

Narratives of self-directed professional development:

**Practices, learning and change of teachers in South
African schools**

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Doctor of Education in the College of Humanities at the
University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), South Africa.**

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2012

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Dr Guruvasagie Pillay

DECLARATION

I, **Rosaline Govender** declare that

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- b) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- c) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sources from other persons.
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ABSTRACT

This research study is an exploration of the self-directed professional development of teachers, teaching in public schools in an era of democracy and educational change in South Africa. Amidst an ever-changing educational system, these teachers - Mbeje, Shabeer, Carolina, Shakila and Tasneem - position themselves as self-directed teacher-learners. As self-directed teacher-learners they adopt particular learning practices which enable change within the broader discourses of public schooling.

Life-story interviews were used to enter into the public and private spaces of these five teachers which offered me glimpses of how particular systems shaped their identities, and how the meanings of teacher-learner shaped their learning practices. I employed the thematic restorying approach to represent the narratives. Through collaboration with the teachers in this study, I identified critical moments in their lives which shaped their self-directed learning for change within the broader discourses of public schooling. The reconstructed narratives are located within the social, political and educational systems of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa

Positioning this study in the critical paradigm, I developed a multi-layered framework of analysis and interpretation. I offer my interpretations of the stories through three lenses: restorying the field texts - the self through story; the teacher-learner in relation to socio-cultural contexts, and practices of self-directed learning.

This study shows that as teacher-learners learn for change through self-directed learning, they develop their agency as transformative intellectuals, which is necessary for the reworking of South African public schools. Self-directed learning is critical for the

transformation of the teacher-learner: as their race, class and gender meanings are disrupted for new meanings of teacher- learner. In their becoming they consciously and subconsciously create a “new professional teacher-learner” for South African public schooling.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my mother, Mrs Baigum Munsamy, who always placed the utmost priority on my education. Thank you, Mum, for your unconditional love and the numerous sacrifices you made to ensure that I achieved my dreams and goals. You continue to inspire me.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

List of abbreviations and acronyms used in this thesis

BED	Bachelor of Education
B.Paed	Bachelor of Pedagogics
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DoE	Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
HoD	Head of Department
Hons	Honours
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSLA	National Support for Learner Attainment
NTA	National Teaching Award
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PD	Professional Development
REQV	Relative Education Qualification Value
TREE	Training Resources for Early Education
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SEM	Senior Education Management
UNISA	University of South Africa

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Chapter 1 Taking a glimpse into the tapestry of teachers' learning and change

1.1 Introduction

My interest in the lives of teachers was sparked by a young teacher named Kevin to whom I was introduced to while I was considering my research topic. Kevin is an Indian male who had been teaching for ten years at the time that I met him. I read about his achievements in a local newspaper and was interested in his learning achievements. He had been nominated by his school for the National Teaching Awards and had been placed third at the national finals. His story highlighted the fact that amidst all the negativity surrounding teaching and teachers there are still teachers who strive for excellence by creating opportunities to develop themselves through learning. Kevin's story inspired me to explore the practices of learning and change in South African teachers.

Kevin's Story

Is education the only factor that shapes an individual's future? Or is it more than that? Personally, I believe that education is only one aspect of a microcosm of events that, when woven together, create this beautiful and unique tapestry that is the individual.

I brought home the accolades

It was on the 20th of August 1976 at approximately 1:30AM that I took my first breath of life in Stanger Hospital. Born to Savy, my mum, and Soma, my dad, I was the second son in the family. I always felt that since I was born at a time when South Africa was fighting its political demons, I could make a difference.

My parents were never rich but we were also never poor. They always made sure we had the best, often at the expense of their own luxuries. From 1983 to 1989, I attended Flambel Primary School. It was during this time that I realised how cruel children could be. The existence of "friendship groups" based on how rich your parents were, or what car your father drove, was rife. This never bothered me though; I concentrated on my studies and brought home the accolades – the taste of which I would become addicted to.

“You new ones need to be taught a lesson”

I attended Belverton Secondary from 1990 to 1994 which was a wake-up call for me. This was when I bore the brunt of undue corporal punishment. I remember it like it was yesterday. It was my first week in Standard 6¹ Mrs S.B.T. left me in charge of the class when she went to the office. A teacher who announced himself as Mr K.M. waltzed into the class and slapped me hard across the face saying, “You new ones need to be taught a lesson, this is not a primary school you know.” I can't tell you what this did to my self-confidence levels but it was a necessary evil. It led me to my present career. I wanted to be a teacher, one who was loved and not feared, one who could make a difference. Once again I engaged myself in my studies, never letting persuasions of peer pressure or my teenage years tempt me from the path that I had chosen.

I wanted to make a difference

I attended the University of Durban, Westville, from 1995 to 1999. It was here that I first interacted with people from different race groups. It was an interesting time. I made friends quickly and learnt all that I could, especially from my African friends. They told me stories about apartheid and how their families were destroyed. I realised that there was an entire race of people out there who were traumatised by their past but were willing to forgive the sins of yesterday so they could build a better tomorrow. It was at this time that I saw life from another perspective and this awoke something in me. I wanted to help and make a difference. I helped these students with tuition and assignments. The years flew by and in 1998 I completed my studies and graduated from university.

In 1999 I ventured out into the world and accepted my first opportunity to teach at a school in Lenasia, Johannesburg, where I concentrated on sport and other co-curricular activities. It was here that I gained experience as a co-ordinator. I coached and organised chess competitions up to provincial level. Although my career was progressing, I wasn't happy as I hadn't become the teacher I had once envisaged I would be. It was at this time that I decided to transfer to another school; a school that could help me become what I once imagined – a teacher who can make a difference! I was transferred to a small school in Estcourt called M.L. Sultan Primary and I taught there from 2002 to 2006. It was here that I grew professionally and achieved my goal of becoming a change agent.

¹ Grade 8

Although the learners were from impoverished backgrounds they had a thirst for knowledge. They sat back and absorbed my lessons; listening, questioning, reasoning and debating. It was at this small school that I made a difference.

I strive to become a better teacher

I introduced learners to poetry and they wrote poems that were published in two anthologies, *Rock Pool Musings* and *Fairy-tale Moon*. I taught them about science and technology and they excelled at the Eskom Science Expo. What started as a small committee that took two Grade 7 learners to provincial competitions – where they received bursaries to study engineering – grew from strength to strength until we had had four learners who competed against learners from private schools and brought back the medals.

My endeavours were showcased when I entered the National Teaching Awards and I was placed third at the national finals. Every day, I strive to become a better teacher. I look for different opportunities to develop myself so that I can continue to make a difference in the lives of my learners.

Kevin's story resonated with something deep within me. As a teacher who grew up in apartheid South Africa and had been teaching in a public school for the past 18 years, I could identify with Kevin's story. His account highlights interesting and important aspects of his learning and how he views himself as a teacher-learner in post-apartheid South Africa. For him, teaching is a mission to bring about personal change within himself, his school and community. He experiences a sense of discomfort as he realises that he hasn't become the teacher that he had once envisaged. It is this discomfort that propels him to make particular decisions to "*transfer to another school, a school that could help me become what [I] once imagined - a teacher who can make a difference!*"

Kevin's story raises many issues and questions about teachers' learning and change, especially within the post-apartheid schooling context of South Africa. How do teachers who grew up in apartheid South Africa, who have been shaped by their experiences with race, class and gender, construct themselves as teacher-learners? Who is this South African teacher-learner who is interested in developing him- or herself? How does experiences with race, class and gender shape teachers' learning? How do the spaces within and outside the school enable or constrain self-directed learning? What are the sources of this learning and change?

Kevin's story served as a catalyst for my research. It prompted me to explore how teachers working within the broader discourses of public schooling in post-apartheid South Africa are constructing themselves as teacher-learners

Research in the area of teacher learning in South Africa shows that when professional development activities are externally driven, there is little or no change (Moore, 2000; Hayes, 2000; Pillay, 2003; Shezi, 2008). Professional development in post-apartheid South Africa has focused primarily on curriculum reform. The Department of Education (DoE) has facilitated many workshops with the emphasis on how to teach the curriculum, which began with Curriculum 2005 in 1997, then moved to the National Curriculum Statements in 2002, and now focuses on the implementation of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (Betram, 2011). The Department of Education uses the cascade model to train teachers on policy implementation. This model is ineffective as it contributes to the development of teachers as "restricted professionals" (Shezi, 2008, p. 97). A restricted professional is a teacher who is reliant on a narrow, classroom-based perspective of what it means to be teacher (Hoyle, 1974).

According to Hayes (2000) the cascade model of teacher training and development is being used because it is cost-effective, using teachers and those in senior positions as co-trainers. Teachers are viewed as docile as they are not involved in selecting what and how they want to learn – instead, they are subjected to a top-down approach. The cascade model is a form of the "occupational control of teachers" (Ozga, 1995, p.35) where teachers are told what to learn and how to learn. Teacher knowledge is thus state-controlled and teachers lack autonomy.

The cascade model used in continuing professional development of teachers is also not context-sensitive (Shezi, 2008) as it does not take into consideration the social and political systems of apartheid and post-apartheid schools. Teachers in South African schools feel a sense of powerlessness because they are seen as "reproducers of the state's agenda and implementers rather than formulators of policies" (Carrim, 2003, p. 318). Shezi (2008) argues that the present cascade model has contributed to the deprofessionalisation of teachers. When teachers negotiate their own learning in meaningful ways this enables change in how they think, act and behave.

When teachers are able to direct their own learning this can produce change in their practice as teachers. As Pillay (2003, p. 26) reiterates, “teachers [are] not objects to be changed but complex subjects with power and knowledge to change”. Teacher change is not about what can be done to teachers but what teachers can do to change their professional lives as teachers. Teachers as agents of change must take responsibility for their learning.

Both Kevin's story and the current research on practicing teachers' learning in South Africa schools ignited my curiosity to explore self-directed, lifelong learning. They raised many questions and issues on teachers' self-directed learning in South African public schools: How are teacher-learners developing themselves? Who are these teachers who want to learn and change as professionals, working in a different era of democracy and educational change? What are some of the learning activities that they engage in to improve their practice as teachers? What are the sources of their professional learning as teacher-learners? What are the learning spaces within which learning and change takes place? These are some of the issues and questions that led me to embark on this journey of focusing on the practices, learning and change of teachers in post-apartheid South Africa.

1.2 Research methodology

The primary objective of this study is to explore the practices of self-directed learning for teacher-change in South African public schools. I want to explore teachers' socio-cultural contexts which shape meanings of self and analyse the spaces within which professional learning and change occurs. I also want to examine how teacher-learners are shaped by their personal meanings of self and how these meanings shape their practice in their particular schooling realities.

The general aim of this study is to explore the self-directed professional learning and change of teacher-learners. The scope of this study is encapsulated in the following critical question:

What self-directed professional learning and change are South African teachers who teach in public schools engaged in?

The sub-questions that drive this exploration are:

- Who are these teacher-learners engaging in self-directed professional learning and change?
- What meanings of self shape teachers' learning?
- How do the meanings of teacher-learner inform teachers' learning practices?

In this study I used narrative inquiry which provided me with the means to explore teachers' learning and change. Stories offered me a glimpse into teachers' lives as they shared their experiences as learners in apartheid South Africa and as teacher-learners in post-apartheid South Africa. I located this study in the critical paradigm because I am interested in uncovering the particular historical and socio-cultural contexts that gave rise to particular types of teacher-learners in South Africa. Critical paradigm is important in the study of South African teacher-learners as it "acknowledges production *and* reproduction, agency *and* structure" in South African schools (Zeicher & Gore, 1990, p. 5). Critical paradigm focuses on exploring the underlying meanings of "human actions and experiences" (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002, p. 718). Through the critical paradigm I am able to explore the production (Giroux, 1988; Willis, 1977, 1987) and reproduction (Bernstein, 2001, 2003; Bourdieu, 1986, 1987, 1990; Bowles and Gintis, 1976, 1986, 2002) that occurred in South African schools during the apartheid and post-apartheid era and explore how teacher-learners

act as agents of change and direct their learning. The critical paradigm also allows me as a teacher-researcher to explore the identities of teacher-learners as fluid; they are multiple adaptive beings in a state of flux and their identities are constructed within particular discourses, as recognised by Foucault (1984), which “show us our world and ourselves through new and valuable lenses” (Tyson, 2006, p 2).

All five teachers in the sample teach in schools in Phoenix, KwaZulu-Natal. I was directed to these teachers by principals, teachers and members of the community. Most of the teachers share similar teaching contexts. Their stories describe the socio-cultural contexts of growing up in apartheid South Africa and how they construct themselves as teacher-learners in post-apartheid South Africa, creating the impetus for particular practices as noted by Pillay (2003). In exploring teachers' lives I am interested in the contexts in which they teach as well as how as teacher-learners they exert their agency to find ways of learning, and developing themselves as professionals.

The teachers in this study grew up within the apartheid context where the discourses of race, class and gender shaped particular constructions of themselves as teacher-learners. In this study I present a critical analysis of the lives of these five teachers and how they negotiate the discourses of race, class and gender and make new meanings of knowing, being and doing through their self-directed learning and change. I highlight how particular discourses shape the way that they view themselves and the meanings that they ascribe to their practice as teacher-learners. As noted by other authors like Ballantine (1993) and Lorber (2007), I examine how teacher-learners create and produce new meanings of teacher-self through these dominant discourses

1.3 Professional and political imperatives in post-apartheid South Africa

1994 signalled the end of the apartheid era in South Africa and since then there has been a radical shift in the educational landscape. Eighteen education departments that were once divided by race were restructured into nine (Chisholm, 2008). Although this desegregation occurred more than a decade ago, race, class and cultural problems still manifest in South African schools (Jansen, 2004a; Ndimande, 2009). Even though the main aim of the South African Schools' Act is to eliminate a race-based education system (Department of Education [DoE], 1996) there is still an inequity in resources and staffing at

formerly black schools. As a result, schools struggle to fulfil their educational mandate of providing quality learning and teaching (Lam, Ardington & Leibbrant, 2011).

Many policies were introduced to herald the shift in the educational landscape, such as: the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE; 2011a); the National Protocol for Assessment (DoE; 2011b); the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE; 2006); the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Curriculum 2005) (DoE; 2000) and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (DoE, 2003a). These policies construct teachers working in the changing educational landscape in particular ways. Adler (2002) notes that teachers' identities are constantly being formed and re-formed as they interpret their roles as teachers through the interpretation of policies and the envisaged changes that teachers are expected to enact in their schools.

The Department of Education has particular ideas of what teachers should be and do, and envisages teachers who are:

Qualified, competent, dedicated and caring. They will be able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the *Norms and Standards for Educators*. These include being mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors, and subject specialists (DoE, 2003b, p. 5).

As indicated above, teachers in South African public schools are required to fulfil multiple roles to demonstrate their professional competencies and being a lifelong learner is one of them. Lifelong learning as a self-directed learner is the focus of this study.

1.3.1 Continuing professional teacher development

The focus of professional development is to “build the capacity of the individual professional, and so the profession as a whole” (Ferguson, 2006, p. 2). In 2006 the

Department of Education (DoE) introduced new system of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD). According to the DoE, the new CPTD system will:

- Ensure that current initiatives devoted to the professional development of teachers contribute more effectively and directly to the improvement of the quality of teaching;
- Emphasise and reinforce the professional status of teaching;
- Provide teachers with clear guidance about which Professional Development (PD) activities will contribute to their professional growth;
- Protect teachers from fraudulent providers; and
- Expand the range of activities that contribute to the professional development of teachers (DoE, 2006, p. 17).

The Department of Education's initiative to introduce continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers takes a top-down approach; that is, teachers are given directives as to what, how and where they learn. The needs of individual teachers are not taken into consideration (Tammets, Valjataga & Pata, 2008). Teachers' contexts, their experiences, interests and learning styles are not considered, they are instead being given a "one-size-fits-all" set of professional development activities (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008, p. 227). Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2008) assert that learning is social and happens in professional learning communities in which teachers are given time off to network and to learn with and through other teachers. In this thesis I am interested in how teachers learn as self-directed learners for change and development.

1.3.2 Why study the self-directed professional development of teacher-learners?

Schools are continually changing due to external and internal processes and professional development activities are supposed to be geared towards building the "capacity of the individual professional" (Ferguson, 2006, p. 2). Research conducted in South African schools (Moore, 2000; Hayes, 2000; Pillay, 2003; Shezi, 2008) indicates that there is very little opportunity provided by various stakeholders for formal professional-development activities for teachers. The few professional-development activities that are organised by the Department of Education and teacher unions target only one teacher per subject, per school and many of the activities have little or no connection to classroom practice or to the teachers' professional needs. Some programmes are not designed to meet the individual and

collective needs of teachers because there is no consultation regarding the learning requirements of teachers at grassroots level. The majority of professional-development programmes are geared toward meeting policy demands and fail to take cognisance of the requirements of classroom practitioners and the systems within which teachers work.

With the implementation of new policies, teachers are under pressure to learn new approaches and methodologies and to engage with knowledge differently. The knowledge of teachers who qualified more than ten years ago is proving to be inadequate and does not meet the requirements of teaching in a climate characterised by change. This is illustrated by the comments of two teachers whom I met whilst visiting one of the research participants:

***Teacher A:** I feel lost. I don't know what to do or how to teach anymore. It is very frustrating for me because I don't understand how to do the work schedules. I am still using my journal because I understand how to do that.*

***Teacher B:** No-one seems to know what is happening. I'm just following the teacher's guide; because everything is already done...The one-week workshop I attended did not help me because all the new terminology and various methods of recording and reporting were very confusing.*

Log entry: March 2006

These two views express the inadequacies that many teachers feel regarding their ability to cope with the implementation of constant changes in the curriculum. They are expected to prepare and implement innovative teaching methodologies and collaborate with other teachers teaching the same grade and subject.

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2011a, p. 13) reports that teacher development is “badly coordinated, poorly monitored, confusing and burdensome[...]; in addition, too many continuing professional-development programmes lack relevance and practicality and are sometimes of a poor quality.”

Research has found that teacher education is a lifelong professional-development process beginning with initial teacher preparation and continuing throughout a teacher's career (Eales, 2001; Day & Sachs, 2004). This means that all teachers should be engaged in professional development that will address their personal needs for growth as well as the needs of their learners and schools. This approach to the professional development of teachers recognises that while teachers need a solid foundation in content, process of learning and teaching, the teacher must continue to develop throughout his or her career.

In the past decade, new methods of professional development have emerged that involve teachers as active participants in defining and shaping their learning and practice as teachers. It is important to recognise that professional development is voluntary – no-one can force a person to learn, change or grow. When people are given a choice to participate in a process, they value the process more than if they are forced into it (Guglielmino, Long & Hiemstra, 2004).

In this study, teachers are viewed as reflective and transformative professionals who are capable of identifying their professional needs and discovering various sources of learning to meet these needs. Teachers improve their practice throughout their careers; they remain learners even as their learners learn. Teachers have to remain up to date on new information and conduct research on how their learners learn, and the content that learners need. In transforming their meanings and practices as teacher-learners, teachers direct their own learning.

1.4 Self-directed learning

Self-directed learning is known by various terminologies but all point to the same idea: that learning is directed by the individual. The individual takes responsibility for his or her development. In fact, Kulich (1970) stated that before the development of formal schooling individuals relied on self-education as the main way of attaining knowledge and making sense of what was happening around them. Kulich (1970) noted that self-directed learning was crucial to the learning and development of Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Knowledge is constantly changing and teachers have to keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in education. When teacher-learners take the initiative to direct their

own learning they exercise power over their learning and development. This self-directedness is an important characteristic of professional development. Teachers who are self-directed “take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material sources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes” (Knowles, 1975, p. 18). Knowles (1975) also notes that as an individual matures, he or she develops varied experiences which make him or her rich source of knowledge and at the same time provide him or her with an expanded foundation of knowledge to which to relate new learning; thus, learning becomes more meaningful.

Jarvis (1992) asserts that there is a correlation between teacher awareness and professional development. When teachers are aware of what their practice as teachers entails, they become more aware of their learning needs and this propels their self-directed learning (Jarvis, 2005). Nieto (2003, p. 125) adds that “given the dynamics of their work, [teachers] need to continually rediscover who they are and what they stand [for]”. In rediscovering who they are through learning, teachers continually negotiate and interpret the roles they adopt as they move in and out of learning experiences. This study aims to examine how teacher-learners in South African schools, who experienced apartheid education as school learners and were constructed as particular kinds of learners, now direct their own learning for change in their position as teacher-learner.

This study also examines the meanings of teacher-learner and the practices of self-directed learning for change of five teachers - Mbeje, Shabeer, Carolina, Shakila and Tasneem - teaching in public schools located in Phoenix, KwaZulu Natal. These teachers differ in terms of the number of years of teaching experience and the positions that they occupy at their schools. Labels of race and gender are used in this study as South Africans are still classified according to these categories and theorists have identified race, class and gender as being important in the development of identity.

Both Mbeje and Carolina are Level one teachers. Their schools are located within a predominantly Indian suburb but have a majority of African learners and Indian teachers. Mbeje is a thirty-eight-year old African male who has been teaching for 11 years. He teaches isiZulu in the FET phase. He has an honours degree in education and a higher certificate in

adult basic education and training. Carolina is a forty-seven-year old Coloured female who has been teaching for 22 years. She teaches Afrikaans, and Arts and Culture in the Senior and FET phase. She has a certificate in teaching and is presently completing a diploma in social work through Covenant Bible College.

Shabeer and Shakila are heads of departments at their schools. Shabeer is a forty-three-year old Indian male who has been teaching for 23 years. He has an honours degree in education. The school he teaches at is located in a predominantly Indian area where the majority of learners are Indian. He is a prominent person in South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). Shakila is a fifty-year-old Indian female who has been teaching English in the Senior and FET phase for the past 25 years. Her school is located in an Indian suburb and also has a majority of African learners. She is the founder of the Phoenix Debating League and is the debate coach at her school.

Tasneem is a fifty-seven-year old Indian female who has been teaching for over 30 years. She is the principal of a primary school in Phoenix. Her school has a majority of African learners. She completed her master's degree in education in 2002. She is the recipient of many awards for excellence in mainstream education.

1.5 Overview of chapters

The following is a brief outline on the course of study for this research undertaking.

Chapter One: Taking a glimpse into teachers' learning and change introduces the topic and locates it within the area of curriculum change and its demand on the teacher to constantly grow and develop as a professional. It briefly locates this study within the post-apartheid schooling context and includes the motivation for this study, the aim, critical question and sub-questions, and research methodology guiding this research.

Chapter Two: Surveying the educational landscape of teachers' self-directed learning and change provides a framework for understanding teachers' learning and change and an exploration of possible tools for producing and analysing the data. In this chapter, I explore the self-directed learning and development of teachers by surveying their practices of self-directed learning.

I explore aspects relating to understanding the self-directed learning and change of South African teachers. In understanding how teachers learn I discuss pertinent psychological and sociological perspectives on learning. I also explore the development of the teacher-self by focussing on identity theories. Teachers' learning and change within the context of professional development is also discussed.

Chapter Three: Research methodology. In this chapter I discuss the research methodology employed in this research and motivate for the use of life-story interviews as a means of understanding the development of the teacher-self and the self-directed learning practices of South African teachers. I discuss how the use of narrative inquiry provides the means with which to explore teachers' learning and change. I also discuss some of the challenges I faced as a researcher working with narrative inquiry and how I attempted to overcome these challenges.

Chapter Four: Lens 1: Restorying of field texts – the self through story provides the narratives of the five teachers in the study, in which they share some of the critical moments in their lives and how these shaped their learning as teachers. In the narratives, teachers reflect on their experiences growing up in apartheid South Africa and the practices that they engage in to learn and develop themselves as teachers in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Five: Lens 2: The teacher learner in relation to the socio-cultural contexts provides an analysis based on the narratives of the life histories of the five teachers in this study. Through vignettes, this chapter explores “who” these teacher-learners are that engage in self-directed learning and change. A critical analysis of the lives of teacher-learners, and how personal meanings of race, class and gender as dominant discourses offer the platform and space for creating and recreating new meanings and identities for teacher-learners, is also presented.

Chapter Six: Lens 3: Practices of self-directed learning and change explores from a deconstructive stance how teacher-learners learn, change and engage with learning within their respective schooling systems. It shows how teacher reposition themselves as particular kinds of teacher-learners engaging in particular kinds of learning practices to change who they are, what they know and what kinds of schools they want to work in.

Chapter Seven: Creating a “new professional” for public schooling through self-directed learning serves as a concluding chapter where a summary of the findings is presented. I discuss my methodological reflections, theoretical interests and the overall conclusions of this study.

1.6 Conclusion

Teacher-learners in public schools in post-apartheid South Africa are faced with many challenges relating to their learning and change for the purposes of continuing professional development. Although the desegregation of South African schools has been in place for over 17 years, many schools continue to be sites where teaching and learning face great threats. Teachers (occupying different roles in schools) working within the normative structures of public schooling are being challenged to engage with many different policy initiatives as part of the continuing professional development of teachers, and to take up the externally driven professional development (CPTD) initiatives that are in place to support teacher development. Although there is much focus on CPTD, these professional development initiatives are limited and have been criticised for not adequately meeting the needs of teachers. This study offers a deeper understanding of how some teachers learn, change and develop professionally.

Chapter 2 Surveying the educational landscape of teachers' self-directed learning and change

2.1 Introduction

Given the dynamics of their work, “[teachers] need to continually rediscover who they are and what they stand for through their dialogue and collaboration with peers, through ongoing and consistent study, and through deep reflection about their craft” (Nieto, 2003, p. 125).

The preceding chapter provided an overview of the main study. This chapter provides a framework for understanding teachers' learning and change and an exploration of possible tools for producing and analysing the data. In this chapter, I set out to explore the self-directed learning and change of teachers by surveying the practices of self-directed learning. I explore two aspects relating to understanding the self-directed learning and change of South African teachers: how teachers learn and what meanings of “self” drives this learning.

Firstly, in understanding how teachers learn I discuss pertinent psychological and sociological perspectives on learning. Secondly, in understanding the development of the teacher-self I focus on identity theories. Thirdly, I discuss teachers' learning within the context of professional development.

I have divided this chapter into three sections as follows:

Section A: Towards an understanding of how teachers learn.

Section B: Towards an understanding of teachers' fluid identities.

Section C: Teachers' learning for change.

2.2 Section A: Towards an understanding of how teachers learn

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2011) defines learning as “the act or experience of one that learns; knowledge or skill acquired by instruction or study; modification of a behavioural tendency by experience.” As a researcher, I am interested in the “learning acts” and experiences of teacher-learners, the means by which they acquire this learning and how it shapes their practice as teacher-learners. After reviewing the literature on the learning and development of teachers, I found that the prevalent perspectives on learning are those held psychological and sociological theorists. I will briefly discuss these theories.

2.2.1 Psychological theories on learning

Learning theories attempt to explain how people acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes. There are many theories of learning but for the purpose of this study I will briefly discuss the main ideas of behaviourism, cognitivism, humanism, social learning theory and holistic learning.

Learning as a product or process

Psychological theorists make a distinction between learning as a process and learning as a product (Mwamwenda, 2004). Behaviourists view learning as a product which includes facts, concepts, principles, skills, attitudes, values and behaviour. As noted by Smith (2008) behaviourists see learning as the achievement of specific outcomes: only learning that can be quantified and measured is regarded as learning. A criticism of the behaviourists' view of learning is that it claims that individuals respond to external stimuli and that the motivation to learn is external to the learner (Mwamwenda, 2004). The individual is not considered in this theory as behaviourists do not consider the process of cognition; rather, learning is viewed from a conformist viewpoint (Mwamwenda, 2004).

Whereas behaviourists view learning from a conformist viewpoint, learning as a process, as advocated by the cognitive theorists, is described as ongoing rather than an end result that can be measured by tests and examinations. This type of learning indicates a change in behaviour as a response to a particular situation (Mwamwenda, 2004; Smith, 2008). Cognitive psychologists like Chomsky, Piaget, and Vygotsky maintain that there is a step in the learning process between stimulus and response which they identify as *the thought processes*, where the learner is viewed as a processor of information (Louw & Edwards,

2005). Cognitive theorists differ from the behaviourists by focusing on the inner mental activities of the individual to investigate how processes such as thinking, memory, knowing and problem-solving occur (Mwamwenda, 2004). Cognitivists define learning as “the modification of our mental representations and subsequent changes in our thinking” (Smith, 2008, p. 49). Cognitivists assert that people are rational beings whose actions are a consequence of thinking and not merely a response to environmental stimuli (Smith, 2008; Louw & Edwards, 2005). The motivation for learning is intrinsic and it is the learner who drives this learning (Smith, 2008; Louw & Edwards, 2005).

The ideas posited by the behaviourists and the cognitivists are limited for the purpose of this study as they don't take into consideration individual agency and how the particular socio-cultural contexts within which this learning takes place shape the learner and the learning.

Humanistic learning theory and the individual

Humanist learning theorists deviate from the behaviourists and attribute learning to the individual and not to external stimuli. They assert that “meaningful learning comes through reflection on personal experience and a process of interpreting, integrating and transforming one's experiential world” (Smith, 2008, p. 66). Humanists argue that the desire to learn is intrinsic and is “created by the need for personal growth and fulfilment” (Smith, 2008, p. 66). Humanistic learning theory is concerned with “human freedom, dignity, potential, and self-fulfilment” (Smith, 2008, p. 63). The main aim of humanistic-based education is to “help people develop and maintain the desire and creativity needed to foster lifelong learning” (Smith, 2008, p. 65). Humanists “give primacy to the study of human needs and interests with the assumption that human beings behave out of a personal sense of purpose and value” (Smith, 2008, p. 64). Humanists believe that people, their behaviour and the way they think shouldn't be separated into parts and that “each person must be understood as a unique and whole being that grows and develops over a lifespan” (Smith, 2008, p. 64).

One of the humanistic theories that has had the most influence on educational policies and practices is that of facilitative learning, developed by Carl Rogers (Freiberg, 1999; Maharg, 2000; Foley, 2001; Smith, 2008). Carl Rogers's ideas had a major impact on

theories on self-directed learning (Maharg, 2000; Foley, 2001; Smith, 2008). Rogers based his theory of human learning on three questions: “What is the purpose of my life? What am I striving for? What do I want to be?” (Freiberg, 1999, p. 51). These are important questions when exploring teachers' self-directed learning. Teachers who are self-directed have to ask themselves these questions continually in relation to their lives as teachers.

The humanists' view of learning includes many concepts that are useful in understanding how teachers learn, and they attribute learning to the self which directs the learning. Humanists argue that learning will only become meaningful when it is self-directed (Maharg, 2000; Foley, 2001). The only knowledge that can significantly influence behaviour is “self-discovered and personally appropriated and assimilated through direct experience” (Smith, 2008, pp. 64-65). For teachers engaging in self-directed learning, this means that only when they make decisions about their professional learning and development will learning be meaningful and holistic.

Social learning theory

Social learning theory, also known as social cognitive theory, bridges both the behaviourists' and cognitivists' views on learning. This theory expands on behaviourism and posits that individuals don't only respond to, but also interpret external stimuli. This interpretation step in the learning process is vital as social learning theorists claim that individuals learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling (Smith, 2008; Louw & Edwards, 2005). Learning is viewed both as a social and individualised activity and in order to better understand learning and its effect on change and behaviour the entire social network has to be analysed (Berger, 1983; Louw & Edwards, 2005). Thus knowledge is viewed as being “socially constructed” which “implies that the social, historical and cultural contexts, together with the individual's setting in all these, determine the content, style and methods of learning” (Jarvis, Holford & Griffin, 2003, p. 43).

Holistic learning

Holistic learning theorists highlight the concept of reflective learning, which occurs within a social context and where the learner reflects on his or her learning before, during and after the learning (Jarvis & Parker, 2005). Teachers engaging in self-directed learning and change must reflect on their learning which directs them to their next learning goal. This reflection, which is viewed as an important component of the learning process, is defined by Dewey (1993) as *purposeful thinking orientated towards a goal*.

This learning and reflection takes place within specific environments, and Dewey (1998) argues that learning occurs only when learners interact with their environment. Dewey (1998) adds that every learning experience affects the next one, and that for learning to be of value, it must “lead to growth and further growth” which then can be defined as an educative experience; he however cautions that some educational experiences are “mis-educative” (Dewey, 1998, p. 13). A mis-educative experience “has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience” (Dewey, 1998, p.13). Teachers who experience this type of education may not want to continue learning since they view learning as being “disconnected from one another” (Dewey, 1998, p. 14). Dewey raises an important issue on teachers' learning in that it should not be viewed as being separate from the teaching environment.

Xie, Ke & Sharma (2008, p.19) posit that “reflection on the learning process enables the learner to take a critical overview and accumulate further understandings of the self or the knowledge, hence pushing him/her into higher-order learning”. Reflection is an important step in teachers' learning and change; as they reflect on their learning it shapes the teacher-self and leads to the next learning experience. Thus learning never ends but produces the desire for more learning.

Psychological theories on learning raise some important issues for this study on exploring South African teachers' self-directed learning and change. I found the ideas advocated by humanism, social learning theory and holistic learning to be particularly useful in enhancing my understanding of how teachers learn. Firstly, the literature suggests that agency is important in the learning process. As the humanists argue, the desire to learn is intrinsic and is “created by the need for personal growth and fulfilment” (Smith, 2008, p. 66). What teachers do (behaviour) and how they think shouldn't be separated. This implies that

teachers' learning is a result of inward reflection and action; thus, thinking and acting are inextricably linked. Teachers must be viewed as individuals with an intrinsic desire to learn and this learning can only be meaningful if teachers reflect on their personal experiences.

Secondly, the view postulated by social learning theory - that knowledge is socially constructed - is important for this study. In order to understand teachers' learning the social and historical cultural contexts that shaped and continue to shape teacher learning must be examined, especially considering the systems within which South African teachers were schooled as children, and now work in as teachers.

Thirdly, another useful viewpoint for this study is the one suggested by holistic theorists: that learning should be holistic. They believe that when individuals reflect on their learning, this action will direct them to their next learning goal. Learning and reflection take place within particular contexts as individuals engage with these contexts. According to Dewey (1998), leaning is "educative" when it leads to more learning and growth as individuals interact with their environments.

As this study focuses on the learning and change of South African teachers, it is also imperative to examine the particular contexts within which South African teachers in this study learn and change. Race, class and gender are key discourses in this study because the teachers in this study grew up and were schooled in segregated schools and now teach in public, desegregated schools. Race, class and gender are also operational at the societal level as they intersect in individuals' lives.

Sociological theories on learning also offer tools to understand teachers' experiences as school- learners during apartheid and how these experiences shaped their learning as teacher-learners in post-apartheid South Africa. The sociological discourses of race, class and gender, and the dominant structures of schooling in South Africa that shape learning will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 Sociological discourses that shape learning

The sociological discourses that shape learning are examined in this sub-section. If we are to understand how South African teachers learn then we must scrutinise the "multiple contexts" within which they live and work and the "social systems in which they participate"

(Borko, 2004, p. 4). Sociological theories offer the tools with which to understand learning as a social phenomenon. Sociologists maintain that learning takes place in an interaction between us and others in the context of the prevalent attitudes and beliefs of society (Bourdieu, 1990). In South Africa, apartheid shaped and continues to shape teachers' experiences in public schools in post-apartheid South Africa. These experiences are shaped by what theorists describe as the dominant discourses (Foucault, 1984) and practices (Bourdieu, 1990) of race, class, and gender.

In understanding the dominant social discourses of race, class and gender at play in teachers' lives in this study, it is vital to briefly examine the socio-historical lives of South African teachers. Two important questions that must be addressed when discussing the socio-historical lives of South African teachers are: "How does our past experience play into who we are and how we teach, learn and change? How can we revisit or use that past to study and reinvent ourselves as teachers?" (Mitchell & Weber, 1999, p. 4).

Discourse on race and learning

For the purpose of this research, it is important to note that race is a social construct, "with no rational basis in biology" (Francis, Hemson, Mphambukeli & Quin, 2003, p. 139). Race has to be understood within the context of gender, sexuality and social class (Francis, Hemson, Mphambukeli, & Quin, 2003). Race has a "formative" power in that it can form and shape both individual and collective identities (Connolly, 1998, p. 11). Race is produced and reproduced at schools through symbolic discourse (Foucault, 1984) and practice (Bourdieu, 1990). Discourses on race are constantly changing and have serious consequences as they give rise to the stereotypical way in which people are labelled and treated (Francis, Hemson, Mphambukeli & Quin, 2003; Bourdieu, 1990).

During apartheid, South African schools were divided by race through the enforcement of the following laws: the Bantu Education Act No.47 of 1953; the Coloured Persons Education Act No. 47 of 1963 and the Indian Education Act No 61 of 1965 (Mothata & Lemmer, 2002). The Bantu Education Act in particular led to a racially divided teacher training system. Teachers were trained at different teacher training institutions, which were racially segregated, and were posted to racially segregated schools (Sayed, 2004). Adler

(2002, p. 7) maintains that “apartheid education had been grossly unequal: black education was inadequately funded and thus of poor quality, and designed to produce acquiescence.”

Although South African schools have been desegregated for more than a decade after apartheid, problems related to race, class, culture and gender still manifest (Jansen, 2004a; Ndimande, 2009). Granting that the main aim of the South African Schools Act (DoE, 1996) is to eliminate a race-based educational system by equalising government funding across all public schools in South Africa, there is still inequity in resources and staffing at the formerly “black” schools (Lam et al., 2011). As a result, schools struggle to fulfil their educational mandate of teaching, learning and management (Hoadley, 2007). Teachers are expected to teach under these difficult circumstances.

Bornman (2010) argues that South Africans in post-apartheid South Africa still feel the need to align themselves closely with their racial and ethnic groups in order to emphasise “social borders[...]and to confirm their ethnic, cultural, and/or racial identities[...]which gives rise to new ways in which ‘us’ and ‘them’ are defined (Bornman, 2010, p. 241). Schools in post-apartheid South Africa are supposed to be free from discrimination based on race, class and gender. However, “there is an ongoing conflict within the individuals between the construction of ‘the other’ (in terms of race and culture) [and] the desired perception of self (as race-less and universal)” (Chisholm, 2008, p. 231).

If schools are segregated along race, class and gender lines then they also reproduce class inequalities and feelings of powerlessness in learners and teachers, which they may experience elsewhere since there are links between the economy, education and class structure (Bernstein, 2003; Sadovnik, 2001; Bowles & Gintis, 1976, 1986, 2002; Jansen, 2004a; Chisholm, 2008). Teachers are faced with a crisis and may experience a sense of powerlessness because they are seen as “reproducers of the state’s agenda and as implementers rather than formulators of policies” (Carrim, 2003, p. 318).

Discourse on class and learning

South African schools are still socially stratified. Sociological theorist Basil Bernstein (2003) argues that children from varying backgrounds develop different codes, meaning systems, or forms of speech during their early lives, which affect their learning

experiences. These codes shape our identity and our aspirations thus determining the various occupations that the different social classes occupy (Bernstein, 2001, 2003). Schools select knowledge that they want to transmit to their learners, thus contributing to social reproduction (Bernstein, 2003; Bowles & Gintis, 2002).

Schools perpetuate particular social identities and learners are prepared to occupy particular occupational positions according to their present social class position (Bowles & Gintis 1976, 1986, 2002). Bowles and Gintis (1976, 1986, 2002) do, however, add that the ideals of personal development in relation to education can be achieved if people can control the conditions of their own lives and develop their talents and abilities of self-expression.

According to Bourdieu (1987) different cultural practices peculiar to the dominant culture, exist in a class-based society. Bourdieu (1987) speaks of these cultural practices as “cultural arbitraries” which he says are representations of our cultures and are acquired through socialisation. South African schools have their own set of cultural arbitraries where the cultural practices of the dominant class are imposed on learners (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, 1986, 2002). Both Bowles and Gintis (1976, 1986, 2002), and Bourdieu (1987) argue that learners are also taught content that is decided upon by the dominant class and that this practice, coupled with the rituals practised at the school, places children from different classes at a disadvantage. Bernstein (2001, 2003) adds that success is difficult for these learners as they don't have the “cultural capital” that is required to succeed. These biographical experiences at school and in the community also play a crucial part in teachers' choices as adult learners. Gender reproduction is included in the social reproduction that takes place at schools (Lorber, 2007; Coole, 1995)

Discourse on gender and learning

Gender is another dominant discourse when studying teachers' lives and their learning. As Lorber (2007, p. 276) explains, gender is constantly “being created and re-created” as people interact with each other. Lorber (2007, p. 278) adds that “individuals are born sexed but not gendered, and they have to be taught to be masculine or feminine”. The gendered self is a product of socialisation; as individuals, we learn particular gendered roles (Coole, 1995). These gendered roles are reinforced through the media, the gender roles we see enacted on a daily basis and modelling the behaviour of others. Coole (1995, p.134)

maintains that “gender is not an identity, but a fabrication or performance, sustained by signs or rituals. Different acts create gender and without these acts there would be no gender at all.”

The gendered self is shaped at home and entrenched when learners attend school. “Children learn by observing and imitating adult roles[...]; they learn their own sex-appropriate behaviour through positive and negative sanctions” (Ballantine, 1993, p.104) Children watch the behaviour of adult role models who can be parents, teachers and other significant people in their lives (Ballantine, 1993; Coole, 1995).

Teachers' learning

The sociological and psychological discourses that shape learning discussed in this section are vital for this study if we are to understand how teachers learn and how the socio-cultural contexts shapes their practice as teachers. The psychological theories of humanism, social learning theory and holistic learning are particularly useful in enriching my understanding of how teachers in public schools learn. The sociological discourses, on the other hand, highlight important issues for understanding teacher learning within particular socio-cultural contexts. These discourses also scrutinise the “multiple contexts” within which teachers live and work. Sociologists view learning as a social phenomenon that occurs in the interaction between us and others within particular social contexts. The dominant discourses of race, class and gender are crucial in understanding who South African teachers are and how they learn and change as self-directed learners.

In understanding how the self directs the learning it is imperative to understand the development of teachers' identities. In the next section I will discuss the fluid identities of teachers as they define and redefine themselves as teacher-learners.

2.3 Section B: Towards an understanding of teachers' fluid identities

Identity provides a link between the individual and the society, between the personal and the social (Woodward, 2000). Teachers as individuals are not powerless as they negotiate and interpret the roles they adopt and it is possible, through social action, to challenge the structures that constrain them (Woodward, 2000). It is important to note that identity is not static but fluid as we move in and out of learning experiences. Teachers are constantly faced with choices of which identity to adopt and which group to identify with. It is important to note that identity is not recognised only by the individual but also by society (Woodward, 2000).

Levels of identity

Many theorists posit that there are different levels of identity. Wenger (1998b, p. 149) identifies five levels of identity. These are summarised by Sachs (2001, p. 154) as follows:

- Identity as *negotiated experiences* where we define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through interaction with others.
- Identity as *community membership* where we define who we are by the known and unknown.
- Identity as a *learning trajectory* where our identity is shaped by our past experiences and future goals.
- Identity as a nexus of *multi-membership* where are various identities merge into one.
- Identity as *a relation between the local and the global* where we define who we are by how we belong to the local spectrum and interact on a global scale in terms of our dialogue and communication.

For this study these five levels of identity are important because it focuses on the socio-cultural systems which shape teacher-learner identity. It shows us that teacher-learner identities are fluid in that they constantly defining and redefining who they are as teachers as they work together with others and become part of a collective. Identity is viewed as a continuum where past and future encounters shape their identities as teachers.

However, Wenger's (1998) five levels of identity do not address how teachers' identities are constructed. Who are these teacher-learners? What gave rise to this self? How do they make sense of their lives in the world and in their work as teachers? How are they agents of change? Are they aware of the elements that influence them, having reflected upon both external and internal factors? How do they exercise power in their lives and embrace some ways of being whilst resisting others?

Social identity theory

Social identity theory is a theoretical perspective which addresses group membership and behaviour (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Jenkins (1996, p. 5) provides a definition of social identity as "our understanding of who we are and of who other people are" and explains that, as individuals interact with others they define and redefine themselves, a process that occurs throughout their lives. He adds that the "self" is seen as an ongoing "synthesis of (internal) self-definition and the (external) definitions of one's self as offered by others" (Jenkins, 1996, p. 20). Social identity theorists believe that "the self is at least partially defined by membership of social groups" (Bornman, 2010, p. 237).

As individuals form memberships with particular groups their identities are being shaped and reshaped. Symbols and representations are also important in the construction of our identities and this is how we signal our identities to others and how we know which group/s to identify with (Woodward, 2000). Britzman (1991) also recognises that that teacher identity is constructed through different complex relationships as teaching involves other people and these various groupings and settings also shape teachers' identities. As teachers identify particular groups and choose to interact with those groups, this becomes their "collective identity" which is also referred to as Social identity (Woodward, 2000, p. 10). Within schools, teachers "develop and sustain multiple, socially derived identities" (Korte, 2007, p. 167).

Woodward (2000) suggests that the way in which teachers position themselves in their social lives and professions gives rise to the various identities that they hold. This theory is important for this study as it suggests that the way teachers view themselves gives rise to the choices that they make in their professional development. It is this synthesis of how teachers view themselves as professionals and how others define or view them that helps

them to define and redefine themselves as teacher-learners. Connected to this defining and redefining process are the kinds of people teachers are and their relationship with others (Woodward, 2000).

The teacher-learner

An interesting study conducted by Sikes, Measor and Woods (1985) on teacher identity distinguished three main features of a teacher's professional identity: "the subjects they teach, their relationship with their learners and their conception of their role" (Sikes et al., 1985). Sikes et al. (1985) found that teachers identify strongly with the subject that they teach and that their identity is shaped by their relationships with colleagues who teach the same subject. They also noted that teachers' relationships with their learners change over time as the teachers' life experiences influence these relationships (Sikes et al. 1985). They also claim that a teacher's role or role conception is influenced by factors such as his or her personal norms and values, and personal experiences as a learner (Sikes et al., 1985).

Nieto (2003) concurs that the "teacher-self" does change over time. Teachers' identities are shaped by their life experiences. She attributes the changes in her professional life to the experiences she has had "[...] as a teacher, educator, mentor, mother, grandmother, scholar and researcher" (Nieto, 2003, p. 10). Teachers' professional development and identities have a cyclic effect as one affects the other (Nieto, 2003). Nieto adds that "teachers bring their entire autobiographies to their classrooms: their experience, values, beliefs, attitudes, hang-ups, biases, wishes, dreams, and hopes" (Nieto, 2003, p. 24). Nieto's point is important for this study when trying to understand the self-directed professional development of teachers; as teachers change, so do their professional needs and the development that they require.

Teachers' identities are crucial when attempting to understand their learning and change, as they draw on their inner resources when they teach and learn. "Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). In his/her quest to become a better teacher, the teacher becomes "an intellectual adventurer" (Palmer, 1998p.10). As "intellectual adventurers" teachers are passionate about their learning and change and take the initiative to identify

various sources for their learning. Teachers who are self-directed aim to develop new skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to improve their practice as teachers (Nieto, 2003).

This section shows that teachers' identities are fluid and undergo redefinitions and transformations as they interact with different social groupings within their schools. Social identity theory is useful in that it addresses group membership and behaviour since teachers' identities are to some extent defined by collective membership. Teachers' professional identities are also influenced by the subjects they teach, the relationships that they establish with their learners and the way they view their roles as teacher-learners. Their identities as teacher-learners are also shaped by their life experiences and goals. When teacher-learners take the responsibility to identify sources for their learning they adopt the identity of "intellectual adventurer".

In the next section I will discuss teachers' learning and change within the context of professional development.

2.4 Section C: Teachers' learning and change

In this section, I discuss teachers' learning and change within the context of professional development. The type of learning activities teachers select to enhance their self-directed learning direct us to the purpose of their learning, which can be categorised as "professionalisation" or "professionalism", or a combination of both. Hoyle (1974) defines professionalism as the knowledge, skills and procedures that teachers use in the process of teaching. Professionalism, on the other hand, refers to the formal means through which teachers acquire knowledge (Hoyle, 2001). Evans (2002, p. 130) builds on Hoyle's distinction and defines professionalism as "an ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually-, and epistemologically-based stance on the part of the individual, in relation to the practice of the profession to which s/he belongs, and which influences her/his professional practice".

2.4.1 Professional development

The purpose of professional development is to "build the capacity of the individual professional, and so the profession as a whole" (Ferguson, 2006, p. 2). "Professional development is designed for individuals, fosters the cultivation of uniqueness and virtuosity [and] focuses on differences" (Duke, 1990, p. 71).

Teachers' professional development takes place within formal and informal contexts; they learn from others and with others in particular ways (Wilson & Demetriou, 2007; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008). Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2008, p. 227) maintain that teachers "learn through practice (learning as doing), through meaning (learning as intentional), through community (learning as participating and being with others), and through identity (learning as changing who we are)." Formal and informal learning can take the form of teachers learning through study, reflection, interaction and dialogue with colleagues, asking questions, sharing information, attending conferences, workshops and courses, professional reading, studying and application (Eraut, 2004; du Plessis, Conley & du Plessis, 2007; Wilson & Demetriou, 2007).

Many schools have structured professional development programmes. Glover and Law (1996) identify the goals of a professional-development programme as: improving student learning, improving teacher productivity and improving accountability to and communication with students, families, and communities.

Glover and Law (1996, p. 32) also indicate that professional development is a combination of meeting three kinds of needs:

- individual need – developing the skills and knowledge to teach effectively and grow as a professional;
- departmental, year, or group need – developing common approaches and sharing expertise within a team situation, and
- whole-institutional needs – establishing common values which determine policies for the school.

Glover and Law (1996) stress that if professional development is to be integrated to improve both teacher development and teacher organisation then it is imperative that each organisation determine its own policy framework within the broader national context. They indicate that for most institutions, the key elements in determining and formulating policy can be summarised under three headings:

- The parameters: there must be a shared understanding about what constitutes professional development.
- The structures: there is a need for clarity and transparency in professional development structures and organisations.
- The personnel: everyone should be clear about what their specific roles are (Glover & Law, 1996, pp. 43-44).

However, in South African public schools most professional-development programmes use a top-down approach where the needs of individual teachers are not taken into consideration (Tammets, Valjataga & Pata, 2008). Professional-development programmes that are externally driven do not address the needs of individual teachers as teachers are given a “one-size-fits-all” programme (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008, p. 227).

Professional development as a goal focuses on a top-down approach whereby professional development is imposed on teachers (Tammets, Valjataga & Pata, 2008). This model works on the assumption that those in power are able to make decisions regarding the professional needs of teachers and that “ power is exercised by those in authority and the

individuality and uniqueness of teachers are not taken into consideration” (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008, p. 227). However, when professional development is self-directed it is a process in which teachers exercise agency and take control of their learning (Tammets, Valjataga & Pata, 2008).

2.4.2 Collaboration and collegiality in schooling contexts

Professional development occurs within specific schooling contexts. Hargreaves (1994) examines the contexts within which professional development takes place and highlights some key issues in his theory on collaboration and collegiality as a strategy for the professional development of teachers. In collaborative cultures, where teachers meet within groups with the intention of learning and sharing professional knowledge, collaborative working relationships between teachers tend to be unstructured (Hargreaves, 1994). Hargreaves (1994, p. 166) states that:

Collaboration and collegiality allows teachers to learn from each other rather than from outside experts. It can take the form of team teaching, collaborative planning, peer coaching, mentor relationships, professional dialogue and collaborative action research, and so on.

In collaborative cultures, collaborative working relationships between teachers tend to be:

- Spontaneous – teachers take the initiative to meet.
- Voluntary – teachers value the social grouping.
- Development-orientated – teachers work together but develop their own ideas and ways of implementation.
- Pervasive across time and space – collaboration does not have to happen in a designated time and can take the form of discussions, comments, praise, and the sharing of problems that occur on a daily basis in an informal manner.
- Unpredictable – due to teachers having control, the outcomes are not easily predictable.

Slater (2004, p. 5) elaborates on Hargreaves's (1994) strategy of collaboration by saying that as teachers work towards "common goals, joint work or interdependence, parity or equality and voluntary participation" they share common goals that have been "negotiated" by them; that they are motivated to collaborate with their colleagues addresses the "parity or equality" in collaboration where teachers are seen as equals in the learning process, which is voluntary. Hargreaves (1994), however, cautions against *contrived collegiality* which occurs when teachers are forced to learn together by those in positions of power.

2.4.3 Continuing professional development (CPD)

Teachers engage in continuing professional development (CPD) to "add to their professional knowledge, improve their professional skills, clarify their professional values and enable their students to be educated more effectively" (Glover & Law, 1996, pp. 2-3). CPD comprises three components: "*Professional training*: short courses, conferences and workshops, largely focused on practice and skills; *professional education*: longer courses, focused on theory and research-based knowledge, and *professional support*: job-embedded arrangements/procedures" (Glover & Law, 1996, pp. 2-3, my italics).

These components of CPD focus on professionalism, which is formal and doesn't consider a fourth component: informal learning, which aims at professionalism. Illeris (2007) prefers the term "everyday learning" to "informal learning". He explains that "Everyday learning [is] embedded in daily life, [the] learner is responsible for obtaining knowledge and skill" (Illeris, 2007, pp. 214-215).

Teachers as professionals are able to make informed decisions regarding their professional development. As Pillay (2003, p. 26) reiterates, "teachers [are] not objects to be changed but complex subjects with power and knowledge to change." When teachers direct their own learning they exercise power over their learning and development and it is this power that, Foucault maintains, permeates the individual's existence: "In thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking [...] of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives" (Foucault, 1980, p. 39). The teacher as an agent of change is able to make decisions regarding his or her own learning and development. As teachers learn, this process of learning shapes their "actions and attitudes".

Many self-directed teachers aim to gain new skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to improve their professionalism as teachers (Day, Hadfield & Kellow, 2002). Learning can take place in isolation or with other people such as colleagues and/or subject experts. A survey of more than 4,000 teachers, conducted in England, showed that the majority of teachers “gained inspiration for their most effective lessons from talking with colleagues [...] they engaged in professional knowledge-sharing conversations” (Dymoke & Harrison, 2006, p. 73).

CPD encompasses various strategies and approaches. According to Evans (1980, p. 165), approaches to CPD should include the following: “upgrading courses; award courses; non-award courses of various length; seminars; conferences; meetings; workshops; visits; use of libraries and resource centres; school-based conferences and seminars; school-based problem solving and curriculum development; participation in curriculum development projects; personal reading, and informal discussions.”

Teachers should be fully engaged in their learning as they take cognisance of their learning needs and make informed choices about how they want to learn and change (Day, Hadfield & Kellow, 2002). As Evans (1980) points out, “learning adventures” encompass different learning activities which could be formal or informal. Teachers as “intellectual adventurers” will make those choices of learning that resonate best with their learning styles, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Perry (1980, p. 143) points out that it is important to note that self-directed learning and change involves goes beyond the gaining of knowledge and encompasses:

The growth of individual teachers in their working lives, the strengthening of their confidence, the sharpening of their skills, the continuous updating, widening and deepening of their knowledge of what they teach, and a heightened awareness of why they are doing whatever it is they are doing. It implies a growth into that intangible area of performance which goes beyond skill and becomes virtuosity: into an area which lifts a job into a vocation, and which transforms expertise into authority.

Perry (1980) addresses an important point: that as teachers learn, they become an authority in their field. When teachers are confident in their subject matter they can be a source of learning for other teachers.

Teachers have “a strong desire to continue growing as professionals” and “are willing and eager to examine their practices, benefits and needs for growth” (Duke, 1990, p. 75). Teachers need to nourish the “self” if they are to be successful (Berman, 1987). Berman (1987, p. 214) advises teachers to consider the decisions that they make to help renew themselves and to make plans for their professional growth, “to do the unusual, breaking out of routines, ‘being there’, being involved in the moment and developing ‘support groups and networks’.” Teachers as “intellectual adventurers” must be given the space to learn and grow, and reflect on their practice as teachers.

2.4.4 Teachers' self-directed learning

Although government policies are in place that “[acknowledge] teachers as key role-players in the transformation of education” in post-apartheid South Africa (Gultig, 2002, p. 46), the reality at grassroots level is that teachers are constantly feeling de-professionalised.

Gultig (2002, p. 47) cites several reasons for the de-professionalisation of teaching. They are:

- educational bodies have not redressed the imbalances of the apartheid era;
- educational bureaucracies tend to adopt a technical approach to teaching and in-service training;
- global economies pressurise schools to create a competitively productive workforce and
- overseas companies promote education materials that require little of teachers.

Teachers need to plan and direct their own learning since they are individuals and their professional needs differ. Nieto (2003, p. 125) states that teachers “need to continually rediscover who they are and what they stand for through their dialogue and collaboration with peers, through ongoing and consistent study, and through deep reflection on their craft.” Teachers' identities are in a constant state of flux; they must, therefore, reflect on their lives as teachers as this reflection affects their learning choices. The learning implications of this reflection for the teacher is that “he must design and conduct his programme with the

realisation that it is based on his own uniqueness, that it has meaning only as it changes him, and that at every point he must be its master” (Houle, 1972, p. 96). The teacher as a change agent has power over what he or she learns, and how he or she learns and changes. Learning has to produce change in teachers' practices, this becomes possible when teachers are in control of their own learning - they are able to direct their learning and produce changes in their practice as teachers.

Learning involves the acquisition and application of new knowledge. Professional development is the learning of teachers which requires the acquisition and application of new information. In order to learn continually, teachers must study, apply, reflect and have conversations about the application of new information. Although teachers are influenced by society, educational policies and cultural contexts, it is important to note that learning is also an individual activity. Teachers who see themselves as agents of change will be able to direct their learning

Knowles (1975) expands on this notion - that teachers should take control of their learning - by emphasising the importance of self-directed learning:

Knowledge is always changing so this means that we need to change the way we learn and every experience must be viewed as a learning experience. Every resource ...must be used for our personal growth and development (Knowles, 1975, pp. 5-16).

Self- directed teachers are able to identify and use resources for their learning and change. Self-directed learning is a process that occurs throughout a teachers' life.

2.4.5 Self –directed learning as a process

Knowles (1975, p. 128), a major contributor to the literature on self-directed learning, describes self-directed learning as “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes.” Knowles (1975) addresses key components of self-directed professional development in this definition. Teachers have to take the initiative for their own professional development. Teachers are seen as “initiators of change” (Day, Hadfield & Kellow, 2002, p.

19) who take the responsibility for identifying what their learning needs are and choosing the means by which they will attain their goals.

Self-directedness depends on “who is in charge, who decides what should be learned, and who should learn it, what methods and resources should be used and how the success of the effort should be measured” (Lowry, 1989, p. 1). As noted by Lowry (1989), if teachers make decisions regarding their own learning then it is generally considered to be self-directed.

Self-directed learning and change is a process in which the teacher is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating his or her own professional-development programmes. Professional development can be formal or informal and there are many opportunities that exist for self-directed professional development (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995).

2.4.6 Aligning the personal and the professional

In designing self-directed learning, the personal, social and occupational aspects of teachers' lives must be aligned. Fraser et al. (2007) elaborates on this alignment in the Triple Lens Framework. This framework focuses on three different ways of understanding the professional development of teachers: Bell and Gilbert's (1996) three aspects of professional learning; Kennedy's (2005) framework for analysing models of teachers' continuing professional development, and Reid's quadrants of teacher learning (Fraser et al, 2007). Bell and Gilbert's (1996) aspects of professional learning consist of the personal, social and occupational, which are interconnected. Bell and Gilbert (1996) assert that it is the personal aspect of an individual that drives professional learning, which can be constrained or enabled by various factors.

Teachers' attitudes to self-directed learning are influenced by various factors, such as their previous experiences with re-professionalising themselves, being given the opportunity to choose what they learn, and their previous “knowledge, experience and expertise” (Fraser et al., 2007, p.158). Fraser et al. (2007) add that teachers' confidence may be affected by these factors. This ties in closely with the second dimension of how teachers become agents of change, that is, through their professional development choices.

The personal, social and occupational aspects of teachers' lives shape their learning. Fraser et al. (2007, p. 159) summarises these three aspects as follows:

- Personal – teachers' beliefs, values and attitudes are to be considered and interest and motivation must be addressed.
- Social – relationships between individuals and groups need nurturing and the school context must be supportive of any professional development.
- Occupational – the link between theory and practice must be strong; educators must be intellectually stimulated and professional relevance is required for teaching.

Kennedy's (2005) framework for analysing teachers' professional development looks at the teacher as an agent of change, engaging in transitional to transformational learning which eventually has an impact on classroom practice. As noted by Kennedy (2005) the teacher as an agent of change is crucial to professional development. Kennedy's (2005) framework places much emphasis on the teacher taking responsibility for his or her own learning experiences. Reid's quadrants of professional learning assert that learning takes place formally or informally and can be planned or unplanned (Fraser et al., 2007).

In this section I discussed teachers' learning for change within the context of professional development. The type of learning that teacher-learners select for their professional development directs us to the purpose of their learning which can be professionalism, professionality or a combination of both. Hargreaves's (1994) theory on collaboration and collegiality was also discussed as it examines the contexts within which professional development takes place. The three components of continuing professional development - professional training, professional education and professional support - were also discussed. The literature shows that learning is meaningful to teachers only when they exercise their agency as self-directed learners. Self-directed teacher-learners are able to identify and use resources for their learning and change. The Triple Lens Framework (Fraser et al., 2007) provides a perspective for understanding the continuing professional development of teachers as it examines the personal, social and occupational aspects of teachers' lives which are vital when trying to understand teachers' learning.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, learning from a socio-cultural perspective was discussed from both the psychological and sociological perspectives. The psychological theory on facilitative learning developed by Carl Rogers gives us insight into knowledge that is self-discovered through direct experience and that will significantly influence teachers' behaviour. Both Jarvis (2005) and Dewey (1993) highlight the importance of reflective learning which involves the whole person. Learning takes place within specific contexts and the socio-cultural contexts of race, class and gender that shape teachers' learning were highlighted. Social identity theory as a useful tool for understanding the development of teachers' identities, as promulgated by various theorists, was also discussed. As teachers interact with others, they work, rework and invoke the meanings of teacher-learner. Teachers who plan and direct their learning are change agents working within particular social contexts, as discussed by Bell and Gilbert (1996). Their learning can be personal or professional and could be to enhance professionalism or professionality, as suggested by Evans (2002).

Chapter 3 Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study focuses on exploring the self-directed professional learning and change of the teachers in this study and the particular learning practices that they adopt as professionals amidst what Sayed (2001) describes as the turbulence and turmoil of governance and curriculum change that characterises the South African schooling system. Are teachers engaging in ways to invoke and rework and create new meanings from the adoption of particular learning practices? How does the social-cultural context in which teachers live and work shape what they learn and how they learn, and create the impetus for particular practices?

In this chapter, I discuss how the use of narrative inquiry provides me the means with which to explore teachers' learning and change. By using narrative inquiry I am able to gain access into teachers' lives as they share their critical moments with me. I discuss some of the challenges I faced as a researcher working with narrative inquiry and how I attempted to overcome these challenges. Producing the data for this research study helped me to understand the development of the teacher–self and the analytical framework assisted me to attend to the gaps and the silences within the narratives. This chapter also presents the methodology that I utilised to explore the lives of the five teachers who resist, defy and disrupt classifications of who they are and what they do in order to learn and change as teachers.

I locate my study within the critical paradigm which allows me as a researcher to explore the identities of teachers as being fluid, multiple and in a state of flux, through their stories. Working in the critical paradigm helps me to “uncover myths/hidden truths that account for particular social relations” (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson, 2002, p. 719) given the social backgrounds of teachers and the current context in which they work. In this study I view teacher-learners as “creative, adaptive beings with unrealised potential” (Fossey et al, 2002, p. 719). In attempting to articulate how teacher-learners are empowered through their learning as they become agents of power within their schools and societies, I was drawn to narrative inquiry.

3.2 Using narrative inquiry to explore teachers' learning and change

Reading and telling stories have always played an important role in my life. I have vivid memories of my childhood, engaging the neighbourhood children with fascinating stories that I had heard, read or created. When I became a mother I used stories to entertain my children and their friends. In my practice as a teacher of English and Dramatic Arts I naturally turn to stories to illustrate my lessons. Whilst considering a research method that would be most suitable for this study I was drawn to narrative inquiry. I remember sitting in the library sifting through some books for my research when I was captured by the title of a book, *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (Noddings & Witherell, 1991). "What stories do teachers' lives tell?" I knew at that moment that if I wanted to learn more about teachers and how they learn and change as professionals, I had to delve deeper into their lives, and narrative inquiry would allow me to do this.

Teachers "not only possess knowledge; they can also be creators of knowledge" (Johnson & Colombek, 2002, p. 2). The narrative inquiry approach is useful in exploring the lives of these teachers who learn, change and become creators of new knowledge. It is through their stories of past and present that we are able to understand their self-directed learning and change. Connelly and Clandinin (2006, p. 477) state that:

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.

Using "stories as portals" allows me as researcher to gain access to the lives of teachers as they share their lived experiences. Their narratives provide an interpretation of how they position themselves in post-apartheid South African schools and provide insight into how, why and where they learn. The use of stories also provides me with a glimpse into teachers' lives and their fluid identities (Woodward, 2000).

Teachers live “storied lives” and various social contexts shape their lives. Through stories we can enter into the otherwise private worlds of teachers and have an insider’s view of their learning and change. I am aware that teachers share only what they want to share and present particular pictures of themselves, “Yet this telling gives access to lives as told and these acts of telling are an act of creating one’s self” (Hatch & Wisniewski, 1995, p. 129). As Polkinghorne (1988, p. 150) adds, “The life as told may be different at different times, with a different audience, or when told with a different purpose.” Through narrating particular critical incidents in their lives, teachers give us a sense of who they are and we get glimpses of their identities as dynamic, partial, fragmented and context-dependent.

3.2.1 Understanding and exploring teachers’ self-directed learning and change

As a researcher I am interested in exploring the learning practices that some teachers adopt and how learning contributes to teacher development for change. In order to do this I had to focus on teachers’ experiences, past and present, and how these experiences contribute to future experiences as outlined by Creswell (2008), and Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Aligned to John Dewey’s (1944) ideas on experience and how one’s experiences affect the next learning experience, I want to understand and explore how teachers’ learning is continuous, and how every experience, whether negative or positive, has an impact on their learning.

As teachers learn and one learning experience has an impact on another, they become reflective practitioners and, as Dewey states, “knowers who reflect on experience, confront the unknown, make sense of it and take action” (cited in Johnson & Colombek, 2002, p. 4). According to Dewey (1938), when we learn we make connections among experiences which Dewey terms the *continuity of experience*. Together with continuity of experience, Dewey (1998) speaks of *interaction* – the interaction between the self and the context, which, he argues “is whatever condition interacts with personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience which is had.” (Dewey, 1998, p. 44). As teachers interact with their worlds a change occurs – change within the self and in the world.

Gergen and Gergen (2008) use the term “self-narrative” to describe the individual’s recollection of relevant incidents across time. They conclude that one’s identity is a result of one’s life story and helps individuals to give meaning to their lives (Gergen & Gergen, 2008). It is important to note that teachers have evolving identities which constantly shift as they

encounter different learning experiences (Jenkins, 1996; Nieto, 2003). Narratives give glimpses into teachers' lives, how they position themselves as teachers and how this gives rise to what Woodward (2000) describes as their evolving/multiple identities. What do critical moments in the narratives tell about teachers' self-directed professional learning? How do their social and professional contexts give meaning to their self-directed learning and how does this self-directed learning bring about change in their lives as teachers?

Narratives are a tool which allows me as a researcher to focus on "how individuals teach and learn, of how temporality (placing things in the context of time) connects with change and learning, and how institutions frame our lives" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.1). Teachers live and learn within particular contexts, which are temporal. What are these contexts? How do teachers exert their power of agency to resist the way institutions attempt to frame them through their learning and development?

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) expand on the notion of "temporality" by stating that every experience is temporal. They assert that as researchers, they focus not only on the present but also on life as a "continuum – people's lives, institutional lives, lives of things" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000, p.19). Connelly and Clandinin (2006, p.479) add that "events under study are in temporal transition, that is, events and people always have a past, present, and a future... people, places, and events as in process, as always in transition". Teachers are "real people in real situations" (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 279). In this study, teachers have to be understood within the social, historical, political and educational contexts of South Africa because it was within these contexts that the teacher –learner develops, and meanings are created or reworked in the position of being a teacher.

Clough (2002, p. 8) contends that "narrative is useful only to the extent that it opens up (to its audiences) a deeper view of life in familiar contexts: it can make the familiar strange and the strange familiar." Narrative is a means by which researchers can have a glimpse of what is happening in teachers' lives and the choices that they make that affect their learning. I am interested in exploring the factors that shape the evolving teacher-self, and the learning practices of teachers. The process of reflecting on one's life as a teacher can also help one to examine "[one's] own learning, beliefs, and understandings of self" (Lipka & Brinthaupt, 1999, p. 48).

When teachers shared their stories with me they allowed me into their worlds. Sometimes their stories and the personal crises they experienced made me unsure about my role as a researcher.

...How can one person experience so much pain and still remain so strong and focused? I was so interested in using narratives in my research that I didn't realise that it meant going into very deep places. I wasn't prepared when Carolina started sharing very personal moments with me – very hurtful memories of abuse, betrayal and feeling like an outsider. As a woman, should I offer her advice on how to get out of this abusive relationship that seems to be strangling her? Should I offer a way out? Solutions? Promises???

Log entry: February 2007

The above is an example of one of the dilemmas that I faced as I began to delve deeper into teachers' lives and some of them began to share very personal details that I felt inadequate to deal with. Can researchers turn a blind eye to what is happening in research participants' lives? Are we supposed to just listen to stories for the purpose of our research and ignore the pain that surfaces? How prepared are we as researchers for details that may emerge as research participants reach deep into their past and share their lived experiences with us? Can I separate myself and hide behind the cloak of researcher? These were some of the questions that I faced constantly whilst working with narrative inquiry.

As teachers shared their stories with me they presented particular meanings of what it meant to be a teacher-learner working in a South African public school. Stories give us a sense of the teachers' evolving self. Why do they do the things they do? What particular meanings do they ascribe to their roles as teachers? Through stories I was able to make connections between the various events and characters in the participants' lives. Stories are important in that "they attach us to others and to our own history by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives" (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 280).

The next challenge I faced was trying to differentiate between truth and fiction as teachers began to share their stories. Were the teachers' stories the truth or particular versions of the truth? I found Reissman (2000) useful in trying to make this distinction between truth and fiction, as she states that "truths lie not in their faithful representation of a past world, but in the shifting connections they forge between the past, present and future".

3.2.2 Evolving teacher-selves

The only way to understand our present self is to examine our past self or selves (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). Cooper (1991, pp. 97-98) explains that "the past selves have evolved to form a present collective self. This present self can be discerned through a journey back in time, a journey that threads the past selves, like beads on a string, forming a necklace of existence, a present complex whole...the narrative is a way to tell our own story, a way to learn who we have been, who we are, and who we are becoming." As teachers reflect on their professional development through the narrative, it provides us insight into where they have come from and meanings that shape and continue to shape them as professionals. Narratives help us to explore teachers' lives and their learning practices within particular contexts, and to get a sense of what experiences and meanings shaped the construction of the self/selves and self-directed learning. The stories individuals tell "[reflect] the inner workings of the person's mind: his or her identity, sense of meaning in life, moral commitments, and emotions and ways of understanding the past, present, and anticipated future" (Sparkes & Smith, 2008, p. 297).

For the purpose of this study I was interested in the critical moments in the teachers' lives, how these shaped and continue to shape the teacher-self and how this impacts on teachers' learning and change. Connelly and Clandinin (1995, p. 102) support the notion that teachers "need to think through their own educational histories and what made a difference to them. How did they get to be who they are? How did they get to know what they know?"

Webster and Mertova (2007) argue that these critical moments of learning are "unplanned and unanticipated", and have the following qualities:

- they exist in a particular context, such as formal organisational structures or communities of practice;
- they have an impact on the people involved;
- they have life-changing consequences;

- they are unplanned;
- they may reveal patterns of well-defined stages;
- they are only identified after the event;
- they are intensely personal with strong emotional involvement (Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 83).

The critical moments that occur in teachers' lives are incidental and unplanned and have lasting consequences because they have particular meanings for teachers. Dewey (1944, p.74) argues that "reconstruction or reorganisation of experience [...] adds to the meaning of experience, and [...] increases one's ability to direct the course of subsequent experience". As teachers reconstruct or reorganise the critical moments of learning in their lives, these moments become meaningful to them and they are able to build on these experiences.

In the next sub-section I discuss my research plan for this study which focuses on the research participants, the life-story interviews, and how I developed the framework for analysing the narratives.

3.3 Research plan

This research study is about exploring the self-directed learning and change of teachers in South African schools. In order to understand their learning we have to understand the evolving identities of teachers. As Stafford (1991); Cooper (1991); Noddings and Witherell (1991), and Connelly and Clandinin (2000) propose, I want to enter into the private world of these teachers through their narratives in order to explore who they are, what learning discourses they adopt to develop themselves professionally and how these self-directed initiatives lead to learning and change.

This research entailed a three-year study of teachers located within the Phoenix area, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. I tried to include in my sample teachers from different teaching levels, from Level One educators to heads of departments and principals. Purposive sampling was used when selecting research participants. The research participants were selected because they were information-rich subjects.

3.3.1 The research participants

I chose to work with teachers teaching in the Phoenix area because the sample was representative of the teaching fraternity in KwaZulu-Natal in terms of the composition of teachers' qualifications, gender and race as identified by the Department of Education (DoE, 2005, pp.49, 61). Principals, teachers and members of the community directed me to potential research participants. At the initial meeting with the potential research participants I explained the purpose of this study which is to explore the practices, learning and change of teachers in South African schools. I also outlined my expectations of them as research participants.

Only five research participants were interviewed because I reached "data saturation," that is, I saw common patterns emerging in the data and no new information was being presented (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Most teachers shared similar backgrounds and were involved in analogous activities in their professional learning and development.

Table 3.1 below presents details of the final sample. Participants in the sample differed in terms of the number of years of teaching experience and levels of teaching. There were two Level One teachers, two heads of departments and one principal. I wanted my study to explore what particular practices teachers occupying different positions at their schools were adopting in their self-directed learning and change. Two teachers were from a primary school, one from a secondary school and two from a combined school (primary and secondary). There were three females and two males in the sample. Labels of race and gender are used in this study as South Africans are still classified according to these categories and theorists have identified race, class and gender as being important in the development of identity.

Sample	Race	Gender	Type of School / Phase	No. of years teaching	Position at school
1. Mbeje	African	Male	Combined school– Further Education and Training (FET) Phase	11	Level 1 – teacher
2. Shabeer	Indian	Male	Primary school – Senior Phase	23	Level 2- head of department (promoted during this study)
3. Carolina	Coloured	Female	Combined school– Senior and FET Phase	22	Level 1 – teacher
4. Shakila	Indian	Female	Secondary school – FET Phase	25	Level 2 – head of department
5. Tasneem	Indian	Female	Primary school – Senior Phase	32	Principal

Table 3.1: The final sample of teachers and the criteria by which they were selected for this study

The teachers in the sample taught in schools in Phoenix, KwaZulu-Natal. I received verbal consent from the participants to use their names in this study. I also obtained written consent from them to use their stories and artefacts in this study. A brief introduction to the teachers who participated in this study is given below.

Mbeje is a thirty–eight-year old, African male, teaching at a combined school in Phoenix. He has been teaching for 11 years. He is married and is the father of four children. He lives in Newlands West, Durban. He is a Dramatic Arts and Music specialist but teaches isiZulu in the FET phase due to the shortage of isiZulu teachers at his school. The school that he teaches at is located within a predominantly Indian suburb but has a majority of African learners and Indian teachers. Since he started teaching isiZulu at his present school, learners have obtained a one-hundred percent pass rate at Matric level in isiZulu. He has an honours degree in education and a higher certificate in adult basic education and training. He is presently completing an advanced certificate in education in Accounting through the University of South Africa (UNISA). He is also a volunteer for the Kha Ri Gude Literacy Campaign which focuses on adult education.

Shabeer is a forty–three-year old Indian male who is a head of department at a primary school in Phoenix (he was promoted during the course of this study from Level One teacher to Head of Department). He has been teaching for 23 years. He is single and lives in Overport, Durban. He has an honours degree in education. The school that he teaches at is located in a predominantly Indian area where the majority of learners and teachers are Indian. He is a very prominent person in South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and is

the chairperson of the Professional Development Committee in Phoenix. He has conducted numerous workshops on professional development and has attended many professional-development conferences.

Carolina is a forty-seven-year old Coloured female who has been teaching for 22 years. She is married and is a mother of three children. She lives in Mount Moreland, Durban. She teaches at a combined school in Phoenix which is located in a predominantly Indian residential area but the majority of the learners are African. She teaches Afrikaans, and Arts and Culture in the Senior and FET phase. She has a certificate in teaching and is presently completing a diploma in social work through Covenant Bible College. She co-ordinates many different community outreach projects and uses the experience gained from her involvement in these projects to assist her learners.

Shakila is a fifty-year-old Indian female who has been teaching for 25 years. She teaches at a secondary school in Phoenix. She is married and has two children. She lives in Phoenix, Durban. She is the Head of the Languages Department at her school. She teaches English in the Senior and FET phases at one of the top-achieving schools in Phoenix. She is the founder of the Phoenix Debating League and is the debate coach at her school, which under her leadership participated in global debates at the United Nations for two consecutive years. She is also one of the founding members and Vice-chairperson of Phoenix Child Welfare and the founder of the Phoenix Children's Foundation.

Tasneem is a fifty-seven-year old Indian female teacher who has been teaching for over 30 years. She is the principal of a primary school in Phoenix. She is married and has three children and resides in Phoenix, Durban. She completed her Master's degree in Education in 2002. She is a very prominent principal in Phoenix and is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award at National Level and the Excellence in Primary School Leadership Award at Provincial Level, awards which were organised by the Department of Education as part of the National Teaching Award. Her school has been the recipient of the Ammen Award, The Batho Pele Gold Service Excellence Award and the coveted Gold Premier's Service Excellence award for excellence in mainstream education.

3.3.2 Creating the space for the research participants' voices to emerge

In presenting the stories of these teachers I had to think about how I could create the space for their voices to emerge from the text. I had to consider what my role as researcher was in the recording and presenting of their stories. As suggested by Coulter (2003), the research participants narrated their own stories in the first person. I recorded and transcribed the interviews and thereafter restoried the narratives. After the stories were written they were given to the research participants to check and comment on any changes to be made.

Both Foucault (1972, 1980) and Kisteva (Peters, 1996) speak about allowing the research participants' voices to emerge in the research. Rudduck clarifies this notion of voice by stating that at one level the stories can "represent individuals or groups who have been denied the right to contribute or whose voices remind us of the individuality that lies beneath the surface of institutional structures whose routine nature pushes us to work to 'sameness' rather than to respond to difference" (Rudduck, 1993, p. 8). At schools, teachers are faced with various institutional structures that attempt to "silence" them through paperwork and mundane procedures (Chisholm, Hoadley, wa Kivulu, Brookes, Kgobe, Narsee & Rule, 2005). Chisholm et al. (2005) also reported that teachers are assessed and "developed" as a common group without considering individuality and the different ways in which they learn, develop and change. Through the narratives we can see how the teacher engaging in self-directed learning is an "intellectual adventurer" who is able to make decisions regarding his or her learning and change. Julia Kristeva speaks about this new type of intellectual, one who "produces the right to speak, to voice the specific histories and to assess their political value" (Kristeva, 1991, cited in Peters, 1996, p. 60).

The views of Foucault (1972, 1980), Kristeva (cited in Peters, 1996) and Rudduck (1993) on allowing the voices of the research participants to emerge challenged me to choose a research method that would best articulate teachers' experiences in terms of their learning and development through enabling the voices of individual teachers to be heard. The function of the narrative is to "make memory speak; to cause students to become increasingly conscious of the ties that bind them to culture and society, and to help them discover valuable aspects of themselves" (Adams, 1997, p. 123).

Teachers' memories are important tools because it is from these memory banks that the teacher-learner is constructed and reconstructed. "Memory is made as a quilt is made. From the whole cloth of time, frayed scraps of sensation are pulled apart and pieced together in a pattern that has a name" (Stafford, 1991, p. 15). Narrative inquiry allowed the teachers in this study to "give voice to each individual form of unconscious, to every desire and need [...] to] call into play the identity and/or language of the individual and the group" (Kristeva, 1991 cited in Peters, 1996, p. 60). It also allowed me to use the tools of observation as proposed by Webster & Mertova (2007), such as documentation (certificates, letters, policies, and photographs), interviews and transcripts. I collected artefacts such as photographs, newspaper articles, letters and certificates from the teachers and, as suggested by Creswell (1996), these were used to "trigger" the memories of the participants. As teachers were sharing their stories they would make reference to a particular artefact. Teachers obtained permission from the other people in the photographs to use these photographs in the study.

3.4 Life story interviews

Atkinson (2007, p. 225) asserts that "The life story interview is designed to help the storyteller, the listener, the reader, and the scholar to understand better how life stories serve the four functions of bringing us into accord with ourselves (psychological), others (sociological), the mystery of life (spiritual) and the universe around us (philosophical)". Studies have shown that it is through the power of stories we can relive critical moments in our lives (Stafford, 1991; Cooper, 1991; Noddings & Witherell, 1991; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000).

Samuel (2009, p. 3) contends that:

Telling stories about one's life is a process – not documenting the truth of what exactly happened. Instead, the act of telling the story is the process of recording how the teller of the tale presently sees her position in relation to the subject/topic being discussed. Stories of one's lives therefore encapsulate the past, the future and present.

Atkinson (2007, p.226) explains the process of life-story interviews as being "the story the person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible. What is remembered of it, and what the teller wants to know of it,

usually as a result of a guided interview by another.” The life-story interviews served an important function this study about the self and self-directed learning in that it is “interested in exploring personal truths” (Kathard, 2009, p. 19).

By using life-story interviews I was able to gain insight into the social, historical, educational and political backgrounds of the teachers which played in a crucial role in the construction of their fluid identities, as well as into the otherwise private world of the teachers which helped me to understand their learning choices and practices. By using the life-story interviews I was able to identify the character in the narrative – “who” are these teachers who are engaging in self-directed learning and change. Life-story interviews gave me insight into how teachers make sense of their lives, the shaping of their identities and the practices of their self-directed learning. I selected the unstructured interview approach because it granted me more freedom as a researcher; also the style is free-flowing and more conversational. I was able to generate and generate questions as the interview progressed and I could ask appropriate questions to get a better understanding of, and to clarify the teacher’s life and practices of learning.

During the interviews I did not offer opinions on the topic being discussed but kept participants focused on describing the critical moments in their lives by prompting them with relevant questions. Participants were encouraged to interpret as precisely as possible their feelings and behaviours regarding their learning and change, as advocated by Johnson and Colombek (2002). After the interviews were recorded and transcribed, I asked the participants to endorse the interview transcripts and then grouped the information from the interviews into themes. As suggested by Reissman (2008, pp. 53-54), I focused on “what” the research participants said rather than “how”, “to whom” or “for what purposes”. On the few occasions when I needed clarification regarding a particular issue, I contacted the participant telephonically.

3.4.1 Interpreting the field texts

I am aware of the power that I have as researcher and interpreter of the field texts so I constantly collaborated with the research participants on my re-presentation of the narratives. Whilst the research process was unfolding a relationship between the participants and myself was developing and, as Pinnegar and Daynes (2007, p. 9) point out, “both parties will learn and change in the encounter”. Being a teacher-researcher, I was constantly

challenged to improve my practice as a teacher as I listened to the research participants. The relationship between the participants and I remained open as I asked them to share the critical moments in their lives that they felt had shaped their development as teacher-learners. As a researcher, I didn't know which critical incidents were important to them or which incidents they would identify as being critical in the formation of their fluid identities, so I allowed them freedom in the selection of these critical moments. Had I used a more structured approach in my research I would have missed the "thick description" (Geertz, 1973; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) that participants offered which allowed me an in-depth look into the "who", "what" and "why" of self-directed learning.

Both the researcher and the researched are changed through the interchange of information during the research process. It is impossible not to change, grow and be inspired as the researcher-researched relationship goes into a very private place – the participants' memory. As teachers shared very personal information of personal struggles of suffering, abuse and failed relationships, I was allowed access into their worlds. I was challenged by their personal struggles and their unstinting commitment to learn and change as teachers. Their stories motivated me to become a better teacher myself and gave me ideas on how to improve my own practice as a teacher.

After listening to Tasneem's story, I feel so inspired. She has really opened her heart to the community in which she works. She actually goes into her learners' homes to investigate the reason/s for their poor performance and non-attendance at school. Many principals will be afraid to enter into particular areas due to safety reasons and rather ask Governing Body members to conduct the home visit. It is clear that Tasneem takes her role as manager of the school very seriously and takes a personal interest in her learners and is also there to support her teachers.

Log entry: March 2009

3.4.2 Retelling the stories

Narratives are a collaborative process, as Neander and Skott (cited in Riessman, 2008, p. 21) state: “the researcher does not *find* narratives but instead participates in their creation.” I became a participant in the narrative as soon as I invited the teachers in the study to share the critical moments in their lives with me. The questions that I asked in order to prompt them to share their stories with me also made me a participant. I became what Andrews, Squire and Tambokou (2008, p. 6) describe as “the audience for which the story was being told”.

As part of the collaborative process I requested that the research participants check the narratives to ascertain whether I had captured their stories correctly. During this collaborative process I also studied documentation and photographs that were given to me by the teachers. The documents included certificates of attendance at workshops and seminars, letters from learners, teachers, governmental and non-governmental organisations, newspaper articles, magazine articles and photographs. These artefacts aided the teachers to better articulate their stories. The choices they made in the selection of the material also signalled what was important to them as teacher-learners. In allowing teachers to select material that would be read together with the narratives and in collaborating with them on the retelling of their stories, they were also part of the “voice” that emerged in the text.

3.4.3 Trustworthiness, rigour and believability

In representing the stories, I had to take into account issues of trustworthiness, rigour and believability. I had to ensure that the narratives reflected what the research participants had said and that the “participant’s viewpoints, thoughts, intentions, and experiences are accurately understood and reported” (Pulkkinen, 2003, p. 34). In order to validate my account of the narratives I carried out member-checking with the research participants. This was done both formally and informally during the interview process, the writing process and when the “final” version of the narratives was complete.

Member-checking was an important process for me because it gives credibility to this study. It also allowed the participants an opportunity to correct information and to challenge any of my interpretations. There was some information that the research participants offered for inclusion in the study that I felt uncomfortable listening to, for example one of the participants disclosed that she had been abused by one of her close

relatives. She insisted that this information should be included because it had shaped her life in many ways. She attributed the insecurities that she experienced in later professional relationships to that particular abuse. Some information that was originally omitted during the interviews was later added during the member-checking process whilst other information had to be revised because some of the respondents felt it might be problematic for those involved. Some shared very personal information with me concerning their lives, which is not included in this study because of its sensitive nature.

After reading the narratives, some of the participants offered more information or clarification regarding certain issues which they felt were important and that they had merely glossed over. Member-checking allowed participants the chance assess the narratives and to confirm particular aspects of the data. Member-checking also proved to be challenging for me when some of the participants changed their minds about including particular incidents in their story or felt that what they had said would cause problems if the people mentioned read the study.

After reading the draft copy of the narrative one of the research participant sent the following message via short message service (SMS) to me:

In retrospect I think that some of my comments would cause offense to the many people I mentioned. I'm having a serious re-think about using pseudo names [sic] in those cases. I wish I could redo so much as my focus has changed since then. So much has happened since our interviews, I have been very ill. I was diagnosed with multi-resistant TB of the eye, been on sick leave in 2009; treatment was radical and life altering. Now I have limited vision, hearing difficulties, etc. Back at school this year but I am finding it very difficult. But more than anything, I still want to be a teacher. Coming so close to death and being incapacitated has made me more reflective on my entire life and what lies ahead. I feel that the interviews reveal how naive and blasé I was about meaningful activities.

SMS: 5 March 2012

The above SMS reveals that the near-death experience prompted the participant to reconsider aspects of her story that she had shared with me. It provoked her to rework her meanings of self, of others and of her practice as a teacher-learner. Allowing teachers in this study to change aspects of their stories, to add or delete sections, gave them “authorship” over their stories.

The final narratives were also given to the research participants for their comments. The final draft was peer reviewed by two critical readers to ensure rigour and believability. Both suggested changes that should be made and posed challenges to my interpretations, which I had to defend or justify. After reviewing the comments from the critical readers and the research participants I made the final changes to the narratives.

3.5 Developing a framework for analysing the narratives: a multi-layered framework of analysis and interpretation

In order to analyse the narratives I linked theoretical ideas from social identity theory, Evans’ (2002) concepts of professionalism and professionalism, Bell and Gilbert’s model on professional learning (1996) and the socio-cultural theory on learning. As Goodson (2003) notes, teaching is personal and in order to understand teachers’ learning we have to understand who the teacher is. Identity theories helped me to understand the development of the teacher-learner. In studying teachers’ lives, it is important to note that the teacher’s identity is linked to the meanings that they give to their learning and that these meanings shape their practice as teachers (Goodson & Hargreaves, 2003; Sikes et al., 1985; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). Teachers’ attitudes to self-directed learning are influenced by various factors, such as their previous learning experiences, being given the opportunity to choose what they learn and their previous “knowledge, experience and expertise” (Fraser, 2007, p. 158).

I designed a multi-layered framework of analysis and interpretation to analyse and interpret the narratives using three lenses (see Table 3.2, below). By analysing the field texts using a multi-layered framework of analysis and interpretation, I am able to present a more complete picture of self-directed learning of teachers in this study.

Below is a table illustrating the layers of analysis and interpretation that will be used in this study:

Lens 1	Restorying of field texts – the self through story	A reconstruction of the teachers’ critical moments
Lens 2	The teacher-learner in relation to the social-cultural contexts	Race, class and gender discourses
Lens 3	Practices of self-directed learning and change	Learning: - Within the schooling community - Outside the schooling community

Table 3.2: Multi-layered framework of analysis and interpretation

3.5.1 Lens 1: Restorying of field texts, the self through story (Chapter Four)

This section is a response to the first sub-question: Who are these teacher-learners engaging in self-directed professional learning and change? In this section of analysis, in collaboration with the teachers, I restory the field texts from the different data sources: the interview transcripts, newspaper articles, photographs, letters and certificates. This section includes contextual information (the teachers’ socio-cultural contexts), characters (the people in the teachers’ lives) and specific events (critical events which are identified by the teachers).

I find that the thematic restorying approach as a way to represent the narratives is an innovative approach. In restorying I attempt to “foreground the voice of the participant” (Clandinin, Pushor & Murray, 2007; Mulholland & Wallace, 2003) by adhering as closely as possible to the field texts. Restorying helps to restory (retell) the narratives using themes (Wieber, 2010). In presenting the stories I searched for critical moments that would highlight the intention of the study, that is, the self-directed professional learning and change of teachers.

As proposed by Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2000), the method of restorying allowed me to analyse the critical moments as narrated by the participants for key elements that focus on the development of their teacher identities and the meanings that they give to their practice as teachers. The artefacts that the research participants selected allowed them to step back into particular memories which shape them as teacher-learners. Not all the stories relayed during the life story interviews were told in a chronological sequence as research participants drifted from one scenario to the next, sometimes adding information to the story that they had

just remembered. Restorying allowed me to “weave together the delicate threads of memory” by forming links between those critical moments. Throughout this process of restorying I collaborated with the participants so that they could validate the story and approve of the themes that I had selected. By doing this the participants and I negotiated and re-negotiated the constructed narrative. This kind of collaboration is an important step in the restorying as it serves to “lessen the potential gap between the narrative told and the narrative reported” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.19). Teachers also suggested alternate themes and proposed changes to some of the themes.

As researcher, I am conscious of the issue of voice and representation. I tried as much as possible to represent the stories told to me by the research participants using their words and ideas. I made decisions regarding the relevance of information to this study. In consultation with the research participants, I constructed the final version of the narrative. I then had to move beyond the first interpretation to the second layer of analysis, which focuses on the teacher-learner in relation to the socio-cultural contexts.

3.5.2 Lens 2: The teacher-learner in relation to the social-cultural contexts (Chapter Five)

This section is in response to the second sub-question: What meanings of self, shape teachers’ learning? In this section, I explore the teacher-learner in relation to the socio-cultural context through the theoretical lens of social identity theory and socio-cultural theory. I examine how issues of race, class and gender shape particular constructions of the teacher-learner and how teacher-learners negotiate these discourses as they make new meanings for themselves and engage with new ways of knowing, being and doing as a teacher-learner.

Social-learning theorists agree that learning is a social and individualised activity and that knowledge is socially constructed, and “this implies that the social, historical and cultural contexts, together with the individual’s setting in all these, determine the content, style and methods of learning” (Jarvis et al., 2003, p. 43). Looking through the lens of social identity theory and socio-cultural theory I explore how teachers who attended school during the apartheid era construct themselves as particular teacher-learners in post-apartheid South Africa. I analyse and interpret how teachers as agents of change or “vehicles of power”, (Foucault, 1980, p. 98) disrupt, resist, or defy imposed discourses of race, class and gender

and the residues of apartheid through their self-directed learning, as noted by Francis et al. (2003).

Through this lens, I examine the lives of these teachers and how they negotiate meanings of race, class and gender and the dominant discourses of schooling as they make new meanings for themselves as teacher-learners.

3.5.3 Lens 3: Practices of self-directed learning and change (Chapter 6)

This section of analysis is in response to the third sub-question: How do the meanings of teacher-learner inform teachers' learning practices? I use Evans's (2002) concepts of professionalism and professionalism, combined with Bell and Gilbert's model on professional learning (1996), as a lens for examining the practices of self-directed learning and change of teachers in post-apartheid South Africa. Given that professional development and continuous professional development in South African public schools are externally driven, I focus on how teachers as "initiators of change" take responsibility for their own learning and identify spaces within which their learning takes place (Day et al., 2002).

Through the lens of socio-cultural theory of learning I explore the dynamic connection between who teachers are and how they learn as reflective practitioners, as recognised by Jarvis and Parker (2005). As teachers reflect on their learning, what meanings do they give to their practice as teacher-learners (Jarvis, 2005)? In this section of analysis I show how teachers engage with learning for change within the socio-cultural contexts of their schools. I examine the formal and informal contexts in which learning for change takes place. I analyse how teachers engage in various practices of learning within the schooling community as they learn with others, through others and through the self. I also analyse learning that takes place outside the schooling community and how these spaces contribute to teachers' learning for change.

3.6 Conclusion

Locating this study within the critical paradigm allows me to use a suitable research plan to explore how the South African teachers in this study learn as professionals. Field texts such as the life-story interviews, as well as photographs, newspaper articles, letters and certificates were used as data. The information gathered from the field texts was then transcribed and written into narratives. A multi-layered framework of analysis and interpretation was used to analyse the self-directed learning and change of the teachers. Through restorying the field texts, I was able to discover who the teacher-learner is in relation to the social-cultural contexts that they grew up in and presently teach in and could also identify their practices of self-directed learning.

The next chapter focuses on the stories of the five teachers involved in this study. These stories were recorded at the interview sessions and thereafter were thematically restoried. The narratives highlight the teachers' socio-cultural contexts and how it shaped them as teacher-learners. It also focusses in how these teacher-learners as agents of change within their schools and communities make particular learning choices. It also serves to highlight how self-directed learning takes place within different spaces.

Chapter 4 Lens 1: Restorying of field texts- Narratives of the self

Stories are not only the way in which we come to ascribe significance to experiences ... but also they are one of the primary means through which we constitute our very selves ... we become who we are through telling stories about our lives and living the stories we tell (Andrews, 2000, pp. 77-78)

4.1 Introduction

Teachers do not leave their values at the door when they enter their classrooms, on the contrary, as much as they might want to hide or avoid them, their values and beliefs slip in the door with them. In fact, teachers bring their entire autobiographies with them: their experiences, identities, values, hang-ups, biases, wishes, dreams, and hopes (Nieto, 2003, p. 24)

Every teacher has a story to tell and this chapter focuses on the journeys of teachers as they highlight critical moments in their lives that have a profound effect on their self-directed learning. In re-presenting the stories I was interested in understanding how teacher's personal/professional selves drive their self-directed learning and change, and the spaces within which this learning takes place. "How did they get to be who they are? How did they get to know what they know?" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1995, p.102).

Teachers' lives are entrenched in race, gender and class. Through the stories in this study, we can understand how self-directed learning takes place within the discourses of race, gender and class as these teachers resist or challenge the status quo and create spaces for their learning. Stories granted me access into the teachers' worlds and helped to articulate their lived experiences. I am aware that as a researcher I look through my own lens which is coloured by my own philosophy and my own experiences with race, class and gender. In re-presenting the stories I am also conscious of the fact that, as a practising teacher I have my own views on professional development.

In restorying the texts, I also used artefacts that teachers provided which included photographs, certificates, newspaper articles and letters. Some of the teachers in this study

didn't have many photographs from their childhood due to them growing up in disadvantaged homes where photographs were regarded as a luxury. These artefacts were used to "trigger" particular memories of participants (Cresswell, 1996).

I consulted with the teachers about which artefacts to include alongside their stories as this allowed them to present particular identities of themselves as teachers; identities that they chose. The artefacts provide critical information on some of the activities that teachers have engaged in that shaped them as teacher-learners.

4.2 Text One: Mbeje, inspiring young minds

“Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.”



Mbeje is 38-year-old African teacher who lives in Newlands East. He is married and has three children. Although he is a qualified Drama and Music specialist, he is presently teaching isiZulu in the FET phase. At the time of this study he had been teaching for eleven years. His classes are always vibrant as he allows his learners to use creative means to express themselves. He takes time to focus on the learners' achievements in his learning area and gives them recognition for improving their results.

The value of education

I grew up in the rural area of Greytown. It is situated in the Natal Midlands where there is an abundance of timber and sugar-cane farms. I lived with my mother, two brothers and two sisters. My father did not live with us because he was employed as a police constable in Durban. It was too far for him to travel home every day so he lived in Durban. I missed having my father around because I only saw him once a month. My mother took the leadership role in the home, ensuring that we had food, clean school uniforms and that we went to school regularly. She exerted a positive influence on my life because she motivated me to do things for myself and stressed the value of education.

I grew up in an average-income home because my father was the only one who worked. My mother was a housewife and my father's income was sufficient to provide us with the basic necessities. He was a good provider and bought us our school uniforms, textbooks and paid our school fees. In those days when apartheid was rife not many African parents encouraged their children to go to school because of financial constraints.

Most of the African children would work on the surrounding farms to supplement their family's income. I was very lucky to have a mother who was a visionary; she had an insight into the importance of education and insisted that we attended school.

I treasured my textbooks

I attended Ehlanzeni Primary School which is situated in Greytown. The school was in a rural area, built by Lutheran missionaries. The school building was drab with just a basic block structure and was not plastered. What was rather disconcerting was the fact that no toilets were provided for the learners. It was humiliating and dehumanising to use the bushes as toilets. The school did not have many facilities and nothing much in terms of curricular and co-curricular activities were offered to us. We even had to buy our own textbooks. My father bought my textbooks, which I treasured. Lots of my classmates didn't have textbooks and they found it difficult to cope in class. I would share my textbooks with my classmates which made following the teacher difficult because at least ten of us would share one textbook.

The luxury of having a desk and a chair

Life at school was a struggle with overcrowded classrooms with about fifty learners crammed into one small classroom. The only way to be recognised by the teachers was to excel. Another thing that I remember vividly was the luxury of having a desk and a chair. Sometimes I would go into the classroom and find that there were no desks and chairs available for me. They were usually taken by the older learners in my class. Sometimes, I would have to sit on the floor for the entire day which made it difficult to concentrate. If I sat at the back of the class it was difficult to hear what the teacher was saying because of the overcrowded classrooms and the noisy learners, thus I would miss out on the lesson for that day. This was very frustrating because I wanted to learn. It was very early in life that I learnt the discipline of self-study. I would read my textbooks and study my notes, thus I began to perform better at school.

When I complained to my mother she would reprimand me for complaining and remind me that I was there to learn and should make use of the opportunity. Going to school was a privilege because at that time not many African parents sent their children to school due to the costs involved.

I had no choice but to accept the schooling situation and find ways to adapt. It was through my mother that I learnt the value of education. I would make it my duty to go early to school every day so I could choose the best place to sit and learn.

Learn and excel

Although our schools didn't have basic facilities, we had the best teachers. Our teachers were very dedicated and they motivated us to learn and excel. The teachers played a vital role in motivating us to attend school and explained to us the importance of education. They told us about the opportunities that were available to us if we were educated. My teachers used what little resources they had at their disposal to teach us and make learning fun. My teachers painted a positive picture of the benefits of an educated life.

Pursue knowledge and excellence

One of my favourite teachers at primary school was Mr Ngubane, who taught us Afrikaans and mathematics in Grade 5. He loved teaching and was passionate about teaching Afrikaans; however, I doubted his ability to speak the language fluently. He would invite some bright learners from Grade 7 and 7 to recite Afrikaans poems in our class so that we could become interested in Afrikaans. Those learners were so thrilled about being chosen that it boosted their confidence. I also tried to excel in Afrikaans so that Mr Ngubane would be impressed by me. His lessons were always inspirational and he taught us about us how we could use education to overcome the atrocities of living in apartheid South Africa.

I really admired the way he was always dressed smartly with a suit and a tie. He had a vibrant personality and an enthusiasm for life. I could see from his attitude that being a teacher was something he enjoyed. He loved teaching and inspiring young minds. His dedication and commitment to his work was contagious. It made me want to pursue knowledge and excellence. He made learning fun and something that should be done throughout our lives. He said that learning opportunities were everywhere and we should seize those moments. He painted a picture of a successful life for us, one that could only be attained through lifelong learning. He also encouraged us to envision ourselves going to university and obtaining our degrees and living successful lives.

He spoke about the hope for the future, one in which the black man would be emancipated and would rule South Africa. He inspired us by saying that if we wanted to be the future leaders of South Africa, education would be the key. He would inspire us with stories of successful people like Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo. He definitely shaped my ideas on learning and impacted on the type of teacher and lifelong learner that I am today.

Learners learn in a supportive environment

Not all teachers were inspirational like Mr Ngubane. I remember my form teacher, Miss Makhaye, who took pleasure in embarrassing us by asking us personal questions in the presence of the other learners. Those questions were asked to hurt and belittle us. She enjoyed seeing us squirm. She used to ask me what I had eaten for breakfast and if I said *putu* (porridge made from mealie meal) and tea she would laugh at me, which was embarrassing. Some learners would even go to the extent of lying that they had eaten bread and tea for breakfast. She would always make fun of us. Some learners would even stay at home so they would not be traumatised by this teacher's invasive questions. When I qualified as a teacher I promised myself that I would never treat my learners the way Miss Makhaye had treated me! I believe that learners can only learn in a supportive environment where they feel loved and are treated like they are special. As teachers we must make the classroom environment conducive to learning.

Learning was fun

Attending Somashi High School, near Greytown, school proved to be a totally different experience for me. For the first time I could go to school knowing there were toilets available for me. This was significant to me because I didn't like being embarrassed and feeling undignified.

This school had spacious grounds where we could play soccer, netball and other sports. This school's sports committee was well organised but teachers coached mainly soccer and netball because we only had basic facilities and equipment. I would have loved to have played other sports like cricket and rugby. I excelled in playing soccer and participated in inter-class and inter-school tournaments. It gave me immense pride and satisfaction when we won the matches we played. Participating in sport was invaluable and it instilled discipline and focus in me. I also developed good communication skills.

There were a few dedicated teachers who were willing to share their skills and knowledge with us by encouraging us to participate in co-curricular activities, which were conducted after school hours. Although music was not offered as a subject choice for the Senior Certificate examinations, we were encouraged to join the school choir. Mr Khumalo was our music teacher and it was clear that he was passionate about teaching us music. He taught us classical songs and showed us that music was a very colourful thread woven into the entire fabric of our lives. It was here that my passion for music blossomed because learning it was fun.

Quest for new knowledge

I remember with fondness the excellent spirit with which my teachers taught us. Although our school had limited resources and overcrowded classrooms, my teachers still persevered to give us the best education that they could. I really appreciated their efforts. Mr Nxumalo, my teacher of English, was an outstanding example of a dedicated teacher. English was our second language and he was aware of the difficulties we experienced in learning this foreign language. He knew the importance of us being literate in English because of the opportunities it would provide for us. He was concerned with our ability to express ourselves in English and he would use innovative methods to help us to become confident in using English as a medium of communication.

He would organise classroom debates and would encourage us to read aloud or discuss novels that we had read. This helped us to develop our confidence in speaking and reading English. His thirst for new knowledge and his innovative teaching methods inspired me to search for different sources of knowledge to supplement my learning. He taught me that learning was not restricted to the prescribed textbooks and the constraints of the classroom. I began this quest for new knowledge which has helped me to learn, develop change and grow.

Stronger and resilient

Whilst at secondary school it was not strange to see teachers walking around with sticks because corporal punishment was used to discipline us. Our parents and members of the community believed that if a child was beaten it would make that child more disciplined.

A teacher that I feared more than others was my teacher of Afrikaans because he was not afraid to use his jumbo whip to discipline us.

When I was in Grade 10 I had a very traumatising incident in my Afrikaans class. Although we experienced much difficulty in understanding Afrikaans, which was our second additional language, my Afrikaans teacher expected every learner to achieve fifty percent and more. If we achieved below fifty percent we would be severely punished. I remember a particular incident which is forever etched in my memory. My form teacher had granted me leave because I had the flu and was really unwell. After I had taken leave, my class wrote an Afrikaans test. My teacher gave me zero for the test because I didn't inform him that I was leaving school on the day of the test. He refused to listen to my excuses, screamed at me and gave me twenty lashes on my back with his jumbo whip. What was even more humiliating was that he punished me in front of my classmates. I developed an intense dislike for that teacher because I felt that he was not a caring and understanding person. That experience made me stronger and more resilient. I worked really hard at upgrading my Afrikaans marks so that I would not be punished again. This incident contributed to making me a caring and understanding teacher. I try to get to know my learners, especially the ones who have learning difficulties, and try and find ways in which I can assist them.

Learning never ends

I went to school during the apartheid era and was politically conscientised by my history teacher. He would tell us about the privileged lives that most of the Whites lived and the opportunities available to them. We knew that if we wanted to succeed in apartheid South-Africa we would have to work extremely hard.

My history teacher would tell us about the injustices that the blacks experienced. At school level, we felt the effects of apartheid at our school. Certain subjects like economics and accounting were not offered to us because we attended a non-White school. The government didn't think that these subjects were important for African children to study and teachers were also not trained to teach these subjects.

I have always felt that I was disadvantaged because I was denied the right to choose the subjects that I would have loved to have studied. Later, when I qualified as a teacher, I pursued studies in accounting because I felt that learning never ends.

I was still a learner when there was an outbreak of student uprisings in South Africa in the 1980s. Militants were calling for black communities to become ungovernable. The apartheid government declared a state of emergency and would detain anyone who was seen as a threat to the state. Many people were detained without a trial or appeal. Schooling was disrupted as there were calls for boycotts and stay-aways. I knew that change in South Africa was on its way and I had to be ready for that change; for me, this meant that I had to concentrate on my studies so that I could take my place in society and make a difference to my people.

I blamed apartheid

During the apartheid years in South Africa we lived in racially segregated areas and didn't have much opportunity to interact with other race groups. I felt that people from the other races were very 'big' – they were people with whom I would feel uncomfortable talking to. My only interaction with someone from a different race was with a White man who owned a local store in our area. The adults would talk to the white man and out of respect call him "*baas*" (boss) and "*nkosi*" (king). The white shop-owner was pleasant and treated us with respect but I was not sure whether it was because he wanted our business or because he was genuinely being friendly. I blamed apartheid for the divisions it created between people.

I always loved learning

When I went to university I became more involved in the political struggle. I became more conscientised and began to participate in the political rallies. I found that most people felt more comfortable keeping to their own race groups and there were only a few who mingled freely. I had big dreams and aspirations and registered at the university to complete my BA but due to financial constraints I didn't complete my studies. I was very disappointed that I couldn't pursue my dream. I was granted a bursary to study teaching so I registered at Ntuzuma College and completed my diploma in teaching.

I always loved learning so after I qualified as a teacher I continued studying and completed my higher diploma in education at the Sacol (South African College for Open Learning) college in Pietermaritzburg.

Learning builds our character

I think that as teachers we stagnate if we reach a state when we feel that we have nothing more to learn. Learning is taking place all the time; it's just that we must be willing to make the most of these learning opportunities. Presently, I am teaching in a school that has a majority of African learners and only four African teachers. I actually experience some difficulty relating to most of my Indian colleagues because if I express my dissatisfaction about an issue they think that I am being difficult.

However, I have a fantastic relationship with my learners and I prefer to spend my free time helping them. Some of the learners experience problems with understanding the work taught because English is not their mother tongue. Many of the African learners experience difficulty in English and accounting. When they come to me for help and I cannot assist them because it's not my subject, I feel that I have failed them. So I have enrolled at UNISA to study towards a bachelor of commerce so that I can be of assistance to them. I also get study material from other schools and conduct my own research to assist the learners. I sacrifice my time after school hours to teach the weaker learners so that they can improve their results. Everyone at this school was shocked at the IsiZulu Matric results. Every child passed and the subject had the most 'A' symbols in the school.

The learners also see me as someone who can assist them with their personal problems. I also share my life history with them, how my parents also struggled to send me to school, and I advise them that experiencing problems does not mean that you have to quit school or give up on your dreams. By sharing my life's struggles with them, they can identify with me. I am constantly motivating them to aspire to greater heights. I show them that there are solutions to every problem if they just try to look at it from a different angle. Every day, I challenge them to try to learn new things because learning builds character.

Everything I learn impacts on my teaching

I don't think that you can teach children and not be changed in the process. I have learnt that teaching is much more than an occupation to earn a salary; it is also about the continued development of yourself so that you can inspire young minds. I look forward to meeting new challenges and exploring new things in life.

The information that we receive from the one-day workshops organised by the Department of Education is insufficient. The managers at my school are not equipped to assist me in the teaching of my subject. Most of the textbooks are not even relevant to the context that I teach in. As a teacher, looking for new and interesting material is a priority. I feel compelled to conduct more research in order to stay informed. I am always reading articles and books that are linked to teaching. Learning makes my professional life exciting and everything that I learn impacts on my teaching. I find that when I search for information on my own, it makes learning more meaningful and I try to impart this skill to my learners.

There is not much scope for professional development at our school and district level. We just receive instructions regarding changes in curriculum and are expected to enforce them. I work in collaboration with my colleagues from other schools to design learning materials for our learners. The IsiZulu Cluster was started by the subject advisor and all teachers from the area attend meetings. The IsiZulu Cluster has worked very well where everyone contributes and we learn from each other. The main aim of the cluster was to moderate Continuous Assessment and Examination scripts. It has, however, evolved into a learning space where we feel free to share our ideas on learning and teaching. It is a non-critical environment and a space where we can be ourselves. All of us share our resources and ideas on how to make our teaching more effective.

Teaching is a stepping stone in assisting me to accomplish things that I could not do when I was younger because I didn't have the resources or the opportunities. Last year I studied ABET (adult basic education and training) through UNISA because I would like to teach illiterate people in rural areas. There are many people who are illiterate and I am always looking for opportunities to assist them.

We must share our skills and knowledge

I believe that whatever skills and knowledge we have must be shared with others. By sharing knowledge we impart to others and also learn at the same time. I am always looking for opportunities to share my skills and knowledge with others. My involvement in community activities like choral activities, the church choir and soccer coaching has brought me great joy and a sense of accomplishment in my life. I know that I am making a difference in the lives of those I interact with. I treat each moment as a learning opportunity.

I am a volunteer for the Kha Ri Gude Literacy Campaign which was initiated by the Department of Basic Education. Its aim is to enable 4.7 million adults above the age of 15 to become literate and numerate in one of the eleven official languages of South Africa. We use specially designed teaching materials. I work as a supervisor in the KwaMashu area and am instrumental in spreading the news about the literacy campaign.

I am willing to share my time and skills with these students because it gives me great pleasure and it is heart-warming to assist those who cannot read and to see their faces light up when they can read. These are some of my treasured moments.

4.3 Text Two: Shabeer, ‘a foot-soldier’

“If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got, is it not now time to change so you can get something different?”



Shabeer is a 43-year-old Indian teacher who is the head of department at a primary school in Phoenix. He is single and lives in Overport, Durban. He is a qualified mathematics teacher and has been teaching for 23 years. He has an honours degree in education. He is a very prominent person in South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). He served as the chairperson of the SADTU Phoenix Branch Education Committee and the SADTU Ethekwini Regional Education Committee between 2007 and 2009. He has conducted numerous workshops on professional development and has attended many professional development conferences.

I am intrinsically motivated

I grew up in Overport, in Durban which is a predominantly Indian area. My parents had six children and I am the second-youngest. My family was below average as there was no steady source of income. My dad was a vendor in Grey Street. He also worked as a taxi conductor and later sold poultry. Gradually, when my elder brothers and sisters left school and started working, the financial status of my family improved. My parents came from very disadvantaged backgrounds and had only basic primary school education. My father was a very strict disciplinarian. He was very concerned about our academic and our religious education. Our parents expected us to perform our best at school, although we were not offered any rewards or incentives and this led me to become intrinsically motivated. There was much competition amongst my siblings to excel at school which made me strive to achieve the best results.

The teachers were extremely dedicated

I attended Overport SRS Primary School which was state-aided. It was regarded as a disadvantaged school because we had the barest of necessities. We had large rooms that were divided into four classrooms so we had approximately twelve classrooms. Due to the lack of space we followed the platoon system of morning and afternoon classes. We had a small library, a science room and ablution facilities for both the teachers and the learners. Although the school was disadvantaged and had basic facilities, the teachers were extremely dedicated in the way they executed their duties. They were very innovative and used their limited resources to make teaching interesting. I remember the colourful charts and home-made resources that they used in their lessons.

I could do anything that I desired

When I was in Grade 2 my teacher told us about the Tin Town floods where many houses were destroyed. Tin Town was an area inhabited by Indians, who lived in tin houses, in the Springfield area. My teacher asked us to draw a picture of the devastation of the floods. She was very impressed with my artwork and I was delighted when she showed the entire school my art. This was an inspirational moment for me; I knew that I could do anything that I desired.

I was motivated to succeed

Studying Afrikaans has always been an obstacle for many learners and my school was no exception. Most of my friends battled to learn to speak or write in Afrikaans because it was their second or third language of instruction. Their parents couldn't help them either because they had studied Latin at school instead of Afrikaans. When I was in Grade 4, I excelled in Afrikaans. My teacher was very impressed with my results that he escorted me to the other grades to demonstrate my proficiency in conversing in Afrikaans. His praise and faith in me made me want to perform even better. I developed a love for the subject which continued at secondary school where I was blessed with outstanding teachers.

At secondary school, Mr R Singh taught me Afrikaans in Grades 11 and 12. He was an inspiration to me. He had high expectations of me and I did everything in my power to achieve better results. I admired the way he conducted himself and he was always encouraging us to succeed.

He never belittled us but took every opportunity to encourage us. He accepted every learner and motivated us to persevere. He told us of the opportunities that we could have if we performed well at school and furthered our studies. He is now the deputy principal at a secondary school in Phoenix and whenever we meet in a professional capacity he always tells me of how proud he is of me.

A lifelong passion for sport

My primary-school principal, Mr Manirajh Singh, was instrumental in developing sport at our school. He executed his duties diligently and ensured that sport was taken seriously at our school. With him at the helm, sport took on a life of its own at our school. He was not satisfied with us just participating in a few sports like athletics and cross-country so he introduced us to other sporting codes like volleyball and cricket. More learners took an interest in participating in sport because they could choose from a variety of codes. I was impressed with Mr Singh's enthusiasm for sport and this inculcated in me a lifelong passion for sport. Throughout my schooling career I excelled in sports and was identified as one of the outstanding sports leaders at school. I attribute my achievements in sport to the positive influence and motivation of Mr M Singh.

Sport helped me to be more in control of myself, to be disciplined, to strive to do my best and to achieve my potential. It also kept me out of trouble and helped me to focus my energy on positive things. At secondary school I was also very involved in sport. I represented my school in athletics, soccer and volleyball. I still hold the 3000 metre record for long-distance running at district level. My family and community members were very proud of my achievements.

My father instilled good values in me

My father was a strict disciplinarian and I always behaved in a manner that would make my father proud of me. When I was in Grade 4, I was seated at the front of the classroom and the children at the back were unruly so I turned around to look at what they were doing. My teacher accused me of misbehaving and he beat me. That was the first time that I had been punished at school. My classmates were shocked and my teacher refused to listen to my explanation. He believed in "hit-now-and-talk-later" philosophy. Later, in the afternoon, the teacher realised that he had made a mistake and he apologised to me.

My father instilled good values in me and he always taught us to forgive those who hurt us. I accepted the teacher's apology but the embarrassment of being humiliated in front of my friends remained with me for a few days.

When I became a teacher I adopted the policy of investigating the incident first then deciding on the form of punishment. I am a disciplinarian! I believe that as teachers we have to be disciplined in all that we do. We have to ensure that our learners are disciplined because learning can only happen in a disciplined environment. This is sadly lacking at our schools where disciplinarians are becoming a minority and teachers don't know how to manage their classes.

I was at the frontlines of leadership

I attended Centenary Secondary School during the turbulent boycotts of the 1980s. It was regarded as one of the best Indian schools at that time. It had all the basic facilities like a library, a science laboratory and a playground. I was very politically conscientised and at the frontlines of leadership at my school. My teachers were surprised when I joined the boycotts, which continued for three weeks, and refused to go to class. Although I was not a senior learner, the other learners looked to me for support, direction and leadership. It was a defining moment for me because I realised that I had the ability to lead. It was my entry into politics and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Unfortunately, I couldn't pursue it because my family was depending on me to make a financial contribution to our home so that we could have a better life. I realised that education would lead to a better future so I concentrated on my studies and excelled.

I worked diligently

One of the outstanding things that I remember about my secondary-school teachers was their caring and thoughtfulness. They treated us with kindness and respect. An example of this was when I was in Matric. I was late for one of the papers and my principal came to fetch me from my home. This showed that he was so caring and interested in my welfare. I felt so important that I didn't want to disappoint him so I worked diligently to produce good results.

At secondary school, the teachers identified me as a pivotal person at school. I was given many duties which I executed in a diligent manner. When I was in Matric, my teacher had so much faith in me that he selected me to teach maths to other classes that were underperforming. I was also a member of the school's Maths Committee, which aimed to assist learners who had difficulty learning maths and to organise activities to encourage an interest in maths.

I was also outspoken and was selected to participate in debates. It was here that my critical thinking skills were developed. I had to conduct my own research into the various topics being researched and this formed the beginning of my self-initiated learning. I discovered that there was a vast expanse of knowledge that made learning exciting. Every time I read a book or newspaper article made me more passionate to learn more. Learning became something that I couldn't do without. I found that what was being provided at my school was inadequate to satisfy my hunger for knowledge, so I found other ways of educating myself. The library was one prime spot where most of my learning took place.

I could make a difference in the lives of children

My hunger for knowledge led me to the University of Durban Westville, where I enrolled for a bachelor of arts in 1984. I financed my own studies by working part-time at a wholesaler over the weekends and during the holidays. I chose to study teaching because it was seen as a very secure job and a profession that was regarded in high esteem by the members of my community. It was also seen as a stable and risk-free profession. I was also encouraged by my teachers to pursue teaching. I knew that I could make a difference in the lives of children just as my teachers had made a difference in my life. I was the only person in my family who decided to study further. Although my siblings excelled academically most of them didn't complete their Matric but opted to leave school and work to support the family. I was aware that I could make a difference to the socio-economic status of my family if I studied and entered the teaching profession. I felt strongly that by being a teacher I could provide for my family and be a breadwinner. I also wanted to be independent and self-sufficient. My dad was absolutely thrilled that I had decided to pursue teaching.

A 'foot-soldier'

At university I joined a political party called the United Democratic Front. I worked as a 'foot soldier', which involved encouraging others to join the party. I was aware of the major changes that were taking place in politics in apartheid South Africa. The African National Congress was gaining more support from the people. Interacting with my colleagues at university and discussing the evils of apartheid and how it had impacted on our lives made me eager for change.

Working in the community

We live in communities and should always strive to make a difference to these communities so that others can have better lives. We must give back to our communities. I work very closely with the Soofie Mosque in Kenville where we do a lot of charity work like distributing grocery hampers during the year.

I am also a member of the Phoenix Poverty Reduction Association (PPRA). Our aim is to alleviate poverty by capacitating the indigent with skills to earn a living. A group of indigent ladies were taught how to cook, bake and operate their own business. The PPRA also initiated the tunnel farming project which is operated by the indigent in the Phoenix area. The fresh produce from these tunnels is sold and the profits are used to fund other projects. We are also in the process of securing sponsorships to provide bursaries for the indigent learners in the Phoenix area. The PPRA also embarks on a blanket distribution in winter and holds a Christmas party for children in December.

In the last five years I have been involved with the KZN² Wildlife Association. I go on education drives and teach people about not exploiting our oceans. I speak to unlicensed fishermen and encourage them to apply for their licences. This is done over the weekends and during the holidays.

² KwaZulu-Natal

Teaching is a gift

I am highly spiritual and I believe that God is very significant in my life and I emphasise this in my classroom.

I could have selected to pursue religious studies and I would have excelled in those. I continued reading books on Islam and have interesting discussions and debates with religious leaders. My spiritual life greatly affects how I view and conduct myself as a teacher. I am what some would call “risk-averse” in that I don’t drink or smoke. I believe that my prophet (Mohammed) was a teacher and all the other religious leaders were great teachers sent to mankind by God. I believe that teaching is a gift and we must use it to make a difference in our learners’ lives so that our society can become a better one.

A teacher should always lead the learning

Teaching a very special occupation. Many say that teachers mould children but I believe that a teacher also develops learners to make informed choices. We must provide opportunities for learners to broaden their horizons because we are the learners’ visas to the world. A teacher should be unbiased and allow learners to develop themselves by acting as guide to the child’s learning.

A teacher should always strive to improve him- or herself in all aspects. A teacher is a lifelong learner, our learning never stops! There is always new knowledge that the teacher has to learn constantly in order to be updated. A teacher should always lead the learning. We learn from our life experiences, which impact on our teaching. Learning brings about a continuous change; it is never stagnant – it’s like the waves in the ocean.

I improved my qualifications

After I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree and a higher diploma in education, in my quest to better myself I registered for an honours degree in education. Subsequently, I was disappointed because there was no upward mobility or recognition for teachers even if we had bettered our qualifications. Ten years later I decided that improving my qualifications would assist me in becoming a better teacher so I enrolled for a postgraduate course which would lead me obtaining a Master's degree in education. The postgraduate

course is normally completed over four years but with much perseverance I completed it in one year. I selected the modules that would improve my teaching.

I chose Education Law because as a teacher you have to understand and implement the policies of the department. I also enjoyed a module on professional development. I believe that I am capable of being an excellent senior manager at school. For me personally, things were very difficult financially and I didn't pursue my master's degree which I am seriously considering now.

There are many learners at my school who struggle to learn so I enrolled for a course on educating learners with special needs at Embury College so that I could assist them. It was an eight-week course held on Saturdays. This course helped me to identify learners with special needs. It taught me how to interact with them and how to design programmes to assist them.

I share a close bond with learners and through my interaction with them am able to identify if they are experiencing problems at home at school. I assist the Institutional Support Team at school level by identifying learners who have personal problems. The Psychological Unit was so impressed with my input that they asked me for my assistance in trying to identify learners who have difficulties at other schools.

I have a thirst for knowledge

Most of my exposure to learning opportunities has been provided by being an active member of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). As a union leader I willingly sacrifice my weekends, afternoons and holidays to attend, organise and facilitate workshops and meetings. I have a thirst for knowledge and to impart whatever I learn to others and this helps me to be a success in whatever I do. Being involved in the SADTU has also played a pivotal role in my professional development. It has given me exposure to different sources of professional development which have contributed to my learning. It offers an excellent opportunity to interact with different people who have outstanding ideas about how we can excel as teachers. It allowed me to be more informed about changes that are taking place or that could be initiated. Ultimately, as a teacher I have an opportunity to make an impact and influence the educational sphere within which I am operating.

I was a site representative for many years and I stepped down from this position so that other teachers could develop themselves in this position. I was later elected to serve at the branch level of SADTU and I took over the education portfolio in 2008.

I represented the Phoenix SADTU branch at various education forums. Leaders from SACE (South African Council of Educators) saw my potential and nominated me to fill a vacancy at Ethekwini North as an education convenor. I served in this post for eighteen months. I was in charge of twelve SADTU branches and I had to convene regular meetings to inform teachers of the latest curriculum changes. It was exciting and rewarding being in a position where I could make a difference to the knowledge and practice of teachers. In 2009 I represented the Ethekwini North Region at the Teacher Development Summit in Gauteng. The theme of the summit was “Towards perfecting the Art of Teaching” and the summit focused on the professional development of the teacher.

Some of the workshops that I conducted were on the National Protocol on Assessment, the National Framework on Teacher Education, the NSLA³ (schools that underperformed in the Matric exams), Foundations of Learning Campaign, the National Teachers’ Awards (NTA), continuous professional teacher development and so on.

I facilitated a workshop at the Pinetown District on continuous professional teacher development for approximately 600 principals and the Staff Development Teams’ chairpersons. I addressed them on the various aspects of teacher development, the policies and how it fits into professional development.

I have served on the Pinetown and ILembe districts on the National Teachers’ Awards (NTA) committees. I also conducted workshops for advocacy and capacity-building to encourage educators to participate in these awards. The input that I made was highly respected because I received a lot of positive feedback. I was also involved in adjudication at cluster, district and coastal levels of the NTA.

We can learn from each other and share our resources

With the introduction of outcomes-based education (OBE), SADTU launched many learning-area committees to assist teachers with the changes in the curriculum and in professional development. Due to various factors these committees ceased to exist or were ineffective. One of the reasons was that workshops and meetings were held outside working hours and most teachers are reluctant to sacrifice. Another reason for the lack of success of the committees is that the teachers who volunteered to chair these committees were unable to meet after hours to ensure the success of these committees. Another problem that we face is that many teachers join committees so that they can include it their job profiles and are not passionate about making a change in education. I believe that if you as a chairperson don't have a vision of where you want to take a committee then it will fail. As leader you must capacitate and motivate those who are in your team.

I believe that these committees are important for the professional development of teachers so we can learn from each other and share our resources. In 2008, as education convenor I was instrumental in resuscitating the learning-areas committees but the same challenges still exist. If the proposed policy to extend the school day by one hour is approved by the Department of Education then teachers will be compelled to attend these meetings.

Mentoring other teachers

As a head of a department I also mentor other teachers. The Department of Education sometimes places unqualified or inexperienced teachers in our schools. I mentored a teacher who just matriculated and had to teach maths at our school and he was totally paranoid about it. My principal was totally amazed at how confident this teacher became in teaching maths. She now teaches maths at a school in Verulam. I also mentored another teacher who was an ex-learner of mine. He said that he emulated me in his teaching and was a strict disciplinarian like me.

'Professional talks'

I guide my teachers to teach in any learning area. I also surf the internet for more information on how to better my teaching. I have found some useful information on the internet which I use in my teaching.

I also share information with my colleagues and I find that this is very effective because it gives me a different perspective on the topic. Discussions about professional matters with school managers, colleagues and other stakeholders in education have helped me to gain professional insight and knowledge. These professional talks help me to clarify my own ideas and to get a deeper understanding of professional issues.

My passion for sport

I am actively involved in the Phoenix Schools' Sports Association (PHOESSA) which is the body that delivers sport to all 74 schools in Phoenix. These sporting activities are conducted after school hours. I am the chairperson of a sub-committee of PHOESSA that co-ordinates the sporting activities of 12 primary schools in Phoenix North. I am also an executive member of PHOESSA's athletic and cross-country committee. I am actively involved in the Pinetown District as a Phoenix Circuit co-ordinator where I co-ordinate inter-school athletics and cross-country.

At school level I am the sports co-ordinator. I was instrumental in bringing Baker's mini-Cricket (now called KFC mini-cricket) to our school and we are now a hub (we control about 10-12 schools). Teachers who are my seniors are now inspired by my passion for sport and those who were previously involved in sport are now volunteering their services to co-ordinate and coach cricket. PHOESSA organises the Nelson Mandela Challenge Cup for the sporting codes of soccer, netball and volleyball. In 2010 PHOESSA co-ordinated the Inter-District Friendship Games involving 2 500 learners from Phoenix, Verulam, Tongaat, Chatsworth and Pietermaritzburg. I enjoy my role of co-ordinating sport which is intense and in-depth. This is really exciting because they have so much experience and skills that would add value to the learners. Being involved in these various activities helps me to meet with different stakeholders and has helped me to develop as a teacher.

Being involved in different activities has assisted me with being able to interact with various stakeholders. I am very sociable and am always willing to help. If I am given a task to complete, I always strive to complete it to the best of my ability and even go beyond what is required. Wherever I have been I know that I have made a positive contribution.

4.4 Text Three: Carolina, ‘a prisoner of hope’

“The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live” (Adler, cited in St. Peter, 2010, p. 392)



Carolina is a 47-year-old Coloured teacher who lives in Mt. Moreland near Umloti, Durban. She is married to an Indian and is the mother of three children. She has been teaching for 22 years. She presently teaches Afrikaans, English, and Arts and Culture at a combined school in Phoenix. Teaching is her passion and she loves working with children. She is actively involved in community upliftment projects. She is presently completing her studies in social work.

A mixed ancestry

I am a woman born into a country where you are classified according to the texture of your hair and the shade of your skin. In terms of South African identification I am classified a ‘Coloured.’ Being classified ‘Coloured’ has made me identify with other Coloured people but it has also made me an outsider to other groups that I want to join.

My family’s roots are of mixed ancestry and that is why we look so different to each other: my father was White and my mother was Dutch. My paternal granny was an African woman from Rhodesia and my grandfather was a white French man. My maternal grandparents were both Dutch. I shared a close bond with my French grandfather and adopted many of his mannerisms.

My father instilled good work ethics in us

I grew up in Caledon District, which is in the Western Cape. It is also known as District Six, the name goes back to 1867, when it was the sixth district in the municipality. Once it was home to around 40 000 people, most of whom were Coloureds.

Then the Group Areas Act of 1950 was enforced by the Afrikaner nationalist government which zoned the entire country into separate residential and business areas for different racial groups. In 1966, District Six was declared an area for occupation by Whites only. My people were forced to move out of an area in which they had built their homes, families and lives. Their houses were sometimes bulldozed and some people were even evicted at gunpoint!

My family was allowed to stay in District Six because my father was employed as a foreman on a big sheep farm, owned by a White farmer. When I reflect on the conditions under which we grew up and the poverty of those who lived around us, I would consider us to be very privileged. Being the farm foreman, my father was granted certain privileges which ensured that we lived a comfortable life. We lived in a farmhouse which was rent-free and the White farm-owner supplied us with meat and flour. We were also given a cow, so we had our own supply of milk. My father's employer provided us with a piece of land on which we planted small crops, like strawberries and tobacco. My father worked tirelessly and instilled good work ethics in us. We used to wake up by four in the morning in order to work in the garden and tend to the crops which we sold to the White farmers and families around us. Whilst the farm-owners drove around in their expensive family cars, our only mode of transportation was a horse and cart.

Strive and advance

My father was always a tower of strength and support to me. He was always motivating me to strive and advance. I shared a special bond with my dad and he was a constant source of encouragement to me. My father understood me; he looked beyond my faults and weaknesses and accepted me. I knew that I could count on my father always being there to assist me. I was devastated when my father died and I turned to my brother for support.

My mother was a traditional housewife who also worked as a midwife in the community. She influenced my focus on health, the importance of eating correctly and the value of exercise. Somehow, I never shared a close relationship with my mother. She expected me to be perfect and was very critical of me.

She never accepted me for who I was and constantly judged and criticised me. She was difficult to relate to and expected me to do everything her way. Her constant criticism and nagging led to intense feelings of inadequacy and insecurity in me.

The other members in my family also criticised me. There was always a dispute between my sisters and me concerning one issue or another. They couldn't handle my independent thinking and my outspoken behaviour. The Coloured children in the neighbourhood were like castaways that no-one cared about. I took the initiative of sharing my sporting skills with them because I knew the role that sport had played in my life. My sisters didn't understand my passion and dedication to these children, to the extent that they would go to the extent of hiding my sports kit.

As a child I was always looking for acceptance but found only condemnation. Today, I cannot handle criticism because of my negative experiences as a child. These feelings of insecurity that plagued me as a child constantly threaten to resurface even in my life as an adult. For example, my husband expects too much from me and I can't handle that. I know that I can do it but I wasn't encouraged as child to do things on my own. Sometimes I feel that I can't make decisions on my own, I know that I make certain decisions that are going to have a positive impact on me but I'm not strong enough to do it on my own. I'm always seeking other people's approval.

My quest for knowledge

I attended an Anglican mission school during my primary school days. There were about 60 to 70 White, African and Coloured children at the school. The government employed the teachers but the mission school was responsible for our well-being. They took very good care of us. Our school was very neat and there was always food. In the morning we would get a glass of milk, a slice of peanut-butter bread and one vitamin tablet.

During winter they would give us a nourishing soup and during summer they would give us delicious stew. I always appreciated the meals that we received. The school was about four kilometres away from our home and we had to leave early in the morning so that we could reach school on time. Sometimes my siblings and I would travel by tractor to school but most of the time we walked.

It was my quest for knowledge that made me get up every morning and take that long walk to school. It was a walk that I knew would lead me to a better place one day!

Potential for greatness

In apartheid South Africa most Coloured children didn't continue into the higher grades at school because of a lack of funds. Girls were not encouraged to complete their schooling since the community believed it would be a wasted effort because they would end up as housewives. I was determined to complete my schooling. Although my father had certain privileges because we were living on the farm, he never had much money to send us to school.

I must acknowledge two people who were actually responsible for sending me to school, a White school principal and his wife, who was a teacher. They promised my parents that they would assist in the payment of my school fees. He and his wife were a source of encouragement and gave me hope. They believed that I had potential for greatness. Their kindness extended to such an extent that on many occasions they would fetch us from school and would also pay our entrance fees so that we could attend church camps. Their confidence in me really motivated and sustained me during those moments in my life when I really wanted to give up. At a time when racism in South Africa was rife, these two White people made a difference in my life. If it wasn't for them I would never have become a teacher.

The 'prison warden'

My experiences with whites were not all positive ones. In primary school we had a white teacher who wasn't from South Africa. He was a very stern and militant person who bullied us into submission. He displayed an intense hatred for coloured people and showed blatant favouritism towards the white children.

The majority of us at school disliked him because of the disgusting way in which he treated the coloured and African children. He verbally abused us and treated us like his prisoners. He enjoyed hitting us and made us stand outside on cold days, holding the corridor poles. I hated the condescending manner in which he treated us and how low this made me feel so much that I wanted to physically hurt him.

We were poor and couldn't afford warm school clothes. This 'prison warden' was totally inconsiderate and made us stand outside in the cold as a form of punishment for silly things. I blamed him for the sicknesses that we developed because of standing in the cold. I dreamt of the day when I could tell him how I felt and take revenge on him for his barbaric behaviour.

One day a unique opportunity presented itself, the 'prison warden' left his things unattended on his table. As an act of defiance, we buried his coffee flask and his favourite smoking pipe in the school yard. We vowed that we would never tell him where his things were. When he came back to class and realised that his things were missing, he was furious. He began to threaten us with violence until one of the White children told him where his things were hidden. He gave us a beating and sent us outside in the cold to hold the poles.

I continued to learn and excel

Going to school during apartheid was difficult. If you were a coloured learner you were 'not seen.' I felt invisible in the class, so I tried my best to be seen and heard by participating in curricular and extra-curricular activities. If as a coloured child you excelled academically or in sport, you were never acknowledged. There were white teachers and parents at my school who couldn't believe that coloured children could excel and they used every opportunity to undermine us.

When I remember incidents of racial discrimination at school, when we were ignored and made to feel inferior, it still brings tears to my eyes. Every year without fail there would be learners who would share the position of having scored the highest marks in a particular subject. If this position was shared between a white child and a coloured child, the teachers would award the certificate of merit to the white child. This was demeaning to us but we were forced to accept our fate.

This happened to me on several occasions and it caused tremendous pain and suffering to be treated like a second-class citizen. But I didn't allow these circumstances to define me, I continued to learn and excel even though I wasn't given any recognition for my efforts. I fought really hard to be recognised as a person of worth. I discovered that I could use sport as a vehicle to shine!

Underprivileged children were often ignored and not trained or selected

One of the highlights and joyous moments of my schooling career was my success in sports. Sports allowed me to be me! I enjoyed playing club netball and tennis, and I was a good athlete. Being coloured in apartheid South Africa meant that I had no access to tennis and netball courts. A rich White farmer allowed me to practise on his private tennis court. My teachers soon realised that I was good at playing netball and was a good long-distance athlete, so they entered me into inter-provincial tournaments. At the age of 12, I had achieved Western Province colours for netball and for long-distance running. This achievement was a moment etched in my memory because for the first time in my schooling career my existence was acknowledged.

Sports developed my leadership skills

When I went to secondary school I was faced with the similar scenario of racism and prejudice. Many children who attended the school came from multiracial farms and the White teachers displayed blatant favouritism towards the white children. coloured and African children were placed at a disadvantage when it came to inter-school sports selection because they were side-lined during the training sessions. The White teachers just ignored the potential of many of these children and refused to train them. I knew the tremendous role that sport had played in my life and how it gave me the determination to persevere and succeed so I decided to make a difference. I started coaching the Coloured children in tennis after school hours.

I also started to coach the under-nine and under-15 divisions in long-distance running. Sport gave me a reason to breathe and I participated actively in sport even at college level. Later, at college, I was elected as the sports manager of the region and used to organise sporting activities for young people. Sports developed leadership skills in me and allowed me to make a difference to others by motivating them.

I was betrayed

Life wasn't easy; it was always one hurdle after another. Something that tore my heart to shreds was the abuse I suffered at the hands of one of my close relatives. It was someone I trusted and believed in and he betrayed my trust. The abuse started when I was 14 and he would touch me in an inappropriate way.

It was a painful secret that I kept from my parents in order to keep the peace in the family. I knew that if I told my father there would have been bloodshed in the family and my mother would have blamed me. It has taken me a long time to heal and forgive but the scars are still there. Today, I can identify with children who are abused because I know what it feels like. The abuse had a very negative impact on my relationships with men. I didn't trust men and felt that all of them wanted to hurt me and betray my trust. It took me a long time to trust men and when I finally did I was betrayed once again...

I could take on any challenge

I met my first true love while I was teaching at a secondary school. He made me feel special and with him I could be myself. I felt safe with him and knew that I could trust him. I was 23 three and had been teaching for two-and-a-half years, everything in my life was taking shape. I had been feeling sick for a couple of days and then discovered that I was pregnant. I was devastated!

It was a most humiliating time for me because I had to face disciplinary action because I was unmarried and had to leave teaching for six months and re-apply for another teaching post. If you were single and became pregnant you were forced to be married within three months. My boyfriend disappeared when he found out that I was pregnant. Another painful disappointment!

My mother was furious and she asked me to leave the house. I was left to fend for myself! Life was tough; I was pregnant with no accommodation, no source of income and no family support. When I was about to give birth, my mother gave me permission to return home because she was concerned about my unborn child. After my son was born, I was forced to work in a shop in Cape Town in order to support us. Life became unbearable and on several occasions I was tempted to put my son up for adoption.

My son soon became a source of joy and pride in my life and I could take on any challenge because I had to fend for my son. I knew that he belonged to me and no-one could take him away from me.

Although I wanted to complete my teacher training at a distance-learning centre, I couldn't because I never had sufficient money. I couldn't to ask anyone for help and I knew that I had to make it on my own. The pain, hurt and rejection made me decide that I was never going to trust another man again. I decided to become a missionary and dedicate my life to God.

God became the most important person in my life

God became the most important person in my life. I had always been God-conscious because my parents were very religious and brought us up with sound Christian morals and principles. At the mission school I learnt how to sing, pray and lead a service. At secondary school I was part of a Christian youth group and later at college we started the first Christian fellowship which soon impacted on the colleges around us. It was while I was doing mission work in Cape Town that I met another missionary who shared my passion for God. He was an Indian missionary and understood my painful past. I was confident that he would never betray me and when he proposed marriage, I accepted.

A proud moment

A few years later when I had saved sufficient money to complete my studies, I enrolled at the Roggebaai Training College. It was a distance-education college and finally in 1980 I qualified as a junior primary teacher. It was a proud moment for me because of the turmoil that I had been through. My first appointment was at a private school in Cape Town. The wealthy farm-owners had established this school especially for their children and their workers' children. It was a multiracial school since all the employees were non-Whites. That school had all the facilities and equipment and no school that I would later teach in would compare to that school.

The school had about forty percent White learners and sixty percent non-White learners. I taught Grade 1 and Grade 2 learners, who were combined in one class. I was faced with different challenges whilst teaching at this school.

I had to be very careful about what I said to the White learners because I was employed by their parents. The Black learners were very poor and would come shabbily dressed to school. Some of them were dyslexic and there was no-one that we could refer them to for assistance. I found it challenging to teach this class: I was teaching two grades at a time and there were learning and communication barriers. There were also language barriers because many of the children came from the Transkei and could not speak or understand English or Afrikaans. I tried to help those that I could but it was heartbreakingly sad to see those children sit in the same class year after year because they couldn't understand what was being taught.

A thirst for knowledge

Mr Smith, a White inspector from Caledon, helped me to grow and develop as a teacher. At that time the White inspectors displayed much favouritism towards the White teachers and we were often side-lined or overlooked. With Mr Smith, there was no favouritism! He immediately recognised that I was a very good geography teacher and he always used to compliment me on my classroom organisation and set-up. I had a reading corner, a nature corner, educational charts and so forth in my class. Whenever he would come on school visits he would compliment me on the way I handled the learners. Knowing of my thirst for knowledge and innovative ways to teach, he used to post reading material and books to me, which I used as resources in my teaching. Since I lacked funds to purchase resources, I cherished those teaching resources sent by Mr Smith.

Mr Smith always encouraged me to further my studies, he was confident that one day I would become the principal of a school. Studying is my passion, but my financial situation always placed constraints on my need to learn so I had to find other means of learning.

I read!

The introduction of outcomes-based education has really been a challenge for me. It provided me with another opportunity to learn and grow. This year I am teaching Afrikaans, English, and arts and culture. I have never received formal training in arts and culture and English. In order to prepare myself so that I can do justice to my learners and the subject, I read!

I have to read to extend my knowledge because I need to be able to challenge my learners to reflect critically on the information. In the old system of education, subject knowledge was confined to the prescribed textbooks; nowadays teaching is more challenging and exciting because information can be used from a variety of sources.

Engaging with new knowledge and sharing ideas

I have always enjoyed attending workshops because it provides me with the privilege of engaging with new knowledge and sharing ideas with my colleagues. I've attended several professional-development workshops which I have enjoyed tremendously. They were organised by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, the Department of Education and non-governmental organisations. Since money and time are still constraints for me, I make the most of every learning opportunity that presents itself. At the workshops, I learnt about systematic teaching and the different ways of planning. At the last OBE workshop that I attended, I was elected to do the presentations, feedback reports and demonstration lessons. It was fun! All the knowledge that I have gained from these workshops is shared with my learners and colleagues.

Whilst teaching at Kenwyn Primary School I attended a professional development course every alternate year which was sponsored by Woolworths. I enjoyed the courses because we learnt much from each other. Some of the aspects that the courses focused on were communication skills, leading a disciplined life, conflict resolution and mediation.

Learning means growth

Learning to me means growth. My learning has come from reading, listening to others and from my life experiences. Even though I didn't study further and equip myself with studying professionally I know that I am capable of teaching Afrikaans to any grade. At many schools in Durban I have been thrown into the deep end when I was asked to teach new subjects and had to take the challenge of learning new material in order to be a successful teacher.

At present I am a substitute teacher and am teaching technology for the first time to Grade 8 learners. It is difficult for me because I have to understand the material before I can go and teach it. I read in order to equip myself. The learners are very weak so I have to

find a way to get the information across to them. I work closely with the HOD who is very approachable and I can ask her for assistance. She is extremely helpful.

As teachers our learning is ongoing. We must never feel that we know it all. We learn from the children.

If I want to learn about something specific I go to a teacher who has excelled in that particular field. I select teachers who are approachable and who are willing to assist me. I also engage in self-study. I take responsibility for my own learning. I have also found that I learn better when I share my resources and experiences with other teachers.

The value of self-discipline

Afrikaans is part of my identity; it is an integral part of my being. Teaching Afrikaans helps me to connect with my past. At school and college we would always identify the Afrikaans teacher by the way in which she dressed. I have fond recollections of my secondary school Afrikaans teacher, Mrs Maree. Her teaching style was energetic and she forged strong bonds with us. Mrs Maree also played a part in shaping me and she taught me the value of self-discipline. My life as an Afrikaans teacher is modelled on Mrs Maree, in the way that I dress, teach and treat my learners. She was a wonderful person and was always ready to talk to us. I'm the same with my learners; I will never chase a child in need away. I will always try and assist in whatever way that I can.

I've learned from my colleagues

I believe that learning is a two-way process of giving and receiving. I always share what I am learning with my colleagues and in turn some of them share their knowledge and expertise with me. I am always learning from my teacher colleagues, especially my head of department. I am a qualified junior primary teacher but I am presently teaching Afrikaans in the FET phase. Although Afrikaans is my first language, I had never taught it at this level before now. There is not much support at school level in my quest for knowledge and development. I have to motivate myself and find my own learning resources. My Head of department has constantly provided encouragement and support in my learning. During my free periods and after school hours I meet with her and she provides clarification regarding the planning and teaching of the subject.

There were many occasions when I didn't know what to teach so I had to study on my own; I also got help from other teachers from other schools. Sometimes I go to my colleagues who are more knowledgeable than me if I require assistance in a particular area. I've been teaching Afrikaans for over 20 years and I feel that I have mastered the subject and now I can assist other teachers. When I taught in the primary school we used to design Afrikaans lessons and evaluate their effectiveness. I had a chance to share the way I think a lesson should be taught.

I learn from the learners

I have always felt like an outsider and always have to make a concerted effort to "fit in". When I started teaching at Indian schools in 1989 I was the only Coloured teacher on the staff and there wasn't much acceptance from the teachers. The teachers were anti-social and I was constantly excluded. However, I was well accepted amongst the kids because they saw me as a teacher who was willing to help them. With the learners I could be myself because they accepted me for who I am.

I teach learners that respect must be earned. I also teach them spiritual principles, which are embedded in every lesson. I focus a lot on character building. As a teacher, it is important that I bring about change. A teacher must be different to the ordinary person on the street. As teachers we have such an advantage when it comes to making an impact on the learners, more than a nurse or a policeman. We don't only teach knowledge but also skills and values to help learners to become better people. A teacher must be someone who the learner can depend on besides his or her parents. For me, it's important that the learners trust me and when I have gained their trust then I know that I have accomplished something and that they are ready to learn from me. We cannot feel that we know it all; we also learn from the children that we teach.

I feel like an outsider

Mostly, I connect with the Christian teachers because we share a common bond. I remember a Muslim teacher from a previous school with whom I had close relationship. I later realised that I connected with her because we both experienced disappointments in our lives. But I was never close to other teachers, it was very difficult.

Although I have been teaching at my present school for more than five years, I still feel like an outsider. I get along better with the African teachers than the Indian teachers. I am freer with them and I feel in my heart that they accept me for who I am. With most Indian teachers I have never felt this acceptance.

Sometimes I feel ostracised because I am left out of conversations. Maybe I come across as being aggressive because of the way I speak and some people think that I am rude. It is difficult to find many people that I can trust and depend on.

Learning through action research

Teaching geography in St. Paul's Primary School was very enjoyable. I was interested in the environment and how it was being destroyed. I attended an action research workshop where we had to conduct research in Hermanus and Hawston in Cape Town on how people destroy beaches and damage the ecosystem. The research taught me about the damage that people do to the environment. They urinate on the sand and destroy the creatures that live in it. They throw Coke on the shore which is dangerous for these small animals. Birds and seals are killed because of the plastic packets that are thrown into the ocean. I enjoyed the action research as it allowed me to work with others and I used my knowledge to make a d

Learning through surveys

I am very passionate about working with the underprivileged and took full advantage of every opportunity that presented itself to do so. I was the secretary of the Tuberculosis Association which was headed by an ex-principal. My family was very proactive and my mother, sister and brother were part of the committee. Being the secretary, I had to conduct a survey with the farm workers working in Perdeberg, is a sheep farm in Cape Town. I worked closely with the municipality and the nursing sisters who designed the questionnaire which I administered. There were many people on the farms who we were infected with tuberculosis. I taught the farm workers about healthy eating, good hygiene, how to take care of themselves and how to shop for nutritious items that were within their budget. The project was very successful and it impacted on many families. We were interviewed by the local newspaper, *Die Burger*.

I persevere

Before I could leave Cape Town to relocate to Durban I met my Afrikaans inspector who told me that I have much potential and I can even head a school. He said that he hoped that when I went to Durban I would complete my studies. I have always wanted to further my studies but I was never encouraged by my husband to study.

My money was never my own. I didn't feel confident to ask for money from my husband to further my studies because I always knew the answer would be "No!" There were many times when I would sit with the UNISA brochure and registration forms but would never go through with it because of fear. I have realised that I allowed these things to happen; maybe if I was more assertive my life would be different today. I allowed myself to be passive and allowed my husband to dictate to me.

I felt that if I went against his wishes, he would leave me. He always used leaving me as an ultimatum if I didn't do what he wanted. It's been ingrained in me and now that I am older I am trying to remove all the negative aspects that have happened in my life for the past 22 years. It affects my teaching, my communication with other people and it makes me feel invisible. I feel inadequate because I lack confidence. My personal problems affected my professional life and other areas of my life.

I don't want this to affect my children. By watching me, my children have learnt how to cope in difficulty, to accept the things that they cannot change and to hold on. Somewhere in the Bible it says that we are prisoners of hope, so we must always hope. Our hope must not be in the situation but in God. Although things were difficult in my life, I persevered. I would advise other people in my situation to change it as quickly as you can or get out of it as quick as you can if you see that there is no change.

My eldest son told me that I have been too submissive to my husband for all these years and it's time that I made a change in my thinking and get out of this relationship. I am scared to make a change because I cannot drive and I don't have a permanent job.

Leadership in the community

Leadership in the community is also a rich source of learning and development for me. At the moment I'm in a leadership position at the Apostolic Faith Mission Church located in Mt. Moreland. I'm teaching the Xhosa church members life skills like good nutrition, good financial management and Basic English. In order for my teaching to be effective I had to learn to speak Xhosa. There is a lack of suitable resource material so I use the Bible as a resource for teaching and learning.

I've conducted several seminars focusing on women's issues in the community, especially the role of women in society. In order to adequately prepare for these seminars I had to do research about the culture and the lifestyle of Xhosa women. The research was fascinating as I discovered information which made me better understand these women.

Presently, I am pursuing studies in social work through Covenant Bible College. I've completed two years of training and I've got two more years to complete my studies. My vast experience as a community leader has helped me to assist learners in need. There are no counsellors at my school so I offer my services to learners. After school hours I listen to their problems and give them advice. A child from my class told me that she was HIV-positive and that she had been raped by her uncle. She was worried that her stepfather would also start abusing her and wanted my advice. It was very difficult dealing with a case like this but my HIV/AIDS training and community experience helped me to assist this child.

Teaching has made me a better person. I have really changed from the first time that I stepped into the classroom. I have allowed myself to learn, to grow and to change. I believe that the knowledge and experience that I have gained is not just for me but to be shared with all that I have the privilege to come into contact with. Learning opportunities can be found everywhere, if we just take time to stop and look

4.5 Text Four: Shakila, 'educating the heart'

"Our lives should be a reflection of our beliefs."



Shakila is a 50-year-old Indian teacher who has been teaching for 25 years. She is married and has two children. She has made headlines in the local newspapers for her outstanding contribution to the Phoenix Debating League of which she is the founder and coach. She coaches the school debating team, which won trips in two consecutive years to debate in the global debates at the United Nations in the USA. She is also the vice-chairperson of the Phoenix Child Welfare and the founding member of the Children's Foundation.

A closely knit family

I lived in Pietermaritzburg, in an area called Raisethorpe. My parents were originally from an area called Haythorns Hill. When I was about three years old, we were forced to move into the Raisethorpe area because of the enforcement of the Group Areas Act. Life was simple in Raisethorpe where we lived 'closely knitted' with our extended family. I was the eldest granddaughter, therefore very spoiled and cherished by my many uncles and aunts. They treated me in a very special manner and this love and acceptance permeated everything in my life. It was here that I learnt important life lessons such as being appreciative of all that I had and valuing every person regardless of his or her position in society.

Our lives should be a reflection of our beliefs

My dad never forced us to perform all the Hindu rituals but he would instead take us to meditation and yoga, which 40 years ago was a very enlightened and modern view of religion. He emphasised that our lives should be a reflection of our beliefs. The excellent way in which he lived his life certainly influenced me in leading by example in my family, workplace and community. Both my parents were vegetarians and I was reared in a similar manner. Dad believed that as a Hindu there was no compromise, you were totally vegetarian or you were not. My father left school at a very early age to take care of his extended family. He sacrificed his ambitions so that he could make a difference to the lives of his family members. His sacrificial behaviour is admirable.

My mum is a strict disciplinarian and taught me the value of discipline and about being passionate about everything that I do. My mum has a zest for life! She instilled in me the value of setting goals and striving to attain them. She loves people and is passionate about entertaining them.

My father taught me to be proud of myself

I went to a school that was attended by mostly affluent learners who lived in huge houses. Their parents drove expensive cars and they had the opportunity of travelling overseas. My father, on the other hand, drove a cheap car that could be heard a mile away, in fact I was often teased about my father's car. Although my dad was not as educated as many of my friends' parents were, I was never ashamed of him. He was my hero; he taught me values and skills that I still use daily. My father's positive attitude taught me to be proud of myself and our accomplishments as a family. My affluent friends soon realised that being poor was not an issue for me and their teasing didn't affect me and they soon accepted me.

We were taught to put others first

Life was always a struggle because my dad worked in a shoe factory and didn't earn much, so we adapted to enjoying the simple pleasures in life. We learnt that we shouldn't be embarrassed about not having new clothes or wearing our cousins' old clothing. We were taught to put others first and my parents led by example. When times were financially tough, my elder brother and I would go around the neighbourhood selling flowers and vegetables that we had grown in our garden.

We felt no sense of embarrassment because we did it to survive. The many struggles and hurdles that I experienced as a child have made me appreciate what I have now.

We were politicised

I grew up in a racially segregated South Africa and had very limited interaction with other race groups. My family members were very politically conscientised and many of my uncles were members of the Natal Indian Congress (a political party started by Mahatma Gandhi). There were many political discussions held at our home so we were politicised from a very young age and taught to respect other race groups. My grandmother's brother's "marriage" to a White woman in a country that prohibited mixed marriages and enforced the Group Areas Act became the talk of our little town. We also had a *gogo* (Zulu word for granny) who worked for us for 31 years. She was an integral part of our family and helped rear us.

A lifelong passion for books

I attribute my love for reading and studying to the positive influence of my father. My dad instilled in me a lifelong passion for books. He encouraged us to read widely and would take us to the local library regularly. Going to the library was a special event in my life and it was something that I looked forward to. My father encouraged us to read different sources and authors. When some of my wealthy friends would travel overseas, my father would console us by telling us that we could travel free by just entering into the world of books and have every imaginable experience.

I dared to touch those books

There is this old Indian superstition that if you have mumps, you must stay at home and you are not allowed to go anywhere until you are totally recovered. I had mumps and was bored and wanted to borrow more books to read. One of my uncles took me to the library despite my family admonishing him. I had recently been introduced to the delightful tales of *Anne of Green Gables* and he took me to a different library which had the whole series of these books available on the shelves. I was delighted to find that the collection included books that I had not yet read.

I was bending down engrossed in those books and the next minute somebody yanked me up and I got this resounding slap on my face that was swollen with mumps. It was excruciating!

I later realised that the library was divided into a white and non-white section. In my enthusiasm to read I had entered the white section of the library which stocked all the latest books and had a larger stock available. Those books were newer and better maintained than the ones from the non-white section, which had pages missing or pages cut out.

The white lady was totally horrified that I dared to touch those books; she must have thought that I had contaminated those books. She rudely insisted that I replace those books and curtly directed me towards the section for non-whites. I just cried because I could not understand why she had verbally and physically abused me when I had done nothing wrong. When we got home, my uncle was in even bigger trouble for having taken a sick child outdoors and the visible bruise on my cheek made matters worse. Everyone was horrified but we were powerless living in Apartheid South Africa. My parents assisted me by putting this incident into a political context. My uncle told me that I should fight passionately for my rights to be able to use amenities like the library but there was no-one we could complain to.

A humiliating shopping experience

When I was growing up I was extremely thin. Shopping for clothing was very difficult and what made matters worse was the apartheid practices that were enforced at these stores. These stores had separate entrances for whites and blacks (Indians, coloureds and Africans) and we were not allowed to go into the fitting rooms to try on clothes and couldn't exchange garments after they were purchased. I felt angry that the white girls could try on different outfits and I wasn't allowed to. I remember my mum bought a beautiful navy blue and white dress for me. I was disappointed when I tried it on at home and found that it was too big for me. My mum tried to alter it so it fitted better but it hung on me like a curtain.

'Blackjacks'

During my childhood days I remember the black police vans, known as 'blackjacks', would patrol the streets. Police would suddenly pounce on domestic workers working in Indian areas and ask them to produce their 'dompas' (permission to work in designated areas because of the Group Areas Act). If they didn't have a 'dompas' both the worker and the employer would be issued a fine or face arrest. I remember the day when the 'blackjack' was patrolling our area and the policeman saw our *gogo* sweeping our yard. She didn't have her 'dompas' so they arrested her and my mum. It was very scary when they were taken away in the 'blackjack' despite the outcry from my family members. My mum had to appear in court with our domestic worker and pay an admission-of-guilt fine. For a while I was scared of every black vehicle driving through our neighbourhood.

Very dedicated teachers

I attended TPA Primary School in Pietermaritzburg. The school was newly built and had all the basic facilities. I was part of the first group of Grade 1 learners at the school. There were a large number of dedicated Indian missionaries teaching at the school and they taught with enthusiasm. I have fond recollections of Mrs Lawrence and Mrs Matthias who taught us deportment – how to sit and speak like ladies. We were so impressed with them because they looked smart and elegant and we wanted to emulate them. I really admired Mrs Lawrence; I loved her upright posture and her perfect English pronunciation. She wore lovely dresses with matching shoes. I probably spent a large part of my day just admiring her.

I felt a sense of belonging

At school, I found different ways of belonging and feeling important. One of the highlights of my primary-school days was being selected as a drummie (a drum majorette). To be selected as a drummie you had to be good looking, so when I was selected I felt like I had passed some kind of test. I loved wearing those special outfits and performing at various festivals. The performing, travelling and exposure to different places and people was wonderful.

I was identified by my teachers as a good public speaker and I participated in several speech contests. I remember winning one speech contest and being a runner up in

two contests. Winning gave me a sense of accomplishment and I aspired to achieve more. Being a drummie and participating in the speech contests certainly boosted my confidence because I was a part of the group and I felt a sense of belonging.

Her class was humiliating and embarrassing

My needlework teacher was not one of my favourite teachers. She was very rude to me and constantly reminded me that she didn't want me in her class. She said that I was clumsy and useless because I never got the stitches right. It was torture because I could not sew or knit properly due to the pressure that she placed on me. She would often show my work to the rest of the class as an example of what their sewing should *not* look like. She did nothing to motivate me but used every opportunity to ridicule me. Being in her class was humiliating and embarrassing. Her degrading comments affected me so much that even as an adult I feel incompetent to sew even a button on my children's clothes.

The principal's rose garden

I attended Woodlands Secondary, it was steeped in a very long British tradition and it was a status symbol to be a learner at this school. The school had a British ethos and was very much admired by the other Indian schools for its ethos and strict discipline. We wore hats and bow-ties and wore our uniforms with a sense of pride. The school assembly was very formal; the principal would enter the assembly area dressed in his long graduation gown followed by the entire staff while the music teacher played the school anthem on the piano and we sang along. Our principal, Mr Lazarus was also educated by the British. He shaped my continuous love for flowers. If you excelled at something you were allowed to cut roses from the school's rose garden just before the commencement of the main assembly. These flowers would be placed in the school foyer. It was an honour to be seen in the principal's rose garden and everyone waited for this opportunity. I loved the feeling of being at this school and persevered to excel at everything I did,

A love for learning

The interesting thing about Woodlands Secondary was the courtyard that was built between two blocks.

We had this wonderful English teacher, Mr James, another British-educated teacher, who converted that space into an amphitheatre. He would bring alive any Shakespearian text as he would stride across the 'stage' and enact the different scenes. He would encourage us to learn the important sections from the text that we were studying and perform it for the rest of our class mates. We responded enthusiastically to this exciting method of teaching and he made quite an impression on us. We were inspired by his love and passion for literature. Mr. James would challenge us to memorise huge chunks of the prescribed text so that if he made reference to a particular section we could quote it from memory. I still remember those passages that I learnt almost three decades ago.

Today, I still share this passion for literature that Mr James inculcated in me, and a love for learning that I continually strive to impart to my learners.

Reflection and critical thinking

Mr. Ramdhanni was my inspiring and revolutionary history educator whom I admired. He was a member of the African National Congress, which was banned at the time. We were thrilled to hear his stories about his activities as a member of this party. The other teachers didn't approve of him discussing politics with us. The principal would often call us to the office to quiz us about what was being taught in our class. There was this unspoken loyalty towards our form educator and we appreciated the trust he had in us and the information he passed on to us. Through my teacher I was very well informed about the radical changes that were taking place in South Africa. I can also remember being part of a Republic Day protest in high school. We were expected to raise the South African flag and sing the national anthem, and we refused. At that time we were not aware of the significance and impact of our actions.

He also made us to think critically about the carnage that happened during the Soweto uprising and the Sharpeville massacre, where hundreds of school children protested against apartheid education and were killed by the police under orders from the apartheid

government. His lessons helped me to reflect and think critically on issues that were affecting us as South Africans. I learnt to analyse issues and make informed opinions.

‘Service to man is service to God’

Mr. Ramdhanni took us to many service projects and taught us that “service to man is service to God”. We went to Aryan Benevolent Homes in Chatsworth and to other places of charity. Mr Ramdhanni would inspire us by saying that if we were good Hindus, our hearts should also be educated by practising charity and goodwill to the less fortunate. It gave me intense joy seeing the appreciation in the eyes of people when we would give them Diwali (Hindu festival of lights) hampers. His words and actions impacted on my life in such a radical way that even today I care for the disadvantaged and downtrodden by becoming involved in different social upliftment projects.

The thrill of acting

I was a good public speaker and was selected to participate in speech contests at school and at inter-school level. Every year our school would stage major plays, which was a huge event at our school. All of us aspired to be involved in the play and would be encouraged by our teachers to audition. I participated in many plays and it gave me intense satisfaction because I enjoyed the thrill of acting.

Every year we would go up to Hilton College (a boys-only school for Whites) to watch their performances but they never came to watch us! We felt betrayed when they didn’t come to watch our plays which we felt were of a very good standard. I didn’t understand why our school attended Hilton College’s plays year after year when they always ignored our invitations to our school productions.

Nothing was going to stop me

I remember acting in a play and feeling quite proud of how I looked in a lovely costume that my mum had designed for me. The scene was about two characters who were having an argument about disturbing the peace. When it was my turn to speak, the audience just laughed and laughed. I couldn’t say my words because they were drowning it out. Every time I wanted to speak they just pointed and laughed. I realised that they were amused that I was wearing a skirt and my legs were ultra-thin. It was quite embarrassing

when they screamed that they could use my legs as golf sticks. Although I was embarrassed, I didn't allow that incident to deter me.

I was adamant that nothing was going to stop me from doing something that I loved. So for the evening show, I remember wearing my brother's soccer socks to fatten up my legs and I wore tights over them.

My spiritual identity

My spiritual identity is rooted in the way I was raised and I attribute my strong spiritual roots mainly to the influence of my father. I've researched different religions and philosophies and consider myself to be enlightened. I'm very tolerant and accept other people's beliefs. I don't discriminate against anyone on the basis of which religion they belong to.

I do not perform any rituals besides lighting the lamp and I don't go to the temple very often. I live the way my parents taught me and I don't force my children to perform any rituals. I've given them a choice about wanting to become vegetarians and I don't force them to fast (to abstain from meat on particular days). I'm very critical about animal sacrifice and people conducting prayers because of their superstitions and other trivial reasons.

Tear-gassed and baton charged

When I was in my third year of study at the University of Durban Westville (UDW), the first Student Representative Council (SRC) was elected. I was actively involved in the SRC and was part of the co-ordinating committee during those turbulent times in South Africa. We protested against the quality of education that we were receiving and the police were extremely brutal. We were tear-gassed and baton charged. I was involved in many incidents of protest against the inequalities of the apartheid government in which I was hurt very badly. During one protest on campus, I was kicked down a flight of stairs by the police and I was injured very badly. I had to have reconstructive surgery on my face because the policeman who hit me almost shattered the bones on my jaws and cheeks.

I could change the world

As a student, coming from a political family, I spent the majority of my time involved in politics. My studies took a secondary place as I believed that I could change the world and liberate the political prisoners.

I firmly believed that change would come and that we as South Africans could just live and work together in peace and harmony. A highlight in my life was when the students took a trip to Cape Town and stood at Sea Point and shouted for Nelson Mandela to be released from Robben Island. I am glad that I chose to be a part of the struggle rather than stand on the side-lines as a spectator.

I was also a member of the political party, the United Democratic Front (UDF). There were some brilliant intellectuals on the SRC; many of them went on to become ministers in South Africa's democratic government, like Pravin Gordhan, Valli Moosa and Jay Naidoo. To a large extent they shaped my view of politics because they would provide us with information that was classified. They would inspire us with stories of revolutions in other countries and how the masses could bring about change.

Political rallies

I did not have much interaction with other race groups at university because UDF was still predominantly Indian because of apartheid policies of separate education. In my final year of study I met the first black student, called Pinkie, who wanted admission into residence and was refused. I was part of the hunger strike to ensure that she was admitted into the university. I had the opportunity to meet other race groups at the different political rallies. Some of the people that I had interacted with at that time were later assassinated, like Griffiths Mxenge and his wife Victoria, Archie Gumede and other political leaders. I learnt to sing freedom songs although I wasn't fluent in IsiZulu. It gave me a sense of hope for the future when I attended all those political rallies. There was a great sense of solidarity and camaraderie amongst the people of different race groups who attended these rallies. We all had one vision of a unified, democratic South Africa!

I became impatient for change

The SRC van would take a whole group of students to different communities where we would set up street committees in different communities. I would work in the Phoenix area during the weekends. We would visit families to mobilise them around community issues like privatisation or rent or water. At that time the Verulam Child Welfare was operating an office in Phoenix for the residents and it was sad that a huge area like Phoenix didn't have their own welfare offices.

As part of the SRC, I was instrumental in setting up the Child Welfare office in Phoenix. We were involved in house-screening and worked together with the medical students; later the political and civic members got involved. I felt that change in South Africa was taking too long to happen. I became impatient and I wanted people to revolt against the apartheid government so that we could live in a better country, one which treated every person with dignity and respect irrespective of class, race or gender!

I wanted to make a difference

My first teaching position was at Thornville Primary School, which was located in a rural area. I applied to rural schools because I wanted to do something positive with my life and make a difference to the lives of these children. Coming from the turbulent 80's at Durban Westville, I wanted to change the world. I wanted to politicise these children so that they would rise up and revolt against the apartheid system. I was in for a big shock because I faced much opposition from my principal who was very conservative and didn't want me to even mention Nelson Mandela's name. He refused to place me on the permanent staff because he said that I was teaching politics and not English.

It was such a shock to have to come up against such an authoritarian figure. He was just so rigid in everything that he did. Whilst he was initially pleased that he had a teacher with a university education, he tried to undermine me at every opportunity. After a while, he did not want to release me from the school because he saw that I was a very dedicated teacher. The parents were very angry with my political ideas and they confronted me saying, "What on earth are you teaching our children?" They never wanted to hear anything about politics. I then realised that I was teaching in a very conservative Indian community and that many of them were not ready for the political change that I envisaged for South Africa.

Leading by example

I believe in leading by example and one of my trademarks is that I am a very disciplined person and am never late for class. As a result the learners are also never late. I've been teaching for twenty five years and I still want to see children bring about change. Mr Ramdhani, my teacher, had shaped my views about giving back to the community and educating the child with life skills. I don't want learning to be only text-based.

I'm proud of my non-violent approach to teaching and I've never hit a child in 25 years of teaching. I made a pledge with myself when I was beaten during a protest at university that I would never inflict pain on another human being. I don't have to beat up the children to get them to listen to me. I adopt a non-violent approach in my classroom. This is more effective because learners are learning. I disapprove of colleagues who use corporal punishment and who lose control of their emotions and hurt children.

My father worked in a shoe factory and he never stayed away from work and I have inherited that value from him. No matter how ill I am I still go to school. In the 25 years of teaching I have been absent for a total of five days. I leave home at an unearthly hour so that I can be at school early. The school offices are not open yet so I sit in the staffroom or chat with the learners. I can't wait for school to start!

Every child has a story

I speak to the learners softly and if I'm angry then I deal with the issue rationally. One of the most difficult challenges of being a head of department is that teachers send children to you that they cannot control and they expect you to wave some kind of magic wand to discipline the child. Ninety percent of children are crying out for attention, we just need to take time to listen to them because every child has a story. Schools have become like factories focusing on mass production, churning out pieces of written work at the end of each day. Every child has "social baggage" and wants somebody to listen to them and I believe that I can provide a listening ear. By listening to children we teach them the value of listening to others.

I seize every opportunity to develop myself

I have taken the responsibility of developing myself professionally and seize every opportunity that presents itself. I'm forever searching for new ideas and new ways of teaching. Every few years I clear out all my teaching material and I start afresh, I call this "purging". Through this purging process I have found such innovative ways to teach and discovered exciting new material. This has helped me to keep abreast of the latest developments in my subject.

The internet is a remarkable tool for professional development. I use it to link up with teachers from America and we share resources. I also surf the net searching for teaching resources and articles on teaching English.

I enjoy reading

I enjoy reading in the morning from 3:30 AM to about 5:30 AM because everything is quiet and I am able to concentrate. It's a habit I learnt from childhood because I lived in a very large family and I never had space to do my homework or to read a book. I had endless fights with my granny about wasting electricity because I was always reading. To avoid problems I would read with a torch under the blanket.

I read widely and especially enjoy reading autobiographies about social activists. I have read all the journals and the autobiography of Vandana Shiva, a social activist in India. I was thrilled when I met her at a Gandhi Peace Awards Ceremony. I admire her because she has the courage to tackle social issues that others prefer not to tackle.

There are many new books that have been published due to the vast changes in the curriculum but I feel that many teachers don't engage with them critically. Teachers should adapt the material to suit the context that we teach in. Teachers use the same text for years because they feel comfortable with it and are sometimes unwilling to try something new.

In 2008, I was diagnosed with tuberculosis and I suffered a loss of vision so now I battle to read. We are a family of readers and we buy all the different newspapers every day and it is very frustrating not being able to read. I get my family members to assist me by reading aloud to me.

We take our sight for granted! Shakila has an unquenchable thirst for learning. She is so desperate for knowledge and to be informed that she asks her family members to read the paper to her. In an earlier interview she said that she was fiercely independent and now she has to rely on others to be informed. The image of my rolled-up newspaper, unread and thrown in a corner at my house, haunts me.

Log entry: March 2010

I initiated a book club

My school doesn't have the finances to ensure that our library is updated, so I initiated a book club at my school. I purchase books that I am passionate about or that I think would interest the learners. It is amazing, the interest that this book club has created amongst learners; I actually have lists of learners waiting to read the books. I believe that if the teacher is passionate about something it is very easy to convey the same passion to the learners.

I didn't know how to react when Shakila shared with me how being diagnosed with TB affected her. She had to take an injection and 27 tablets a day for 18 months. A side-effect of the medication was nausea. She shared with me how she had a designated area behind her classroom where she would run and spew. She spoke about the dizzy spells she experienced whilst teaching and had to sit down quickly. What surprised me was her resilience, "I still want to teach!" is what she kept injecting into the conversation.

Log entry: March 2010

Learning spaces

Working with colleagues who are passionate about teaching has played a key role in shaping my learning as a teacher. As teachers, we must have an open mind and an open approach because there are always new things to learn. It is so important that we share our knowledge because all of us have our strengths and weaknesses and we need forums and

spaces where we can learn from each other. There are different spaces in which my professional learning takes place.

The English Committee

I was very fortunate to work with a team of very dedicated teachers, the *crème de la crème* of teachers, when I joined the English Committee in Phoenix. Its aim was to collaborate and produce quality resource material for teachers of English. Every year we would produce at least two guidelines on the prescribed English set-works.

A very knowledgeable member on the committee was Jayshree Singh who taught us how set exam papers; she has since been promoted to the post of subject advisor of English.

Workshops are a great source of learning

Workshops are a great source of learning to me and have helped me to become a better teacher. Whether I've attended workshops or have been instrumental in organising them, they have helped me to broaden my learning. Workshops like the Time of the Writer, Poverty Alleviation, and Rape Wise have helped me to become a better teacher. Meeting prolific authors like, Arundhati Roy and Margaret Poland was one of the highlights in my life as teacher. Their insights into their writing helped me in understanding the text that I was teaching and provided me with ideas on how to convey this information to my learners.

I remember when I had to teach a Shakespearian text for the first time and how nervous I was and wasn't sure how to teach the text. There wasn't really anyone who was there to guide me and I am aware that there are many new teachers who feel overwhelmed when faced with a new text. I have years of experience and believe in developing others with the knowledge that I have obtained. I have been involved in organising and presenting workshops at school and district level. Together with other dedicated teachers I've compiled teaching guides on *Othello* and *Hamlet* especially for the new teachers.

I link community work to teaching

I am the first vice-president of the Phoenix Child Welfare. I believe I'm very efficient in what I do. It helps me to understand the children I teach because I can identify signs of abuse and other problems. I have an amazing record of referrals even at school for all kinds of cases and all kinds of emergencies. I think it helps me to understand the community I teach and live in. It is important that we link community work and school because they impact on each other.

As a form of punishment for misdemeanours at school I make learners do community service at the Child Welfare offices. I would take the naughtiest boys at our school they would spend their Saturday mornings with me doing chores at the shelters for the sexually and physically abused women and children. Being involved at the shelters made these learners feel important and gave them a sense of self-worth. It was such a life-changing experience because it made them appreciate their lives and families. I think that it's important that the teacher links community work to his or her teaching if teaching is to make a positive impact on the learners' lives.

They yearn to learn

One of the worst experiences at the shelter was when I met a former pupil of mine who was there as a battered wife and to my horror I discovered that the abuser was also a former learner. That was one of the lowest points in my life, to find two people whom I had taught destroying each other physically. By taking children to the Child Welfare and to the Phoenix Charity Fair and getting children involved in the Children's Foundation I help to teach them important values like being non-violent; that there other ways of resolving problems and the most important value is caring for others. Many learners come to school with many emotional, social and personal problems and I have learnt much from them. Despite their circumstances they are optimistic and they yearn to learn. I learnt humility from them and to smile despite the adversity.

We can change our society

In 2007 I was part of a group that initiated a new project called the Phoenix Children's Foundation; its motto is, "Children taking care of other children." Its aim is to

inculcate the value of children taking care of other children. We've identified and acknowledged positive role models in our schools.

We are encouraging children to do community service, for example volunteering their services at the Phoenix Charity Fair and other projects that we organise. We have about two-and-a-half thousand children who are in foster care and we need children to assist and mentor them. One of the projects we engage in is the Christmas Party and the members of the Foundation co-ordinate the function. When the children's shelter is built then we will have other children to check and monitor homework and so forth.

We have a peace garden that has been set up at the Sahara (home for abused women) and we have children from the Foundation who work in that peace garden. I believe that if we take the 72 schools that we have in Phoenix and we motivate just ten children from each school to grow up with this value of taking care of other children then we can change our society. The Phoenix Children's Foundation also helps us to identify and acknowledge role models amongst our children and this is done at a public forum on an annual basis at the Phoenix Charity Fair. We want to encourage learners to aspire to do greater things. I believe that every young person has the potential to make a difference to the world that we live in. I'd like them to become active members of society. We need a new generation of children to become social activists.

Creating a positive lifestyle amongst learners

My involvement with debates began with my involvement with the Love Life programme. I was attracted to the Love Life programme because I felt that the message of Love Life was really significant. I knew that it would help create a positive lifestyle amongst the learners because the Love Life programme centred on issues affecting children and society. At that stage I never imagined that debating in the Phoenix area would grow to the extent that it has.

We initially started debates with four schools in the Phoenix area and we used to have a round robin (all schools had chance to debate each other), then other schools wanted to join. I then invited other schools to a workshop on debates. Now we have 600

debaters in the debating league which makes us one of the largest debating leagues in South Africa.

Debates have been successful mainly because they provide the means by which learners can express their views; debating also develops listening skills. Listening, thinking critically, evaluating information, expressing your views in a non-confrontational manner and accepting other points of view are some of the important social skills that are learnt through debating and if we practice these skills we will have a better society.

We can change so many children's lives

I was instrumental in setting up the Phoenix Debating League. I approached Mr E.S. Chetty and Mr Mark Moonsamy (managers at Phoenix Circuit level) about using debating to promote reading in schools. They provided necessary support and assisted in sending out circulars informing schools about the Debating League. They also addressed the principals regarding the importance of debating and the benefits of joining a league.

The whole culture of debating just caught on in the Phoenix community because the children didn't have many other alternatives on a Saturday morning when compared to the ex-Model C schools which have rugby and hockey matches and so forth on Saturdays. I believe that we can change so many children's lives by teaching them a non-violent approach to dealing with problems and debating teaches learners to agree to disagree in a non-violent way.

The provisional debating board

I've also helped to transform the Provisional Debating Board, which only catered for teachers from the private or ex Model C schools. When I first made a request for the Phoenix Debating League (PDL) be recognised as a league so that it could enter the next level of the competition, I faced much resistance. The chairperson at that time was actually quite racist and for the next two years when I attended the monthly provincial meetings she would refer to me as "the lady from Phoenix". That was just one example of the many obstacles that the PDL had to go through in order to be recognised as an official debating league.

It gave me a sense of pride when the PDL beat the other leagues and won the provincial competitions and later the national competitions. I was exhilarated when six children from the PDL received their national colours for debating.

The very first year that we were accepted on the provisional board in KZN, we won a provincial tournament. We won against a group of Grade 12 debaters who had just come back from their UK debating tour. We were very nervous because we were in awe of these kids from the private school with their fancy uniforms and well-resourced school. The adjudicators, who had never heard of Phoenix, were really impressed with the arguments that our team presented.

Debating enhanced my teaching

In 2008 I was elected to serve as an executive member of the South African Debating Board and I'm the only teacher who serves on that board. I am the coach of the Solvista Global Debate Team which comprises four girls. I also represented South Africa as an adjudicator at the World Debating Championships and I'm going to Washington in September 2008 for the third year. The international debating contest was entered by 293 teams from around the world and the top six teams get an all-expenses paid trip to the United Nations. I was amazed when we were selected as one of those teams. I coach the debaters after school and over weekends and I just view it as an extension of my teaching. I buy newspapers like the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Guardian* and other British papers and I discuss important issues with the debating team. Being involved in the debates has enhanced me as a teacher because I can look at issues in a more knowledgeable way. I've read so widely on different issues and I've had exposure to learners from different social backgrounds and schools. Coaching debating and adjudicating debates has allowed me to travel widely to cities and schools in South Africa that I never dreamed of going to. The knowledge that I have acquired has impacted on my professional development. I use the information that I have acquired to broaden the perspectives of my learners and to develop teaching materials for my English lessons.

I've always aimed and achieved

There are a few teachers who've become the pillars of the school and they strive to keep the standard of teaching high. It is sad to note that this commitment is not visible in

every teacher. I think that we could have successful schools irrespective of where the school is located if we could have one-hundred percent commitment from every teacher.

I truly believe in Thabo Mbeki's words, "If learners come to learn and teachers come to teach and principals manage their schools" then we can have the ideal situation at our schools. In my 25 years of teaching I've always aimed for and achieved a one-hundred percent pass rate at Matric level in the subject that I teach.

Buddy teaching

I'd like to see more professional development for teachers especially in areas of discipline. I have noticed that teachers don't know how to cope with discipline in large classes (50 – 55 learners) and there is a lack of adequate support structures at school and departmental level. As a head of department of languages, it is my responsibility to assist teachers who are experiencing problems. A strategy that has worked for me is "buddy teaching" (when you pair a new teacher with more experienced teachers). I have a teacher in my department team who is an ex-learner. I provide her with guidance on how to teach. It's a pleasure to listen to her teach while I evaluate her lessons, and I provide assistance for her improvement.

The orientation of new teachers to teaching is an area that is often neglected. If we don't invest in those types of professional development then we are going to reap the harvest of what those teachers are going to get into.

Teachers must be empowered

When I first initiated change in my languages department I had some teachers who were very reluctant to do anything outside of their classroom duties. Now I can say with absolute confidence that every teacher in my department is actively engaged with their own professional-development activities. They are constantly learning new things and I provide a forum for them to share their ideas with other teachers. The latest project that we engaged in as a department of languages was a writing project. Each teacher had to compile a booklet on creative writing, which is a relatively new section in the curriculum. It was amazing when every teacher compiled a booklet and proudly shared their work with the rest of the team. I believe that the empowerment of teachers through professional

development initiatives is important if education standards are to be improved at our schools.

Teachers need a lot of support in their professional-development activities. There needs to be more networking and sharing. There are many teachers who are doing excellent work and no one is acknowledging or supporting them. There's nobody coming to our schools and asking us, "How are you coping?" "Are you having any problems?" "What can I do to help?"

Learning adds spice to the classroom

Professional development of teachers is a sadly neglected area. I wish I could have more time to ask teachers what their areas of weaknesses are, and assist them. In all my years of teaching nobody has asked me what help I need to improve my teaching. We all have our weaknesses and need assistance to become better teachers. I believe that we must always find new ways of teaching and learning and bring that spice back into the classroom. I really believe that my language team at school is great because everyone works and that explains the excellent results we obtain, even at Matric level.

There are some teachers who are set in their ways and refuse to learn new ways of doing things. I believe that every school management team should be an effective support structure for the teachers. At the same time, we as managers also need support for our learning, which is sadly lacking. The Department of Education organises workshops mainly to address the changes in the curriculum. I am not impressed with the Departmental workshops because they are often rushed and I don't think that they do justice to the changes in the curriculum. I think that the Department of Education should be more proactive and set up professional-development support structures for teachers.

Networking with teachers

I have been the English Cluster Co-ordinator in Phoenix for many years and have assisted many teachers in developing themselves professionally. In order to come to grips with the changing curriculum, I read widely. I network with other schools and share resources. I co-ordinate workshops within the cluster and district related to the new curriculum changes.

I make extensive use of the internet and I feel that this resource is under-utilised by many teachers.

The internet is an invaluable resource, there are many sites where you can access new material which you can improve and utilise in the classroom. I am also passionate about networking with other teachers from all over the world. I've attended two African Cup of Nations Debating Championships, where I interacted with teachers from Africa. I've also attended two World Debating Championships where I met teachers from other countries. I also network with these teachers whom I have met. Whenever my network of colleagues from other countries comes across some information that I require, they e-mail it to me. It's a wonderful learning experience. Networking is much more than making friends and socialising; we also have the unique opportunity of comparing educational approaches.

Through this network, I have acquired new knowledge and have learnt how to improve my teaching and I have introduced new concepts in my classroom. The network of teachers keeps me informed about new texts that have they are currently studying or texts that their learners have enjoyed.

One of my colleagues from the United Kingdom recommended a text entitled *Holes* by Louis Sachar, which I read and was very impressed with. I purchased a set of books and am currently reading it with my Grade 9 learners. After a very long time I have children literally running into the class because they are so enthusiastic about reading the novel.

An exchange programme

Networking across the world created an opportunity for me to teach for a day at a school in Delhi, India when I went for there for tuberculosis treatment. Teaching there was incredible because of the cultural differences. I met with the principal and initiated an exchange programme with my school. The first batch of ten learners and two teachers will be going to India in January 2011 for ten days. Learners will pay for their own flights whilst accommodation and food will be provided by the host country. During May 2011, my school will host ten learners from India. This is a really exciting project for me.

I am an independent person.

I am an independent person. I don't allow myself to be in a situation where I am oppressed. Many women don't stand up for themselves and that is where the problem lies.

Many women are not financially independent and feel psychologically that they have to rely on their partner for their survival. I am fiercely independent; it's a value that my father instilled in me. I learnt to drive when I was still at school and he encouraged us to buy our own cars. I have a husband and family who respect me and have been very supportive of the work that I do outside school hours. I am glad that I have their total support and my husband always encourages me to develop myself through study. I have a Bachelor of Pedagogics degree and a further diploma in education but I've not engaged in any further formal study. I feel strongly that preparing the learners for the debates is professional development for me.

Teaching is my passion

I am still passionate about wanting to change the world. I do feel a bit disillusioned when I look at the current politics and the black elite that have begun to develop because some of them were the same comrades I fought alongside during the struggle. I live and work in Phoenix and it is a choice that I have made.

I believe that staying in Phoenix has helped me to keep in touch with my roots and the community that I work for. This keeps me humble and very grounded.

Although the loss of hearing and vision is impacting on my teaching, it has not killed my spirit of wanting to be a teacher and the desire to continue to learn. Teaching is my passion and I wish that I could just teach forever! I cannot describe the immense joy that I felt after I returned to school after a year's sick leave. The simple joy of greeting the learners and having them respond to me gave me immense joy. I am so encouraged when I see the fruits of my teaching evident in my learners.

I am making a positive difference in children's lives

I'm a mum and a Man United Football fan. I'm an avid reader. I'm a social activist and I will champion the rights of the oppressed very passionately. I feel sometimes that I

don't have all the hours to do the things that I would love to achieve. I really am not frustrated as a teacher and I would not give up the profession.

Although I entered teaching because I had no other choice, I've found that it's what I would want to do again. I'd like to believe that I am making a positive difference in children's lives. I also like to work with teachers to motivate and encourage them.

I'm very patient and I sometimes think that that I am a perfectionist. I hate any kind of confrontation and I hate being yelled at because I don't shout at people. I cry easily and get hurt very easily. I believe in the principles of non-violence. My vision as a teacher is to ensure that I have literate learners and I also believe that the education of the heart is equally important. I also believe that learners should be taught about how to deal with their emotions.

2008 – two overseas trips in one year! Awesome... New York in July and Washington DC in September. We were involved in almost every national debate initiative and the successes of the various teams knew no boundaries! We were riding the crest of a debating tsunami.

Later in the year I coached provincial debate teams that won first and second place in the national competition. The coaching took place over 7 Sundays and I was barely managing physically. I dreaded Monday mornings and felt I was tired all the time. My health began to deteriorate but there was no time to be sick as the national championships was around the corner.

Like I said in an earlier interview, I never took time off for ill health and I was unprepared to deal with a severe life-threatening and debilitating illness. Long periods of hospitalisation and treatment required me to take extended sick leave for over a year. I suffered side-effects almost as severe as the illness itself.

I desperately wanted to return to school and to be mentally involved in academic issues again. It has been a long struggle as I have sight and hearing loss and [am]

physically weakened. I no longer have the capacity to do all the things I enjoyed doing - teaching from 6.30 AM; coaching debates and community work. I am a mere shell of my former self.

Did I pick up the illness at the National Championship? Was it in Washington, where my ill room-mate passed away a few months later? Does it matter anymore? I am still alive and I celebrate this every day. My tenacity and resilience keeps my fight to survive burning strongly.

I know so much more about the differences between private and public health care in this country.

e-mail received 20 June 2010

4.6 Text Five: Tasneem, ‘disrupting the underdog’

“It is through serving humanity that we serve God.”



Tasneem is a 57-year-old Indian teacher who is the principal of a primary school located in Phoenix, Durban. She resides in Phoenix and is married and has three children. Her school’s motto is: “The school where you feel and see the difference.” She is a very prominent principal in Durban and is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award at national level and the Excellence in Primary School Leadership Award at provincial level. Her school has been the recipient of the Ammen Award, the Batho Pele Gold Service Excellence Award and the coveted Gold Premier’s Service Excellence Award for excellence in mainstream education.

A close-knit family

I was born into a family that can be categorised as being “below par” of the socio-economic status at that time. In total we were eight children; four sons and four daughters. I was the eldest daughter in the household, with three older brothers. Being the eldest daughter, I was much sought out in the household. We experienced a lot of love and understanding from our parents and we were a very close-knit family. When I consider my upbringing, I think that the over-protectiveness of my parents, my grandparents and my three elder brothers was a bit too overwhelming and overpowering at times, but I have realised that my upbringing was instrumental in moulding and shaping my character.

A labour of love

When I was little, my father worked as a farmer on land that he had leased. He would take the fresh produce to sell at the market. On rainy days when he was unable to harvest and sell his produce, the meals in the house would be seriously compromised. Sometimes, when the weather was extremely inclement there would be nothing in the

house to cook. Then there were days when my father would reap a good harvest and would sell his produce at the market and on those particular days which, perhaps once a week or once in two weeks, we would be able to have a good meal. Our staple diet was simple and consisted of fresh produce that we harvested from our garden. When I think of the hardships that my parents endured in sustaining the household and providing adequately for us through their dedication and labour of love, I would say that we were head-and-shoulders above other people in our community.

Education was a tool that would liberate us

The desire to excel despite my circumstances was instilled in me by my parents who always motivated me to be the best at whatever I did. My parents always stressed that education was a tool that would liberate us. I appreciated my parents for their efforts in ensuring that we attended school despite the financial constraints. Their encouragement and belief in us inspired us to become role models in society.

Although we grew up amidst poverty, it is important to note that ethics, morals and values were emphasised in our household. This was largely due to the model behaviour that our grandparents displayed. My siblings and I were very conservative in all our mannerisms in that we would not speak disrespectfully to anybody. We were highly respected in the community and everyone held us in high regard. Whilst all around our house there were people who were smoking *dagga*⁴, peddling drugs and doing all sorts of terrible things, my family and I were very disciplined and continued to follow the right path at all times.

My father always supported my learning

My father always supported my learning. When my father returned home very late from work he would ensure that he would check our homework even if it meant waking us. My father ensured that we were always learning because he believed that it would remove us from the clutches of poverty and provide access to life-changing opportunities.

4. Marijuana

My life is dedicated to the memory of my parents. When I went to India recently I traced my family roots and visited the area that my ancestors lived in; it was a moving experience for me. When I returned to South Africa I was interviewed on Lotus FM and Radio Al-Ansaar (radio stations) about my experience on tracing my family history.

The lunch issue

I grew up in the area of Springfield and attended the Springfield Hindu state-aided school which serviced the neighbouring areas like Puntan's Hill and Umgeni Road. The children who lived on the hill came from affluent homes and they would bring lovely lunches to school which included fruit and milk. We'd see other children carrying hamburgers and Vienna sausages and some brought biryani (an Indian rice dish) to school.

Those of us who lived in the lower-lying areas of Puntan's Hill were poor and we looked forward to the hot meals that the school served us daily. It was difficult standing in the queue with my bowl, waiting for my meal, because there was always a group of affluent children looking at me in a condescending manner and this made me feel uncomfortable.

Committed to the poor

Despite the fact that we were so poor ourselves, we were always compassionate towards the poor and needy. God in his grand plan placed me in one of the poorest homes which has made me committed to the poor. As a principal, I continually ensure that the poor learner doesn't see him- or herself as a stupid child but as somebody who can fight against the clutches of poverty. I assist the poor learners to rise above their circumstances and acquire a good education and to remain focused. I'm extremely empathetic towards the downtrodden and I continually strive to ensure that these families are taken care of.

A compassionate person

There were times several times in my schooling career when I excelled at school in dance and drama and other co-curricular activities but was not allowed to participate because my father couldn't afford the glamorous outfits that were required. Most of my teachers were openly prejudiced against us because we were poor and they would reject us even if we were the best actors. These experiences made me feel really sad because I loved acting and I felt that I shouldn't be punished for being poor.

I remember that even as a young girl I would share the little that I had with others who were in the same, or even worse, predicament as me. For example, if there was a school concert we would borrow clothes from our cousins to ensure that we looked presentable and if there was something I could lend to my neighbours and friends, I would. These childhood experiences taught me to be a compassionate person.

When I started teaching, I remembered those incidents and I ensured that learners were chosen for their competence and not their financial status. I ensure that I assist learners who cannot afford the basic requirements in order to participate. I also assist the poor learners at my school who don't want to participate in the Grade 7, Debutantes' Ball because they can't afford the outfits. I personally ensure that they participate, even if it means obtaining the outfits for the children myself.

I committed myself to learning

When I was growing up, uniforms were another way of differentiating the rich from the poor. I had maybe one or two school dresses and if we experienced inclement weather, especially rain, I wouldn't have a uniform to wear to school. My mum believed that nothing should deter us from attending school so she would wash the uniforms and dry them inside our home. While the clothes were still damp she would iron them with the coal iron, which resulted in dark patches and marks all over the uniform. I would constantly compare my dress with the Puntan's Hill children whose dresses were snow white. I always felt that I was treated differently by my teachers and fellow learners because my uniform indicated that I was poor. I knew that I wouldn't be poor forever if I listened to my parents and grandparents who constantly reminded me that education was a tool that would take me out of poverty. I committed myself to learning and striving to excel at everything I did. Education became the key to my success and a tool to making a difference in my life and my community.

I persevered

Another thing that separated the rich from the poor was the type of school bags we carried to school. The richer children would carry school bags that they had purchased from the shop. My bag was lovingly made by my father from timber which resulted in it being heavy and cumbersome.

Being of small build and having to walk a distance to school, carrying those bags was quite difficult and the rich learners strolled past us carrying their books all neatly packed into compartmental bags. At times I would feel angry and frustrated but would always encourage myself to persevere despite all obstacles.

A wonderful person

Most teachers displayed blatant prejudice towards the poor learners to the extent that they would not even allow us to carry their books and bags. They would ignore us in the classroom and would give preferential treatment to the richer learners. There were a few who treated us as equals and Mrs J. Pillay was someone who displayed kindness to all of us even though she lived in Puntan's Hill and was regarded as one of the "elite" teachers. She was such a wonderful person and she treated all of us in the same, kind manner. I always wanted to emulate her because she treated all of us with dignity and respect. She was kind to everybody and she'd give us turns to come to her house and carry her books and her bags. This was a privilege and it made me feel so good because she acknowledged me and this made me feel visible. She definitely made an impression on me and I always try to emulate her behaviour in treating every child in a special way.

Soaring to new heights

I have fond recollections of my school principal, Mr N.C. Naidoo, who is well known for his outstanding work in Hindu Maha Sabha (a Hindu cultural organisation). The Indian cultural community holds him in high esteem and regard him as a role model. He was a gentleman in the true sense of the word. Throughout my schooling career, he was one of those people who made me feel special. He looked past our poverty and saw the potential within each one of us. With his belief in us we were able to soar to new heights. He used every opportunity to motivate and challenge us to strive for more. I did not always excel at a school and Grades 1 and 2 were really bad years for me. Mr Naidoo did not give up on me. His belief in my siblings and me resulted in two of my brothers excelling at school; we always achieved top positions at school.

I brought honour to my family

In Standard 1⁵ I was placed third in my class and my name was placed in the school's newsletter and I was so excited that I showed it to everyone who came to my house. This did something positive for me and I started performing better. In those days the schools used to host many concerts to generate money for the school and to raise cultural awareness. Compared to the affluent learners, I excelled in learning the scripts. I was also a good actress and was selected for the school plays and dances. My parents were amazed when most of the leading roles were given to me.

The school organised many cultural events which were held in the open air and at the community centre. Participating in these concerts improved my self-confidence which impacted on my achievement at school. My parents were extremely proud of me because I was the only girl from a poor area who was selected and this brought honour to my family and community.

I was proud of my accomplishments and I acquired a positive self-image and self-esteem. As time progressed I excelled at acting and public speaking. My teachers requested that I mentor other learners which assisted in building my self-esteem and confidence.

Leading by example

I have painful memories of my primary school arithmetic teacher, Mr D. He was the most stern and horrible man. He was absolutely firm about attendance and insisted that he wanted only straight ticks in his register (indicating you were present). If we were absent from school he would hit us, demoralise us and make us feel guilty and tell us that we spoiled his register. I was scared of his cruelty and I tried not to get absent even if I was sick because I never wanted to be a victim of his abuse. This impacted on my life as despite my health problems and so on I never stayed away from school. As a teacher, I place much emphasis on excellent attendance and always believe in living by example. I have not been absent from school for the past 12 years!

⁵ Grade 3

Being professional

Although I never liked Mr D. and how he treated the learners I learned valuable life lessons from him which have helped me to be very professional in all that I do. When I started teaching I followed his example and used a ruler to ensure that all the ticks in the register were straight because I also wanted my register to be neat and immaculate. When I became a principal, I insisted that my teachers pride themselves in the way they maintained their registers. My teachers' registers are absolutely immaculate. I am also very particular about the attendance of my learners and don't approve of them being absent from school for trivial reasons. I remember how Mr D. made us feel when he hit us and demoralised us, so I am not nasty and abusive towards the learners. My staff and I are constantly monitoring learner absenteeism and if the same learners are getting absent we interview parents and encourage their parents to seek medical assistance or counsel them.

He would really hit you badly and demoralise you

When I attended high school, Mr T. used to take me for arithmetic. He was a very, very firm teacher. If he asked us a question and we did not respond then he would call us to the front of the class and beat us badly. He would also demoralise us and make us feel so small. There were times when I witnessed both male and female learners actually urinating and messing themselves in class. Urine would just run down their legs and he would continue to hit them and then would give them a lot of newsprint to wipe the floor in the presence of their classmates. He made me very afraid so I tried extra hard to excel at my work but it was a constant struggle.

I continued to struggle with arithmetic and at that stage I didn't know that I had poor eyesight. I was well behaved so the teachers would always make me sit at the back of the classroom and I couldn't see what was written on the board. I would excel in all the other subjects but in arithmetic I obtained average marks. My parents and I didn't know that my eyesight was deteriorating at such a rapid rate that I required spectacles. It was only later that I realised that I was doing poorly in arithmetic because I couldn't see the writing on the chalkboard. I began to hate arithmetic and later mathematics at school. The subject made me feel inadequate and the teacher's attitude towards me didn't help much.

I had some very kind and helpful friends who came to my rescue by assisting me in completing my classwork. My younger brother, who was three years junior to me and achieved A's in all his subjects, also assisted me with my homework.

Every child is special

My fate seemed to be sealed concerning understanding arithmetic. At high school I had another teacher who was good at teaching arithmetic but he never focused on assisting the weaker learners to grasp the concepts. All the bright children would progress from one level to the next and the weaker learners were always left behind. He never took the time to teach us and he also used to demoralise us, more than Mr D. If we didn't know an answer, he would chastise us and tell the entire class to laugh at us. I remember him encouraging my classmates to mock me, "tell her what a stupid goat she is, tell her how useless she is, such a simple thing you are all getting right and she's getting it all wrong." I performed better in the mental tests in arithmetic than in the written work. These experiences provided valuable lessons that I would use later when I qualified as a teacher. I never treated my learners in an abusive way because I firmly believe that every child is special and should be treated as such.

When I became a teacher, I ensured that I did not abuse the learners the way in which my teachers abused me. Although I did not fare well in maths but excelled in the other subjects at Matric level, I was required to teach maths in the Foundation Phase. Learning from my own negative experience with maths, I took my time teaching and focused on the weaker learners. I taught with passion and compassion. I would teach every concept until every child in my class understood before going onto the next section.

We saw ourselves as lesser people

While growing up I wasn't too aware of the impact that apartheid was having on our lives. I later became aware of the impact when my father went to work in the hotel industry and he would say that he was so petrified of his White boss and that he felt compelled to do everything in his power to please him. At that stage I thought that bosses could only be white people because my father's bosses were always White and he was subservient to his White bosses. We began to see ourselves as a lesser people.

As a youngster I never really understood the effects of apartheid until the black-on-black violence in 1949, incited by the Whites. My father would recount numerous stories of what he had seen or heard and it was through those stories that we got to know about apartheid and its effects on us.

Racial discrimination

My brother was a high-ranking officer in the police force and he excelled at his job. Despite applying for promotion posts for several years, he was never promoted because the posts were always given to the Whites. This racial discrimination led to a great deal of stress which resulted in him becoming psychologically affected and he had to be medically boarded at a relatively young age.

My other brother became a health inspector and would come home and tell us stories of what was happening in South Africa. The White inspectors would go only to the White areas and he was forced to go into the African areas. He related to us how deplorable the conditions were in the African townships and his work was also taking a toll on him. At that stage, he wanted to quit being a health inspector because of the racial discrimination and segregation. So I always felt that these Whites were there to get everything that was mine and we would always have to prove our worth and were not recognised for our achievements.

We were always God-fearing

My spirituality began in my household. We were steeped in culture and were very God-fearing. My parents would conduct all the rituals and we were always warned against doing the wrong things. We would always be taken to special places of prayer and told that this where God resides and He would be watching everything that we said and did. All of us developed deep spiritual values and we invariably put God first in everything we did. We are always very God-fearing in terms of ensuring that we are not biased towards people. We ensure that we treat all people as equals and do not undermine the dignity of other people. We were taught to respect everyone and accept different points of view irrespective of colour, kind or creed and we were taught never to view ourselves as being better than any other person. Every person in my family is able to mentor, counsel, guide and coach people, irrespective of the problem, because our parents trained us to help others.

Today, the spirituality that was instilled in me as a little child is still evident. I still work on that same spiritual plane where I make everybody around me feel at ease. Irrespective of the various positions of power and authority that I occupy, I treat every person with respect and dignity. I always listen to what other role-players are saying as I value their input. My beliefs are all-encompassing and I get involved in the various religious celebrations at my school.

Caring and loving

I grew up witnessing the love that my parents had for others in the community because the little that they had, they shared with others. I learnt to be compassionate from my parents. In honour of my late parents who were dedicated to the cause of the weak, feeble and poor, I gave the elderly at the Verulam Day Care and Frail Care Centre a treat. I trained my learners from Grades 4 to 7 to give massages and pedicures to the elderly. I also wrote poetry and plays which I trained my learners to deliver. I sent my teachers and learners to the Centre as I chose not to go because I believe that if you do something good it is between you and God. The helpers, teachers and learners in their report-back thanked me for giving them the opportunity to treat the elderly. It was a defining moment for me.

For Mother's Day I gave a treat to all the helpers at our school, who despite being down-and-out come to the fore to support us in the different initiatives we engage in at our school. I personally selected some compassionate Grade 6 and 7 learners and I trained them on how to give professional head, neck and foot massages, and manicures and pedicures. I brought all the lotions, towels and massage equipment from home. I ensured that I personally gave each parent a particular massage or treatment. I asked my learners to make cards and gave each helper a gift bag as a token of our appreciation. Some parents cried and said that in their entire lives they had never experienced such care and love.

A proactive educationist

As a proactive educationist I am always looking for new strategies and innovations so that I can lead my learners and teachers to new horizons. I am a lifelong researcher. My teachers were complaining that literacy is a problem at our school, which has a majority of

African children who find difficulty in learning in English because it is not their mother tongue. I conducted research to investigate this problem and to find solutions.

I studied the development of the child from birth onwards so I could be better equipped to understand the underlying barriers to learning.

I surfed the internet for more information and found a literacy test called the Burt Word Reading Test, which is presently used in New Zealand and has been proven as the most reliable test to ascertain the reading levels of the learner. I downloaded the test and we administered it to every child at our school. The results were shocking and revealed that most of the learners were operating at two levels lower than their grade. As a concerned staff we decided to start the school day earlier so that we could use the first twenty minutes to conduct a remedial programme. I worked closely with a few of my staff members who were passionate about improving reading at our school and we liaised with different outside agencies like Training Resources for Early Education (TREE). We created our own resources such as reading cards, books and charts. We also set up a reading room which has encouraged reading across the grades. I firmly believe that a literate society is an empowered society.

A catalyst in education

Being a catalyst in education I constantly conduct research to understand the backgrounds that my learners come from. Teachers were complaining about a learner, J, who was constantly trying to run away from school and had to be carried into the school on a regular basis by our security guard. I decided to conduct a home visit to help me understand the nature of this child's problem. The home environment was so dismal and was worsened by personal and medical problems. I was shocked to discover that fourteen people live in that small house and they had one only bed and broken furniture. Due to the lack of space, some sleep in a sitting position.

When I returned from the school I immediately called a staff meeting to inform my staff of my findings. My caring attitude transformed this family. The child's mother came to school the next day and told me that J was so excited about coming to school and wanted to

participate in the 1860 Settlers Commemoration function. J said, “Look principal, I’m in school! My mummy didn’t bring me and I’m not crying!”

I said, “J, come here and give me a big hug and look how beautiful you look when you are not crying! Go to your ma’am and tell her that from today you are the class monitor.”

The home visit made me realise that these parents were constantly seeking excuses to visit the school because our school is bright and beautiful compared to their living conditions. We are trying to remove the children from the shackles of poverty so we try to make our school bright and beautiful; a place where they feel loved and secure. I have so much confidence in my school that all three of my children were educated at this school.

I conduct simple investigations

I conduct simple investigations in order to help my learners and teachers. I act on the findings of my research and if I am not equipped to handle particular problems, I get assistance from outside agencies like Psychological Guidance and Support Services, police services and social workers. If there are medical problems with the learners I work with the form teacher and we write letters to the nearest clinic or the hospital.

In one of my investigations I also found out that many parents were HIV-positive and didn’t know how to cope with this virus, so I contacted Save our Souls of Suffering, who are now helping the parents. As a result of our investigations, we set up a homework centre where teachers supervise the learners’ homework after school hours because at home they are overwhelmed with collecting firewood and water and other social problems.

In another investigation, I discovered that my learners were underperforming because they were hungry. After numerous failed applications to the Department of Education to receive funding to implement a feeding scheme at our school, I finally took the Department to court. It was another failed battle but we were not deterred, my teachers and I started a lunch club for the indigent learners. We collect money from the teachers and provide porridge for breakfast and sandwiches for lunch. Recently, a few parents and one religious organisation have also joined us in this venture.

Learning is an ongoing process

Learning is an ongoing process. My teachers, colleagues and learners are an important source of my learning. I have learnt much from successful people whom I have observed over the years; I see what works for them and emulate their behaviour. I have a few colleagues with whom I interact with on a constant basis and I am always learning from them. They have been a real inspiration to me. Although I am faced with so many social evils and challenges at my school, the SEM [senior education manager] has twinned me with another school so that I could mentor that principal. I am also mentoring a number of primary school principals which provides new learning experiences for me. With consensus from my teachers, I share our limited resources with other impoverished schools.

Reading is very important to me and I keep myself informed by reading different types of books, the newspaper, and I watch the news religiously. Through reading, I imbibe new information on how I can empower myself and have a positive influence on others. I also love listening to talk shows and documentaries. I am inspired by stories of other people who are making a difference in our society. I listen to understand rather than to react and dispute and this has helped me in my learning because I believe that everyone is a divine source of knowledge. When you interact with others there is always something that you will learn.

My superiors have not provided me with any support in my development. On many occasions when I felt like my school was sinking or I encountered problems, I received very little or no support from my superiors. As a school we had to find solutions ourselves.

I believe that my placement at this school, which serves a very poor community, is God-ordained because of my own social background. I hear the voice of my father who said, "God will never give you more than what you can handle and if He puts you in a particular place He knows that you are going to come up heads and shoulders from that place so that you can carry everybody else". I firmly believe that leading this school is my destiny.

A lack of resources

Community members see me as successful manager of the school. The school that I am working in is situated in a poor community and is serving the needs of the poorest of the poor. The few resources I get I'm able to stretch far. I am able to accomplish much because of my negotiating skills. In the household where I grew up there were so few resources to sustain ourselves. I am able to maximise the little I receive and ensure that it reaches as many people as possible. I try my best to see that more people are getting benefits out of it than an isolated few because we were always treated as underdogs.

My family members have cautioned me against overworking in this community because they say that "the barrel will be dry and I will have nothing more to give". As a result of my drive to better the community, my health has suffered because I don't eat on time, I don't go to the toilet when I'm supposed to and I don't rest. Everyone tells me that I've taken the phrase "work is worship" to another level.

I have noticed that even my teachers are driven because I am so driven to uplift the lives of others. The parents call me 'Ma Nkulu' (isiZulu word for mother); old parents will come into my office and bow down to me because they say that I am their mother and their life.

A literate society is an empowered society

I am somebody who has found herself, someone who is zealous about life and exceptionally passionate about uplifting the plight of the downtrodden. I am someone who wants to listen and who is willing to go beyond the call of duty and to reach out to people. I am compassionate and want to listen to other people's problems and offer assistance. I want to spur other people to heights that I couldn't achieve in my own life. I want to be a person who promotes enlightenment and professionalism. I always strive to achieve the best in everything that I set out to do. If the government can't handle problems like abuse, neglect, hunger, poverty and so on then I can do what I am supposed to do as an educationist and develop my teachers and learners.

I am not materialistically inclined but am very, very prim and proper. I want everything in order and I work in a principled way to accomplish not my own desires but to assist others to accomplish their desires and to reach their destiny .This is the Tasneem who has got my school, neighbouring schools, my cluster of schools, teachers, principals, heads of departments, governing body members looking in my direction to see what they can learn from me. It is an honour to help others and to be seen as a role model in the community. My parents would be very proud of me.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided a reconstruction of teacher's critical moments as I attempted to present *who* these teachers were that were engaging in self-directed learning. In collaboration with the teachers, I restoryed the field texts from the interview transcripts and artefacts. The reconstructed narratives show how the personal and professional aspects of teachers' lives intersect and give rise to their identities as South African teacher-learners. Mbeje, Shabeer, Carolina, Shakila and Tasneem highlight particular critical moments that shape and continue to shape the meanings of teacher-learners working within particular discourses of race, class and gender in South African schools. The selection of the teacher's critical moments provide us with a sense of *who* they are and how they would like to be viewed as professionals, it also provides insight into their learning.

These reconstructed narratives provided a platform for me as a teacher-researcher to identify the self-directed learning that occurs within the school and outside of the school. The next chapter will focus on how teachers' meanings of self-directed learning are negotiated (through dialogue and resistance) between the individual and the social-cultural context.

Chapter 5 Lens 2: The teacher-self in relation to the socio-cultural context

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the second layer of analysis which deals with the teacher-learner in relation to the socio-cultural context in response to the second sub-question: What meanings of self, shape teachers' learning? As Wasserman and Jacobs (2003) note race, class and gender are socially and historically constructed so the teachers' identities in this study have been shaped by their experiences growing up in apartheid South Africa and continue to be shaped through their practice as teachers. Teachers in this study were educated and trained during the apartheid era in South African, in educational institutions that were stratified according to race, class and gender. During apartheid, South African schools were divided by race through the enforcement of the following laws: The Bantu Education Act No.47 of 1953; The Coloured Persons Education Act No. 47 of 1963 and the Indian Education Act No 61 of 1965 (Mothata & Lemmer, 2002). The Bantu Education Act No.47 of 1953 in particular led to a more racially divided teacher training system. Although South African schools have been desegregated for more than a decade after apartheid, problems relating to race, class, and culture and gender still manifest in schools (Jansen, 2004a; Ndimande, 2009).

As children, the teachers in this study attended racially segregated schools and as practising teachers, they presently teach in racially desegregated schools. How do these teachers negotiate the complexities that arise from such changes and challenges in South Africa's new educational setting? How do they negotiate their meanings of teacher-self/ves within particular schooling realities and what do they do to change and challenge the reproduction of the dominant discourses in their schools and communities?

Social identity theory and the socio-cultural theory provide me with theoretical lenses through which to examine how the dominant structures of schooling in South Africa shape particular (raced, classed, gendered) constructions of the teacher-learner. Social identity theory is a theoretical perspective which addresses group membership and behaviour (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Social identity theorists believe that "the self is at least partially defined by membership of social groups" (Bornman, 2010, p. 237). As teachers form memberships with particular groups within their schools their identities as teacher-learners are being shaped and reshaped. Jenkins (1996, p. 20) explains that the "self"

is seen as an ongoing “synthesis of (internal) self-definition and the (external) definitions of one’s self as offered by others.” The way in which teachers position themselves in their social lives and at their schools gives rise to their identities as teacher-learners. The socio-cultural theory, on the other hand, allows me to examine teachers’ identities and agency within the particular social contexts that shape and continue to shape certain constructions of teacher-learner. “Teacher agency is part of a complex dynamic; it shapes and is shaped by the cultural features of society and school cultures (Lasky, 2005, p. 900).

In this chapter I present a critical analysis of the lives of the teachers in this study and how they negotiate meanings of race, class, gender and the dominant discourses of schooling as they make new meanings for themselves as teacher-learners. I also explore how these particular discourses shape the way these teachers view themselves and the meanings that they ascribe to their practice as teacher-learners in South African public schools. Although all teachers in this study are shaped by race, class and gender, I consciously foreground particular discourses that frame the meanings that teachers give to themselves as teacher-learners.

Racial identity is crucial within the South African context given the country’s history of apartheid and the way this has shaped South Africans. Racial identity provides a framework for understanding individual and collective identities. For the purpose of this research it is important to note that race is a social construct “with no rational basis in biology” (Francis, Hemson, Mphambukeli & Quin, p.139). Race has to be understood within the discourses of gender, sexuality and social class. Race has a “formative” power in that it forms and shapes the individual and collective identities (Connolly, 1998, p. 11). Discourses on race have serious consequences as they give rise to the stereotypical way in which teachers are labelled and treated. Race, together with the discourses of class and gender, is an important facet of this study since it shapes teachers.

I also examine how teachers’ positions as being raced, gendered and classed are shaped as children through socialisation at their schools (as learners) and at home (as children), and how as teachers they find different ways of recreating and reworking meanings of “who they are” to produce new meanings of teacher-learner as they work in desegregated public schools. Through this process of creating and producing new meanings of teacher-learners, they are able to develop personally and professionally as social beings working in

particular schooling realities. Discourses of race, class and gender are important for this study if we are to understand South African teachers' learning within the "multiple contexts" in which they work and the "social systems in which they participate" (Borko, 2004, p.4).

Like Pillay (2003, p. 81), "the storied vignette offers a space for me to provide a critical perspective to the interpretation, through a process of excavating and making visible those subtle silences and muted experiences embedded in the life story, that have shaped, shape and continue to shape teachers' lives." In this chapter I present vignettes of the five teachers which direct us to how they negotiate the teacher-self/ves within particular schooling realities and how they consciously take on particular discourses to disrupt or attempt to disrupt the production and reproduction of the dominant discourses in their schools and communities. These vignettes show how these five teachers use their position as teachers to rework what it means to be a teacher-learner. Through the vignettes I highlight how their race, class and gender meanings of self are shaped and continue to be shaped by their daily lived experiences as teacher-learners.

5.2 Vignette 1: The knowledge seeker

Mbeje's experiences as an African male who was educated in a racially segregated South Africa and now as a practising teacher working in a desegregated school constructs himself as a teacher-learner in particular ways. Meanings of race frame the way Mbeje sees the world as noted by Connolly (1998). He "*blames apartheid for the divisions it created between people.*" Mbeje has constructed what Jansen (2004b, p. 245) terms a "racialised identity". This identity, together with the racial discourse that dominates the South African schooling, system propels him on a particular trajectory of what it means to be a teacher-learner.

The desire to learn

During apartheid, "*going to school was a privilege,*" since most African parents opted not to send their children to school due to financial constraints. The picture that Mbeje presents of the primary school that he attended is dismal: it lacked the basic amenities, and had inadequate textbooks, furniture and teaching resources. Corporal punishment was rife and to further compound matters some of his teachers were unqualified. Within this bleak context his desire to learn is born: "*I wanted to learn.*"

Mbeje's desire to learn is inextricably linked to his marginalisation as an African in apartheid South Africa. He remembers his teacher's words of motivation: "*He spoke of the hope for the future, one in which the black man would be emancipated and would rule South Africa. He inspired us by saying that if we wanted to be the future leaders of South Africa, education would be the key.*" From an early age, Mbeje viewed education as a tool for the emancipation of Africans from the clutches of apartheid. It is this desire to use education to change his life and the lives of other Africans that shapes him as a lifelong, self-directed learner. For him, learning is a preparation to take his rightful position in a society in which he was marginalised as a child: "*I knew that change in South Africa was on its way and I had to be ready for that change; for me, this, meant I had to concentrate on my studies so I could take my place in society and make a difference to my people.*"

Being othered as a teacher

When he is posted to a school with a majority of Indian staff the feelings of powerlessness that he experienced as a learner surface when he is othered: *“I actually experience some difficulty dealing with my colleagues because they feel that I am difficult to deal with.”* Being othered forces Mbeje to join other African teachers at the school where it is evident that race seems to be an unspoken bond as teachers sit in *“racially segregated areas”*; a phenomenon also observed in other studies (Carrim, 2000; Moodley & Adam, 2004). As a result of being othered, the African teachers resort to forming their own *“community.”* *“There are only four African teachers at this school and they all sit at one table. They share their lunch with each other and communicate in IsiZulu. There is limited interaction between the African and Indian teachers during the lunch break”* (Log entry, March 2006). This signals us to the formation of a collective identity as identified by Meyer, Becker and van Dick (2006) which serves as a common bond amongst the African teachers.

Mbeje finds an alternate space for learning at his school when he chooses to spend his time with the African learners who constitute eighty percent of the learners at his school. He finds *“acceptance”* with the learners: *“I have a fantastic relationship with my learners and I prefer to spend my free time helping them.”* In helping the learners he finds a space where he can enforce his agency as a teacher through particular relationships and social formations. He believes that *“teaching is much more than an occupation to earn a salary; it is also about the continued development of yourself so that you can inspire young minds.”* He promotes a culture of knowledge seeking amongst his learners by showing them that learning is exciting and rewarding.

He motivates the African learners to strive to excel *“by sharing my life’s struggles with them, they can identify with me.”* Being othered constructs him in a particular ways in that he seeks alternate ways of being *“visible”*. He does this by becoming a seeker of knowledge.

A seeker of knowledge

As a seeker of knowledge, Mbeje concentrates on developing himself by engaging in self-directed learning: *“we could use education to overcome the atrocities of living in apartheid South Africa...learning opportunities are everywhere and we should seize these*

moments.” His experiences as an African male living in South Africa are a motivating factor in his quest to learn and change. For him, education is of primary importance to improve his practice as teacher.

He seizes every opportunity to learn. *“I think as teachers we stagnate if we reach a state when we feel that we have nothing more to learn. ... We must be willing to make the most of these learning opportunities.”* Even after he qualifies as a teacher he exercises his agency as teacher and upgrades his qualifications. As a seeker of knowledge, he directs his own formal learning by attending short courses and workshops. He continually strives to update his knowledge because he believes that learning is a tool for social advancement: *“Teaching is a stepping stone in assisting me to accomplish things that I could not do when I was younger because I didn’t have the resources or opportunities.”*

The choices he makes as a teacher-learner directs us to how he was marginalised as a school-learner during apartheid, *“I have always felt that I was disadvantaged because I was denied the right to choose the subjects that I would have loved to have studied.”* Through the act of professional development we see Mbeje exercising his agency as teacher by choosing to resist the oppressive apartheid education practices where African learners were not allowed to study particular subjects. In making decisions about what, where and how he learns he draws our attention to his agency as a teacher. He has the power to make decisions that shape his learning and his practice as a teacher.

Mbeje as knowledge seeker doesn’t only seek new knowledge for himself but he also seeks to empower his learners with this knowledge.

5.3 Vignette 2: The activist learner

When I examine Shabeer's childhood experiences, growing up in South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s, I find the meanings of teacher-as-activist rooted in Shabeer's experiences of class. His motivation to be a successful teacher is deeply embedded in his experiences of growing up amidst challenging social circumstances. Shabeer's intrinsic motivation to succeed is fuelled by his parents' attitude: *"Our parents expected us to perform our best at school, although we were not offered any rewards or incentives. That is one of the reasons why I am intrinsically motivated."*

Teachers are the learners' visas

"We must provide opportunities for learners to broaden their horizons because we are the learners' visas to the world."

Being the "learners' visas" creates a particular meaning for Shabeer of what it means to be teacher-learner. He views his position as a teacher as a powerful one: as the learners' entrance into the world of work, where they will be able gain access to opportunities that will enable them to be successful. This meaning of teacher-learner that frames Shabeer's behaviour and beliefs is rooted in his working-class experiences as a child growing in racially segregated South Africa. In providing opportunities to enhance his learners' learning, Shabeer has to seek out spaces for his own learning.

Shabeer's spirituality frames and re-frames him in particular ways. His spirituality inspires his practice as a teacher. For him, teaching is gift to bring about social transformation. *"My spiritual life greatly affects how I view and conduct myself as a teacher...I believe that teaching is a gift and we must use it to make a difference in our learners' lives so that our society can become a better one."* His activist role is an extension of his spirituality as intervenes in the learners' lives as he liaises with different structures at his school and district to assist learners with academic and personal problems.

An independent learner

Growing up amidst poverty and strife in apartheid South Africa constructs Shabeer's meanings of teacher-learner in particular ways. Shabeer's self-directedness and motivation are key factors to his learning. His motivation to succeed is evident in his outstanding achievements as a school-learner, a university student, as a practicing teacher trade unionist. Although he grew up in difficult social circumstances in South Africa, he doesn't allow his working class background to constrain him. Instead it motivates him to enter a professional career so that he could become "*independent and self-sufficient.*" He resists the self-fulfilling prophecy that Bourdieu (1986), and Bowles and Gintis (2002) speak about when he pursues his dreams so that he "*could make a difference to the socio-economic status*" of his family.

In attempting to improve the "*socio-economic status*" of his family, he challenges the system that wants to reproduce class inequalities and the feelings of powerlessness in working-class children as discussed by Bernstein (2001), Sadovnik (2001), and Bowles and Gintis (2002). For Shabeer, learning becomes a tool for social transformation as he uses it to change the social status of himself, his family and his learners.

A self-initiated learner

Shabeer's construction of being a self-initiated learner began when he was a learner at secondary school. As a learner he was selected to participate in debates which required him to conduct research into various topics and "*this formed the beginning of my self-initiated learning.*" Acquiring new knowledge becomes an exciting prospect for him and is carried through into his practice as a teacher.

As a self-initiated learner he exercises agency when he selects learning which will fulfil his learning aspirations. "*What was being provided at my school was inadequate to satisfy my hunger for knowledge, so I found other ways of educating myself.*" His agency to make informed decisions regarding his learning constructs his identity as a self-directed teacher-learner. He is motivated to find various spaces for learning within and outside of his school that would improve his practice as a teacher. The learning choices that he makes signal us to his aspirations as a teacher.

The activist learner

Shabeer views himself both as an activist and as a professional as is evident in his leadership role in SADTU. Although some theorists, like Heystek and Lethoko (2001) believe that unionism and professionalism seem to have different agendas and are sometimes contradictory, Shabeer proves otherwise.

He is not only interested in championing the rights of teachers but is also passionate about professionalising teaching. His role as a union activist is linked to his working-class experiences and his determination to fight for social justice. *“Being involved in SADTU has also played a pivotal role in my professional development.”* Shabeer’s involvement in the union provides an alternate learning space to develop himself and others. Through Shabeer’s activism, we see how the role of SADTU has changed from just fighting for equity and justice for teachers to advocating the restoration of the culture of learning and teaching at schools by focussing on professionalising teaching

Through his active engagement in the union Shabeer inspires and capacitates other teachers. Through this activist role, Shabeer promotes the belief that teachers are *“lifelong learners”* and that learning should *“bring about continuous change.”* The view that he posits is a powerful one; he sees learning as a process in which the teacher is continually being changed, renewed and transformed. He demonstrates what he believes by leading the learning as a teacher- learner.

Shabeer’s identity as an activist learner propels him to activate change in himself, his school and his community.

5.4 Vignette 3: The knowledge pursuer

Carolina grew up as a coloured woman in a racially segregated South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s. She grew up in the poor community of the Caledon District in the Western Cape where life was an ongoing challenge. Carolina's experiences with race, whilst growing up as a coloured woman in apartheid South Africa, frames her in particular ways. *"In apartheid South Africa most Coloured children didn't continue into higher grades because of a lack of funds."* As a learner she constantly felt stigmatised because she was ignored, mistreated and abused by her White teachers. Although she excelled academically at primary school, she was never acknowledged by some of her White teachers who *"never liked coloured people"* and treated them like *"prisoners."*

Being othered

Her first experiences of being othered were at primary school when her attempts to excel as a learner at school were ignored: *"Even if you shone out, you were never acknowledged,"* this need to belong and to succeed, is an ongoing struggle for Carolina even when she becomes a teacher. *"Being classified Coloured has... made me an outsider to other groups that I want join."*

Carolina experiences the same feelings of being othered that Mbeje does when she is posted to a school with a majority of Indian staff in Phoenix during the 1980s: *"When I started teaching at Indian schools in 1989 I was the only Coloured teacher on the staff and there wasn't much acceptance from the teachers. The teachers were anti-social and I was constantly excluded."* In her quest to be an insider she continues to seek acceptance from the Indian staff. Carolina experiences feelings of rejection when her constant attempts to infiltrate the Indian teachers' group fail and she blames herself: *"Maybe I come across as being aggressive because of the way I speak and some people think that I am rude. It is difficult to find many people that I can trust and depend on."*

Being othered shapes her learning and makes her more determined to succeed. Carolina's need for acceptance and approval propels her to find other ways of belonging and she does this through becoming a facilitator of knowledge for her learners. In this role, she seeks acceptance amongst the learners and the African teachers at her school: *"I was well*

accepted amongst the kids because they saw me as a teacher who was willing to help them. With the learners I could be myself because they accepted me for who I am.”

Teacher survivor

Working with teachers outside of the dominant grouping of Indian teachers is where Carolina feels most powerful: *“I get along better with the African teachers rather than the Indian teachers. I am freer with them and I feel in my heart that they accept me for who I am. With most Indian teachers I never felt this acceptance. Sometimes I feel ostracised because I am left out of the conversation.”*

It is within this common survival space that she feels accepted, and religion serves as a common bond since the African teachers are also Christians: *“I mostly connect with Christian teachers.”* For Carolina, teaching is a mission, a “calling,” a vocation where she can *“help others...counsel learners and listen to their problems and give them advice... and encourage others.”* This belief is strongly linked to her spirituality where she believes that everything she does is *“God-ordained.”*

Carolina finds that *“there is not much support at school level in my quest for knowledge and development.”* She doesn't allow herself to be constrained by the lack of support at her school in terms of her learning and change. Her quest for knowledge propels her to find other ways of learning. Carolina gravitates towards teachers whom she can trust and who are approachable. She identifies a few teachers as mentors with whom she feels free to exchange information and resources. In the sharing of information and resources, Carolina learns and changes as a teacher

Carolina's construction of herself as a survivor and *“a fighter”* is crucial to understanding the teacher-learner that Carolina constructs. Carolina makes conscious decisions on a daily basis to overcome her insecurities: *“I am a fighter; I will fight for myself so that I will not go down... I didn't allow these circumstances to define me, I continued to learn and excel”*

She makes a conscious effort to “fight” the oppressive forces at her school that attempt to define her. She views her status as a teacher as something to be protected. In protecting her status as teacher she chooses to continually improve her practice through

learning although she experiences financial difficulties: “*Studying is my passion, but my financial situation always placed constraints on my need to learn so I had to find other means of learning.*”

As a pursuer of knowledge she constructs herself as a particular type of teacher-learner, one who empowers herself through learning. Carolina exercises her agency as one who has the capacity to make a difference to her life and her learners through her pursuit of learning; in doing so, she affirms her own self-worth.

5.5 Vignette 4: The nurturer

In Tasneem's narrative, class and gender discourses are foregrounded. She grew up during the 1950s and 1960s in South Africa, in a patriarchal family. Her father worked first as a farmer and later in a hotel and her mother was a housewife. She is the eldest daughter of eight children and was "*much sought after*" as a child to assist with the household chores. Her gendered role was being determined by the role models around her and the meanings she gave to "being female." The over-protectiveness of her parents, grandparents and three elder brothers was a "*bit overwhelming and overpowering...to the extent of being stifling*" which resulted in her not being able to do as she pleased and being answerable to many people in her household.

The nurturer

Tasneem's meanings of teacher-learner are framed by the strong sense of spirituality that was inculcated in her "*culture and [...] God-fearing*" home. Her nurturing identity is shaped by her parents and grandparents and is strongly influenced by the rituals they performed and places of worship that they visited. She learned to value and respect people regardless of their social standing. Although her family was poor they assisted other community members by providing advice.

Her childhood experiences of poverty shape her identity as a nurturing principal. One of her goals as a principal is to reduce the "*underdog category*" in the community in which she teaches: "*I think that one of the reasons why people see me as being a successful woman manager is because I'm working in a school that is serving the needs of the poorest of the poor. The few resources I get I'm able to stretch far. I always try to make everyone feel that 'you are the most important person and you can be the best person, no matter where you're coming from how bad your situation is, you can be an overcomer'.*"

Tasneem's school serves a poor community where she faces a multitude of social problems on a daily basis. As a nurturing principal, she identifies social problems at her school and researches ways in which she can solve them. "*I conduct simple investigations in order to help my learners and teachers...I get assistance from outside agencies like Psychological Guidance and Support Services, police services and social workers.*"

As a nurturer she strives to create an environment where her learners have a safe space to learn: *“We are trying to remove the children from the shackles of poverty so we try to make our school bright and beautiful; a place where they feel loved and secure.”* The community recognises her efforts and call her Ma Nkulu (mother). *“Old parents will come into my office and bow down to me because they say that I am their mother and their life.”*

The ‘community nurturer’

The schools that Tasneem attended as a learner attempted to reproduce dominant discourses of class hierarchy. Learners who came from affluent homes carried the teachers’ books and bags and were given roles in the school play. Her parents’ motivational words, *“Be your best,”* became her personal motto as she faced different racial and class situations in her life.

Tasneem makes a choice to resist feelings of inadequacy and experiences of dissatisfaction in her position as teacher. She strives to excel, which enables her to bring about change in her life as a teacher and in her community. In this space, her capacity as an embodied, active being is acknowledged and realised through particular relationships with the community within which she works.

Her identity of being a nurturer is evident in her active involvement in various community projects, where she volunteers her services, like the Phoenix Child Welfare. She also initiates projects which teach her learners important skills like *ubuntu* (the South African philosophy of caring for others): *“I gave the elderly at Verulam Day Care Centre a treat. I trained my learners from Grades 4 to 7 to give massages and pedicures to the elderly. I also wrote poetry and plays which I trained my learners to deliver.”*

Disrupting the “underdog”

In her position as principal of a public school, Tasneem chooses to rework particular meanings she had of class and gender through the various projects she engages in. *“I believe that my placement at this school is God-ordained because of my own social background...I am exceptionally passionate about uplifting the plight of the downtrodden.”*

As a woman manager in an area that is historically dominated by males, Tasneem approaches learning differently. Her childhood experiences make her a compassionate

principal. Tasneem refuses to be a victim of her past and the imposed definition of what it means to be a woman. On a daily basis she resists gender stereotypes as she interacts with other principals and stakeholders in education. There are very few female principals in Phoenix and Tasneem's determination to excel has resulted in her being identified as one of the best principals in Phoenix and in South Africa. She is recognised for her diligence by the Department of Education and is given one of the highest accolades in teaching in South Africa when she wins the National Teaching Award.

Tasneem's childhood experiences with class and gender shape her identity of being a nurturer at her school where she assists the learners and their parents. *"I discovered that my learners were underperforming because they were hungry... We collect money on a monthly basis and provide porridge for breakfast and sandwiches for lunch."* Coming from a background of abject poverty she seeks to minimise the *"underdog category"* by trying to provide a nurturing environment for her learners in which they can thrive and excel. She introduces homework classes where learners are supervised by teachers as they complete their homework.

Tasneem's learning as a social being and a principal is shaped by her experiences of poverty and the stifling life she experienced as a girl. In her position as a nurturing principal, she attempts to disrupt these dominant discourses that she sees at play in her school and community through learning and reflection.

5.6 Vignette 5: The social justice learner

With Shakila I found that race, class and gender intersected in discursive ways, thus giving rise to multiple identities. Shakila grew up in a patriarchal, working-class home in apartheid South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s and attended schools where traditional meanings of what it means to be a female were inculcated in learners. Shakila's experiences with race, class and gender help create new meanings of power and agency in her position as teacher-learner. In constructing new meanings of teacher-learner, Shakila attempts to disrupt race, gender and class stereotypes. In this vignette I attempt to show this multiplicity of identities as race, class and gender give rise to Shakila's shifting meanings of teacher-learner.

A transformative learner

Shakila says, "*I was the eldest granddaughter, therefore very spoilt and I was cherished by my many uncles and aunts.*" Growing up in a close-knit patriarchal home, Shakila felt loved and had a sense of belonging. She was spoilt and cherished by her many uncles and aunts.

When Shakila attended school, she recalls Mrs Matthias teaching deportment – "*how to sit and speak like ladies.*" She recalls being fascinated by her teachers: "*We were so impressed with them because they looked smart and elegant and we wanted to be like them.*" She also admired the posture and elocution of another educator, Mrs Lawrence: "*She wore these really lovely dresses and matching shoes.*"

In her position as teacher, Shakila resists these imposed definitions of what it means to be a female teacher through the many transformative roles she adopts at her school and in her community. In her position as head of department she seeks to empower the teachers at her school and district through facilitating learning and dialogue. "*They are constantly learning new things and I provide a forum for them to share their ideas with other teachers.*"

She implements various practices at her school like buddy-teaching, collaborating on projects and compiling teaching resources because in her transformative role she believes that "*the empowerment of teachers through professional development initiatives is important.*" By resisting gender, class and racial stereotypes, Shakila develops a passion for protecting and upholding human rights and campaigning for the cause of the underprivileged. She grew up in a politicised family who were involved in the struggle for South Africa's emancipation

from apartheid: *“We were politicised at a much earlier age and we therefore respected other race groups and this was encouraged.”*

Growing up in apartheid South Africa, Shakila was no stranger to the pain that came as a result of belonging to the non-White section of society. She vividly recalls an incident from her childhood which left an indelible scar. She was assaulted by a White librarian while she was in the “Whites-only section” of the library. She speaks of the books in this section of the library: *“[They] were better maintained and were the newer ones, unlike the ones from the non-White section which had pages missing or pages cut out.”* After this incident she began to *“fight passionately for [her] rights”*. It was this passion that would fuel the fire within her to *“change the world”*. This incident began her political awareness of the racial segregation in South Africa as she began to recognise the effects of apartheid on South African society.

For Shakila, learning is powerful and should be linked with the lives of teachers: *“I don’t want learning to be only text-based.”* Knowledge should be used to bring about a change in society and *“educating the child with life skills.”* In Shakila’s view, knowledge is linked to social justice in that it should effect change in individuals.

Using knowledge to ‘change the world’

Shakila was exposed to class inequalities whilst growing up in a working-class home and community. She describes life as a struggle and her experiences helped create new meanings of power and agency as a teacher. Her father, although not well educated himself, taught her to be proud of who she was and not to be ashamed of her social background. What is striking about Shakila’s childhood is that although she came from an impoverished background she was taught *“to put others first.”* This has become her life motto as is evidenced in all the community projects that she engages in. When Shakila qualified as a teacher she *“wanted to change the world.”*

In attempting to transform society Shakila seizes and creates opportunities for change in her school and the community. She defies gender and class stereotypes as she adopts a transformative role at her school and in her community. She exercises her agency as teacher as she works in the working-class community of Phoenix. She is transforming the

lives of the learners through debates. Through her unstinting training and involvement, Shakila is instrumental in developing learners to become critical and independent thinkers.

In her role as one of the founding members of the Phoenix Children's Foundation and vice-chairperson of Phoenix Child Welfare she assists the poor and destitute. Her passion to transform lives is not quenched even when she is diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB).

“Although Shakila is still unwell (recovering from the side effects of TB – loss of vision, nausea, and weakness) she is still caring for others. She told me of the care packs that she was making for the poor families at her school. They contained basic toiletries and a blanket. The TB has affected her eyesight but she is still driving around continuing with her charity work” (Log entry: July 2010).

The partial loss of vision and constant illness serve only to strengthen her resolve to “put others first” and focus on the “education of the heart”. To Shakila, learning is much more than attaining knowledge, it is also about caring for others. She believes that knowledge should be used for social upliftment and building a better society.

In adopting the identity of a social justice learner, Shakila chooses to disrupt those conceptions of self that others tried to impose on her during her childhood. She recalls being made to feel insignificant as a learner: “*She [a teacher] did nothing to motivate me...being in her class was humiliating and embarrassing.*” Now, with her agency as teacher she ensures that she doesn't perpetuate the same feelings she experienced as a learner. As a social justice learner she is concerned about her learners' wellbeing and takes time to listen to their problems and counsel them. “*Every child has ‘social baggage’ and wants somebody to listen to them and I believe that I'm that ‘somebody’.*”

As a social justice learner, her learning is motivated by her need to see a change in the community in which she lives and works.

5.7 Conclusion

The teachers in this study negotiate the dominant discourses of race, class, gender within normative structures of South African schooling systems to make new meanings for themselves as teacher-learners. They adopt alternative raced, gendered and classed positions in and through which they create new meanings of what it means to be a South African teacher-learner.

Othering and teachers' identities

Teachers in this study experienced othering as children growing up in a South Africa divided by race, class and gender, and as teachers they encounter similar experiences. They construct themselves as teacher-learners in particular ways based on their experiences with race, class and gender.

Othering through race

Mbeje's and Carolina's negative experiences as children constructed particular meanings of other races in particular ways. Both Mbeje and Carolina teach in schools which are historically Indian, and teach mainly African learners.

Their marginalisation as teachers of particular racial groupings within the dominant staff complement puts pressure on them to change their focus from trying to infiltrate the predominantly Indian group to joining the "outsider group" made up of a few African teachers. They also develop support relationships with their learners. It is within these two spaces at their schools that they seek acceptance and affirmation. In taking up membership of the "outsider group" at their schools they signal their collective identities. As they take up this new membership and develop a collective identity, they are defining and redefining who they are as teachers.

As a result of racial othering both Mbeje and Carolina position themselves as knowledge experts. This is an interesting phenomenon where both Mbeje and Carolina support learners whom they don't teach and are not academically responsible for. Mbeje helps learners in subjects that he is not qualified to teach and even goes to the extent of enrolling for a degree in Accounting so that he can assist learners who are struggling in the subject. In responding to the needs of the learners, both Mbeje and Carolina construct their

identities as knowledge seeker and knowledge pursuer, respectively. They position themselves as knowledge experts and engage in self-directed learning to extend their knowledge. It is within this context of positioning themselves as knowledge experts that they acquire knowledge and skills as teachers and their identities as teacher-learners are shaped and re-shaped.

Othering through class

Shabeer, Shakila and Tasneem are also shaped by their early experiences of being othered as Indian learners and because of their social class. In their practice as teachers they challenge the class inequalities at their respective schools. In their desire to transform their schooling sites, they adopt particular positions as teacher-learners. Their childhood experiences of being othered construct them as particular teacher-learners and as teacher-learners in that they become more motivated to succeed and are self-directed. They position themselves as sources of knowledge for their learners, other teachers and their respective communities and this is evident by the various activities and projects they engage in. As they engage their colleagues and communities in learning they are also developing their identities as teachers and constructing themselves as agents of change.

Othering through gender

Carolina, Shakila and Tasneem also experience being othered because of their gender. Growing up in South Africa during apartheid constructs their identities as women in particular ways. As children they felt disempowered and now, in the powerful position of teacher-learner, they strive to disrupt gender stereotypes. In the case of Carolina, her life as a teacher is a constant battle as she strives to overcome the insecurities that she faced as a child where she was traumatised because she was as a Coloured female. Every decision that she makes is a conscious one; for her, learning is a matter of survival. Both Shakila and Tasneem lived highly politicised lives as children and when they become teachers they are quick to identify the dominant discourses within their schools and society that seek to oppress them as women. In taking up transformative roles, and occupying positions of power in their schools and communities, they attempt to defy gender stereotypes. It is within these positions of power that they seek to change their schools and communities.

Teachers as change agents

The teachers in this study have already constructed particular identities growing up in a divided South Africa and these identities are shaped and continue to be shaped by their lives and work experiences as practising teachers. As knowledge seeker, activist learner, pursuer of knowledge, nurturer, and social justice learner, they act on what they are passionate about as teacher-learners, thus creating new meanings for themselves as South African teacher-learners.

All five teachers in this study position themselves as change agents striving to change their lives and the lives of their learners and communities. They seek to emancipate themselves from the hurtful and painful childhood experiences they had growing up in apartheid South Africa. As teachers they use their positions of power and take on a transformative role by changing the lives of their learners and the communities that they teach in. Working in the community becomes an alternative space where they exercise power in more productive ways. In this way they exercise their agency as teachers by making a difference in the lives of others. In making a difference in the lives of the learners, colleagues and communities, they shape who they are as teachers.

This chapter focused on the storied vignettes of the teacher-self in relation to the social-cultural context. By using social identity theory and socio-cultural theory as a lens I examined the meanings of self that shaped and continue to shape teachers as particular kinds of teacher-learners in South African public schools. This lens is useful in understanding the meanings that teachers in this study adopt and provides insight into what type of teacher-learners they are. It also illuminates the multiplicity and fluidity of identity as is evident in Shakila's vignette. I found that teachers' experiences with race, class and gender, and schooling construct their practices as teacher-learners in particular ways. As teacher-learners they take up particular meanings which direct us to who they are as teacher-learners. The meanings of race, class and gender are reworked and recreated as these teacher-learners find critical spaces in which to disrupt meanings of race, class and gender. This gives rise to particular kinds of teachers who have the potential to challenge and change the dominant discourses of race, class and gender and the existing structures of education.

This chapter shows that race, class and gender have the potential to be disrupted as teachers adopt different meanings as teacher-learners. The vignettes show how Mbeje,

Shabeer, Carolina, Shakila and Tasneem construct themselves as knowledge seeker, activist learner, knowledge pursuer, the nurturer , and social justice learner as they seek learning which is personally meaningful them.

This chapter focused on the particular learning identities that teachers in this study adopt as they exercise their agency as teachers. In the next chapter I focus on the self-directed learning practices of these teachers.

Chapter 6 Lens 3: Practices of self-directed learning and change

6.1 Introduction

This chapter offers an analysis in response to the third sub-question: “How do the meanings of teacher-learner inform teachers’ learning practices?” In this layer of analysis I show how teachers learn, develop and engage with learning within their respective schooling contexts and community. I show how teachers reposition themselves as particular kinds of teacher-learners engaging in particular kinds of learning as they exercise their agency as teachers. In this study, my interest is directed towards exploring the learning and change that teacher-learners take up through self-directed learning, more specifically as teachers working within South African public schools.

Within the South African public school system, professional development is externally driven by the Department of Education. According to Tammets, Valjataga and Pata (2008) the Department of Education’s initiative to introduce continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers adopts a top-down approach and the needs of individual teachers are not taken into consideration. One of the aims of continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) is to “provide teachers with clear guidance about which Professional Development (PD) activities will contribute to their professional growth” (DoE, 2006, p. 17).

The Department of Education has given the responsibility for the implementation and management of CPTD to the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (DoE, 2006). Teachers receive points for engaging in PD activities which are classified into four types: school-driven programmes; employer-driven programmes; qualification-driven programmes and other programmes such as those offered by NGOs, teacher unions, community-based and faith-based organisations, or private companies (DoE, 2006). This policy views professional development as a top- down process and doesn’t take teacher agency into consideration.

Literature shows that teachers engage in different ways of developing themselves as professionals. They can improve their qualifications through registering for post-graduate studies, attending short courses or in-service training (Hoyle, 2001). Teachers can also choose alternative social learning spaces where they acquire knowledge, skills and procedures which they use in their teaching practice, which Hoyle (1974) terms professionalism. Teacher-learners who seek alternative spaces to improve their professionalism

construct themselves as transformative intellectuals (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Evans, 2002). As noted by Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), teachers are transformative intellectuals because they are thinkers: they ask questions about how and what they learn, and challenge the dominant discourses within their schools as they create spaces for their learning.

As transformative intellectuals, teacher-learners are also “reflective practitioners” who make particular decisions regarding their learning (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Evans, 2002). They take responsibility for what they learn, how they learn, where they learn and with whom they learn. In order for teachers to function as intellectuals, conditions at schools should allow teachers to “reflect, read, share their work with others, produce curriculum materials, publish their achievements for teachers and others outside of their local schools, etc.” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 42).

In an attempt to develop themselves despite prevailing constraints, some teachers initiate learning activities and pursue professional learning and development goals and are able to take ownership of the learning process (Miller, 1983). In this study, teachers as “initiators of change” take responsibility for their own learning as they identify sources for their learning (Day, Hadfield & Kellow, 2002, p. 19). In looking at the data of the five teachers in this study, I show how these teachers adopt particular self-directed learning practices which take place both within and outside of their *professional schooling community*. The *professional schooling community* refers to the physical and social space within their schools. On the other hand, the spaces within which *professional learning* (learning that teachers engage in to improve their practice as teachers) takes place is referred to as the *professional learning community*. These *professional learning communities* can exist within and outside of the schooling community. The activities that teachers select are linked to their identities as teachers: the knowledge seeker, the activist learner, the knowledge pursuer, the nurturing learner and the social justice learner.

I have organised this chapter into four sections:

- Section A: I examine the constraining and enabling conditions within the *professional schooling community* that provide the impetus for teachers’ learning.
- Section B: I discuss practices of self-directed learning within the *professional learning community of the school* where teachers learn *with others, through others, and through the self*.

- Section C: I discuss practices of self-directed learning within the professional *learning community* outside of the schooling community where teachers learn *with others, through others, and through the self*.
- Section D: I discuss teachers' self-directed learning and change within the broad categories of professionalism and professionality outlined by Hoyle (1974) and Evans (2002). I also discuss the learning that takes place within the *professional learning communities*.

6.2 Section A: Constraints, challenges and possibilities for teacher learning in public schools

Teachers in this study described various constraints, challenges and possibilities at their respective schools which either enabled or constrained their professional learning. For some of them, the conditions at their schools propelled them on a learning trajectory. Although some of these conditions were constraining, the teachers in this study used them as an impetus for their learning and change.

Constraining conditions within professional schooling communities

All five teachers in this study indicated that there were constraining conditions within their respective *professional schooling communities*. Some of the constraints were externally driven whilst others were internally driven.

Externally driven constraints

According to Shakila, there is “*a lack of adequate support structures at school and departmental level.*” Public schools don’t seem to have processes and structures in place in support teachers in their learning. Although there are policies in place governing teacher professional development, there is a lack of support when it comes to implementing these policies. This results in teachers not being given the necessary support that they need in order to excel in their classrooms. Shakila says, “*There’s nobody coming to our schools and asking us, how are you coping? Are you having any problems? What can I do to help?*” With a dearth of support of their learning, teachers have to look at other means of support.

Tasneem also highlights the lack of support from the Department of Education that she faces as a manager of a school. She says, “*My superiors have not provided me with any support in my development...On many occasions when I felt like my school was sinking or I encountered problems, I received very little or no support from those in power.*” Due to this lack of support Tasneem has to find other sources of learning to support her professional development. It is her resilience and drive to succeed as a leader that propels her own learning. Being one of the few woman managers in the Phoenix area she is adamant about being a success. She acknowledges that the only way in which she can succeed is through learning how to be an excellent manager. She sees her appointment at a poverty-stricken

school as being “*God-ordained*” and she seeks different avenues to change the climate in her school and community.

Learning for Tasneem is intellectual as she thinks about how she can create learning opportunities for herself, her learners and teachers at her school. In her position as principal, Tasneem ensures the smooth operation of her school by ensuring that effective learning and teaching takes place. She encounters many social and educational problems at her school and has to identify spaces where she can learn how to deal with these problems.

Internally driven constraints

Teachers in this study cited the lack of support from within their schools as a factor which provided an impetus for their learning. Mbeje also feels frustrated by the absence of adequate support mechanisms at his school. The problem he faces is that no-one at his school seems to understand the complexities of his subject, which is isiZulu. What further compounds matters at his school is the fact that his head of department (HoD) is an Afrikaans specialist. He says, “*The managers at my school are not equipped to assist me in the teaching of my subject.*” He expects the HoD to be a knowledge expert and provide assistance with subject-specific problems. Mbeje also becomes frustrated with the implementation of the changes in the curriculum: “*We just receive instructions regarding changes in the curriculum [and] are expected to enforce them [...] most of the textbooks are not even relevant in the context that I teach in.*” The expectancy exhibited here reveals that teachers require more from the Department of Education than the dissemination of curriculum changes.

Schools should be sites of learning for both teachers and learners. On-going opportunities for professional development should be provided for teachers. Carolina says that “*there is not much support at school level in my quest for knowledge and development.*” The implementation of Curriculum 2005 in public schools means that teachers are required to teach new subjects or learning areas; Carolina notes, “*This year I am teaching Afrikaans, English, and Arts and Culture. I have never received formal training in Arts and Culture, or English.*” Carolina expects the managers at her school to support her learning since she feels that she doesn’t have the necessary qualifications to teach the new subjects. Mbeje also raises the same issue of a lack professional development at his school when he says: “*There is not much scope for professional development at our school and [at] district level.*” Both Carolina and Mbeje anticipate some form of professional development to occur within the school and

district but this is not forthcoming. They therefore embark on a road to self-directed learning which is driven by their determination to be a successful teacher as they embrace learning.

This constraint - a lack of support mechanisms from the Department of Education and at district and school level - drives these teachers' learning. They are forced to find other sources for their learning. Their professional needs as teachers are not taken into consideration by the various educational management structures and they are given what Liebermann and Pointer Mace (2008, p. 227) refer to as, "a one-size-fits-all' professional development programme.

Challenges for teacher learning

Mbeje is also challenged to learn by the demands placed on him by the African learners at his school. These learners experience difficulty in understanding Accounting and English, which results in their poor performance in these subjects. Although Mbeje doesn't teach these subjects, he views it as his responsibility to help learners improve their results: *"Many of the African learners experience difficulty in English and Accounting. When they come to me for help and I cannot assist them because it's not my subject, I feel that I have failed them. So I have enrolled at UNISA to study towards a Bachelor of Commerce so that I can be of assistance to them."* The learning challenges that his learners experience Mbeje to expand his learning.

The introduction of the new curriculum has placed much pressure on teachers to teach new content and use different teaching methodologies. As Carolina notes, *"The introduction of outcomes-based education has really been a challenge for me."* However, she views the implementation of the new curriculum as *"another opportunity to learn and grow."* As a seeker of knowledge, she is able to use this situation as a challenge to seek out new knowledge so that she can be an effective teacher.

Possibilities for teacher learning

Mbeje: *"The isiZulu cluster was started by the subject adviser and all teachers from the area attend meetings...It has, however, evolved into a learning space where we feel free to share our ideas on learning and teaching."* For Mbeje, the isiZulu cluster becomes an enabling space since he can learn with and through others. It is *"a non-critical environment and a*

space where we can be ourselves.” Both Mbeje and Shakila benefit from belonging to a cluster. As the co-ordinator of the English cluster, Shakila has *“assisted many teachers in developing themselves professionally.”* At the cluster meetings, teachers are free to discuss subject-related issues and their own perceived inadequacies, thus opening themselves up to learning possibilities.

Shakila is driven by her need to learn and to create learning spaces for other teachers at her school and in her district. Her disillusionment with the Department of Education’s lack of professional support for teachers also propels her to learn: *“The Department of Education organises workshops mainly to address the changes in the curriculum. I am not impressed with the Departmental workshops because they are often rushed and I don’t think they do justice to the changes in the curriculum...Teachers need a lot of support.”* Even when the Department of Education organises workshops it does not meet the expectations of the teachers. The focus of the workshops should be to capacitate teachers so that they feel comfortable in their classrooms when delivering the new curriculum. If the workshops do not meet the professional needs of teachers then they must be reviewed and teachers’ needs should be considered.

As head of department at her school and the chairperson of the English Committee, Shakila creates numerous possibilities for self-directed learning for herself and others. She takes the initiative to lead the learning by developing herself and others professionally: *“I have taken the responsibility of developing myself professionally.”* She takes the responsibility of *“organising and presenting workshops at school and district level”* where she, together with other teachers, engages with curriculum issues and shares new ways of teaching and learning.

Shakila’s desire to *“change the world”* directs her learning. As a woman, she consciously defies oppressive gendered meanings of self as she transforms herself, her school and her community through learning. She is *“fiercely independent”* and this also drives her learning and change. Although she has been teaching for 25 years she still updates her knowledge so that her teaching is relevant and innovative: *“I am forever searching for new ideas and new ways of teaching.”* Through learning she is able to *“keep abreast of the latest developments”* in education.

Shabeer's passion to learn and to develop is intensely personal. He is "*intrinsically motivated*" and has "*a thirst for knowledge*". His need to learn is embedded in his belief that "*a teacher should always strive to improve in all aspects*" because "*a teacher is a lifelong learner.*" For Shabeer, learning is essential to teacher learning and change as he believes that every teacher should "*lead the learning.*" As Shakila, uses her position as Head of Department, Shabeer also uses his position as a leader in the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) as "*an opportunity to make an impact on the educational sphere.*" He is elected to many high-profile education posts in SADTU and he uses these positions of power to "*make a difference to the knowledge and practice of teachers.*" In his position as union leader, he exercises his teacher agency and "*leads the learning.*"

6.3 Section B: Practices of self-directed learning within the professional learning community of the school

In this section I elaborate on the various sources of learning within the *professional learning community* of the school where the teachers in this study take up when they learn *with* and *through others*. Learning *with others* takes the form of professional dialogue whilst learning *through others* takes place through organising and/or attending workshops, and mentorship (Hargreaves, 1994; du Plessis et al., 2007). Teachers also learn *through* self-initiated activities like reading. Sources of self-directed learning outside the *professional schooling community* include: formal studies; learning through debates; learning through the union; learning through research, and community engagement.

As teachers in this study develop themselves, they also develop others. This “attitudinal development” as recognised by Evans (2002, p. 132) includes becoming more knowledgeable and thinking about one’s practice, and creating ways to improve one’s practice as a teacher. Teachers like Shabeer and Shakila are passionate about learning and as they engage in personal learning they create learning spaces for themselves and other teachers. As transformative intellectuals they create enabling spaces within their schools and districts for learning.

6.3.1 Learning with others

In this section I will discuss learning as a social phenomenon where teachers learn with others. Teachers’ everyday experiences within the *professional schooling community* are an important source of their professional learning (Coburn, 2001; Horn, 2005; Illeris, 2007). It is within this social setting that learning with others contributes to teachers’ professionalism (Hoyle, 1974; Evans, 2002). The engagement of teachers in this study in *professional learning communities* at their schools directs us to particular learning phenomena.

Learning is social

Learning is a social phenomenon, as teachers learn *with others*. Learning is meaningful when it happens with others. As teachers engage in *professional learning communities*, through dialogue they “feel a sense of belonging and of making a contribution to a community where experience and knowledge function as part of community property” (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008, p. 227).

Shabeer: *Discussions about professional matters with school managers, colleagues and other stakeholders in education have helped me to gain professional insight and knowledge. These professional talks help me to clarify my own ideas and to get a deeper understanding of professional issues.*

“*Professional talks*” is an important component in bringing about “educational change” (Ward, Deglau, O’Sullivan & Bush, 2006, p. 413). As teachers engage in professional talks – which take place incidentally in school corridors and staffrooms – about pertinent issues related to teaching and learning, they “discover who they are and what they stand for” (Nieto, 2003, p. 125). It is through this “everyday learning” that teachers are developing themselves as professionals (Illeris, 2007).

Through “everyday learning” teachers learn from their colleagues and implement these ideas in their practice as teacher. Teachers obtain “inspiration for their most effective lessons from talking to colleagues...they engage in knowledge-sharing conversations” (Dymoke & Harrison, 2006, p. 73). For teachers, learning is reciprocal and they become more confident in their self-directed learning as they begin to share their knowledge with others.

Learning is sharing

Another phenomenon of *professional learning communities* within the school that this study identified is that *learning is sharing*. Learning is “dialogical...learning does not occur in only one direction (from experts to non-experts) and learning is sharing of knowledge” (Galam, 1997, p. 7). This sharing and knowledge provide teachers in this study with clarification regarding the planning and teaching of their subjects. As Leidner and Jarvenpaa (1995, p. 268) note, “Knowledge is created as it is shared, and the more it is shared, the more is learned.”

According to Letman (2004, p. 2), unplanned teacher interactions include “casual conversations, multi-conversations, collisions or bumping into each other.” Carolina states, “*At school I’ve learned from my colleagues and my Head of Department...I believe that learning is a two-way process of giving and receiving. I always share what I am learning with my colleagues and in turn some of them share their knowledge and expertise with me.*” It is this unplanned sharing amongst teachers about their practice as teachers that is

fundamental to their learning and change. Through the sharing of “*knowledge and expertise*” teachers begin to change their practice as teachers since learning becomes personally meaningful as it is acquired in an informal context.

Shakila says that the teachers in her English department “*are constantly learning new things as I provide the forum for them to share their ideas with others.*” Shakila, in her position as the Head of Department, creates the conditions for teachers to share their best practices, teaching strategies and resources with each other. Departmental forum meetings are potential spaces for teachers to develop themselves.

When there is collaboration amongst teachers then there is sharing of resources and learning experiences. According to Shabeer, “*Committees are important for the professional development of teachers so we can learn from each other and share our resources... I also share information with my colleagues and I find that this is very effective because it gives me a different perspective on the topic.*”

Tasneem and Carolina also view sharing with others as being an important part of their learning. Tasneem says, “*I have a few colleagues with whom I interact on a constant basis and I am always learning from them... Every person is a ‘think tank’ on their own and they are full of knowledge. When you interact with others there is always something that you learn...My educators, colleagues and learners are an important source of my learning.*” For Tasneem, learning *with others* is crucial to her learning as a teacher. It is through these daily interactions with other teachers and managers of schools that she is able to deal with the constant challenges at her school. For Carolina, the professional sharing with her colleagues is used to learn about the new curriculum. She states, “*I have learnt from my colleagues and my head of department. I interact with my colleagues regarding the new curriculum.*” In the absence of adequate professional development opportunities being provided by the Department of Education and her school managers, Carolina uses the sharing with her colleagues as a vital component of her self-directed learning.

Learning through sharing is critical for teachers’ self-directed learning as it creates opportunities for learning. Teachers spend most of their day at school interacting with other teachers on professional matters. The interactions centred on teaching and learning are powerful as the impartation of critical knowledge occurs.

Learning is open-mindedness

This study highlights another phenomenon located within the *professional learning community* within schools: *learning is open-mindedness*. In order for teachers to learn with others there has to be an attitude of “openness of mind” to new learning experiences (Dewey, 1916a, p. 50). Teachers as “intellectual adventurers” (Palmer, 1998) make choices about their learning and are open to new learning opportunities; they must demonstrate an “open-mindedness and a passion for wanting to learn from other teachers [...] about their aspirations, intentions, experiences and previous preparations as teachers” (Gupta, 2011, p. 2). By displaying open-mindedness to learning, teachers in this study show that they are reflective teachers as they can critique their practice as teachers, thereby determining what they need to learn. It is through being open-minded that teachers embark on “learning adventures” where they are constantly rediscovering themselves as professional teacher-learners.

Shakila states, “*Working with colleagues who are passionate about teaching has played a key role in shaping who I am as a teacher and a professional. There are always new things to learn. As teachers we must have an open mind and an open approach.*” Teachers who are interested in improving their practice as teachers will be open to suggestions on how to do so. This open-mindedness implies a willingness to dispense with the old and embrace new ways of learning as teachers. This open-mindedness also suggests that the environment at schools should be conducive to openness if teachers are to be learning with others.

When teachers collaborate with each other, learning experiences are shared, which also requires an open-mindedness for new learning opportunities from teachers.

6.3.2 Learning through others

Within *professional learning communities* teachers also learn *through* other teachers. Teachers in this study identified learning through workshops and mentorship as important learning spaces for their professionalism.

Learning through workshops

Teachers in this study identified workshops as spaces for their learning and change. It is within these spaces that teachers share knowledge and skills and have opportunities to join learning networks. Teachers revealed that workshops held at their schools were

important to their learning and change. As teachers, they were not just recipients of knowledge but also contributed to the process of knowledge creation. Workshops provide a space for teachers to share their knowledge and this has immense value in improving teachers' practice. Workshops are learning spaces where teachers can reflect critically on their practice and find new ways of being and doing.

Attending workshops

The Department of Education provides only a limited number of workshops focused on the professional development of teachers. Teachers who are interested in learning and change are always looking for ways to improve their practice as teachers, and workshops have been identified as important learning spaces. Carolina says, *"I have always enjoyed attending workshops because it provides me with the privilege of engaging with new knowledge and sharing ideas with my colleagues. I've attended several professional development workshops which I have enjoyed tremendously."*

Due to the inadequate number of workshops held by the Department of Education, teachers who are interested in developing themselves professionally have to attend workshops organised by their colleagues, teacher unions and non-governmental organisations. Teachers in this study indicated that attending workshops was an integral part of their professional growth and development. Shakila states, *"Workshops are a great source of information for me and have helped me to become a better teacher."*

Workshops provide an important learning space for teachers to engage with new knowledge and share best practices with other teachers. Workshops also allow teachers to form professional networks with other teachers, which is important to teacher learning.

Organising workshops

In this study I found that while teachers' learning and change was enhanced by attending workshops, teachers also created learning spaces for themselves and other teachers through their active involvement in organising and facilitating workshops.

In her role as the chairperson of the English Committee in her district, and as Head of Department, Shakila uses workshops to empower herself and other teachers: *"Whether I've attended workshops or have been instrumental in organising them, it has helped to*

broaden my learning.” She identifies areas in which teachers require development and organises workshops around these areas. She says, *“I have years of experience and believe in developing others with the knowledge that I have obtained. I co-ordinate workshops within the cluster so that we can understand and implement the [curriculum] changes.”*

Shakila recognises that *“there is a lack of adequate support structures at school and Departmental level.”* As an initiator of learning and a change agent, Shakila extends her own learning when she organises workshops for teachers. The workshops that she organises provide creative spaces for teachers to share learn and develop teaching resources as a group. At one of the writing workshops that she facilitated, the workshop culminated in the production of two learner guides on the prescribed English set-works. Shakila says, *“Each teacher had to compile a booklet on creative writing which is a relatively new section in the curriculum. It was amazing when every teacher compiled a booklet and proudly shared their work with the rest of the team. I believe that the empowerment of teachers through professional development initiatives is important if the level of education standards are to be improved at our schools.”*

These workshops extend Shakila’s own learning as a teacher. She learns the importance of collaboration and teamwork. She also creates a non-threatening, non-judgmental and non-critical space where teachers feel free to share their ideas with each other. Through sharing her expertise with other teachers, she is developing her own knowledge and practice as teacher.

Learning through mentorship

Teachers in this study cited mentorship as being an important space for their learning.

There is a shortage of qualified teachers in South African schools which results in schools employing unqualified people (Bertram, Appleton, Muthukrishna & Wedekind, 2006). Shabeer concurs: *“The Department of Education sometimes places unqualified or inexperienced teachers to teach at our schools.”* In order to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is not compromised at his school, Shabeer adopts the role of mentor to newer members of staff: *“As a Head of Department, I also mentor other teachers. I guide my teachers to teach in any learning area.”* In order to be equipped to mentor the teachers at his

school, Shabeer conducts research into various topics and one of the research tools that he uses, is the internet. Through mentoring other teachers, Shabeer is compelled to evaluate his own practice, knowledge, values and beliefs as a teacher. Mentoring provides a space for him learn and change as a teacher.

The mentorship process also provides Shakila with the opportunity to share her wealth of knowledge with other teachers and it helps her to be reflective about her own practice as a teacher. She says, *“I have a teacher in my department team who is an ex-learner. I provide her with guidance on how to teach. It’s a pleasure to listen to her teach while I evaluate her lesson and I provide assistance for her improvement.”* For Shakila, the mentorship process is crucial and should be implemented at South African schools if the culture of teaching and learning is to be restored. Shakila says, *“I am aware that there are new teachers who feel overwhelmed when faced with a new text. I have years of experience and believe in developing others with the knowledge that I have obtained.”*

Mentorship also provides new learning experiences for Tasneem as a principal: *“The SEM [senior education manager] has twinned me with another school so that I could mentor that principal. I am also mentoring a number of primary school principals which provides new learning experiences for me.”* Tasneem is identified as a successful manager in her district and she mentors other principals. As she shares their experiences she learns new skills for coping with the difficulties at her own school.

Carolina also learns through being mentored at her school. She says *“I’ve learned from my colleagues and my Head of Department...My Head of Department has taught me much regarding [teaching] Afrikaans.”* Carolina is able to “diagnose” her needs as a teacher and she identifies other teachers as mentors to improve her practice as teacher. Carolina singles out her head of department as someone who is supportive of her learning process. She uses this mentorship as source of emotional support when she needs someone to acknowledge her achievements and to support her learning: *“My Head of Department has constantly provided encouragement and support in my learning. During my free periods, I meet her and she provides clarification regarding the planning and the teaching of the subject.”* This study shows that the mentoring process involves much more than supporting teaching and learning.

What I found interesting in this study is that during the mentorship process, both the mentor and mentee learn and change. Through mentorship the learning environment is enhanced. Mentorship can sometimes involve “buddy teaching”, which is evident in Shakila’s practice.

Learning through “buddy teaching”

Due to the shortage of teachers and the consequent employment of unqualified teachers as discussed earlier, Shakila identifies a way in which she can help the teachers at her school. She says, *“Buddy teaching” (when you pair a new teacher with a more experienced teacher) is a strategy that has worked for me. The orientation of new teachers to teaching is an area that is often neglected...If we don’t invest in those types of professional development then we are going to reap the harvest of what those teachers are going to get into.*” The “buddy teaching system” offers a non-judgmental space for all teachers involved in the process. “Buddy teaching” is effective when teachers feel confident about sharing their classroom space with someone whom they trust and respect. This system of learning allows teachers to share teaching, learning and assessment strategies in a non-critical environment which becomes a space in which to enhance their learning and development.

6.3.3 Learning through self

Teachers in this study identified learning-through-self as an important source of their professional development. They exercise their agency as they take responsibility for their learning and change. By learning-through-self, they identify sources for their own learning.

For Mbeje, the constraining factors within his schooling context provides the impetus for his learning through self: *“Most of the textbooks are not even relevant to the context that I teach in.”* The lack of textbooks and workbooks in isiZulu impels him to search for relevant material for his subject. During this exploration for teaching materials, he is developing skills and knowledge as a teacher. *“As a teacher, looking for new and interesting material is a priority. I feel compelled to conduct more research in order to stay informed.”*

Mbeje’s zeal in seeking out new knowledge, directs us to his passion for learning. *“I am always reading articles and books that are linked to teaching. Learning makes my professional life exciting and everything that I learn impacts on my teaching.”* Mbeje discovers that when he learns *through self*, he is able to access information that is personally

meaningful and applicable to his learning needs. *I find that when I search for information on my own, it makes learning more meaningful and I try to impart this skill to my learners.*”

Carolina’s *professional schooling community* is restrictive which results in her being unable to access the necessary sources for all her learning needs. She also experiences financial constraints in pursuing formal studies. She feels that she is underprepared for the new subjects that she is expected to teach and the lack of adequate training further compounds this problem. She, therefore seeks new knowledge through reading and self-study. *“In order to prepare myself so that I can do justice to my learners and the subject, I read! I have to read to extend my knowledge.”* By *learning through self* she is able to make decisions about what and how she will learn. She identifies her learning needs and sets her own targets for learning. Through reading and self-study Carolina exercises her agency as a teacher and transforms herself as a professional.

As “intellectual adventurers”, teachers direct their learning towards attaining new skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to improve their practice as teachers. Teachers identify their learning needs through introspection. *Learning-through-self* allows teachers to gain fresh perspectives on their roles as teachers within the context of the latest developments in education. Through researching various topics related to their teaching and professional improvement, teachers are better informed about educational issues and subject-related matter. Teaching becomes exciting as they constantly search for new ways of teaching. By *learning-through-self* they stay up to date on the latest developments in teaching and learning, which has an impact on their classrooms. In this way they nourish the teacher-self as they become empowered and affect the teaching and learning ethos at their schools.

6.4 Section C: Sources of self-directed learning outside the professional schooling community

Teachers in this study also identified learning sources outside the *professional schooling community* for their self-directed learning. These sources of learning were varied and sometimes were an extension of activities within the *professional schooling community*. This learning also takes place *with others, through others* and *through the self*.

6.4.1 Professionalism through formal learning

Teachers who engage in formal studies do so because they are passionate about achieving their professional learning goals as teachers. The South African Department of Education doesn't offer salary increments when teachers complete postgraduate studies (DoE, 2008) so the motivation to extend their learning is not for financial reward but rather the need for self-fulfilment. In pursuing formal studies, the teachers in this study identified particular needs at their schools and in the community.

In his role as a change agent, Mbeje's learning helps him to transform his practice as a teacher through pursuing formal learning. After attaining his Primary Teacher's Diploma in 1996, Mbeje thereafter completed his Higher Diploma in Education and Bachelor of Education-Honours (2004). He subsequently enrolled for a Higher Certificate in Adult Basic Education in 2007, as he desired to extend his learning into the community: "*Last year I studied ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) through UNISA because I would like to teach illiterate people in rural areas. There are many people who are illiterate and I am always looking for opportunities to assist them.*" Mbeje displays a passion for bringing about change in society by teaching people to read and write. He enrolled for formal studies at UNISA and uses his knowledge from the ABET course to teach literacy classes in Kwa-Mashu as part of the Kha Ri Gude Literacy Campaign which was initiated by the Department of Basic Education. In order to assist his learners, Mbeje is presently completing a Degree in Accounting.

Carolina is pursuing studies in social work through Covenant Bible College which helps her in assisting learners in need. "*There are no counsellors at my school so I offer my services to learners. After school hours I listen to their problems and give them advice.*" She cites an incident where she counselled one of the learners who was HIV-positive and had

been raped by her uncle and she used her knowledge gained from outside the professional schooling community to assist the learner.

“Studying is my passion, but my financial situation always placed constraints on my need to learn so I had to find other means of learning.” Carolina identifies other formal spaces of learning like attending professional development workshops organised by the teachers’ union and other non-governmental organisations.

Shabeer also pursues formal studies in his quest for personal and professional development and to improve his practice as teacher. After Shabeer completed his Bachelor of Arts degree and Higher Diploma in Education, he registered for an Honours Degree in education. He believes that registering for formal studies would equip him to become a better teacher: *“I selected the modules that would improve my teaching.”*

Shabeer also identified a need at his school when he discovered that many learners with special needs were under-performing. In order to assist these learners to succeed in mainstream education, he enrolled for an eight-week course which was held on Saturdays, at Emery College. *“The course helped me to identify learners with special needs. It taught me how to interact with them and how to design programmes to assist them.”* Using the knowledge that he gained from this short course, he then provided training for other teachers at his school on how to design and implement inclusive learning programmes.

6.4.2 Learning through organising debates

Shakila identifies debating as a creative learning space that opens up many learning opportunities for herself and her learners. She believes that the power of debating could *“create this positive lifestyle amongst the learners.”* She recognises the positive influence that debating had on the local schools and she takes on the mammoth task of setting up the Phoenix Debating League (PDL).

The PDL is the largest league in South Africa and was introduced to schools in the Phoenix area as a means of encouraging learners to read. Shakila’s passion for debating was rewarded when she was offered a position to serve as an executive on the South African Debating Board and received an offer to adjudicate at an international debating tournament. Debates as a learning space help Shakila to *“look at issues in a more knowledgeable way”*

and she is *“learning new things all the time.”* Her dedication to her learners and to debating is reflected in her willingness to sacrifice her time, effort and even her own finances. All the training and coaching is done after school and on weekends, and Shakila sees this as *“an extension”* of her work as a teacher. She purchases different local newspapers and overseas publications so that learners can be well informed when debating issues of a global nature.

Debating develops her skills as an organiser and a coach for the Phoenix debating league, and infiltrates her practice as a teacher. Through her involvement in debating, Shakila meets teachers from all over the world: *“Through this network, I have acquired new knowledge, learnt how to improve my teaching and introduced new concepts in the classroom.”* This network of teachers is also instrumental in recommending novels for Shakila’s English lessons: *After a very long time I have children literally running into the class because they are so enthusiastic about reading the novel.”*

Debating develops Shakila into a more knowledgeable teacher which shapes her learning as a teacher. She is able to develop pertinent learning material for learners from different social backgrounds. The teaching material that she develops for her learners is around current issues and is influenced by the global perspective that debating has provided. *“Being involved in the debates has enhanced me as a teacher because I can look at issues in a more knowledgeable way. I’ve read so widely on different issues and I’ve had exposure to learners from different social backgrounds and schools. The knowledge that I have acquired has impacted on my professional development. I use the information that I have acquired to broaden the perspectives of my learners and to develop teaching materials for my English lessons.”*

6.4.3 Teacher-learning through the Union

Shabeer’s leadership position in the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) provides him with numerous opportunities to develop himself and others. He says, *“I have a thirst for knowledge and to impart whatever I learn to others and this helps me to be a success in whatever I do.”*

Through his involvement with SADTU, Shabeer is presented with various self-directed learning opportunities. He organises and facilitates workshops for teachers on *“The National Protocol on Assessment, the National Framework on Teacher Education, the*

National Support for Learner Attainment (NSLA) (schools that underperformed in the Matric exams), Foundations of Learning Campaign, the National Teaching Awards (NTA), and continuous professional teacher development.” As he organises and facilitates these workshops he becomes a source of knowledge for other teachers, and develops his organisational and communication skills.

His active involvement in SADTU provides many learning opportunities for his learning and change: *“It has given me exposure to different sources of professional development which has contributed to my professional development.”* He is elected to serve as the Education Convener of Ethekwini North. This position gives him a particular agency as he uses his influence to bring about educational changes in many schools. He convenes regular meetings to capacitate teachers regarding the latest curriculum changes: *“It was exciting and rewarding being in a position where I could make a difference to the knowledge and practice of educators.”*

6.4.4 Teacher-learning through research and reflection

Tasneem creates new learning spaces for herself and the teachers at her school as she learns through research. As Tasneem engages in research at her school and in her community she learns how to become a better educational manager. As the principal, Tasneem is concerned about the factors that affect teaching and learning at her school. She investigates and addresses problems with the members of her staff and together they decide on the plan of action. Tasneem also includes outside agencies to assist her learners if there is a problem that she and her staff cannot cope with: *“I conduct simple investigations in order to help my learners and teachers. I act on the findings of my research and if I am not equipped to handle particular problems, I get assistance from outside agencies like Psychological Guidance and Support Services, police services and social workers. If there are medical problems with the learners I work with the form teacher and we write letters to the nearest clinic or the hospital.”*

In one investigation that Tasneem conducted she *“discovered that my learners were under-performing because they were hungry. After numerous failed applications to the Department of Education to receive funding to implement a feeding scheme at our school, I finally took [the Department] to court. It was another failed battle but we were not deterred, my teachers and I started a lunch club for the indigent learners.”*

By conducting research Tasneem is able to make informed decisions regarding the changes she can make at her school in order to make teaching and learning more effective. *“Being a catalyst in education I constantly conduct research to understand the backgrounds that my learners come from...In one of my investigations I also found out that many parents were HIV-positive and didn't know how to cope with this virus, so I contacted Save our Souls of Suffering, who are now helping the parents.”* As a result of another investigation, Tasneem effected particular changes at her school. Through the research she conducted she became more knowledgeable of the problem areas at her school. She had to investigate possible solutions to the problem areas she had uncovered that were affecting the learning at her school. The research resulted in her setting up a homework centre at her school and this improved the throughput of her learners.

In another example, Tasneem was concerned about the poor performance of the learners at her school so she conducted research into the problem and discovered that her learners had reading difficulties. She investigated possible solutions to the reading problem at her school and implemented the Burt Wood Reading Test. The results revealed that most of the learners were operating at two levels lower than their grade levels, so she implemented a reading programme at her school. *“I worked closely with a few of my staff members who were passionate about improving reading at our school and we liaised with different outside agencies like Tree and Trass and created our own resources such as reading cards, books and charts. We also set up a reading room which has encouraged reading across the grades.”*

Her research helped hundreds of children at her school improve their reading level, thus impacting on their academic results. Through research, Tasneem learns more about herself and the way she learns. She is able to make connections with various outside agencies so that they can assist her in resolving problems that her research has uncovered. As a manager of her school, she teaches the members of her staff the value of finding solutions to the teaching problems that they encounter on a daily basis.

6.4.5 Learning through community engagement

Teachers in this study identified community engagement as an alternate learning space. They use professional learning developed from their community engagement to become reflective teachers.

Shabeer says, *“In the last five years, I have been involved with the KZN Wildlife Association. I go on education drives and teach people about not exploiting our oceans.”* Through his interaction with KZN Wildlife, Shabeer’s leadership and communication skills are being developed. Shabeer is also a member of the Phoenix Poverty Reduction Association whose aim is to *“alleviate poverty by capacitating the indigent with skills to earn a living [...] we are in the process of securing sponsorships for the indigent learners in the Phoenix area.”* As Shabeer gets involved in his community, he acquires knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that he can apply in his practise as a teacher.

Shakila’s “social work” in the community also shapes her as a teacher-learner: *“I think it helps me to understand the community we come from.”* She uses her learning gained from working at Phoenix Child Welfare to identify signs of abuse and other social problems in her learners. She strives to develop learners into responsible adults, who have a sense of self-worth and a non-violent approach to life. She engages problematic learners with personally rewarding work at The Rainbow Cottage, a shelter for abused women and children. She attributes the behavioural problems displayed by her learners to the problems they experience at home and at school, *“Every child has a story to tell. We just don’t make the time to listen.”* She affirms that she witnesses changes in these learners, as they work at the Rainbow Cottage. It *“teach[es] them important values like being non-violent and that there are other ways of resolving problems.”*

Carolina also learns from her engagement in the community. As the secretary of the Tuberculosis Association she conducted a survey with farm workers in Perdeberg. *“I taught the farm workers about healthy eating, good hygiene, how to take care of themselves and how to shop for nutritious items that were within their budget.”* Carolina also teaches *“the Xhosa church members’ life skills like good nutrition, good financial management and basic English.”* She also conducted several seminars focusing on gender issues in the community. She uses her experience as a community leader to improve her practice as a teacher and makes her teaching more context relevant.

Community engagement is an important learning space as it contributes to the professional learning of teachers. Through community engagement, teachers can reflect on their practice as teachers to critique the theoretical assumptions underpinning their teaching and how their teaching can be related to the contextual realities of their learners. This

reflective practice provides impetus for teachers' ongoing self-directed learning and change as it enriches their professional lives.

6.5 Section D: Teachers' continuing self-directed professional development and change

South African schools have been racially desegregated for more than a decade now. In this section I discuss how teachers in this study engage in self-directed learning and negotiate the changing school settings which fall within the two broad areas of professionalism or professionality as described by Hoyle (1974, 2001) and Evans (2002). I also discuss how these schools are racialised spaces and how professional learning communities are created for self-directed teacher learning.

The broad categories of professionality and professionalism allowed me to understand the link between teachers' socio-cultural contexts of the schooling community and the learning practices that they take up. As teacher-learners they respond to the normative systems in place at the schools in which they work. Teachers in this study adopt particular practices of learning to disrupt the status quo of what it means to be a teacher-learner in a South African public school. Some are change agents engaging in developing their professionalism and/or professionality to enrich their work as teachers.

Learning for professionalism

Mbeje and Carolina engage in formal professional development by improving their qualifications through registering for postgraduate studies, or attending short courses or in-service training, and their professional development is enhanced by professionalism. They are motivated by improving their status as teachers. Carolina and Mbeje are constructed in particular ways as South African teachers; both experienced othering as school-learners and later as teachers. They embark on particular practices of learning to elevate their status as teachers. Their need for professionalism drives their learning and change as they adopt particular learning practices. Both of them received education that was considered inferior in apartheid South Africa and were subjected to race and class discrimination. As teachers in public schools they experience discontent with the lack of professional-development initiatives at their schools and districts and seek out formal spaces for their self-directed learning. As Mbeje and Carolina elevate their status as teachers through formal learning, they become resources for their (school and adult) learners and other colleagues.

Learning for professionalism

Shabeer, Shakila and Tasneem, as part of the historically dominant teacher grouping at their schools, choose social learning spaces within and outside of their professional schooling communities where they acquire knowledge, skills and procedures to improve their practise as teachers. They seek alternative spaces to the externally driven professional development initiatives to deepen their professionalism and construct themselves as transformative intellectuals (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Evans, 2002). Such teachers, according to Evans (2002, p. 130; Hoyle, 1974) take “an ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually-, and epistemologically-based stance,” in relation to their learning as teachers.

Through the socio-cultural theoretical lens that I drew on, I can understand how teachers like Shabeer, Shakila and Tasneem respond to the dominant discourses of professional development which define what self-directed learning is, and what and how teachers learn. Through their self-directed learning, these teachers disrupt these dominant discourses of professional development and make new meanings of what it means to be a South African teacher-learner. They make ideological, attitudinal and intellectual changes as they push for new meanings of teacher-learning. As school-learners growing up in apartheid South Africa they experienced an inferior education and as teachers they see the same scenario being re-enacted at their schools. Through their professionalism they strive to make their schools enabling learning spaces.

Through her involvement in debates, Shakila makes teaching “intellectual work” (Nieto, 2003) and as such creates a space where learners can think about issues relating to social justice. Her schooling community becomes a site to develop thinkers, something that was lacking during apartheid education. She challenges class reproduction at her school by developing learners through debates and reading. Shabeer, on the other hand, is an activist learner and wants to bring about social change through his role in the union. As an activist learner, he wants to change schooling in public schools by transforming the lives of the learners and teachers through learning. Whilst Tasneem, in her position as a manager, provides a nurturing environment for both the learners and teachers at her school. Her experiences as a school-learner, where she was marginalised because she was poor, motivate her to transform her school into a nurturing one. She addresses the learning problems at her school through research and deep reflection on how she can resolve some the socio-cultural problems affecting her learners.

The socio-cultural context of the professional schooling community

Although Hoyle (1974, 2001) and Evans (2002) address the purpose for teachers' learning as professionalism or professionality, this study reveals that the socio-cultural context of the *professional schooling community* is a critical dimension that has been considered when trying to understand teachers' learning and change. This study shows that teacher learning within South African schools occurs within the *professional learning community*. These *professional learning communities* are learning sites and are found within and outside of the *professional schooling community*.

The *professional schooling community* is the context within which teachers work as professionals. South African schools are located within particular geographic communities due to the apartheid legacy of separate development and racially segregated schools. Professional learning of teachers occurs within geographically defined schooling communities. These schooling communities continue to be shaped by racialised identities and experiences since schools are still racialised spaces of learning. The type of learning that teachers in this study take up is inextricably linked to the *professional schooling community* that they find themselves in. The residues of apartheid still constrain their learning, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The Indian teachers in this study (Tasneem, Shakila and Shabeer) strive to improve their professionality. Their learning choices direct us to their attitudinal, ideological and intellectual intentions. Due to being marginalised, teachers' professional learning (like Carolina and Mbeje) is more functional and they are more inward looking. They choose to improve through learning that is directed towards improving their performance as teachers. They are concerned with subject-related knowledge and strive to become more productive as teachers.

On the other hand when teachers are in the dominant grouping within the professional schooling community this inspires a more attitudinal, ideological and intellectual stance for rupturing oppressive schooling practices. Their learning is a more public performance of their change and is outward looking as in the case of Shabeer, Tasneem and Shakila. Thus their learning is visible, enabling change in a broader way.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I focused on how teachers as “initiators of change” take responsibility for their own learning and identify alternate spaces for their self-directed learning as they work within the broader discourse of professional development. I discussed teacher-learning within South African public schools and the conditions that constrain and/or enable teacher learning.

This chapter also shows that spaces within public schools/ professional schooling communities can constrain or enable teachers’ learning. When the spaces at schools do not allow for collaboration and collegiality then teachers’ learning is “functional” (Evans, 2002) and individualistic as teachers strive to be experts in their subjects and engage in learning. When teachers’ learning is functional then they transform their own learning and teaching within the dominant discourses of professional development. As they learn to be experts in their subjects, these teachers are learning how to apply what they have learnt through formal learning in their practice as teachers (Evans, 2002). The teachers in this study are motivated by a personal need to learn as outlined by Fraser et al. (2007) and take responsibility to direct their own learning. They also identify learning needs in themselves and in their schools and districts. As they “*lead the learning*” they develop themselves and others, and demonstrate their agency as teachers.

On the other hand, when teachers are within the dominant racial grouping like Shabeer, Tasneem and Shakila, they are able to use their positions productively to create spaces of learning for themselves and others. Through their learning Shabeer, Tasneem and Shakila position themselves as intellectuals within their schools and engage other teachers through collaboration and collegiality. It is within these spaces that teachers learn from and with each other as they work towards a common goal of improving their practice as teachers. Through these collaborative and collegial spaces teachers are able to engage in learning to enhance their professionalism.

I showed that the self-directed learning practices of teachers take place within and outside of the *professional schooling community*. Within the confines of the school, I found that teachers were able to learn *with* and *through others* and *through self* in *professional learning communities*. Learning with others within the *professional learning communities* contributed to teachers’ self-directed learning at schools. Sources of learning within the

professional learning communities outside the school were identified as formal learning, and learning through the teacher unions, debates and community engagement.

In this chapter I also discussed the particular learning practices that teachers in this study adopt in order to enhance their personal learning or what Evans (2002) refers to as attitudinal, ideological and intellectual development in terms of their professionalism (what I want to be?) and/ or their professionalism (how I want to function?). As teacher-learners they are change agents responding to the systems in place at their schools and adopt particular practices of learning to disrupt the status quo of what it means to be a teacher in a South African public school. I also showed how learning takes place within particular racialised *professional schooling communities* and discussed how learning in racialised spaces made the African and Coloured teacher in this study look inward and focus more on becoming a better teacher by improving their professionalism. On the other hand, the Indian teachers in this study were able to break out of the barriers that constrained their learning and their learning was more public and outward looking.

Given the constraints of professional development, teacher-learners engage in self-directed learning and are able to find alternate spaces for learning.

In the next and last chapter, I discuss my methodological reflections, theoretical interests and the overall conclusions of this study.

Chapter 7 Creating a “new professional” for public schooling through self-directed teacher learning

7.1 Introduction

I embarked on this journey into the lives of teachers to explore the practices of self-directed learning and change of teachers in South African public schools. I sought to understand who these teachers were that are engaging in self-directed learning, and what learning spaces shaped meanings of teacher as self-directed learner.

This study is located within the South African educational landscape where, in the last decade, South African teachers have been bombarded with the implementation of policies such as: the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2011a); the National Protocol for Assessment (DoE, 2011b); the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DoE, 2006); the Revised National Curriculum Statement (Curriculum 2005) (DoE, 2000), and the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) (DoE, 2003a). These policies frame South African teachers as lifelong learners, and CPTD for practising teachers is viewed as critical. However, most of the professional development initiatives by the Department of Education are externally driven and do not meet the needs of South African teachers teaching in South African public schools.

In this study I offer glimpses into the lives of Mbeje, Shabeer, Carolina, Shakila and Tasneem, and their practices as teacher-learners teaching within South African public schools. These particular teachers were dissatisfied with the professional development initiatives that were externally driven by the Department of Education and chose to engage in learning that was personally meaningful for them. They engaged in learning practices that were aligned with their personal meanings, interests and needs as teachers in public schools. I examined how these particular teachers engage in particular ways to invoke, rework and create personal meanings through the adoption of specific learning practices as lifelong, self-directed learners.

In studying teachers’ self-directed learning I also examined the socio-cultural contexts in which teachers live and work which, according to Pillay (2003), shapes their learning and creates the impetus for particular practices. In the position of teacher- learner

these particular teachers resist the dominant discourses that prevail in their schools which seek to construct them in particular ways. Mbeje, Shabeer, Carolina, Shakila and Tasneem adopt meaningful learning practices that enabled personal and professional change, and shaped the learning and teaching at their schools and/or disrupted the dominant discourses at their schools.

I have divided this chapter into three sections as follows:

Section A: Methodological reflections

Section B: Theoretical interests

Section C: Theoretical conclusion and recommendations

7.2 Section A: Methodological reflections

The critical paradigm allowed me to articulate who these teachers are and the practices that they engage in to learn and change themselves. It helped me to “uncover myths/hidden truths that account for special social relations” (Fossey et al., 2002, p. 719), and the socio-cultural contexts that teachers work within which shapes their personal and professional development. The critical paradigm also allowed me as a researcher to explore the identities of teachers as being fluid, multiple and in a state of flux.

I used narrative inquiry in this study because it allowed me as a researcher to focus on “how individuals teach and learn” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 1). Narratives show that teachers’ lives are a “continuum” and that all events and people always have a past, present, and a future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006, p. 479). To gain an understanding of practices of self-directed learning I examined five teachers’ experiences with race, class and gender within the broader discourses of public schools during the apartheid era, which shaped their learning experiences as school-learners and constructed them as particular teachers in post-apartheid South Africa.

Narrative inquiry as the methodological approach, enabled the teachers in this study to reflect on their lives and practices as teachers. It also allowed me as the researcher to examine the self-directed learning and change of teachers. Through narrative inquiry, teachers explored “their own learning, beliefs, and understandings of self” (Lipka & Brinthaupt, 1999, p. 48). The teachers in this study reflected on their practice and made links between their experiences as school-learners (during the apartheid era) and their current learning practice as teachers (post- apartheid era). Through the use of narratives as a powerful research tool I was able to view research participants as “real people in real situations” (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 279). I explored teachers’ practices of learning within the social, historical, political and educational contexts of South Africa because it is within these contexts that these teacher-learners developed and changed by creating and/or reworking meanings of their lives as teachers.

In this study, these five teachers focused on critical moments in their lives during open-ended interviews. The identification of these critical moments was important in this study because it helped teachers to recognise particular experiences that had shaped their learning as school-learners and later as teacher-learners. This is in keeping with Clandinin

and Connelly (1995, p. 102) who state that teachers “need to think through their own educational histories and what made a difference to them. How did they get to be who they are? How did they get to know what they know?” Teachers in this study selected critical moments that they felt represented important milestones in their lives. Through their shared stories, I gained insight into their personal and professional lives and how these intersected to give rise to their fluid identities as teacher-learners.

Only five research participants who teach in the Phoenix area were interviewed for this study because I had reached what Bogdan and Biklen (2003) refer to as data saturation. The teachers in the sample ranged in the number of years of their respective teaching experience. There were two Level One teachers, two Heads of Department and one principal. I used data from interviews and artefacts to construct the narratives using the restorying method. I analysed artefacts like photographs, certificates, newspaper articles and letters, which provided an in-depth understanding on their lives as teacher-learners. These artefacts added immense value to my research as they signalled particular positions that they adopted as teacher learners

The restorying method proved invaluable to me as a researcher because it allowed these teachers to become co-constructors of the narratives. Most of the stories were not told in a chronological order as participants spoke freely about their lives and moved from one critical moment/incident to the next. I collaborated with the teachers and they provided further clarification on particular issues. They also added information that they had initially omitted. In some instances I was asked to remove information that they felt uncomfortable including. Member-checking proved to be a very beneficial process as it added credibility to this study. During this process some of the research participants challenged my interpretation and/or revised their narratives by including information previously omitted or asking me to remove particular critical information from their narratives.

I linked theoretical ideas from social identity theory, Evan’s (2002) concept of professionalism and professionalism, Bell and Gilbert’s model on professional learning (1996) and the socio-cultural theory on learning and designed a multi-layered framework of analysis and interpretation to analyse the narratives using three lenses: restorying of field texts - the self through story; the teacher-self in relation to the socio-cultural contexts and practices of

self-directed learning. This framework allowed me to present a more complete picture of the practices of self-directed learning of the teachers in this study.

Through the socio-cultural theoretical lens, I collaborated with the teachers to restory the field texts from different data sources such as interview transcripts, newspaper articles, photographs, letters and certificates. In restorying the field texts, I attempted to “foreground the voice of the participant” (Clandinin & Connolly, 1994; Mulholland & Wallace, 2003) by remaining as close as possible to the field texts. In collaboration with the teachers, I constructed the “final version” of the reconstructed narratives.

Through the social identity and socio-cultural theoretical lens, I explored the teacher-learner in relation to the social-cultural context. I examined how issues of race, class and gender shape particular constructions of the teacher-learner. Teachers as individuals are change agents and they can exercise their power to conform to or resist the social contexts that they find themselves in. In this layer of analysis, I explored how the teachers in this study negotiate the discourses of race, class and gender as they make new meanings for themselves and engage with new ways of knowing, being and doing through their learning and change as teacher-learners.

Through the conceptual lens that I drew from Evans’s (2002) and Bell and Gilbert’s (1996), I examined the practices of self-directed learning of teachers in post-apartheid South Africa. Given that continuing professional development in South African schools are externally driven, I focused on how teachers as “initiators of change” take responsibility for their own learning and identify spaces within which learning takes place (Day et al., 2002). In interpreting the narratives I showed how learning takes place within and outside of the professional schooling community, with others, through others and through the self.

In the next section I discuss the theoretical interests of this study.

7.3 Section B: Theoretical interests

In the present South African educational landscape schooling spaces are still racialised. Although we are into the second decade of democracy in South Africa, public schools still do not reflect the demographics of South Africa. The implementation of the South African Schools’ Act (DoE, 1996), which intended to eradicate race-based education, has given rise to a type of schooling system where parents who can afford to pay ludicrously exorbitant school fees send their children to schools located in affluent areas. This has led to a stratification of public schools which operate in race “silos”, resulting in mistrust and marginalisation (Jansen, 2004).

This study focused on the lives of five teachers teaching in public schools who engage in self-directed learning and change. This study shows that three aspects shape teachers’ self-directed learning in public schools and are interconnected: the professional teacher-learner (who is this teacher?), the professional learning (what he/she learns?) and the professional learning community (where and how this learning occurs?). This study shows that when the teacher-learner is a part of the dominant racial grouping at the school then learning is more outward looking and aimed at bringing about change in the broader educational context. On the other hand where teachers are part of the minority racial grouping then their learning is more inward looking and individualistic.

Teachers’ meanings of self are multi-faceted and are shaped by the particular historical and socio-cultural contexts in which they grew up and their present schooling communities in which they teach. In attempting to understand teachers’ meanings of self I examined how these past and present historical and socio-cultural contexts gave rise to particular meanings to teacher as learner and how these meanings in turn shaped their self-directed learning. All teachers are unique and their experiences with race, class and gender shape them and their learning in particular ways. It is these discourses of race, class and gender that differentiate teachers and influence what, how, where and with whom they learn. All teachers in this study grew up in apartheid South Africa and are classed, raced and gendered in particular ways. These discourses interact in complex ways to shape teachers’ identities as learners. It is through the discourses of race, class and gender that teachers make sense of their lived experiences. As adults, they carry with them some of the pain, hurt and rejection that they experienced as school- learners.

At four out of five schooling communities in this study the staff is predominantly Indian and the learner population comprises a majority of African learners. This study also shows that when teachers are racially ‘othered’ they feel marginalised and alienated within their *professional schooling communities*. They respond to this othering and form their own *professional learning communities* and behave in exclusionary ways based on race. Race becomes an unspoken bond that directs what these teachers learn, why and how they learn. This race othering leads teachers forming “racialised identities” (Jansen, 2001, p. 245) that propel them to seek or form their own *professional learning communities*.

7.3.1 Teacher - learners

All five teachers grew up during apartheid and their meanings of self are shaped by their experiences with race, class and gender. They all have varied experiences and were subjected to pain and suffering and treated as lesser citizens. In their current positions as teachers in post-apartheid South Africa they adopt particular learning practices that construct them in particular ways as knowledge seeker, activist learner, pursuer of knowledge, nurturer and social-justice learner.

Teacher as knowledge seeker

Apartheid education made South Africans feel disconnected from each other and themselves; in post-apartheid South Africa teachers view knowledge as a tool for self-advancement as they reconnect with their selves. Mbeje adopts the role of knowledge seeker when he develops himself through seeking particular kinds of knowledge. He directs his own learning by upgrading his qualifications, and attending short courses and workshops as he seeks to extend his knowledge (du Plessis et al., 2007; Hargreaves, 1994). Knowledge is seen as a liberating tool and teachers who were denied access to studying particular subjects under apartheid education now seize the opportunity to learn and change.

Teacher as activist learner

Teachers’ social backgrounds shape them into particular kinds of teacher learners (Bernstein, 2003; Bowles and Gintis, 2002; Bourdieu, 1987). Shabeer’s learning is shaped by his experiences of class and this directs the type of teacher-learner that he aspires to be. As an activist learner he seeks out particular kinds of knowledge and skills to transform his role as a professional. As an activist learner, he galvanises learning for himself, other teachers and his learners. Being in the dominant racial grouping in their professional schooling community

teachers like Shabeer are able to capacitate themselves through creating learning communities within and outside the school. Shabeer challenges the systems within his school and community that seek to reproduce class inequalities and the feelings of helplessness in teachers and learners (Bernstein, 2001; Sadovnik (2001). Teachers like Shabeer use their teacher position to activate change in themselves and others within their schooling communities and the broader learning communities.

Teacher as pursuer of knowledge

Due to her school still operating in race “silos” (Jansen 2004), Carolina experiences being othered. This othering makes her feel alienated within her own schooling community and leads her to identify alternate learning communities where she pursues particular self-directed learning. These learning spaces become spaces for survival and emancipation. In seeking alternate learning communities she exercises her agency and endeavours to fight the oppressive forces within her *professional schooling community* which attempt to define who she is, and what, where and how she should learn. Carolina adopts particular practices of self-directed learning and seeks to acquire ‘survival’ skills. Working with teachers outside the dominant grouping of Indian teachers is where she feels most powerful. As a pursuer of knowledge, she constructs herself as a particular type of teacher-learner, one who learns so that she can empower herself thereby defying those forces within her *professional schooling community* that seek to define her.

Teacher as nurturer

Tasneem is shaped by her childhood experiences with class and gender. In her position as a principal of a public school, she chooses to rework particular meanings of class and gender through the various learning initiatives she engages in. As a nurturing manager she attempts to disrupt the dominant discourses of class and gender that are prevalent in her school and community. Driven by the need to create a nurturing and supportive schooling environment, Tasneem seeks learning that will enhance her role as a manager. In her position as a nurturing manager she conducts research and reflects on alternate ways to support teaching and learning at her school. It is within this nurturing environment that teaching and learning is executed in more productive ways.

Teacher as social-justice learner

Shakila’s experiences with race, class and gender help create new meanings of power and agency in her position as teacher-learner. As a social –justice learner she attempts to disrupt these race, class and gender stereotypes. Shakila, working within the dominant racial grouping at her school community is able to be more outward looking in her self-directed learning. She positions herself as an intellectual and draws on ideas about social justice from key authors and social activists who are outside her *professional schooling community*. Shakila exercises her agency as a transformative intellectual within her school and district. In positioning herself as a social- justice learner she is able to bring about social transformation within her school and community. She has a vision of the changes she would like to see in within her school and broader learning community. Her self-directed learning is linked to her vision for social transformation which propels her to use learning as a vehicle of change to disrupt the dominant discourses which exists at her school.

These meanings of practising teacher-learners are deeply rooted in their experiences as raced, classed and gendered beings who grew up during apartheid and are now working in a democratic era and a time of educational reformation. Although these discourses of race, class and gender operate in South African schools, teachers who position themselves as change agents are able to resist these imposed definitions. Teachers as change agents, embodied with knowledge and power, adopt particular practices of learning to disrupt the dominant discourses that they experienced as learners which sought to shape their identities. Teacher agency “shapes and is shaped by the structural and cultural features of society and school cultures [...] teachers are active agents whether they act passively or actively” (Lasky, 2005, p. 900).

7.3.2 Teachers’ practices of professional learning

This study revealed that teachers in this study are change agents who take the initiative to find learning spaces in which to develop themselves as *professional teacher-learners*. They are self-directed and take ownership of their *professional learning* by initiating and pursuing learning; they are able to make decisions regarding their own *professional learning*. I found that *professional learning* of teachers is multi-pronged, taking place within and outside of the *professional schooling communities*, and sometimes these sites of learning merged or overlapped. When the *professional schooling community* is restrictive and constraining then teachers find alternate learning communities which can be

within or outside the school. This study also shows that *professional learning* of teachers occur both formally and informally in the *professional schooling community* and the *professional learning community*, where they learn *with others*, *through others* and *through the self*.

Teachers in this study are self-directed and intrinsically motivated and are passionate about learning. They use their positions as teachers as powerful spaces for developing themselves and others. The teachers in this study identified other teachers as one of the greatest sources of their *professional learning*. Schools have teachers with various skills, talents and particular knowledge who are a valuable resource for self-directed development. Teachers in this study took up various sources of *professional learning* within their *professional schooling communities* where they learnt *with* and *through others* (Hargreaves, 1994; du Plessis et al, 2007). Teachers also learnt *through* self-initiated activities.

Learning with others

As teachers engage in *professional learning communities* which are alternate spaces within and outside of their *professional schooling community*, they direct us to particular learning phenomena. Learning is a social phenomenon where teachers learn *with others* in a collaborative space. Professional dialogue was identified as important to teachers' professional learning and change. These professional dialogues about important issues related to learning and teaching took place incidentally in school corridors and staffrooms.

The sharing of knowledge, resources and expertise is reciprocal: as teachers become confident in their professional learning they begin to share their knowledge with their colleagues. In a collaborative atmosphere where teachers are not othered, they have the freedom to share professionally with their colleagues. Interaction with other teachers is critical for teachers' learning as it creates opportunities for them to learn *with others*.

Learning *with others* also takes place through community engagement where teachers actively engage in the community. Teachers use the *professional learning* that they obtain from working in the community to become reflective teachers.

Learning through others

Due to the limited number of workshops organised by the Department of Education and the lack of professional development activities at their *professional schooling community* teachers in this study identify alternate *professional learning communities* where they learn *through others* by organising and attending workshops, and through mentorship. Workshops provide a space for teachers to share their knowledge and improved their practice as teachers. At workshops teachers engage with new knowledge and share best practices with each other. These workshops also provided creative spaces for teachers to learn, share and develop teaching resources as a collective.

As teachers mentored others they were compelled to evaluate their own practice, knowledge, values and beliefs as a teacher. Mentoring provided a space for them to learn and change their practices as teachers. This study identified an interesting phenomenon of the mentorship process in which both the mentor and mentee learn and develop. Shakila says, “*Mentorship is crucial in the learning and development of teachers and should be implemented at all South African schools if the culture of learning and teaching is to be restored.*”

Learning through self

Teachers in this study identified learning-*through-self* as an important source of their professional learning. They respond to the constraining factors within their own *professional schooling communities* by exercising their agency and taking responsibility for their own *professional learning*. Teachers learn *through self* by research and reading, which allows them to nourish them as *professional teacher-learners*. When teachers learn *through self*, the *professional learning* becomes more meaningful to them and enhances them as subject experts. Deeply embedded in learning through self is the need to grow, develop and transform their practices as teachers.

7.3.3 Creating a “new professional” for public schooling through self-directed teacher learning

During apartheid, teachers in this study were constructed as particular kinds of learners as they attended racially segregated schools where race, class and gender stereotypes were entrenched. As school-learners they were “*treated like a second-class citizens*” and “*made to feel inferior*” and were constantly demoralised and denied access to quality education.

By looking through the lenses of the multi-layered framework of analysis and interpretation, I was able to understand how the teachers in this study took up particular learning practices within specific learning spaces. Through their learning teachers attempt to disrupt the dominant discourses prevalent in their schools and communities as they acquire new knowledge in order to be an expert teacher within the broader dominant discourses of public schools in South Africa.

Teachers’ choices of self-directed learning practices in this study can be broadly categorised as professionalism or professionality, or a combination of both. As teacher-learners they are change agents responding to the normative systems in place at the schools in which they work. Teachers in this study adopt particular practices of learning to disrupt the status quo of what it means to be a teacher in a South African public school. As change agents they engage in developing their professionalism or professionality (or both), which are determined by the social spaces within the professional schooling community, to enrich their work as teachers.

Disrupting the dominant discourses through learning

This study shows that through their learning, teachers like Tasneem, Shabeer and Shakila take up particular learning practices to “unlearn” particular meanings of learner that they were subjected to as school-learners during the apartheid era in South Africa. As transformative intellectuals, they position themselves as thinkers with a vision to change their schools through their learning and by disrupting the dominant discourses of race, class and gender that seek to reproduce themselves at their schools. Their learning is both personal and professional as they use their positions of power as principals and Heads of Departments by taking up particular teacher-learner identities and creating spaces for learning.

Shabeer *reworks* what it means to be a teacher-learner through his involvement in the teacher union, SADTU. Through his leadership position in SADTU, he creates learning opportunities for himself and other teachers. His learning is both personal and professional; he wants to effect particular changes in public schools through his learning. Through the union he reworks what it means to be a professional as he capacitates teachers regarding the latest curriculum changes.

Through her involvement in debating, Shakila constructs herself as a *thinker*. Debates become a creative learning space which provides many learning opportunities for herself and her learners. She sees debating as an “extension” of her work as a teacher. Debating is intellectual work as she encourages her learners to think critically about social issues. By inculcating a culture of thinking in her learners she disrupts the dominant discourses at her school.

Tasneem uses her position as principal to create a climate in which she, together with her teachers and learners, can learn through research and reflection. She is troubled by the discourses of class and gender that seek to reproduce themselves at her school. She views herself as a “*catalyst in education*” as she conducts research into learners’ social backgrounds and reflects on ways in which she can implement changes to disrupt these dominant discourses and stop them being reproduced at her school.

In this study it is evident that learning is more effective when teachers are active participants in the learning process and make their own decisions about what to learn, where to learn and with whom to learn. Working within a collaborative and collegial *professional schooling community* promotes learning and change within South African public schools. Through self-directed learning, as teachers learn *with others*, *through others* and *through self*, they become sharers of knowledge.

Through sharing knowledge and networking, teachers create moments of learning as they collaborate within *professional learning communities*. These moments of learning are dynamic spaces in which teachers interact with each other in a non-critical and non-judgemental environment, and where teachers learn through study, reflection and dialogue with colleagues. When the socio-cultural context within the *professional schooling community* is collaborative and collegial, and teachers’ personal and professional

development are aligned, potent spaces for disrupting the dominant discourses of race, class and gender that seek to reproduce themselves are created, which in turn allows for the creation of a new type of South African public school.

In this section I discussed the three aspects which shape teachers’ self- directed learning. They are: the professional teacher-learner (who is this teacher), the professional learning (what he/she learns) and the professional learning community (where and how this learning occurs). This study shows that one more aspect needs to be considered when trying to understand the self- directed learning of teachers and this is the *professional schooling community*, see Diagram 7.1 below.



Diagram 7.1: An integrated approach to creating the “new professional”

The *professional schooling community* is vital when considering self-directed learning of teachers. When the socio-cultural contexts in their respective *professional schooling communities* are restrictive and constraining, teachers like Carolina and Mbeje seek alternate learning spaces. They take up professional learning in formal spaces as they feel

compelled to extend their knowledge and become professional teacher-learners. They engage in formal learning because they are passionate about achieving their professional learning goals as teacher-learners. Their learning choices are linked to the learning needs that they identify at their schools and in their communities.

In the case of Mbeje and Carolina, their learning is “functional” (Evans, 2002), that is, learning is individualistic. They strive to be experts in their subjects and engage in learning to augment their professionalism. When teachers’ learning is functional, teachers transform their own learning and teaching within the dominant discourses of schooling. Although their learning doesn’t change the dominant discourses at their schools, they change their practices as teachers and influence the learners with whom they have direct contact. When schools are not collaborative or collegial, teachers gravitate towards their learners by becoming a resource for them.

Collegiality at schools is important as teachers share this space with other teachers, learners, school managers and administrative staff (Hargreaves 1994). Teachers need to interact with each other in a collaborative manner because they teach common grades and learning areas. If teachers are satisfied with their work environment this will have a positive impact on their professional learning as teachers. Collaboration and collegiality provides a space where teachers can learn from each other.

Building a collegial and collaborative environment in South African schools should be a national imperative if teachers are supposed to be engaged in professional development activities. Professional development can be more effective if schools are places where teachers are seen as equals in the learning process (Slater, 2004).

7.4 Section C: Theoretical conclusion and recommendations

7.4.1 Theoretical conclusion

This study shows that *professional schooling communities* can be racialised spaces which can constrain and restrict teachers’ learning. Although the Indian teachers in this study face constraints and challenges in their *professional schooling communities* they seem to be more outward-looking and are able to break out of the constraining barriers within their schools. Since they belong to the dominant group at their schools, Shabeer, Shakila and Tasneem deal with the South African schooling system in a much more public way than Mbeje and Carolina. *Professional learning* for them is both personal and professional. Mbeje’s and Carolina’s learning, on the other hand, is much more marginalised since the *professional schooling community* is still a racialised space. It is within these racialised spaces that Mbeje and Carolina create alternative *professional learning communities*.

This study shows that when the personal and professional dimensions of being a teacher are aligned, a powerful learning space opens up for self-directed professionals in *professional schooling communities*. The self-directed professional is one who has the capacity to draw on personal interests and needs to engage in meaningful learning for change. This learning for teacher change enhances teachers’ professional development in a way that is both attitudinal and functional (Evans, 2002). The socio-cultural context of public schooling has the potential to enable or constrain teachers’ self-directed professional learning.

In the presence of a collaborative and collegial institutional school culture, teachers’ learning leads to self-transformation and effects change within the broader school context. In the absence of a collaborative and collegial institutional culture, teachers’ self-directed learning enhances self-transformation and promotes better ways of teaching and learning within the classroom.

As teachers learn for change through self-directed learning practices they develop their agency as transformative intellectuals, which is necessary for reworking South African public schools. Self-directed learning is critical for the transformation of the teacher-self in which their race, class and gender meanings are disrupted to give way to new meanings of the

self as a practising teacher, becoming a “new professional” giving birth to a new kind of South African public school.

7.4.2 Recommendations

The present CPTD policy in place in South African public schools is externally driven and advocates a top-down approach to teachers’ professional development which is proving to be ineffective. CPTD is prescriptive as teachers’ needs are not taken into consideration. Considering the history of this country and the way it has shaped South African teachers, the “one-size-fits all” approach to professional development, as noted by Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2008, p. 227) is ineffective for South African public schools. Although CPD policies in South Africa frame teachers as lifelong learners, in practice only professional development courses that occur within formal spaces are recognised. Professional learning that takes place informally and in alternative learning spaces is not recognised as CPTD. In order for CPTD policies to be effective at schools there must be a shared understanding by the stakeholders in education as to what comprises professional development. The findings in this study are important as they show that CPTD policies should recognise the different types of professional learning that South African teachers at public schools engage in; furthermore, these types of learning should be recognised and rewarded.

CPTD policies must take cognisance of the stratification of public schools along racial and class lines. The legacy of apartheid still lingers in South African public schools and is evident in the inequity in resources and funding. This inequity in public schools should be considered when the Department of Education is formulating CPTD policies. CPTD policies should acknowledge that teachers engage in different types of self-directed learning and this learning should be given due recognition. An important finding in this study is that the type of learning activities that teachers select in their self-directed learning/professional learning directs us to the purpose of their learning, which can be categorised as professionalism or professionality. This study also found that teachers learn within formal and informal contexts. It is important to note that learning is meaningful only when teachers take cognisance of their learning needs and make informed choices about how and why they want to learn. These are important factors that should be considered by the Department of Education when drafting professional-development policies.

Another important finding in this study is that schools are important social spaces where the self-directed learning of teachers has the potential to disrupt the dominant discourses of public schooling in South Africa that seek to reproduce themselves. When *professional schooling communities* are collaborative and collegial, and the personal and professional development of teachers are aligned, then change can occur with public schools.

South African schools are still divided along the lines of race and class, and teachers and learners are expected to excel in environments that are constraining and stifling. As teachers “unlearn” the old meanings of learning and teaching advocated under apartheid and relearn what it means to be a South African teacher-learner, then the *professional schooling community* can become powerful sites for learning and change. District managers, principals and heads of departments should use their positions of power to create potent spaces for teacher learning within South African public schools by encouraging collaboration and collegiality.

As shown in this study, narrative inquiry can be used as a powerful tool for teachers’ self-directed professional development. Narratives create a space for teachers to identify their learning needs and to reflect on their journey of learning. It offers teachers a reflective tool with which to guide their practice as teacher-learners. Learning is an individual activity and narrative inquiry allows for reflection on this individualised learning. In writing about themselves and their journeys of learning, teachers can reflect on who they are and the experiences that have shaped their identities as teachers. Through narratives, teachers can identify with those factors that constrain their self-directed learning.

Finally, further research to find out what kind of teacher-learning takes place within informal and unplanned contexts is necessary and critical. For this kind of research, teachers should be encouraged to engage in self-study as they reflect on their learning and teaching within these contexts. Further research should also be conducted into how collaboration and collegiality shape teachers’ learning in public schools.

...and so this research journey into the lives of these *new professionals* engaging in self-directed professional development will continue...

Star Teachers

By George William Russel (1867)

**Even as bird sprays many-coloured fires,
The plumes of paradise, the dying light
Rays through the fevered air in misty spires
That vanish in the height.**

**These myriad eyes that look on me are mine
Wandering beneath them I have found again
The ancient ample moment, the divine,
The God-root within men.**

**For this, for this, the lights are innumerable
As symbols shine that we the true light win:
For every star and every deep they fill
Are stars and deeps within.**

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Appendix A Letter of Consent (Shabeer)**LETTER OF CONSENT**

To whom it may concern

KHAN AHMED SHABEER (Full
name)

do hereby confirm the following:

- I have read and approved my life story as represented by Rosaline Govender in this thesis.
- I grant Rosaline Govender permission to use my life story and other artefacts that I have given to her in this thesis.
- I have the consent from my family member, colleagues and others who appear in the photographs with me to use their photographs in this thesis.

Thank you

Shaban
Signature

3/11/2011

Appendix B Letter of Consent (Mbeje)**LETTER OF CONSENT**

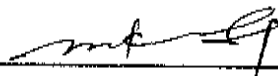
To whom it may concern

I MBONGISENI KHULEKANI MBEJE (Full name)

do hereby confirm the following:

- I have read and approved my life story as represented by Rosaline Govender in this thesis.
- I grant Rosaline Govender permission to use my life story and other artefacts that I have given to her in this thesis.
- I have the consent from my family member, colleagues and others who appear in the photographs with me to use their photographs in this thesis.

Thank you



Signature

Appendix C Letter of Consent (Carolina)

LETTER OF CONSENT

To whom it may concern

I Pena Caroleng Govender (Full
name)

do hereby confirm the following:

- I have read and approved my life story as represented by Rosaline Govender in this thesis.
- I grant Rosaline Govender permission to use my life story and other artefacts that I have given to her in this thesis.
- I have the consent from my family member, colleagues and others who appear in the photographs with me to use their photographs in this thesis.

Thank you

Rosaline Govender
Signature

Appendix D Letter of Consent (Shakila)

LETTER OF CONSENT

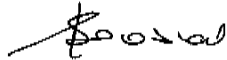
To whom it may concern

I SHAKILA KOOBLAL (Full name)

do hereby confirm the following:

- I have read and approved my life story as represented by Rosaline Govender in this thesis.
- I grant Rosaline Govender permission to use my life story and other artefacts that I have given to her in this thesis.
- I have the consent from my family member, colleagues and others who appear in the photographs with me to use their photographs in this thesis.

Thank you



Signature

Appendix E Letter of Consent (Tasneem)

LETTER OF CONSENT

To whom it may concern

I MRS. TASNEEM RAJACK (Full
name)

do hereby confirm the following:

- I have read and approved my life story as represented by Rosaline Govender in this thesis.
- I grant Rosaline Govender permission to use my life story and other artefacts that I have given to her in this thesis.
- I have the consent from my family member, colleagues and others who appear in the photographs with me to use their photographs in this thesis.

Thank you



Signature

Appendix F Ethical Clearance



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

17 JANUARY 2006

MRS. R GOVENDER (8830051)
EDUCATION

Dear Mrs. Govender

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/06037A

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

"To explore self-directed professional development programmes of educators in post-apartheid South Africa"

Yours faithfully


.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA
RESEARCH OFFICE

PS: The following general condition is applicable to all projects that have been granted ethical clearance:

THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVAL SHOULD THE RESEARCH INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF SPACE AND/OR FACILITIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS. WHERE QUESTIONNAIRES ARE USED IN THE PROJECT, THE RESEARCHER SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDES A SECTION AT THE END WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT (PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE) INDICATING THAT HE/SHE WAS INFORMED OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

cc. Faculty Research Office (Derek Buchler)
→ cc. Supervisor (Dr. P Ramrathan)