passionate about their role as active caregivers in response to the tremendous hardships children are facing on a daily basis.

Writing about my lived experiences has also enabled me to undergo a „healing process“. Looking back, I can identify people who possessed the qualities I would like to have and who affected me in a way that makes me want to be a better person and teacher for my learners. However, I have also recalled how some of our teachers were very authoritarian, unfriendly and harsh towards us as learners. As a teacher myself, I feel that this is an unacceptable approach as it negatively affects the interpersonal relationships between teachers and learners. Through memory-work, I have been able to convert painful lived experiences into valuable learning which has helped me to become more conscious of my commitment to being a caring teacher.

In Chapter Four, I engage with the second research question that guides my study: *How are we, as practising teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?* To address this research question, I look at how teachers in my school are taking action in finding ways to identify and respond to the welfare care needs of learners.

CHAPTER FOUR: TEACHERS ENACTING WELFARE CARE

Introduction

Through this study, I hope to gain a more in-depth understanding of how welfare care for learners is being provided by me and my fellow teachers. I anticipate that this study will contribute to a deeper awareness of what the welfare care role demands of teachers and of how teachers might be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners. In the previous chapter, I addressed my first research question: *How have my lived experiences contributed to my passion to provide welfare care for learners?* I related memory stories of my lived educational experiences, from my early schooling up to my current teaching. Memory-work self-study enabled me to reminisce about and to reflect on significant people and events that have been instrumental in me becoming passionate about providing welfare care for learners. I identified the following themes in response to my first research question: *a) attentiveness; b) empathy; c) encouragement; and d) nurturing.*

In this chapter, I engage with the second research question that guides my study: *How are we, as practising teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?* To address this research question, I reflect on how teachers in my school (including me) are recognising and responding to the welfare care needs of learners. As explained in Chapter Two, during the course of my study, I also held informal conversations with two of the sponsors who support our welfare care activities. With their consent, I noted these conversations in my research journal and have drawn on these conversations in responding to my second research question.

Teachers Enacting Welfare Care

My teacher participants were Penile, Janice and Mark. (I have used pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.) As explained in Chapter Two, I met each teacher participant individually to talk to them about their role as active caregiver as well as the role of businesses, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in supporting teachers. I audio-recorded and transcribed these discussions. Prior to this meeting with each teacher, I handed them a list of possible issues and questions we would be discussing:

- Explain what action is taken by educators to provide welfare care for our learners.
- Explain the role of educators as caregivers.

- How do you feel meeting learner's needs?
- Do you counsel your learners according to different needs (social, emotional, psychological and physical)?
- Did you get any assistance from NGOs, businesses and sponsors? Discuss their roles in assisting learners with the different needs.

As I was also a participant, I too responded to these questions in my research journal and, in answering my second research question, I have drawn on my responses as well as those of my colleagues.

During the discussions, my colleagues indicated that as much as teaching and learning have to go on daily, welfare care also has to be enacted daily because of the backgrounds of our learners. They highlighted that many of our learners suffer tremendous hardships. Some of these learners are coming from child-headed households because they are orphaned due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Many learners come from poverty-stricken homes and some of their parents are dependent on drugs or alcohol. Furthermore, the area where the school is situated has recently become known as the drug capital of KwaZulu-Natal. Pillay (2014, p. 1) reports that “[t]he area is facing such an onslaught of drug related crime that it has been dubbed the „drug capital“ of KwaZulu-Natal”. My colleagues pointed out that our learners are living in the midst of all these problems and are therefore confronted daily with these social ills.

Several themes emerged from my discussions with my colleagues and our welfare care sponsors that are significant to my second research question. The following themes highlight how teachers are enacting welfare care at my school by:

- *a) Connecting nutrition with learning;*
- *b) Making provision for school uniforms and stationery for learners;*
- *c) Bringing on board sponsors, NGOs, religious organisations and businesses as a support base;*
- *d) Providing sports, games and excursions; and*
- *e) Attending to the medical, emotional and social development needs of learners.*

Theme1. Teachers are Enacting Welfare Care by Connecting Nutrition with Learning

It was apparent from the discussions with my colleagues that a large number of children at our school come to school hungry. The *Reviews of National Policies for Education: South Africa* (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development [OECD], 2008) indicates that six percent of South African children live an hour or more from the closest school and as many as four fifths get to school on foot. Thus, many learners walk long distances to school and with no breakfast this can cause short term hunger. My colleagues have indicated that from experience a lack of proper nutrition for children can result in poor concentration levels, and low energy levels. As a result of this, their capacity to learn can be hindered, thus resulting in them underperforming. As the Media in Education Trust Africa (MiET Africa) (2009, p. 106) explains, “They may be hungry, unable to concentrate... [and] have less time and energy for homework”. From my experience, I have found that poor school performance is the result of many families experiencing hunger due to extreme poverty. The Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2013) confirms that “effective learning is not possible on an empty stomach; hungry learners are easily distracted and are unable to concentrate in class” (p. 11).

The following statement by my colleague, Peniel, indicated her awareness of a connection between nutrition and improved learning:

“Some learners from my class often come to school without having supper the night before, and do not eat breakfast because they did not have bread last night. These learners are lethargic in class, often complain of stomach cramps and will start crying. How can I, knowing that my learners did not have breakfast in the morning, expect them to give of their best? I make sure they eat as soon as they get to school, even before the lesson starts. This helps learners to concentrate and, at the same time, start to develop increased levels of concentration and their capacity to learn will improve”.

Thus, teachers at our school have seen the need to start providing porridge for hungry children. Teachers began by approaching their own families and friends, as well as businesses and various religious organisations, to secure porridge every month to feed these children on a daily basis. Some organisations have also offered sandwiches for the learners. By teachers communicating with relevant stakeholders, all these children are now provided with porridge and sandwiches daily.

The National School Nutritional Programme (NSNP)

In 1993, the African National Congress (ANC) established the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The aim of the RDP was to give everyone in South Africa a better life, which included free education, water, electricity and the construction of houses. In this way our former president, the late Nelson Mandela, wanted to decrease poverty. Several programmes were established to care for children in particular. An important part of the RDP is food programmes. The Primary National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) was introduced in 1994 (the MiET Africa, 2009). The purpose of the NSNP is to increase school attendance in poverty-stricken areas and to provide at least one nutritious meal a day at school for the poorest children (DBE, 2013). The first NSNP was prioritised to quintile one schools (DBE, 2013). These schools are regarded as not having basic facilities such as running water, electricity, proper toilets and the buildings are in total disrepair. According to Berg (2011, p. 38), “by offering food in schools they hoped for an increase in school attendance and improved learning in schools”.

According to the DBE (2013), in the period of 2012/2013 in KwaZulu-Natal, “the Provincial Education Department (PED)...reached an average of 2 035 034 learners, which included learners in quintile 4 and 5 schools”. However, as discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Three, my school, which has been classified as quintile 4r, has not yet received the NSNP. It must be noted that a quintile ranking means that the school should be financially stable and that the welfare needs of learners should be taken care of by the parents or guardians. However, in reality, this is not so at my school since many of the parents are unemployed, some parents do menial jobs in order to get money to fulfil basic needs such as food for their families and many families rely on social grants. The quintile ranking of my school does not correspond to the poverty levels of the school community. Consequently, we have made a number of attempts to request the DBE to revise the quintile system and to reclassify our school as either quintile 1 or 2. This would assist our school to receive more funding from the DBE and also to qualify for the NSNP. However, rather than waiting for this to happen, some of our teachers have taken the initiative to approach family members and religious organisations to provide food for learners on a daily basis.

The Breakfast Club at School

The Breakfast Club started off as part of the Mandela Day Campaign. This campaign aims to enable individuals, companies and organisations to become more socially responsible. This campaign appeals to all people in South Africa to give 67 minutes of their time to do something charitable. We can all be part of this campaign by volunteering our time in honour of the late Nelson Mandela's birthday. A group of sponsors (relatives of our teachers) decided to assist our indigent learners by preparing and distributing porridge on Mandela Day (18th July) 2012, as described in Figure 4.1, which is an extract from our school newsletter.

Mandela Day- This marked the 2nd year of completing 67 minutes of outreach to the learners. The Breakfast Club under the care of Mrs [redacted] has grown to include more learners who are fed daily and more sponsors who have come on board. The school had a special assembly to honour Madiba and it was all the more poignant because he was very ill at this time. The school had a visit from Gcina Mhlope who spent her 67 minutes reading to the children. She also donated a box of books to the school library. Bushveld donated cereal and blankets on that day. Hot-stuff Marketing spent their 67 minutes assisting with the Breakfast Club, and they sponsored colouring books for the learners. The Gift of the Givers sponsored ice cream and hampers to the deserving learners. The DA gave their time toward the painting of the fence. Thank you to all and here's to a greater day next year.

The Breakfast Club under the care of Mrs [redacted] has the blessed task of feeding over 250 learners a day, and this makes a difference to their lives as many come to school without breakfast. The club has grown to include more sponsors: Pastor [redacted] (Scripture Union), Pastor [redacted], Meals on Wheels as well as many others. Thanks to all of you.

Figure 4.1. "Spending our 67 minutes "...

I spoke to the sponsor about her motivation to provide porridge for these learners. I made a note of what she said in my journal:

Breakfast is such an important meal. Without it, children struggle to concentrate and they do not get most out of the school day. We want every child to have a bright future fuelled by the power of breakfast. This helps the children to stay sustained and nourished and also boosts their energy levels to improve their academic performance in class.

When I saw so many children coming for porridge, it was so painful. You could see that they are not properly fed because of their physique. You could see they are from poverty-stricken homes and that pains me to see these children. This motivated me to do more for these kids. We decided that we would come on board and provide porridge every day for these learners." (Journal entry, 18 July 2012)

From then onwards, these sponsors agreed to donate 60 kilograms of porridge a month. This helps to feed approximately 150 to 200 learners daily. A few willing and caring parents assist in preparing and distributing the porridge every morning so that every indigent learner starts the day with a cup of porridge.

The feedback from my colleagues was that these children rely on the Breakfast Club. My colleagues explained that they had noticed improved concentration and learning in these learners. Learners had become more energetic and better disciplined. This was illustrated by the following statement from Peniel:

“I had noticed after they started having porridge from the school Breakfast Club every morning, it boosted their thinking capacity to learn and their energy levels increased and they no longer complained about tummy aches”.

Similarly, Mark, during our conversations, expressed the following:

“Many of these children are orphans or live with grandparents or other relatives. They survive on social or pension grants. I think three quarters of them would not have breakfast before coming to school.”

In my experience, these learners would often come to school feeling dehydrated and would collapse or faint in class or during school assembly.

For Mark, the Breakfast Club initiative was a blessing for the learners. He could not believe the improvement he had seen in the few days after the porridge began. Mark indicated in our discussions that those learners who received the porridge were also arriving earlier at school and their attendance had improved:

“We see these bright faces and an improved sense of self-esteem. Children are now arriving at school on time. Some parents or caregivers would try to find breakfast for these children in the morning and this meant they would come to school late. Now they are arriving at school at 07h00. Previously, many learners used to arrive at school at 08h30 or later.”



Figure 4.2. The Breakfast Club in Action Every Morning.

Figure 4.2 shows learners having porridge to start the day. Many learners look forward to coming to school early so they can start the day with a cup of porridge. I have seen that children are more cheerful and happy now that they are being given porridge. At times, we even get some organisations on a once-off basis to give these learners soup or plate of breyani (a rice dish with vegetables), especially during the winter months. I have come to realise that these learners regard school as a provider of food.

The Need for Sandwiches at School

My colleagues also highlighted the importance of providing impoverished learners with sandwiches on a daily basis because the porridge alone will not sustain these learners throughout the day. The distribution of sandwiches at school also helps those who do not have food at home. Learners often take extra sandwiches home because many families are extremely poor and these learners go to bed on an empty stomach. These sandwiches might be their only meal until they get back to school the next day. Some teachers even managed to secure more organisations to sponsor sandwiches throughout the week. One of the major

sponsors, is a Swami (a Hindu priest). I spoke to the Swami and he affirmed the need to provide for learners at my school. I made a note of his words in my journal:

“I have adopted the school for the past 20 years because of the poverty-stricken backgrounds these children are coming from. We want to ensure that every child is fed. Therefore we give them sandwiches on a daily basis because they come hungry. Initially we started with 10 loaves, but now we have increased it to 30 loaves. We want to give these children sustenance and help them to concentrate”.
(Journal entry, 21 January 2013)

Furthermore, my colleague Janice informed me that she used her own car daily to pick up the sandwiches:

“I try and make it my duty every day to pick up these sandwiches from religious organisations because these children don’t have anything to eat and many children go hungry to bed. My heart goes out to these children and therefore I cannot see these learners hungry. Many of them do not have breakfast and I know these sandwiches will give these learners energy. Some children even take some sandwiches home to their families, so that they have some food to sustain them at home. If such organisations stop sponsoring these sandwiches, our children will be without sandwiches. They will stay hungry”.

In my journal, I noted how a parent confided to me that she sends her children to school every day, even when they are ill, because:

“They get lunch every day and the food is good. It is good the children get lunch in school. Sometimes I don’t have the money, so I send my children to school. At school I know they will get porridge and sandwiches. They even bring food for us at home”.
(Journal entry, 19 February 2013)

Moreover, I noticed the sandwiches were still not sufficient because each day the number of learners coming for sandwiches was increasing. To ensure that these learners were provided for on a daily basis, I felt that we needed to get more sandwiches. I managed to get more sandwiches from other organisations within my own community, although it is not situated in the area of my school. This has helped to give more children sandwiches.

Vegetable Gardens

Our school started a gardening project and a portion of the vegetables grown is given to learners while the remainder is sold to the public. The money generated from the sale of vegetables is used to buy food items for child-headed homes and for the maintenance of the garden. This project needed to be supported by the community so that it could be sustained. Therefore, some teachers formed partnerships with children and their families to assist in working in our gardens. Sometimes children work during breaks and after school to tend to these gardens (see Figure 4.3)



Figure 4.3 A Learner Tending to the Vegetable Gardens During the Break Time

Learners water the vegetables and till the soil and plant seedlings to get the garden up and running. At the same time, each class together with their teacher is allocated an area within the school to grow their own vegetables. These vegetables are sent home to indigent families. Similarly, Ebersohn and Ferreira (2011, p.18) highlight: “teachers can promote resilience in schools by making use of vegetable gardens with service providers that can support vulnerable groups” and “parents [can] use the vegetable gardens to supplement the household provisions and children [can benefit] from the vegetable gardens by receiving food”.

Likewise, some parents assist by selling vegetables and the proceeds are used to purchase seedlings, gardening tools and utensils for the Breakfast Club.

To sustain the gardening project, the school has started a permaculture project. This project highlights the importance of sustainable living and recycling. Learners are encouraged to start a vegetable patch at school and they are encouraged to plant vegetables at school. Members of the permaculture committee have liaised with farmers and nurseries from the local community to visit our school and to assist with sustaining this project. However, to date the school has not received a positive response with regard to these partners assisting our garden project. This project has been faced with many challenges. Janice highlighted one of these challenges: *“Security is a big problem of sustaining this project. To be successful about creating a food garden, man power and funding is a big problem”*. Her statement revealed security as a major challenge to the programme. At my school, there is no proper security. There are no fences along the boundary of the school yard; there is no place to house garden tools; the school is often vandalised and the garden tools are stolen. Sometimes the crops are stolen before harvesting. This poses a challenge to keep the garden running. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, we have still managed to start a small vegetable garden and this also helps children to learn about sustainable living.

Hampers and Food Parcels

Food parcels and hampers consisting of basic food items (groceries and vegetables), toiletries, blankets and jerseys and shoes (see Figure 4.3) are given out to impoverished families during special religious festivals such as Christmas (a Christian festival) and Diwali (a Hindu festival). Many of these families do not have the financial means to enjoy such festivities. Therefore, receiving these food parcels and hampers allows them to celebrate and enjoy the festivals with their loved ones (see Figure 4.4).



Figure 4.4 Food Parcels and Basic Food Items



Figure 4.5. Handing over Food Hampers to Poor Families During Special Festivities.

During our discussions, Peniel told me what a parent said to her on the day the hampers were distributed:

“Thank you, May God Bless. At least my children will have a good Christmas with some food. Sometimes I need to go begging on street corners or door to door battling to get food for my family. During the week-ends friends and neighbours give us food”.

Furthermore, in my journal, I noted how one of my learner's parent reflected during our distribution of food hampers:

"Thank you for this food hamper. We were praying last night for our next plate of food. I have children to feed and my wife is very sick at home, I am unemployed. God answered our prayers. I am so thankful". (Journal entry, 01 December 2012)

The comment made by this parent touched my heart and made me tearful. My heart went out to his family and children and I felt that very rarely would people confess their hardships to others who may not understand. Therefore I felt extremely happy and grateful for the kind assistance and donations from the sponsors to provide these hampers.

Theme 2. Teachers are Enacting Welfare Care by Making Provision for School Uniforms and Stationery

I have found that many learners stay away from school because their parents do not have the means to buy pencils, crayons and writing materials. In order to assist these learners, some of the teachers use their own money to buy crayons, pencils and paper. My colleagues and I believe that learners should not be deprived of basic education because of circumstances beyond their control. Therefore, we feel that the onus lies on us as teachers to provide these items for these underprivileged learners since we are responsible for ensuring that learners are purposefully occupied throughout the day.

The following statement by Mark highlights one of the many roles that we as teachers play as providers for learners from disadvantaged communities:

"I have made them reading sheets, so that each child can have a copy of the story during the reading lesson. This has impacted severely on me financially because I had to use my money to buy paper because each learner was expected to purchase a ream of paper which was part of their stationery list at the beginning of the year and many cannot afford this. Learners who did not bring their ream of paper were deprived of getting worksheets. I did not want these learners to be deprived or disadvantaged from basic education because of circumstances beyond their control".

Mark's comment depicts the socio-economic context of poverty which contributes to under-resourced schools. As Bhana, Morrell, Epstein and Moletsane (2006, p. 4) comment, "In resourced-constrained situations learners are most adversely affected as their family circumstances are likely to be more dire, and the schools they attend are likely to have fewer

resources for the development”. This means that schools are poorly resourced in terms of teaching and learning support material when parents cannot contribute much to the school funds.

Hence, these teachers at our school provide learners with basic stationery items such as pencils, crayons, pens, as well as reading and writing materials. This is to ensure that learners are not excluded from teaching and learning. I also believe that many of these learners are keen and dedicated to learn and therefore they should not be further deprived of being educated.

Furthermore, during my discussions with colleagues, they noted that learners were frequently absent because they did not have school uniforms, school shoes and school tracksuits. Therefore, these teachers tried to create “a kind of supportive and caring community” at school whereby they made a collection of school clothing to distribute to learners (Khanare, 2009, p. 90). Mark indicated this during our discussion:

“Collection of school clothing from ex-learners, families and parents. These items are sorted and then distributed to poor learners since many of our learners do not have school uniforms or they come to school with torn clothing and some trying to squeeze into small shoes or uniforms. Their parents are unable to buy school clothing due to extreme poverty.”

Similarly, Grant et al. (2010) highlight that teachers in impoverished schools in KwaZulu-Natal donate school uniforms to learners. This support is shown by teachers at my school, since many of them collect and distribute school uniforms, shoes, jerseys and any unwanted items of clothing. This helps learners so that many of them can come to school feeling happy, confident and motivated to continue with their schooling and not drop out of school as a result of not having school attire.

Interestingly, in her self-study, Vilakazi (2013, p. 63) draws attention to how “the presence of the uniform gave self-worth to [her] and thus created an interest in learning, valuing of education and confidence in [her] capacities and attributes”. This comment has made me

aware of how the school uniform can help to instil a sense of belonging and confidence in learners within the school environment.

Theme 3. Teachers are Enacting Welfare Care by Bringing on Board Sponsors, NGOs, Religious Organisations and Businesses as a Support Base

Without the help of sponsorships from NGOs, religious organisations and businesses, we could not manage to carry out our obligations as teachers. Teachers at my school have managed to form collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders from religious organisations, businesses; NGOs and once-off sponsors to assist our learners. Throughout the year, there are sponsors that come forward to assist these learners because they know from where these learners are coming from.

My colleague Mark told me during our discussions that when he spoke to our sponsors, they told him:

“We are grateful to these sponsors and donors who help to make better the lives of indigent learners comfortable and manageable. As a school which is situated in a disadvantaged community, we depend on these sponsors. If such organisations stop sponsoring their sponsorships, our children will stay hungry.”

Our teachers are constantly engaging in fundraising activities and finding practical ways to keep the school afloat. One of our sponsors explained to me the following reasons for supporting learners at my school:

“We want to see the children emulating good habits, values and skills like the late Mr Nelson Mandela when they leave school. Many of them come from the poor backgrounds just like Mr Nelson Mandela. This will help them to get more value base just like the icon Mr Mandela, who grew up with similar hardships like these learners.” (Journal entry, 21 January 2013)

Likewise, during our discussions, my colleagues expressed similar ideas about making the school a safe and enjoyable environment where learners can become self-confident and develop a positive self-image. Correspondingly, Vilakazi (2013) emphasises that our focus as teacher should be on developing the learners’ strengths and their positive side rather than succumbing to despair over the tremendous hardships the learners are experiencing.

Theme 4. Teachers are Enacting Welfare Care by Providing Sports, Games and Excursions for Learners

For me, teaching is not only about educating the child in reading, writing and mathematics. The child needs to be educated holistically. Children need to be supported emotionally, physically and intellectually. Too often children at our school become absorbed by the tremendous hardships they are facing in their homes. During discussions with my teacher participants, they confirmed that these learners needed an outlet to vent their anxiety, anger or frustration. One of my colleagues, Peniel, expressed that *“teaching should not be chalk and talk”*. I understand this to mean that teaching a child in a classroom is not the *only* important part of teacher’s job; we must also look beyond the classroom and take into consideration that learners have different needs.

My colleagues highlighted that exposing learners to the outdoors, by taking them on excursions and field trips and getting them to play sport and games, could help them to develop holistically. This means that, apart from the formal education which learners get from schools, they also need to be exposed to other forms of learning so that they can become holistically developed. Likewise, Eisner (2002, p. 581) asserts, “[t]he kind of schools we need are those where the most important forms of learning take place outside the school”. The following statement by Peniel highlighted the role of teachers in contributing to the holistic development of the child:

“Meeting the needs of children and trying to solve their problems is more important for me than trying to impart knowledge to learners. If the needs of the learners are not taken care of then we as teachers are contributing to learners having poor concentration in class, having unhappy children in class, and children seeing school as a place with a bleak future”.

Excursions and Field Trips

I have realised that taking our learners on field trips and excursions often allows them to visit new places for their first time. Many learners cannot afford to participate in these outings because of the financial challenges they are faced with. More often than not these are the learners who will never experience feelings of joy and happiness from participating in this kind of event. I have found that some teachers at my school will try to assist poor children

when it comes to going on excursions. Janice explained how teachers paid from their own pockets or even asked some of their family members to sponsor these indigent learners:

“I feel it is these children who need to go on these trips because they are the ones who deserve to go. I was feeling so sad for the indigent learners because they could not pay the fee to go to the Spur restaurant. It broke my heart to see their faces. I contacted my cousins to assist these indigent children. Immediately, they were prepared to assist. They paid for the learners who could not afford to go and also gave each child some extra spending money”.

I have witnessed the joy and happiness that these outings can bring to children. In my view, these extra-curricular activities can contribute to learners becoming more self-confident and to building a positive self-esteem. As Vilakazi (2013, p. 68) points out, “[t]hese excursions excite the learners and make the classroom a safe and an enjoyable place to express ideas, making it possible to meet their emotional needs, at the same time empowering them to become self-confident”. I have realised that these outings can allow learners to forget (even if only for a few hours) about the tremendous hardships and problems they encounter daily.



Figure 4.6 *Children at the Spur Restaurant*

The above photograph (Figure 4.6.) was taken at an outing to the local Spur restaurant. This excursion was organised for learners in the Foundation Phase at our school. The management and staff at the Spur took learners on a walk around the restaurant and into the kitchen so that the children could see how the food is prepared and where it is stored and they also highlighted the proper hygiene precautions taken when foods are prepared at the restaurants. Learners were allowed to play in the restaurant's play area. They were also treated to a hamburger and a milkshake. These learners enjoyed this outing and many indicated that it was the first time they had been taken out to a restaurant. Some of these learners had never tasted a milkshake or a hamburger before. Each child was given a goodie bag with a toy, a colouring book and crayons to take home. For my colleagues and me, this outing was so special because we knew that we had given some of these learners an opportunity to have a new experience.

Sport

As I explained in Chapter Three, during my teaching career I have witnessed how many learners have advanced further through their participation in sporting codes. Some have even managed to reach the highest level any sportsman or woman can achieve in a sporting career, which is to represent your country in playing sport. I have found that some of my learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds and living in underprivileged areas lack local leisure facilities, sports fields, sport centres and equipment. Also with so many problems in their lives, I believe that these learners should not be further stressed. My involvement and passion in sport has permitted me to assist these learners to advance further by allowing them to engage in sporting opportunities that they might otherwise not receive. Lynch (2013 p. 9) highlights, "[t]hat sporting opportunities offered to many learners from lower socio-economic [regions] helps them to feel equal to other learners who come from a more advantaged background". Similarly, as a sports convenor, I have found that sport can benefit learners to develop healthy and active lifestyles; it can also give them an opportunity to socialise and participate with children from different backgrounds. This allows them to build partnerships and, more importantly, to be treated equally. Likewise, Kirui, Kipkoech and Simotwo (2013, p. 393) explain that through being active in sport, "students not only develop their skills but also socialise with their peers and develop careers as well, this is a way for them to have high self-esteem".

In addition, I have found that learners at our school who come from poor communities tend to have many chores after school. These learners are expected to collect firewood, cook food, clean their homes and sometimes take care of their siblings or ill grandparents or parents. Child headed households are managed by children themselves. Consequently, many children are deprived of socialising with their peers and as such do not often experience the joy of playing games and engaging in fun activities. They are too absorbed in performing adult roles and therefore have little time to play. When I reflect on my years as a sports convenor, I can see how sport has contributed to the success of many learners coming from disadvantaged communities. Exposing these children to sport has given them an avenue to vent their feelings, de-stress and more importantly, to showcase their talents and sport prowess. Importantly, some of these talented sports people are now using their sport prowess to earn a living either as a coach or as a player.

The Mini Cricket Programme

I initiated the Mini Cricket programme with the help of a group of committed teachers at my school (see Figure 4.6). It started off as an attempt to give underprivileged learners „a sporting chance“, and an opportunity to be engaged in some purposeful activity on a Saturday morning. We wanted to keep learners off the streets. We realised that many of these underprivileged learners had nowhere to go to over the weekends and so they were prone to antisocial behaviour (e.g., taking drugs, stealing to get money and ending up in places which were dangerous for them). As Lynch (2013) explains, a sports programme can allow learners from low socioeconomic areas to play at least one sporting code.

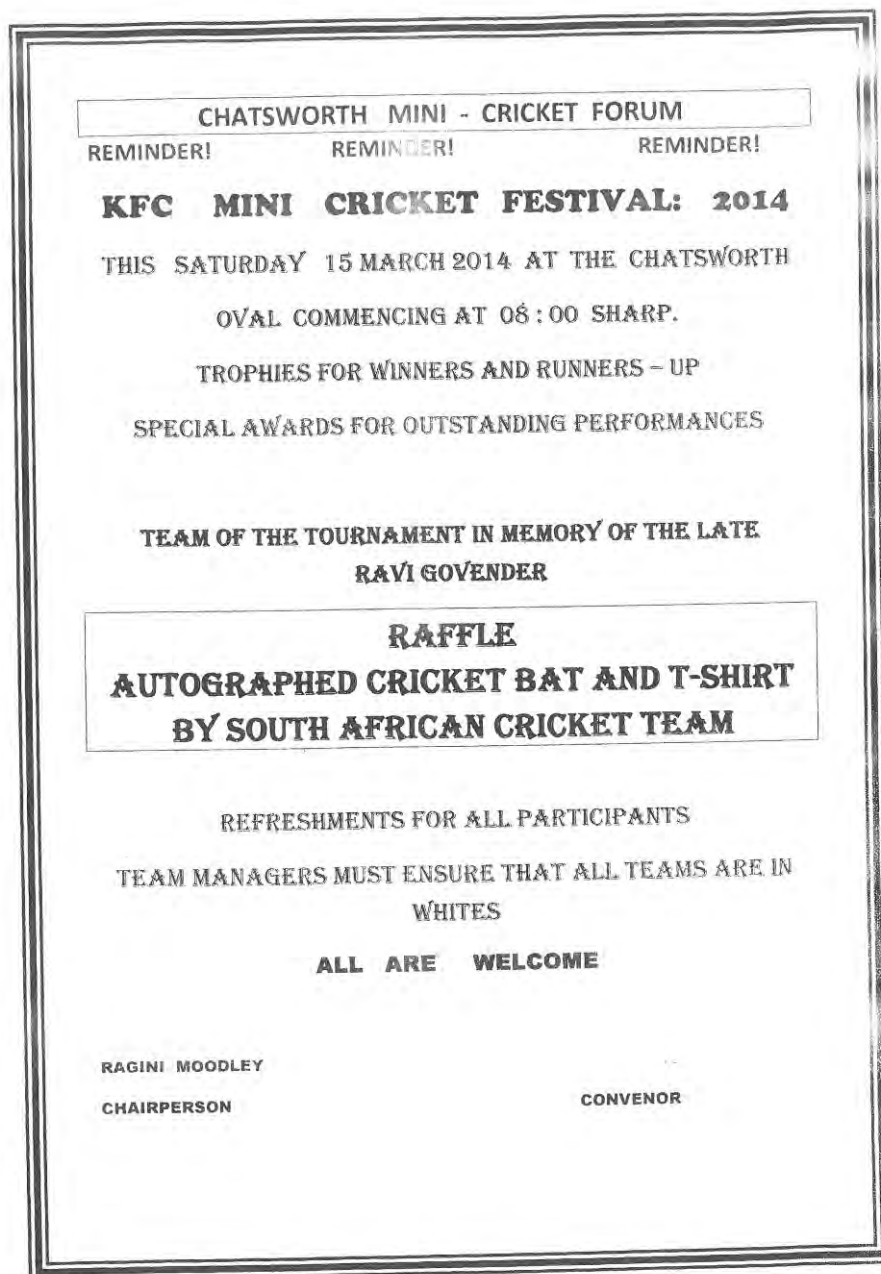


Figure 4.7 Invitation to Mini Cricket Festival



Figure 4.8 Learners Coached by Teachers on Basic Skills in Mini Cricket

By working collaboratively with various committed and passionate stakeholders (e.g. Physical Education students, coaches from sporting clubs and federations and businesses), I have also started a Friday Sports Programme for these underprivileged learners. I arranged for the local community youth centre to be made available for learners to engage in recreational activities during the week-ends and holidays. I, together with a few volunteers (former pupils) from sporting organisations offered to provide coaching skills on various sporting codes to these learners. This helps to keep learners occupied and not become involved in anti-social activities.

As part of this initiative, we introduced a Mini Cricket Coaching and Development programme. This was to ensure that learners from deprived areas were purposefully occupied. The aim was to promote fun and enjoyment and to inculcate a love for sport and, later on, to develop children into competent sportsmen or women. These programmes have also served as an outlet for many children to vent their feelings and to forget about the massive hardships they are faced with. These players are coached by dedicated and passionate teachers and coaches. Children are taught about the basic skills of mini cricket, the rules of the game, discipline on and off the field and the correct etiquette of the game. Apart from these children learning the game of mini cricket, they are also learning about teamwork, discipline and sport

as a career. As the convenor of the programme, I have found that these children cannot afford to purchase the necessary equipment. Therefore, I have liaised with my counterparts at the local Cricket Union, the local sporting clubs, sponsors and businesses to provide these learners with the proper equipment. The programme is held twice a year, for duration of four to six weeks. The programme caters for both boys and girls from the age of six to 13 years. At the end of the coaching and development programme, a gala event is organised for these learners. Each player is given a medal for participating in the programme. The emphasis here is on participation and to encourage these learners that their teachers are always prepared to coach and assist them by providing them with sport opportunities and games. Furthermore, it motivates learners to attend such programmes in the future.

Moreover, some of the children who participate in the programme are given the opportunity to be coached and managed by professional coaches and clubs because of their skills and talents displayed. At the same time, some of these talented young sportsmen and women are given bursaries and scholarships to study at private and well-resourced schools and universities. This also gives them the opportunity to study with some of the best sportsmen and women in the country at top institutions. This helps learners to build partnerships with others and at the same time they also learn to socialise and increase their circle of friends.

I have visited many places and met many people from different walks of life. These interactions have provided a platform for me to gain more knowledge and strengthen my passion for developing learners holistically. Recently, I was present at a National Mini Cricket Seminar, and a social worker was invited to address the convenors on addressing child abuse. Through her presentation, I discovered that sport can promote self-esteem in children who have been abused:

The mini cricket programme has helped many children from low socioeconomic areas to be introduced to sport and physical education and, ultimately, their participation in the Mini cricket programme has led to the holistic development of learners from poor communities. These games have brought joy and fun to children (especially those who are abused). It keeps their minds occupied and they start feeling loved. (Personal Communication: Social Worker, KFC Mini Cricket Seminar, Port Alfred, 5 July 2014)

Fun and Sports Day

As I have reflected on my childhood memories and early teaching experiences, I have come to realise that in the past, these sporting events and games catered mainly for children who could afford sporting kits, equipment and had the financial means to get to playing venues. I became aware that those learners who were not in a good financial position were often not chosen to participate in sporting events and games. I decided that I did not want the same to happen for my learners, especially those who came from poverty-stricken backgrounds. It made me realise that *I* was once a child who would have wanted to be part of these sporting events and to be able to play games but because of my parents not being financially well off, this was a challenge I had to face during my schooling days.

Hence, I decided to organise a Fun and Sports Day for learners in the Foundation phase (Grades 1 to 3). Fortunately, I managed to secure a sponsorship of R1000 from a teacher at my school. Thereafter, I made a special appeal to parents to donate R5, 00 per child towards the purchase of medals. I met with two local businesses and explained the purpose of the event. These businesses sponsored fruit, juice and cakes for our learners. The purpose of organising this event was to afford every learner an opportunity to participate in a day with fun filled activities and novelty races irrespective of where these learners came from. This allowed them to take part and to socialise on the sports field. I met with teachers in the Foundation Phase, explained the purpose and outlined the process regarding their intervention and support. A programme of events was discussed including novelty races (egg and spoon race, three legged race, tug-o-war, and sack races) and other fun-filled activities. This event was to allow all our learners to be happy, to encourage a healthy lifestyle and for all to be treated equally. The learners' drawings shown in Figure 4.9 and Figure 4.10 show learners' positive responses to the Fun and Sport Day.



Figure 4.9: A Learner's Drawing – School Fun Day



Figure 4.10: A Learner's Drawing -- I Love Sport

At the end of this event, the comments and feedback I received from teachers, parents and learners were encouraging. Many of them wanted this to become an annual event at my school considering that the event was a great success and, most importantly, that all learners in the Foundation Phase took part. No learner was left out. A teacher told me that:

“These days are the most remembered and memorable in a child's life and likewise children will remember these days as the best days of the schooling career”.

(Journal entry, 30 November 2013)

Although the fun day was a success, and in spite of it bringing an element of joy and happiness for the learners, it cannot be sustained as an annual event. This is due to the lack of funding. However, my desire is to see this event become an annual one. To bring this to fruition I might need the assistance of outside sponsors.

Theme 5. Teachers are Enacting Welfare Care by Attending to the Emotional and Social Development Needs of Learners

Teachers in our school are supporting medical and emotional care together with social development as a strategy to promote resilience in schools. Many learners are facing hardships and therefore they do not have the necessary support in their homes to overcome medical, emotional and social problems. These learners are coming from extremely poor communities. Children in child headed households and children who are abandoned are often left to fend for themselves. They lack parental involvement and some do not have anyone to talk to. Therefore, there is a dire need for teachers to provide these services for these vulnerable children.

Medical Care

Pastoral care is listed as one of the many collective functions that teachers need to enact, as outlined by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2011). This involves developing learners holistically and providing a caring and protective environment for all learners. All the teacher participants involved in this study revealed that their initial teacher training did not prepare them adequately to provide medical care for learners. At the beginning, they felt unable to carry out these tasks efficiently. Similarly, a teacher cited in Wood and Goba (2011) commented: *“the teacher is left to cope with things they have no training for...this makes it very difficult for all of us”* (p. 281). However, my colleagues did highlight that, through various experiences, they had learned some techniques and strategies to assist learners.

Some teachers in our school took the initiative and approached the local clinic, hospital, doctors, dentists, nurses and opticians in the area to assist learners by allowing them to access free eye tests, dental check-ups and other medical care (see the extract from our school newsletter shown in Figure 4.11).

Road shows

Dettol: Learners had an interactive workshop on personal hygiene and a free sample of Dettol soap.

Colgate: Dr [unclear] from the Ridge at Shallcross gave the learners a talk on dental hygiene and all learners received a Colgate hamper.

Figure 4. 11 Medical / Dental support from the community

At times, teachers transport children in their private cars to take learners to the doctor, clinic or the hospital or even to their homes because these children are too ill to be at school. Unfortunately, these learners are often unable to get proper medical attention because their families do not have the financial means to travel to a doctor. To illustrate, Mark revealed the following:

“One of the common medical problems with my learners is their poor vision. In spite of this, many of them are still keen to learn. This poor vision has resulted in many of them underperforming. Some of them cannot transcribe work correctly from the chalkboard. Some are unable to read and write text and they are dyslexic. Many of these learners have been assisted with free eye tests and were given free glasses. There has been a marked improvement in these learners’ ability to read and transcribe written tasks correctly after they have received glasses. This has ultimately led to an improvement in their academic performance.”

Additionally, Janice, related:

“Last week a boy from my class came to school with sores all over his face and hands. I found that he was constantly scratching these sores, because it became unbearable. He comes from a home where his parents have abandoned him and he lives with his granny who survives on a state grant to sustain their livelihood. She is unable to take him to the clinic due to her financial standing. Therefore, I contacted a friend of mine, who is a nurse at the clinic and asked if she can assist this child by supplying me with medication. Immediately she [the nurse] assisted and sent medication for the sores. I applied it and within a few days this boy had recovered well. Later on I realised, had I not assisted this learner, by getting the correct medication, his condition could have gotten worse. Thereafter, I realised as a teacher it is my responsibility to assist him with medical care because he does not have the financial means and anyone at home to assist him”.

Many of our learners and their families experience a lack of proper sanitation and running water at home. Teachers provide these children with basic medical supplies at school (such as bandages, cotton wool and plasters). Teachers also administer first aid in school (e.g. cleaning infected sores). This is also done to prevent other learners from getting infected. In order to assist these learners, some teachers do go the extra mile by contacting nurses, doctors and local pharmacists to donate medical supplies to the school so that first-aid can be administered timeously. This was demonstrated in the following statement by Peniel:

“It is my duty at school to render first-aid to all learners. I have found learners coming from poor areas need specialised medical treatment because they do have medical supplies at home, due to poverty. Due to neglect, their condition has deteriorated to an extent that they need specialised treatment from doctors, nurses and hospitals. At the same time I try and secure sponsorships of medicines, plasters and first-aid supplies. This helps many learners”.

Apart from assisting learners with medical needs, I have also secured free medical and health services for poor parents, their families and children at the local Ashram (a religious retreat or community based organisation). At this venue, doctors and nurses assist poor families free of charge. Also, free eye tests, dental check-ups, medical check-ups (pressure, sugar, cholesterol testing) are offered as part of the services to these indigent families. Medication is free of charge and serious cases are referred to local hospitals and clinics. This facility is within the community, so there is no need to incur transport costs.

To highlight a healthy life style and proper hygiene for our learners, teachers invite the marketing departments of companies (e.g. Dettol, Milo and Colgate) to do roadshows for our learners. Through the use of songs, dances and demonstrations, learners are taught about healthy lifestyles. Children are also given samples of soap, a toothbrush, toothpaste and healthy drinks to take home. Such initiatives by teachers are aimed at assisting learners in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Furthermore, teachers invite the local Child Welfare Department, and Health and Social services to visit the school, highlighting issues such as the treatment and prevention of HIV and AIDS, Stranger-Danger and Children’s Rights.

Emotional Care

As Lasky (2005, p. 901) affirms, “Emotion is partly biological in nature, but is predominantly a social construction.” This means that emotion that is influenced by how people interact with their environment, other people and their beliefs. We as teachers are expected to take on the important role of providing emotional support, to both the learners and our colleagues. The (DHET, 2011, p. 53), stipulates, “Within the school, the educators will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators.” However from my experience, the emotional effort required in enacting caring relationships for learners and fellow colleagues is an aspect where there is little or no help with regard to specialised training for teachers from the school management team or from the DBE. As Wood and Guba (2011) highlight: “the teacher is emotionally affected by the plight of the affected learner” (p. 281). Likewise, my teacher participants expressed disappointment because they felt that they lacked knowledge and skills to provide learners with appropriate emotional care. They explained that they relied on the techniques that their own teachers had used. These important aspects of providing emotional care were not covered in their initial teacher training. Nevertheless, these teachers highlighted that they did try to offer emotional help to learners who were are abused (emotionally, physically, and sexually), neglected, HIV positive, orphaned or abandoned and those coming from child headed households.

In my research journal, I reflected on the role of the teacher in providing emotional care:

“As a result of such traumatic experiences faced by our learners, I as their teacher am expected to take on the role of being a counsellor, a doctor, a caregiver, mother, social workers, psychologist and a good listener for these children. Knowing that many of them do not have anyone to go to at home therefore, it becomes the teachers” responsibility to provide the proper support and care for these learners because many of them [learners] may fall through the cracks. Through engaging with learners on an emotional level this has helped me to understand the relationship better, getting to know our learners better and making them feel comfortable. Some of the words and gestures used during our conversations can assist learners to „open up to me”, such words and gestures are: “giving these learners a hug”, “praising them in the assembly or in front of their friends” and saying to them “I am happy that you are talking about this issue”, “I do believe in what you are saying”, “you are special

tome” and “we all care and love you”. These kind gestures and utterances made by me would actually embrace feelings of love, care and empathy towards learners. All they [learners] want or need is to be loved and cared for”. (Journal entry, 15 May 2014)

Similarly, Teven (2013, p. 159) maintains that a “vital pre-requisite for effective teaching is establishing a climate of warmth, understanding and caring”. This highlights how the teachers’ caring role can encourage meaningful teaching and learning. However, it is also important to note that when teachers take on these multiple roles, they too can become tired and distressed as a result of the strain they take on to ensure these multiple roles are fulfilled at school. As Meyiwa (2014) highlights, the caregivers also need care.

Peniel expressed her understanding of the emotional care required by a teacher as follows:

“Educators play a pivotal role in the formative years (7 – 18 years) of the child. They act in „loco parentis”, which means taking on the role of a „parent or guardian” whilst these learners are at school. They [teachers] are expected to provide the necessary care, love and attention for their learners in the absence of the parent or the guardian. This involves providing emotional care, support and stability in the lives of these young minds. It is important to realise that these learners’ needs are met ensuring their social and emotional needs as well. We need to treat all learners with love, respect and dignity. As teachers, we need to provide a safe environment for our learners”.

Likewise, Janice equated her caring role as a teacher to that of the engine of in the train:

“When these children are with us, they are okay, but when they are left on their own, they are like a „Derailed Train”. The train is tagging along as long as the engine is there, the minute the engine is cut-off from the coaches, all these coaches get derailed. Similarly, these children would go astray without our [the teacher’s] constant guidance, support and help, just like the derailed coaches without the engine. The train minus the engine and the coaches cannot function. Likewise, we [teachers] are the „engine” in these children. We are the driving force behind these learners”.

In unison, the engine together with the coaches enables the train to move in the right direction. Similarly, the teacher serves the same role to that of the engine in a train. Thus Janice emphasised her supportive role in a learner's life.

Mark explained that during his initial teacher training he did not receive much guidance and help for assisting learners with emotional problems. Furthermore, as a novice teacher he did not receive mentoring or induction to help prepare him to provide emotional care for learners. Mark admitted that he drew on past experiences and memories of how he was taught at school to aid his development in the area of emotional care. He added that our learners need to be nurtured like an “egg in one's hand”, since many of them need protection from the harsh realities they are faced with:

“These children get „damaged“ and we lose them to the world. Many of them become school drop-outs, street-children and some even attempt suicide because of neglect. Their parents do not have the time to listen to their children, and these children do not have anyone whom they can confide in”.

Social Development

The social conditions of a community influence the social context of a school, especially in many disadvantaged communities in South Africa (Grant et al., 2010). Many of the learners at my school come from nearby farms, while some come from townships and informal settlements in the area. Constant poverty can be a consequence of being unemployed or surviving on a grant (social grant, child support, old age or disability). Coupled with this are multiple issues such as poor health, scarce unemployment opportunities, insufficient education, poor housing and hunger. This combination is more than enough to make people chronically poor (Skweyiya, 2001). As a result of this many of our learners enter school in the morning without having had a bath or brushed their teeth. Hence, they do not leave their problems at the school gate. To ignore this, or to say that there is nothing that can be done about it, is to do our learners a grave injustice. As teachers, the social development of learners impacts on our work and therefore cannot be overlooked.

This calls for us as teachers to take up additional social responsibilities, apart from performing our core function which, as Morrow (2007, p. 5) states, “is to teach”. Teachers need to work harder so that these learners are taken care of and are not deprived or

embarrassed. This calls for teachers to form partnerships with the various stakeholders within the local community, such as the South African Police Services, the Child Welfare Society, the South African Social Services Association, religious leaders and businesses, to assist poor families. As the MiET Africa points out, “Many caregivers are entitled to access social grants on behalf of their children. But some do not know who can get these grants, or how to get these grants” (p. 120). Therefore, teachers at our school assist parents and guardians to fill in forms so that they can obtain social grants and child support grants to sustain their families. Similarly, Vilakazi (2013), whose school has an Orphan and Vulnerable Care (OVC) committee, explains the need for health and social development for these children and families:

We liaise with the health practitioners from the local clinic and also the social workers who even visit the families who live with orphans. For example, a recently identified group of learners stay with their 21 year old brother who is temporarily employed. As the committee, we organised the Social Development representative to help his family with a social grant. (pp. 52-53)

At our school, we recently had two social work students who chose to work at the school to do their practical module towards completing their social work degree. Janice referred a few learners to these social work students. Janice shared the following:

“Since these social worker students have been at our school, for the past eight months, I have noticed some of the learners’ behaviour has improved. You can see the difference in these learners’ behavioural patterns. Most learners are making positive contributions after these social workers have assisted learners. They have developed preventative strategies and programme to aid problematic learners in bringing about in their behaviour”.

Furthermore, teachers in their own capacity have taken up the initiative to partner with the local Anti-Drug Forum (ADF) to become empowered to assist learners who are facing serious social ills in the community. As mentioned previously, the area around our school has been named as the „drug capital“ of the province. In order to equip learners to deal with these social ills, these teachers have become empowered to train learners at our school to become part of the “SMART Club” programme. The SMART Club programme spreads the following message “Striving for a drug free society”. Learners of all ages are introduced to this

programme. Through the use of songs, dances, plays, speeches, placard demonstrations, marches, motorcades, special assemblies and other innovative activities learners spread the message across the community: *“To do the right thing.”* Schoolchildren participating in this programme should certainly understand addiction and we hope that the chances of them being caught up in the drug world will be lessened. These programmes encourage learners to be involved in positive activities rather than to just say, “Don’t do this!” Learners are also encouraged to come up with their own ideas and to do things differently. This was illustrated in the following statement by Peniel:

“A group of learners from the SMART Club have composed a song to spread the message of a drug free society and their support to fight against drugs. This song is currently being played on YouTube”.



Figure 4.12 Learners in the SMART Club Programme

The above photograph (Figure 4.12) shows learners from the SMART Club during a placard demonstration at Ushaka Marine World. Many people from throughout the world visit Ushaka, as it is regarded as a popular tourist attraction. These learners wanted to highlight the dangers of taking drugs through the use of posters with anti-drug slogans. They were allowed to do role plays. For learners in the SMART Club, as well as my colleagues and I, this outing was so special because we knew we had spread the message of: “SAY NO TO DRUGS” and “BE SMART DON’T START”. This created an opportunity for some people to call on the SMART Club for assistance in counselling. In this way we have also given the members of the community renewed hope and a chance to discuss their social problems.

We also have an Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Programme at our school. As Wood and Goba (2011) explain:

OVC refers to any child whose level of vulnerability has increased as a result of HIV and AIDS and could include any child falls into one or more of the following categories: has lost both parents or experienced death of a family member: is neglected; destitute, abandoned or abused – has a parent or guardian who is ill, has suffered increased poverty levels and has been a victim of human rights abuse; is HIV positive themselves. (p. 276)

The National Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Programme was initiated by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The National OVC programme is offered to schools to assist orphaned children (children who have lost either one or both their parents, or those who were abandoned by their parents) and vulnerable children (children who come from child-headed households or children who are HIV positive and from poverty-stricken families) at our school.

Our school was part of the DBE's National OVC programme from 2010 to 2011. An amount of R12 000 was allocated by the DBE to assist these indigent learners. This was funding for one year only. An OVC committee was set up to spearhead this programme. The members of this committee comprised four teachers together with the principal of the school. The members of the OVC committee worked together with all the teachers within the school to identify the children for the programme. The learners' portfolio and personal circumstances were used as criteria to identify these orphaned and vulnerable children. We managed to identify 20 learners as the most deserving children in terms their personal circumstances. It must be noted that the committee found it extremely difficult to identify only 20 children since majority of these learners at the school are faced with hardships. However, the money allocated by the DBE was not sufficient to assist all of these learners. At a meeting, the committee agreed to purchase school tracksuits and school shoes (for R6 000). The reason for this was that many learners do not have school shoes to walk long distances to get to school or warm clothes to wear in winter. The balance of the money made available (R6 000) was used to buy food hampers for parents or guardians at the end of the year. As the convenor of the OVC programme, I had to liaise with various businesses and various stakeholders to negotiate discounts on these items.

We realised that the OVC programme should be offered at our school on a continuing basis. Presently, we are sourcing funds from sponsors, businesses and well-wishers to try to sustain the OVC programme.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have addressed my second research question: *How are we, as practising teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?* From discussions with my colleagues and some of our welfare care sponsors, as well as my own reflections, I have learned that teachers are enacting welfare care at my school by:

- *a) connecting nutrition with learning;*
- *b) making provision for school uniforms and stationery for learners;*
- *c) bringing on board sponsors, NGOs, religious organisations and businesses as a support base;*
- *d) providing sports, games and excursions; and*
- *e) attending to the medical, emotional and social development needs of learners.*

This chapter has illustrated how it becomes the teachers' responsibility to provide the necessary support and care for learners who otherwise might „fall through the cracks“. This calls for teachers to take on additional welfare care responsibilities, apart from performing our core function of teaching. To perform this welfare care role effectively, teachers cannot work in isolation but need assistance and support from all stakeholders involved in education, as well as other community members.

In the following chapter, Chapter Five, I look at how teachers can be better supported in enacting welfare care. I explain how I used the arts-based mode of collage-making to elicit and make meaning of discussions with my teacher participants in response to my third research question: *How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?* I identify and discuss three significant themes that emerged from the collage-making and the conversations with my colleagues *a) community support and engagement; b) continuing professional teacher development for psychosocial and emotional support; and c) teacher leadership for welfare care.*

CHAPTER FIVE:

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS IN RELATION TO ENACTING WELFARE FOR LEARNERS

Introduction

The focus of this study is on the role of the teacher in enacting welfare care for learners. Through engaging in self-study, my intention is to better understand welfare care as it is enacted by me and fellow teachers at my school. My hope is that this research will enhance understanding of what welfare care responsibilities demand of teachers and of the support and assistance that teachers require to enact welfare care for learners.

In the previous chapter, Chapter Four, I responded to my second research question: *How are we, as practising teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?* I looked at what action teachers in my school are taking in identifying and finding ways to respond to the basic needs of learners. I also considered how collaborative partnerships between teachers and various stakeholders support teachers in becoming active caregivers. I identified five themes that illustrate how teachers are enacting welfare care at my school by: These are:

- *connecting nutrition with learning;*
- *making provision for school uniforms and stationery for learners;*
- *bringing on board sponsors, NGOs, religious organisations and businesses as a support base;*
- *providing sports, games and excursions; and*
- *attending to the medical, emotional and social development needs of learners.*

In this chapter, I demonstrate how I used an art-based self-study method to explore my third research question: *How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?* I show how my three teacher participants and I made collages which stimulated our thinking and discussions in response to this research question. Based on the collages and discussions with my colleagues, I suggest that teachers can be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners through:

- *community support and engagement;*
- *continuing professional teacher development for psychosocial and emotional support;*
- *teacher leadership for welfare care.*

Additional Support Needed by Teachers

Getting Started with the Collages

As explained in Chapter Two, I made a collage as a visual representation of my views on how we as teachers can be better supported to enact welfare care for learners. At first, when I looked at compiling the collage, I was rather uncertain as to what to include because our school is so disadvantaged in so many ways. Nevertheless, I started by looking at our roles as teachers at my school when it comes to taking care of the children. Following the advice of Khanare (2009), who states that participants should be shown an example of a completed collage, I showed my collage to each of my teacher participants and explained the collage in terms of what support I still needed in order to become better prepared to enact welfare care for learners. (Unfortunately, this collage was misplaced by one of the participants who had borrowed it and therefore I have not been able to include a copy of it in this chapter.)

A purposeful discussion about my collage and about collage-making took place with each participant. Each one seemed excited and keen to undertake the collage exercise to describe the additional support that she or he still needed to become better supported in enacting welfare care. All three participants were presented with magazines, scissors, Pritt (glue) and chart paper (A3 size) to prepare a collage. I asked the participants to make their collages at home. Thereafter, at a subsequent, individual meeting, each teacher participant explained her or his collage to me. I audio recorded and transcribed these discussions. In the next section I will present the recorded and transcribed data of each of the three participants.

Janice's Collage: "Going Beyond the Expected In"

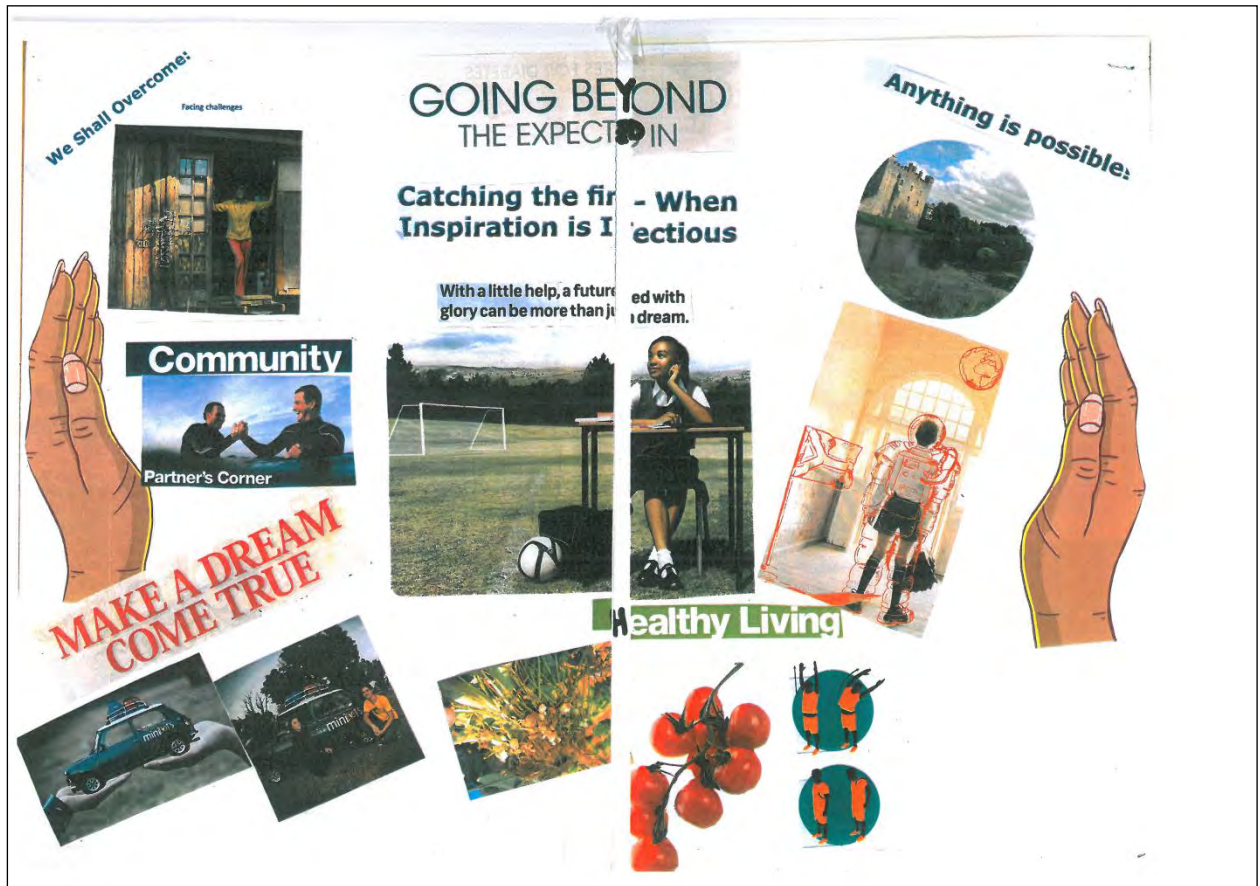


Figure 5. 1 Janice's Collage: "Going Beyond the Expected In"

Janice explained that she had divided her collage into two parts: "What is?" (What is currently happening at school) and "What could be?" (How we as practising teachers would like it to be – an ideal school – what support should we be having?). Janice clarified that she gave her collage the title of "Going Beyond the Expected In" because providing welfare care entails going beyond that which is usually expected of her as a teacher. She explained that teachers at our school need to ensure that the child's needs (social, emotional, physical, emotional, psychological and medical) are taken care of even if it goes beyond the call of duty. Further, Janice revealed the following: *"In order to perform this task effectively, teachers cannot work in isolation but need the support and assistance from all role players and stakeholders involved in education"*. Thus, in her view, forming an alliance with the relevant structures involved in education, together with the Department of Transport, the Department of Health, Department of Social Services, the South African Police Services, as

well as NGOs, businesses, religious organisations and community leaders can assist teachers to be better supported. As Janice explained:

“Looking at my collage, I brought the entire collage between „two hands“. The importance of the hands being open and not clenched means that as teachers we need to keep our hands open to the broader community in order to embrace what is and what is could be. With this in mind we can achieve so much more”.

Mark’s Collage: “In These Tough Times...”

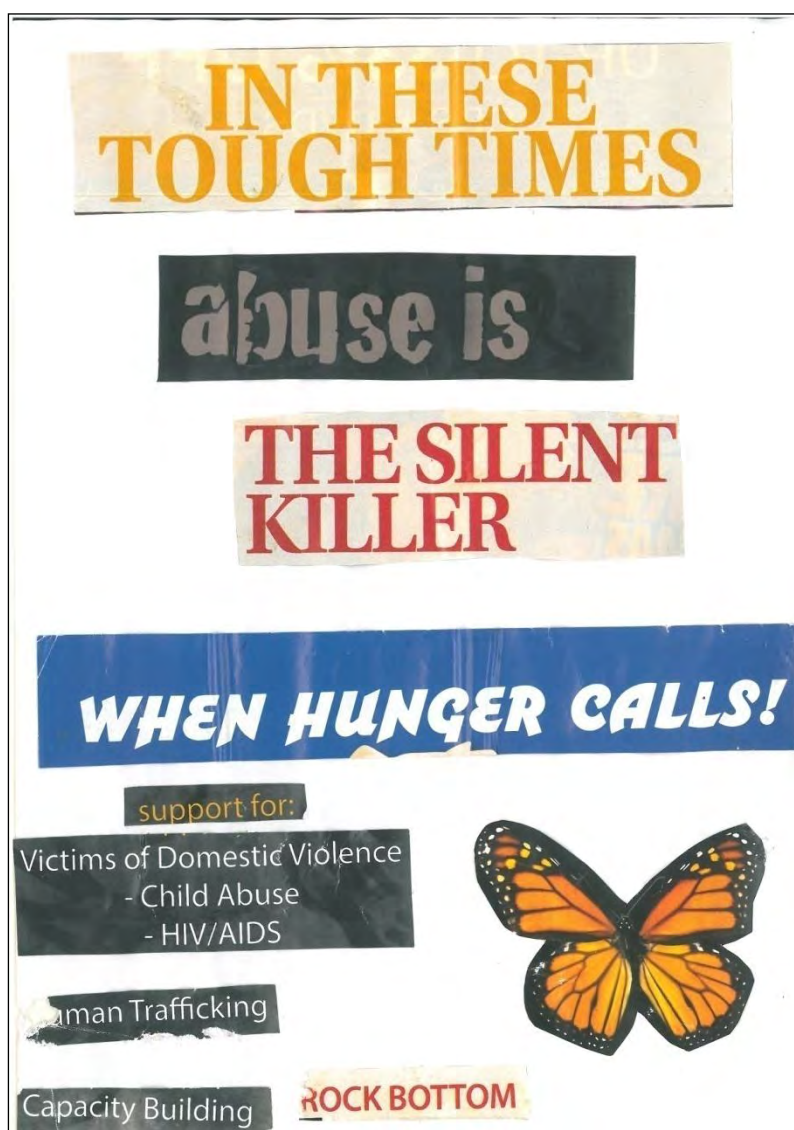


Figure 5.2 Mark’s Collage: “In These Tough Times...”

In discussing his collage, Mark noted that there is a shortage of support staff (social workers and psychologists) available to assist at our school:

“As teachers, we are trained at universities and colleges to teach and assess learners in (maths, reading and writing). Our initial professional training has not prepared us to provide care and the necessary support and counselling skills to assist learners to develop holistically. I feel the DBE [Department of Basic Education] has abdicated their responsibility and there is not enough support offered to teachers in terms of providing programmes for teachers to assist vulnerable children. In all the meetings and workshops I have attended there was no follow up afterwards; you don’t even know who to contact when you are stuck”.

Mark’s collage highlights a need to make more funding available for qualified staff to provide psycho-social support to schools.

Additionally, Mark explained his view that the DBE together with the Department of Psychological Guidance Services and Education Support (PGSES) should assist teachers by offering training programmes on counselling skills or interactive discussions and workshops on preventative measures and strategies to assist teachers to support learners with social, emotional and psychological problems. For example, Jairam (2009) describes counselling skills which can assist teachers in dealing with issues of HIV and AIDS and other related problems. It would be of benefit if these skills were provided to teachers to assist them to handle such issues.

Peniel's Collage: "Children Need Medical Care"



Figure5.3. Peniel's Collage: "Children Need Medical Care"

From our discussion, I found that Peniel enjoyed the collage activity. She also indicated that she had experienced a range of emotions while creating the collage because the poverty surrounding our school impacts not only on the learners but also on the school. She also expresses sadness for these learners who are faced with such adversity. She explained that teachers are overburdened with serving the needs of learners coming from such an impoverished community. Peniel also emphasised that despite the assistance and support the school has secured, in terms of the porridge, sandwiches, food parcels, hampers, school uniforms, stationery, and so on, we still need more assistance and support for care giving. Penile highlighted medical assistance as being of vital importance for our learners, especially since many families lack the financial means to seek medical attention:

“Many of these children who are often sick come to school because they regard the school as a place of comfort where they can get medical assistance. Almost every teacher is faced with this scenario in their classes. These learners look up to us [teachers] as „nursø“, „dæctors“, „mums“ and „dads“, for love, attention and care. Furthermore, how capable are these parent substitutes [older siblings] in child-headed households in the identification of contagious diseases such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV and AIDS related sicknesses?”

Peniel’s collage illustrates a need for every teacher to undertake training in first-aid, to be trained to be able to identify common sicknesses and be aware of HIV and AIDS related diseases. Equally important is the necessary care and support to be given to these vulnerable learners. Peniel stated that such aspects should be included in the curricula of initial teacher education programmes. Likewise, carefully designed continuing teacher development programmes can be beneficial to assist teachers in this regard (Wood & Goba, 2011). As Masinga (2013, p. 128) argues, “[t]he [DBE] needs to provide relevant teacher development to facilitate and include support and care as an important aspect that teachers need.”

Using Collage to Conceptualise a Response to My Third Research Question

After my discussions with my teacher participants about their collages, I decided to create another collage to help me to identify and think about significant themes in response to my third research question. As Butler-Kisber (2008) explains, “collage can...be used as a helpful way of conceptualising a response to a research question” (p. 270).



Figure 5.4. My Collage: “A Support Base for Teachers”

Creating the collage shown in Figure 5.4 helped me to recognise and think about the following three themes in response to my third research question *a) community support and engagement; b) continuing professional teacher development for psychosocial and emotional support; and c) teacher leadership for welfare care*. In the following section, I discuss these themes.

Community Support and Engagement

The collages and the discussions with my colleagues highlighted that, as a school, we are also a community of people who can lend a helping hand by providing welfare care for learners. The phrase shown in my collage (Figure 5.4), “*Let’s take it outside*”, denotes that teachers cannot work in isolation and therefore need to form supportive relationships and partnerships with community-based organisations, NGOs, sponsors, businesses, health organisations, government sectors and the broader community. Correspondingly, the Media in Education Trust (MiET)Africa (2009, p. 118) affirms that “one of the ways in which to meet learners”

needs for basic services is through networking with government departments, non-government organisations and service providers in the area”. This kind of networking can assist teachers to act quickly, by seeking assistance immediately for their learners and not waiting for specialist help to be provided by the DBE.

Since learners do not exist in isolation from a community, community engagement should form an integral part of the work of teachers and schools. It is for this reason that a collaborative relationship between the community, Department of Education, government departments and NGOs be established to facilitate this process. Likewise, awareness programmes within the community regarding the holistic development of learners need to be tabled and prioritised. Schools should serve as a „hub“ for community leaders. People with expertise can be invited to offer support to teachers regarding strategies in assisting learners who are experiencing problems. This approach is supported by the words of Khanare (2009) who explains that in underprivileged communities, skilful and resourceful people can be called on to use their trade, expertise and resources so they may be able to create a more successful community simply by using their skills. However, the DBE should not abdicate its responsibility to schools and other stakeholders to find ways to assist learners experiencing tremendous hardships. The DBE needs to work together with all stakeholders, by providing the necessary tools, guidelines and policies on welfare care, so that teachers will be able to offer a caring and supportive environment for learners.

Of interest to me is the research conducted by Ebersöhn and Ferreira (2011) that focused on how teachers formed partnerships to promote resilience in schools through their participation in the Supportive Teachers, Assets and Resilience (STAR) project. The STAR resilience intervention project focuses on the development and training of teachers. Its aims are to encourage teachers to form partnerships with protective resources in order to develop schools as safe environments and also to enable teachers to function at an optimal level against adversity (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011). These aims correlate to the efforts of teachers at my school who use the school as a base to mobilise parents and people in the community through forming partnerships with them to offer their assistance in order to support the school.

Teachers send out letters to businesses or speak to parents during meetings to encourage them to get involved and to offer their assistance with regard to repairing broken windows, fixing leaking taps, making porridge and the distribution of lunch. Parents also assist children, especially those coming from child-headed households, with their projects, homework and reading. In this way, these partnerships more often than not serve as a forum for parents to engage with teachers and learners. This also assists in saving money as an alternative to outsourcing these tasks to service providers. Parents also assist in planting vegetables and selling them door to door to generate income for the school. The school has also recognised the efforts made by parents and therefore has offset or given a concession towards their children's school fees.

I have also found that teachers can promote resilience in schools by establishing networks with service providers that can support vulnerable children. Schools can be positive psychological pillars to help safeguard children experiencing various risk factors associated with HIV and AIDS. These ideas are supported by the example of the "Learning together" project where teachers and community health care workers worked together with young people to develop strategies for HIV prevention and to tackle the epidemic successfully (Buthelezi et al., 2007). In this project, video documentary was used as a tool for creating a discussion to support the life skills education curriculum in schools. It further promoted interactive dialogues whereby young people were more comfortable to discuss sex and sexuality issues openly. Drawing a parallel to these findings, social workers and care givers from the Child Welfare Department are invited to my school to address teachers and children about HIV and AIDS and to engage with issues of sex, sexuality and AIDS.

Goldstein and Freedman (2003, p. 442) propose "participation in collaborative learning communities" and "service learning" as relevant types of educational experiences to be included in programmes to support teacher caring. Research suggests that more and more, South African teachers face a diversity of vulnerable children in their classroom (Khanare, 2009). Bearing this in mind, activities related to care and support for learners whose parents died as a result of HIV and AIDS and for learners coming from tremendous hardships needs to be covered in initial teacher education and continuing professional teacher development. Also, research suggests that South African schools often do not have a well-structured induction or continuing professional development programme for teachers in relation to

providing welfare care and support for learners (Khanare, 2009; Wood & Guba, 2011). In view of this, there needs to be a combined programme on care and support for vulnerable learners within initial teacher education and continuing professional teacher development so that student and practising teachers can be assisted and motivated to make supportive links with the school community and other stakeholders involved in education.

Continuing Professional Teacher Development for Psychosocial and Emotional Support

An image on the left hand side of my collage (Figure 5.4) shows what could be a counselling session between a psychologist and a client. My discussions with colleagues revealed that they felt that the state had abdicated its responsibility by not sending enough social workers and psychologists to schools to assist learners with psychosocial and emotional support. For this reason, teachers are expected to provide counselling skills. As Peniel asked: *“How capable are these newly acquired substitutes [the teachers] to continue with the responsibility that lies primarily in the hands of school psychologists and social workers?”*

Within the context of HIV and AIDS and other social challenges, the state should consider employing more psychologists, counsellors and social workers to support teachers and learners (Ogina, 2010). This could help to relieve teachers of some of their multiple layers of responsibilities. However, in the absence of human and material resources to provide welfare care for traumatised and grieving children at school, it is important for teachers to be supported in developing valuable counselling skills (Ebersöhn & Ferreira, 2011). In line with this, capacity building programmes for teachers should be geared towards respect, empathy and acceptance as valuable counselling attributes (Jairam, 2009). From retracing my own lived educational experiences (as portrayed in Chapter Three), I have realised that important teacher qualities for enacting welfare care are attentiveness, empathy, encouragement and nurturing. These qualities are illustrated in my collage by the phrase, *“Always be helpful and caring”* and the image of an adult hugging a child. The image at the bottom of my collage that shows a group of people with laptops learning together highlights that continuing teacher development programmes are necessary to empower and develop the teacher’s care giving competencies in providing emotional care for learners.

Providing emotional support for children affected by HIV and AIDS seems to be a particularly challenging task for teachers. In my research journal, I reflected:

“I was not trained at university to provide support and care for learners. As their teacher, I am in constant contact with these learners throughout the day and often have to deal with problems when they arise and not wait for specialist help. Through my passion, religious beliefs and background experiences this has motivated me to help learners orphaned by HIV and AIDS related diseases”. (Journal entry, 3 December 2013)

As Wood and Goba (2011) highlight, my experience seems to be shared by other South Africa teachers:

Teachers struggle to balance the already challenging business of teaching and learning with the additional demands imposed by the increased levels of anxiety, limited concentration spans, severe trauma, heightened discrimination and stigma, and increased poverty experienced by learners living in this age of AIDS. (p. 276)

I have found that not all learners who are affected by HIV and AIDS are willing to talk about their experiences, perhaps as a result of the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS and its related deaths. Masinga (2013, p. 127) believes that “teachers need proper training in order to become sensitive, open-minded, a good listener, caring, non-judgemental, be confidential, trustworthy and ensure confidentiality with learners who are affected or infected with the HIV/ AIDS”. Such training would assist teachers to be helpful and caring towards these learners.

It is usually seen as the responsibility of the Life Orientation (LO) teacher to teach life skills education, which includes HIV and AIDS education (Masinga, 2013). As Masinga (2013) points out, these LO teachers are expected also to provide HIV and AIDS-related counselling and support, even if they are not trained to do so. I have also noticed that learners sometimes prefer not to discuss their personal problems with LO teachers that they seldom see. In light of this, addressing these issues should not be confined to a particular teacher at school, but it should be understood to be the responsibility of all teachers at the school, who should themselves receive appropriate support and training (Bhana, Morrell, Epstein, & Moletsane, 2006; Masinga, 2013; Wood & Goba, 2011). Teachers need to be capacitated by professional counsellors on how to identify learners with welfare care needs and on functional counselling skills (Jairam, 2009). Such programmes are likely to contribute to whole school development

and to enhance teachers' capacity for putting into action an ethics of care. Personally I feel, this might help boost teachers' confidence to become involved in helping their learners to overcome their hardships. I have found that vulnerable children do not always need specialised support from professionals if they can get everyday support and care from their teachers, as well as friends, community members, and caregivers. Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to create an „open-door policy“ with learners. In this way learners would be able to feel free to go to them and share what is going on in their lives (Jairam, 2009). This can instil a sense of hope and belonging in learners.

Goldstein and Lake (2000, p. 442) believe that the “ethics of care needs to be incorporated into the curricula of teacher education”. Goldstein and Freedman (2003) also claim that while teachers do not need to be taught *how* to care, teacher education programmes can “help them understand the role of caring in teaching and prepare them to teach in ways that draw on the power of caring relationships in teaching and learning” (p. 441). The collage activity has shown me that we need continuing professional development programmes that can help teachers design new strategies and methods that will support them in providing welfare care, preventing them from becoming exhausted and burnt out, while at the same time remaining committed to caring for their learners' needs.

Teacher Leadership for Welfare Care

Looking back at my experience as a novice teacher (Chapter Three), I can see how I benefited from leadership and mentoring from my school principal and other senior colleagues. The phrase “*The Masters at your service*” at the top of my collage reminds me of the support I received from these master teachers. Without that support, the transition from being a novice teacher to a practising teacher could have been a very traumatic experience. Literature refers to this as a “reality shock” (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009, p. 207) where novice teachers either „sink or swim“. In my view, induction and mentoring from senior colleagues are also needed to empower and develop novice teachers in relation to providing welfare care for learners.

However, Wood and Goba (2011) point out that school management teams often do not have the required knowledge or skills to provide necessary support to teachers in relation to enacting welfare care. Therefore, the demands created by the need for welfare care for

learners requires a combined effort of teachers, learners and stakeholders inside and outside of the school community (Moorosi, 2009). In this way, it cannot be the sole responsibility of the school principal and the SMT to provide the assistance needed to perform this demanding role. Personally, I feel that schools can benefit from using the full potential of all stakeholders to support teachers to enact welfare for learners. Likewise, Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley and Somaroo (2010) advocate that “the principal should work collectively with both SMT and teachers as leaders and decision-makers” (p. 404). This implies shared leadership by giving “*Power to the people*” (as illustrated in my collage) and acknowledging that teachers are leaders in their own right. If schools are to provide welfare care for learners, every teacher needs to assume a leadership role even if he or she does not hold a formal leadership position. Certainly, in my school, teachers are taking the lead in responding to learners’ welfare care needs (see Chapter Four).

Furthermore, because principals, SMTs and teachers do not have all the answers, expertise from the outside is needed. Ogina (2010) further elaborates: “If teachers, community leaders and people with expertise could be involved as leaders and decision makers, this would ease some of the pressure and burden on providing welfare care for learners” (p.8). Hence, the SMTs need to acknowledge and value the leadership shown by community members as well as teachers.

Additionally, Moorosi (2009) suggests that learners can also be encouraged to show leadership in this regard. She offers an example of “The learner-led peer education programme and the use of web tools, for example YAHANET” (p. 81). These programmes focused on the youth (learners) at school taking on a leadership role in sharing information and knowledge on life skills programmes through participatory action (dance, art and songs). Likewise at my school, learners are part of the SMART CLUB (as explained in Chapter Four). The learners from the SMART CLUB create safe spaces for others to feel free to discuss issues concerning them. Through the use of songs and dance, they share information and knowledge focussing on the drugs, HIV and AIDS and social ills facing our learners. These platforms are created to spread messages of hope for our learners. At the same time, teachers at my school assist and encourage this kind of initiative and leadership in learners. Many of these learners are invited to perform at other schools in the community. These

youth are seen as leaders in the broader community, by taking the action of leading the way through sharing youth information and knowledge.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed my third research question: *How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?* Drawing on collages and discussions with my teacher participants, I have highlighted additional support that is needed by teachers in relation to providing welfare care for learners. The chapter shows that teachers cannot work in isolation and therefore need to negotiate supportive relationships with others through engaging diverse stakeholders. This could help to relieve teachers of some of their multiple layers of responsibilities. In addition, teacher leadership for welfare care can work if partnerships with learners, communities and other stakeholders can be developed, acknowledged and valued. Overall, this chapter highlights that teachers can be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners through: *a) community support and engagement; b) continuing professional teacher development for psychosocial and emotional support; and c) teacher leadership for welfare care.*

In the next chapter, Chapter Six, I present a review of the thesis in relation to the aims, purpose and focus and also offer a summary of each chapter. Thereafter, I offer my reflections on self-study as a methodology. In addition, I note that *Ubuntu* is a challenging concept to live up to in practice.

CHAPTER SIX: MOVING FORWARD WITH ENACTING WELFARE CARE

Introduction

Through this self-study, I aimed to gain a better understanding of my role as a teacher in relation to providing welfare care. Additionally, my intention was to better understand welfare care as it was being enacted by me and my fellow teachers at my school. My hope was that this could help me and others to better understand the role of teachers in relation to welfare care. The purpose of this research was thus to learn from my experience and to deliberate on how I and other practising teachers can become better prepared and supported to respond to the needs of learners by providing welfare care.

In the previous chapter (Chapter Five), I focused on my third research question: *How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?* In responding to this question, I drew on collages and discussions with my teacher participants. This assisted me to better understand what additional support is needed by teachers in relation to providing welfare care for learners. The chapter brought to light that teachers cannot work in isolation to provide welfare care for learners. Teachers need to work in partnership with diverse stakeholders. These supportive relationships could benefit teachers by relieving them of some of their multiple layers of responsibilities. Overall, this chapter highlights that teachers can be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners through: *a) community support and engagement; b) continuing professional teacher development for psychosocial and emotional support; and c) teacher leadership for welfare care.*

This concluding chapter, Chapter Six, begins with a review of the thesis. I then discuss my most significant learning from my self-study research.

Review of the Thesis

Chapter One

In Chapter One I introduced the focus, purpose and context of the study and explained the necessity of welfare care for learners. I clarified my view of the responsibilities of teachers in relation to providing welfare care for learners in South African schools. I also listed and explained the three research questions that informed my study:

1. *How have my lived experiences contributed to my passion to provide welfare care for learners?*
2. *How are we, as practising teachers, currently enacting welfare care at my school?*
3. *How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?*

Furthermore, I explained the key concepts and theoretical perspective that were central in understanding my topic. I clarified how, in my research, I made use of the terms *welfare care* and *pastoral care*, since both concepts involve responding to learners' needs. As explained in Chapter One, my interpretation (drawing on Grant, Jasson, & Lawrence, 2010) of *welfare care* is that it involves making sure that the physical, social and emotional conditions under which learners develop and learn are adequate. In Chapter One, I explained that I was looking at welfare care from a theoretical perspective of *Ubuntu*. According to Mkhize (2004), the term *Ubuntu* can be interpreted as humanness. He explains this as a relational process of becoming, thus highlighting relationships between human beings. A theoretical perspective of *Ubuntu* allowed me to see that, in enacting welfare care, it is imperative that teachers acknowledge and bring out the human element in themselves and others. Teachers need to be sympathetic, caring and understanding and to show empathy towards learners. In Chapter One, I also outlined the methodological approach of self-study of educational practice and explained that I selected this methodology because I realised that it could enrich and develop a teacher's personal and professional development and contribute to public knowledge about teaching and learning (Samaras, 2011). I concluded the chapter by providing an overview of the entire thesis.

Chapter Two

In Chapter Two, I offered my understanding of the methodological aspects of the study. Firstly, I explained my methodological approach of self-study of practice. I also described the context within which the study was undertaken. Further, I clarified my research methods, namely, memory-work self-study, collective self-study and arts-based self-study. Thereafter, I illustrated the multiple data generation strategies that I used. Next, I pointed out certain challenges that I experienced during my research journey and explained how I overcame these challenges. To conclude, I considered issues of ethics and trustworthiness. In reflecting on what I learned about self-study methods through this research journey, I explained how I found the use of artefacts, such as photographs, letters and cards especially helpful in recollecting and depicting noteworthy events and people in my lived experiences of learning

and teaching. These objects provided me with a canvas to reflect on my past and to bring to 'life' these memory stories. On the flip side of the canvas is the part played by others in my self-study research. As explained in Chapter Two, consistent interaction with, and care from my critical friends assisted me to persevere with my research in the face of a number of challenges.

Chapter Three

In Chapter Three, I paid special attention to my first research question: *How have my lived experiences contributed to my passion to provide welfare care for learners?* I explained how, to answer this question, I used memory-work self-study, which helped me to reflect on my past and present life and thus gain new insights into my research topic. I presented memory stories of my lived experiences from my early schooling up to my recent teaching experience, with particular emphasis on exploring how the process of my becoming motivated and passionate about enacting welfare care for learners was shaped by important people and events. I reflected on both positive and negative experiences that I encountered as a learner and as a teacher. I went on to demonstrate how I dissected my memory stories to help identify themes to assist me better understand how these experiences had contributed to me becoming passionate in providing welfare care for learners with emphasis on: *a) attentiveness; b) empathy; c) encouragement; and d) nurturing.*

In reflecting on my use of the memory-work method, I described how I experienced writing about my lived experiences as a therapeutic process. I explained how, through memory-work, I was able to transform distressing lived experiences into important learning. This curative process helped me develop and take cognisance of my commitment to become a caring teacher. Through memory-work, I realised that threading the same path as many of my learners (such as being not financially well off and losing my parents at a young age) contributed to me becoming more caring, empathetic and understanding towards these learners. This chapter also revealed how the motivation and encouragement I received from other people spurred me on in wanting to provide welfare care for learners. It was also a vehicle to motivate and encourage my fellow teachers to become passionate, about enacting welfare care for learners.

Chapter Four

In this chapter, I responded to my second research question: *How are we as practising teachers currently enacting welfare care at my school?* This chapter highlighted the multiple welfare care responsibilities teachers are performing in order to develop learners holistically. It shows how it becomes the teacher's responsibility to offer the necessary support and care for learners who otherwise might 'fall through the cracks'. This calls for teachers to take on added welfare care responsibilities, apart from performing the core function of teaching. In this chapter, I also reflected on ways in which teachers at my school have identified and responded to the basic (social, emotional, medical, and psychological) needs of learners. I clarified how from discussions with my colleagues and from personal reflections, I learned that teachers at my school are performing welfare care by:

- a) connecting nutrition with learning;*
- b) making provision for school uniforms and stationery for learners;*
- c) bringing on board sponsors, NGOs, religious organisations and businesses as a support base;*
- d) providing sports, games and excursions;*
- e) attending to the medical, emotional and social development needs of learners.*

The chapter also points out that, to perform the complex welfare care role effectively, teachers cannot work in isolation, but instead need help and support from all stakeholders involved in education.

Chapter Five

In Chapter Five, I explored how we as teachers can be better supported in providing welfare care for learners. I reflected *how* teachers need to be supported and *where they need to start* when looking to be better supported. I explained how I used collage as an art-based self-study technique to explore my third research question: *How can we, as practising teachers, be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners?* Based on collages and discussions with my colleagues, I found that teachers can be better supported in enacting welfare care for learners through: *a) community support and engagement; b) continuing professional teacher development for psychosocial and emotional support; and c) teacher leadership for welfare care.* This chapter highlighted that, to enact welfare care, teachers need to work in partnership and form supportive relationships with others through engaging with diverse stakeholders involved in education. The chapter also drew attention to how teacher leadership

for welfare care can succeed if partnerships with learners, communities and other stakeholders can be developed, recognised and appreciated.

My Learning through Self-Study

Methodological Reflections

Through engaging with self-study methodology, I have realised the use of multiple data strategies (such as collages, artefacts and collaborative discussions) has assisted me along this ongoing self-study journey. These served as catalysts to recall and describe significant events and people. More significantly, working collaboratively with colleagues and negotiating our experiences helped me to improve my understanding of enacting welfare care.

I have found that self-study lends itself to interaction with other people, namely, my teacher participants, my critical friends and the sponsors. The interactive process of my self-study research helped me to understand, appreciate and value the viewpoints of the people involved. I found these interactions beneficial and this also helped me to create a closer working relationship with all stakeholders. The interactions with these significant others have sparked new ideas and this has helped me to gain other perspectives in exploring my research topic.

At the same time, my critical friends offered me advice and support, which enhanced my self-reflection within a safe and supportive community, and thus served to improve my understanding of my research topic and research process. This gave me the opportunity to learn more about myself and the professional colleagues who participated in my study. I have come to realise that the formation of collaborative partnerships between professional colleagues and various other stakeholders has contributed to teachers effectively enacting welfare care at our school.

Improving my Practice

I selected self-study methodology because I wanted to research myself within my educational context, with the intention of better understanding my professional practice and to become better prepared and supported to enact welfare care for my learners. This gave me the opportunity to learn more about myself and the professional colleagues who participated in my study. Personally, I found that teacher learning can be enhanced through engaging in self-study research, especially when teachers take on the journey to revisit, reflect and recall

their lived experiences. Self-study allows teachers to become more knowledgeable while improving their own practice. Undertaking this reflective journey helped me to find new ways of knowing and thus helped me to identify possibilities to develop new strategies to fill in the gaps to become better prepared and supported in order to perform this demanding role of caregiver.

Moreover, teaching is regarded as life-long learning profession. Engaging in self-study has been a vehicle for me to find new ways of learning, namely memory-work self-study, collective self-study and arts-based self-study. Applying these new ways of learning has helped me to gain important insights into my research topic and hence improving my practice. Through self-study, I established a deeper and more complex understanding of my role as a caregiver for my learners. I am now in a position to contribute to public awareness about teachers providing welfare care for learners. This can ultimately contribute to whole school development and to the betterment of our communities and society. Through engaging in this self-study journey, I have read more widely on research done by others on the role of the teacher in enacting welfare care. This has helped me to better understand what the role demands and, how as a teacher, I can be better supported to become an active caregiver to learners

My Learning about Enacting Welfare Care for Learners

A Micro Perspective – Assisting Learners from the Inside

From revisiting my own past experiences as a learner I have become more aware of the difficulties I encountered and how my teachers did or did not provide a safe and supportive environment for me to address those difficulties. As a teacher myself, I have also observed that many learners feel uncertain about discussing their problems. Therefore during my study, I have become aware of the need for teachers and school leadership (SMT's) to create a conducive atmosphere wherein learners can feel safe and free to confide and be comfortable to discuss sensitive issues. These teachers need to be empathetic, compassionate, loving, understanding, caring and passionate about helping learners coming from tremendous hardships. This may help learners to start realising that schools are places where their teachers can provide them with love, medical and emotional care, food and most importantly a sense of hope and belonging.

In addition, my research has highlighted how critical it is for learners coming from poverty stricken families and child-headed households to be provided with food and other basic necessities. I think the issue of support for learners from disadvantaged communities needs to be revisited. My study has drawn attention to the critical need for such support, especially to the connection between nutrition and learning. Special attention needs to be paid to the poverty index within the communities in which learners live. Physical inspections and visits by various government officials, DBE officials, community leaders and sponsors to the school and surrounding communities need to be undertaken in order to ascertain the poverty levels around the schools. Schools that cater for learners from poverty-stricken homes and communities need to be managed by the DBE in terms of appropriate funding to keep the schools afloat and meet learners' basic needs. Teachers should not be burdened with this task of fundraising; I believe that adequate funding for meeting learners' basic needs would increase teacher motivation to work with learners in need.

My study also highlighted how, in many instances, teacher's lives are entwined with the negative impact of an ethics of care. During my discussions with the teacher participants they described some 'dark moments' they had undergone. They expressed that they sometimes feel overburdened since they do not have the capacity and training to take on these additional roles to meet the needs of individual learners. They drew attention to a lack of proper counselling skills, not having enough time for themselves at school to catch up with their work and feeling emotionally disturbed by grieving children who are orphaned. These are all issues that need further attention. The practice of *Ubuntu* is demanding and as caregivers, teachers themselves are in urgent need of care.

A Macro Perspective – Assisting Learners from the Outside (Broader Community)

My study has highlighted the need for teachers and the SMTs to be supported by the broader community in order to be able to enact welfare care more effectively. Hence, the SMTs, principals and practising teachers need to be supported with relevant training and guidelines. It is also important for the DBE to work with other interested parties to provide all stakeholders involved in the holistic development of learners with the necessary support, education and development to attend to learners' basic needs.

Correspondingly, universities and teacher training institutions could start forming partnerships with schools and the DBE to design relevant educational programmes for

welfare care so that in-service and pre-service teachers can benefit. The ethics of care needs to be incorporated into the curricula of initial teacher education and continuing teacher professional development. Carefully designed educational programmes could assist teachers to design context-appropriate strategies to assist them in providing supportive and empowering environments for learners

Likewise, awareness programmes within the community regarding the holistic development of learners need to be tabled and prioritised. Schools should serve as ‘hub’ for community leaders; people with expertise need to be invited to offer support to teachers regarding strategies for assisting learners who are experiencing problems. Teachers, School Governing Bodies, community leaders and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with the necessary expertise also need to be included in decision making at different levels of planning and policy review so that the ethics of care can be incorporated into school programmes.

Conclusion

My expectation was that this self-study could aid me and others to better understand the role of teachers in relation to welfare care and to gain insight into how teachers can become better prepared and supported in this regard. This self-study has helped me to become better informed about what the welfare role demands and about how I and other teachers can become better prepared to assist learners who are experiencing tremendous hardships and where the social challenges brought by factors such as HIV and AIDS, poverty, unemployment, and child-headed household families are rife.

Circumstances have prompted teachers in South African schools to become counsellors, confidantes and active caregivers for learners. This study has highlighted how teachers are spending a great deal of time and energy in making provision for meeting learners’ basic needs such as nutrition, school uniforms and stationery, and medical care. This is because they understand that children battle to concentrate and learn effectively when they are hungry, cold, unwell or lacking in basic school equipment. These basic welfare needs cannot be neglected. This study has enabled me to acknowledge that learners and teachers are likely to perform better if these basic needs could be met for all learners through more far-reaching programmes involving all relevant stakeholders. Through this self-study, I also have realised that teachers, school management and other stakeholders need to be capacitated with adequate knowledge and skills for enacting welfare care.

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For me, this study has confirmed that enacting welfare care requires teachers to be compassionate and understanding and to show empathy towards learners. The development of positive relationships is of utmost importance when it comes to enacting welfare care. Teachers who are enacting an ethics of care are thus living out the Southern African philosophical perspective of *Ubuntu*. These teachers who acknowledge and bring out humanness in themselves and others are offering learners the vital gift of hope.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

11 August 2012

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO USE FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSIONS IN PROFESSIONAL COLLEAGUES AND CRITICAL FRIENDS MEETINGS

Title: Understanding the role of the teacher in enacting welfare care for learners: A self-study.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand how; I as a teacher have become motivated and passionate in providing welfare care. This study is of interest to me because the context within which I teach draws a large number of learners experiencing tremendous hardships. These hardships are due to their parents being divorced, many of their parents being unemployed, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and learners being brought up in child headed households. Being a teacher in this context is fraught with many challenges and constraints which I am directly affected by. Therefore, I am very passionate about assisting learners who are experiencing these problems. Through this study, I would like to aim at becoming more knowledgeable and empowered in relation to providing welfare care. I would like to learn from my experience to consider how practising teachers can become committed and better prepared to respond to the needs of learners by providing welfare care.

This study is supervised by Dr Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan who is a senior lecturer at the School of Education, UKZN. Dr Pithouse-Morgan can be contacted telephonically on 031-2603460.

In this study, I will use the following methods to gather information: reflective journal entries, artefacts, colleagues' photographs, group discussions with critical friends/ professional colleagues and a collage. The critical friends meetings will take place during our group M Ed supervision meetings and will not require an additional time from you. I will make notes during the discussions.

I hereby request permission from you to refer to our discussions of our critical friends' / professional colleagues' meetings in my study. I will only use this data if I receive written consent from you.

If I receive consent, I will use this data in a way that respects your dignity and privacy. My notes on your inputs to the discussion will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes. Your name and information that might identify you or your school will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study.

There are no direct benefits to you participating in this study. However, I hope that this study will make a significant contribution to research on the development of strategies for enacting welfare / pastoral care at our school and to assist our teachers to become committed and better prepared to respond to the needs of learners by providing welfare / pastoral care.

I also wish to inform you have no binding commitment to the study and that you may withdraw your consent at any time if you feel the need to. If you withdraw your consent, your consent, you will not be prejudiced in any way.

If you have any questions relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Mrs Phume Ximba at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031 – 260 3587.

Thank you for your assistance.

Mrs Ragini Moodley

INFORMED CONSENT AND DOCUMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF STUDY: Understanding the role of the teacher in enacting welfare care for learners: A self-study

I, _____ hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study, and do consent to participate in the study.

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

I consent to the following data collection activities (please tick):

	YES	NO
Group discussions with critical friends.		
Professional colleagues' photographs (objects and designated areas).		
Professional colleagues' collage.		
Group discussion with professional colleagues.		

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

10 October 2012

Mrs Ragini Moodley 209541097
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Moodley

Protocol reference number: HSS/0978/012M

Project title: Understanding the role of the teacher in enacting welfare care for learners: A self-study

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr Kathleen Pithouse-Morgan
cc Academic Leader: Dr MN Davids
cc School Admin: Ms S Naicker

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