

# **Novice Teachers' Management of Learner Discipline Problems in a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)**

**College of Humanities**

**School of Education**

**University of KwaZulu-Natal**



A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
Master degree of Education in Teacher Development Studies

**GODFREY KHULULEKANI SIHLE MEMELA**

211542808

**Supervisor: Prof. Labby Ramrathan**

November, 2013

## **SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT**

17 January 2014

### **Supervisor's report on Masters dissertation**

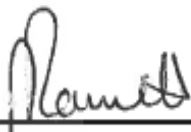
Student: G K S Memela

Degree: MEd (Teacher Development Studies)

Title of dissertation: **Novice Teachers' Management of Learner Discipline Problems in a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)**

Mr Memela is a school manager in a secondary school in the rural area of KZN. His dissertation, therefore, is focused on his experience of teaching and managing education in a rural context. He has worked consistently with his dissertation and had responded satisfactorily to my supervision. I have read his final version before submission and have made final comments for revision. There were some areas of his dissertation that I raised concern about, both, in a previous reading as well as in the final reading. I had emailed him my concerns and expressed that he attend to these areas of concern. The areas of concern related to the use of his theoretical framework in the analysis and discussion of his findings; and lack of reference to his observations in the data presentation. I have not read the submitted version to see if these issues were addressed, but telephonically, he indicated that he had attended to them.

I support his submission of his dissertation for examination, acknowledging that the above concerns may not have been adequately addressed.



---

**Prof Labby Ramrathan**

supervisor

## DECLARATION

I G.K.S. Memela declare that

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

Signed...

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my best learner, Sandiso Madonda, who obtained five distinctions in the 2012 National Senior Certificate Examinations. His achievement was a reflection of the competitive and cooperative spirit that existed during my tenure as an educator at Bhanoyi Secondary School.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the following people for their continual support, encouragement and assistance in this project. This dissertation would not have materialized without them:

Almighty God for granting me the opportunity to complete this task and for allowing my faith to grow, as did my understanding of human social contact and relationships. Glory be to God, now and forever.

My wife Phindi and my children Lusanda, Lwandile, Lwazi and Suthukazi who constantly had to cope without me as I attended classes over weekends and holidays. Your understanding and selflessness allowed me to sacrifice valuable and irreplaceable family time. The rest of the family: my mom for her never-ending encouragement, assistance and prayers, and my brothers and sisters who helped with the households duties in my absence.

My participants and the other staff members of the school who encouraged and supported me during this project. Ms Bongi Bhengu from the Post-graduate Research Office at UKZN-Edgewood campus for her assistance, friendly demeanor and encouragement and for giving me a special name – Hlupha – which has made me famous among her colleagues.

My supervisor, Prof. Labby Ramrathan who constantly gave helpful advice, challenging ideas and support when things looked hopeless. You are truly a great mentor. I wouldn't have been here if not of you, your smile and welcome will never be forgotten. Your input in this dissertation was invaluable and it is sincerely appreciated.

Finally, all those people who were in the background and whose efforts were not always visible. I shall mention a few: Bhanoyi School Management Team and Staff, my 2011 and 2012 Grade 12 learners who always cheered me on to achieve success, Thamsanqa Mzimela my cottage mate, and my son Bongumusa Ngema who always pushed me to study until the early hours of the morning. Thank you for your unselfish comments, criticism and input. The whole is nothing without the small parts holding it together.

## **ABSTRACT**

The study was an exploration of novice teachers' management of learner discipline problems in a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. Although the policy context for maintaining a level of discipline that will facilitate an environment that is conducive to learning seems to be in place in most functioning schools, learner discipline problems in South Africa and worldwide seem to persist despite these policy contexts and processes. The study intended to answer the following research questions: What is the various learner discipline problems novice teachers experience at school? How do novice teachers manage these learner discipline problems at school?

In answering these questions, the researcher used a qualitative approach within the interpretivist paradigm. The exploration was a case study design using data gathered from a single secondary school and the instruments used were interviews with and observations of the participants who were novice teachers. The study was framed within the framework of Albert Bandura's social learning theory. Within the frames of this theory, the researcher aimed at understanding how novice teachers managed their behaviour through an understanding of the learners' disruptive behaviours.

The findings of the study revealed that novice teachers, in their early years of their teaching, are usually settling in and during this period they are being confronted with, amongst other issues, the challenge of managing learners' discipline problems. The most profound finding relates to a 'blame game' that is played by the novice teachers. Here the novice teachers blame, on the one hand, external contributors for learners' behavioural problems such as their parents, the community, the school and the learners themselves; on the other hand they also blame themselves. Furthermore, gendered issues related to learner discipline problems were evident. It was found that male teachers would take the initiative to discipline learners but that female novice teachers were reluctant to exercise strong disciplinary measures.

A key recommendation is that education officials ensure that appropriate education legislation and guidelines are distributed to schools each year. Also, the researcher suggests that parents visit schools regularly in order to discuss the problems that occur at home. Finally, there should be school-based mechanisms to assist novice teachers not only to settle in, but also to manage learner discipline problems.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
DSSC	Discipline Safety and Security Committee
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Contextual Analysis of Participants.....	46
-----------------------------------------------------	----



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUPERVISOR’S STATEMENT .....	i
DECLARATION .....	ii
DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTs .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY .....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background and Context of the Study .....	1
1.3 Purpose and Focus of the Study.....	4
1.4 Rationale of the Study.....	5
1.5 Key Research Questions .....	5
1.6 An Overview of the Research Design and Methodology .....	6
1.7 Definition of Terms.....	6
1.9 Outlines of the Chapters.....	8
1.10 Conclusion .....	9
CHAPTER TWO .....	10
SECTION A: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	10
2.1 Introduction.....	10
2.2. The Place of Discipline in the Classroom and teachers’ Complaints .....	10

2.2.1 A Shift in teachers' priorities towards Trade Union Activities with regards to learner discipline.....	11
2.3 Categorisation of Learner Behaviour in Schools.....	12
2.3.1 Psychological perspective of learner behaviour.....	12
2.3.2 The emotional perspective of learner behaviour.....	13
2.3.3 Social perspective of learner behaviour.....	14
2.4 Parental Influence on Learners and their Engagement with Discipline Problems.....	14
2.5 Learners' Lifestyles and the Impact thereof on their Behaviour.....	16
2.6 Challenges Faced by Novice Teachers and the Implications for the Management of Learner Discipline Problems.....	18
2.6.1 The professional development of novice teachers.....	18
2.6.2 Novice teachers' continuous adaptation to the curriculum.....	18
2.6.3 Policy framework for teachers and its accommodation of novice teachers.....	20
2.7 Classroom Management by Novice Teachers.....	21
2.7.1 Classroom management style through democratic leadership.....	22
2.8 Induction Problems Faced by Novice Teachers.....	24
<b>SECTION B: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
The concept of self-efficacy.....	30
<b>CHAPTER THREE.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>32</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	32
3.2 Research Design.....	32
3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm.....	32
3.2.2 Qualitative research method.....	33
3.2.3 Case study as the research methodology.....	35
3.3 Semi-structured Interviews.....	37
3.4 Observation of Participants.....	38
3.5 Sampling of Participants.....	39

3.6 A Brief Description of the Research School Site.....	40
3.7 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness .....	41
3.8 Ethical Considerations .....	41
3.9 Data Analysis .....	42
3.10 Limitations of the study .....	43
3.11 Conclusion .....	43
CHAPTER FOUR.....	44
DATA AND DISCUSSION .....	44
4.1 Introduction.....	44
4.2 Profiles of Participants and a Thick Description of the Research Site .....	44
4.3 Data Presentation .....	46
4.4 Thematic Presentation of the Data and the Analysis Thereof: .....	47
The three major themes that were identified from the data are presented below: .....	47
4.4.1 The nature of learner discipline problems that novice teachers experienced .....	47
4.4.2. Novice teachers’ perceived reasons on why these learner discipline problems occurred within the school .....	54
The second participant (Soffie) agreed and added:.....	55
4.4.3 The mechanisms that novice teachers used in the management of learner discipline problems.....	58
4.5 The Analysis and Discussion of Sub-themes.....	63
4.5.1 School cultural practices .....	63
4.5.2 Collective approaches to learner discipline .....	64
4.5.3 Learner rights discourse, punishment acts and processes .....	66
4.6 Conclusion .....	68
CHAPTER FIVE .....	69
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	69
5.1 Introduction.....	69
5.2 Summary of the Findings.....	69

5.2.1 The blame game in the management of learner discipline problems.....	69
5.2.2 Gender issues related to learner discipline problems.....	71
5.3 Recommendations for Future Studies .....	72
5.4 Conclusions of the study .....	73
REFERENCES .....	74
Appendix one: ethical clearance .....	81
appendix two: permission to visit school.....	83
appendix three: Letter of informed consent to participants and CONSENT form .....	85
appendix four: Interview and observation schedule .....	87
appendix six: editor’s report .....	89

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

This is the introductory chapter of the study entitled *Novice teachers' management of learner discipline problems in a rural secondary school of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)*. The chapter begins with a background of the study which is followed by the purpose and rationale for the study. The key research questions are presented followed by a brief discussion of the research methodology. The last part of this chapter presents a concise overview of each chapter for the entire study.

### 1.2 Background and Context of the Study

The signing into law of the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup> to which South Africa is a signatory, and the South African Schools Act<sup>2</sup> (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) have impacted radically on the management of learner discipline in South African schools. Although principals, members of the school management team and educators are usually at the fore front of the process of learner discipline, the School Governing Body (SGB) has a statutory and legal duty to ensure that correct structures and procedures are put in place so that necessary disciplinary measures can be taken against ill-disciplined learners. These measures are expected to be administered fairly and reasonably in accordance with the stipulations of the South African Schools Act and the South African Constitution (Morrow, 2007). Hence, the policy context for maintaining a level of discipline that will facilitate an environment that is conducive to learning seems to be in place in most functioning schools, especially those that have effective SGBs. However, in South African schools as well as worldwide, learner discipline problems persist despite these policy contexts and processes (Adams, 2004). What are the reasons for this persistence? More specifically related to this study is the question on what novice teachers are doing to manage learner discipline problems

---

<sup>1</sup> Article 19 of the UNCRC provides that “States parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has care of the child.

<sup>2</sup> The use of corporal punishment in schools is prohibited by the South African Schools Act, 1996. According to section 10 of the act:

(1) No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner.

(2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault

in the context of this persistent school-based issue. Extending this line of inquiry poses the question: what are novice teachers doing to manage learner discipline problems at schools? The latter question forms the core aspect of this research study.

The conception of novice teachers is varied. Some view them as newly qualified teachers and suggest a time period of five years since qualifying as a professional teacher to be regarded as novice teachers (Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2005). Others regard them as first time teachers with shorter than five years of teaching experience (Barret, Jones, Money, Thornton, Candy, Guinee & Olson, 2002). Whatever the variances, for the purposes of this study, novice teachers were defined as newly qualified teachers who had been teaching for a period of fewer than three years.

In their early years of their teaching, novice teachers are usually settling in (Huberman, 1993) and during this period they are being confronted with knowing and understanding of school based-policies as well as Department of Basic Education rules, formal procedures, informal rules, and customs practices at the schools. South African schools are required to have a school-based disciplinary policy or a learner code of conduct to ensure that a disciplined environment is created for effective teaching and learning. The code of conduct for learners is a form of subordinate legislation that reflects the democratic principles of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), thereby supporting the values, dignity, equality, and freedom of South African learners. The code of conduct spells out the rules regarding learners' behaviour and ascribes the disciplinary process to be implemented concerning transgressions by learners (Department of Education, 2007).

The challenges encountered by novice teachers in their management of learners' discipline problems have been well documented by many authors (Nambira, Kapenda, Tjipueja & Sichombe, 2009; Peloyahae, 2005; Jackson, 2012). More and more children from troubled, chaotic or dysfunctional homes are bringing well-developed patterns of antisocial or disruptive behaviour to school. Especially as these learners get older, most of them wreak havoc on schools and disrupt the process of teaching and learning. Their aggressive, disruptive and defiant behaviours waste teaching time, disrupt the learning of all students, threaten safety, overwhelm teachers and ruin their own chances for successful schooling and a successful life (Adams, 2004). Disciplinary problems in schools have been earmarked as a major problem experienced by novice teachers in rural secondary schools in South Africa which has resulted in a tremendous negative impact on teaching and learning, thereby leading

to poor quality of education in these areas (Adams, 2004). Owing to the disciplinary problems caused by these learners, they often need active supervision or management by teachers, especially novice teachers, in order to reduce their continuous disruptive behaviour within the school premises. Studies have shown that the management or curbing of some of these disruptive behaviours becomes a significant challenge to specifically novice teachers (Tungata, 2006). Peloyahae (2005) suggests that these challenges are exacerbated with respect to novice teachers owing to their limited experience in the field of teaching and management of learners' disruptive behaviours. The likely repercussions of these learners' poor discipline in schools cannot be taken for granted as it often results in frustration or depression. Masekoameng (2010) reports that many novice teachers often express frustration over the energy they spend in controlling and managing learners with disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. Novice teachers believe that this energy and time could be better spent on teaching and the facilitation of learning, thereby improving the quality of education in rural areas in South Africa. Hill, Ramsey and Gresham (2005) report that in a poll of the American Federation of Teachers, 17% said they lost a minimum of four hours of teaching time per week thanks to disruptive student behaviour; another 19% said they lost two or three hours weekly. In urban areas, 21% said they lost four or more hours per week. And in urban secondary schools, the percentage is 24. Under such circumstance, it is hard to see how academic achievement can rise significantly in the face of so much lost teaching time, not to mention the anxiety that is produced by the constant disruption during some lessons which also takes a toll on learning time. Moodley (2009) reports that novice teacher in KZN were noted for constantly sending disruptive learners in their classroom to the principal's office or any higher authority in the school for disciplinary actions. Moodley (2009) concluded that novice teachers need guidance, mentoring and adequate induction with regards to managing learner discipline.

Masekoameng (2010) states that the disciplinary problems faced by novice teachers in South African schools are not unique as they are found in every part of the world with the highest rates of learner indiscipline found in the United States of America. The findings from the National Institute of Education in the United State of America revealed that 64% of junior high school teachers reported that their learners had sworn or made obscene gestures at them and 12% of the teachers said they had hesitated to control misbehaving learners for fear of their own safety.

The above discussion presented background details associated with novice teachers and learner discipline. It is suggested that despite the policy context for managing learner discipline, teachers worldwide are continually dealing with learner discipline problems that affect their teaching time as well as their personal safety. Novice teachers, more specifically, have limited experience in dealing with and managing learner discipline problems, largely because their focus in the early years of their teaching is on settling in and getting to know about teaching and learning in an authentic situation. Rural contexts also present their own set of situations and challenges that may impact on novice teachers' management of learner discipline problems. It is in this focus area that this study was conceptualised; i.e., novice teachers' management of learner discipline problems within the rural school context.

### **1.3 Purpose and Focus of the Study**

The study was motivated from the researcher's personal teaching experience and management background. The purpose of the study was to seek ways of providing learners in a rural school context with the best disciplinary measures within the stipulations of the South African constitution and those of the school-based policies governing the management of learner discipline. Adams (2004) comments that since the Department of Education stopped the use of corporal punishment in schools in June 1995, learner discipline has increasingly become more topical in all sectors of education, especially in school settings. From this perspective, the authority of the teacher seems to be restricted and many novice teachers get stuck because they had insufficient pre-service training in managing disruptive behaviours (Adams, 2004). The researcher also had believed that well behaved learners will learn better and make a positive contribution to their communities in the nearest possible future, making the study worthwhile. Furthermore, the study was also based on understanding how novice teachers attend to and manage learner discipline problems in their classrooms. Steyn (2004) affirms that novice teachers have serious problems with learner discipline and that novice teachers find it difficult to work with learners. Even for experienced teachers, it is often challenging to discipline learners who have behavioural problems. Learners often bring problems to school that originate in other areas of their lives (Edwards, 2008, p. 3).

Coetze (2009) states that the effective manager establishes a good relationship with learners. He develops the capacity to manage the teaching and learning process within the classroom. As a result, effective classroom management is arguably the first step in implementing an effective strategy to improve the teacher's ability to be effectively managing his/her



classroom. Salem-al-amarat (2011) opts that effective classroom management by a teacher is one of the most important factors in learner acquisition of knowledge.

According to Adams (2004), learner discipline will always be an issue in schools. An awareness of its cause and impact, in combination with a fair and consistent application of disciplinary measures, will facilitate the effective management of learner discipline in schools. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of novice teachers in the management of learners' discipline problems in rural secondary schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **1.4 Rationale of the Study**

The researcher was interested to understand how novice teachers manage learners with discipline problems amid the absence of the use of corporal punishment in South African schools. Moreover, the study sought to illuminate how novice teachers coped despite the relatively little time they had during pre-service training for an adequate understanding of the complexities of learner discipline problems. Another challenge the study explored was to determine how novice teachers refined their approach in dealing with the ever increasing learner discipline problem at school. Furthermore, Amin and Ramrathan (2009) stress that the resurgence of research in these areas is evidence that suggests a need to better understand the dynamics of contextual issues related to teacher development in rural schools. In the light of these challenges faced by novice teachers, specifically in rural areas, the researcher was prompted to conduct the study.

From a personal perspective and as a principal of a school, the researcher's observations have been that novice teachers experience problems in disciplining learners in rural schools. The researcher argues that their struggles are probably due to their inability to transfer what they learnt during pre-service training into a practical basis in the classroom situation. Furthermore, policies regarding disciplinary measures in schools are more challenging to implement in rural schools. Besides the remote nature of the rural school context, the novelty of the teacher cannot be taken for granted with respect to how they can best manage learner discipline (Moodley, 2009).

#### **1.5 Key Research Questions**

The study intended to understand how novice teachers manage learners with discipline problems within their school premises in a rural secondary school in KZN. This was achieved by examining the following research questions:

1. What are the various learner discipline problems novice teachers experience in their school?
2. How do novice teachers manage these learner discipline problems in school?

## **1.6 An Overview of the Research Design and Methodology**

The study was positioned within an interpretivist paradigm. Neuman (2006 p. 81) defines a paradigm as “a basic orientation to theory and research”. An interpretivist paradigm was used to explore in-depth the nature of the reality of novice teachers’ management of learner discipline. The study employed a qualitative approach to explore the richness, depth, and complexity of the classroom management phenomenon with respect to learner disruptive behaviours within the school premises. This was done in association with the interpretivist paradigm in which the main indicator of meaning is content (Henning, Ronsburg & Smit, 2004). A case study research method of data collection was employed. Rule and John (2011) define a case study as a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge. This therefore implies that the phenomenon of the management of learner discipline in secondary schools can thus be studied as a case study. In order for the researcher to have an extensive understanding of the various behavioural challenges and management approaches used by the novice teachers, a multi-case study was used which illustrated how these teachers understood, identified and managed learners’ discipline within a secondary school.

One secondary school from a rural area in KZN was selected for the study. Due to the rare nature of the participants, only two teachers at the school met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Data were collected through the use of semi-structured interviews and observations and were analysed and coded thematically to assist in answering the key research questions. The researcher also reported on challenges encountered during data collection and validity considerations of the research method. Ethical clearance and a letter of approval from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to carry out the study were received before the commencement of the data collection process.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

### **1.7.1 A novice teacher**

Different authors use varying numbers of years to define who a novice teacher is, ranging from two to five years of teaching experience. Common to all the writers is the consensus that a novice teacher is new in the profession. According to Barret et al. (2002), a novice

teacher is a teacher who has fewer than three years of teaching experience and whose teaching tends to focus on “survival and establishing basic classroom routines”. That notwithstanding, Nambira *et al.* (2009) argue that a novice teacher is professionally qualified and a practicing teacher with fewer than two years teaching experience because the school teaching environment differs from the college experience. Therefore, a novice educator is a new teacher in the education field. This study focused on novice teachers with an average of three years teaching experience. Other sources in the literature also refer to a junior teacher as a novice teacher.

### **1.7.2 Classroom Management**

Classroom management is concerned with the organisation of the classroom as a learning area or environment where the learning process is in progress. According to Cooper and Simonds (2007) as cited in Durondola (2009), argues that classroom management can be described as actions that create, implement, and maintain a classroom climate that supports learning. Cooper and Simonds (2007) further explain classroom management as the sum total of activities (pedagogical and managerial) that are necessary to enable the core or main task of the teaching-learning situation to take place effectively. The term classroom management can also be referred to as the sum total of the organisations of all the activities of the teaching and learning components such as the student, time, material, interaction and intra-actions so that the classroom teacher is able to allow the learner to learn the intended learning concept.

Durondola (2009) further explains that classroom management is at the heart of the teacher’s work; therefore the teacher must be able to organise and manage learners in a confined space in order to enable them to feel safe and concentrated on tasks during the process of teaching. This will include a set of skills related to controlling learners.

### **1.7.3 Learner Discipline**

The term discipline typically refers to the structures and rules describing the expected behaviour of students and the effort to ensure that students comply with those rules within the guiding principles of the teacher. Discipline in the classroom is a prerequisite if any meaningful learning is to take place. Wiseman and Hunt (2008) define learner discipline as what the teacher engages in; it is the effort to motivate students and manage the classroom when certain mechanisms and reinforcement have not been successful. Adams (2004) define learner discipline as the process of running an organized and effective classroom; a classroom in which the abilities of individual children are given the opportunity for development and in

which teachers can fulfil their proper functions as facilitators of learning. Moreover, a classroom is the place where children can acquire sensibly and enjoyably the techniques for monitoring and guiding their own behaviour.

The term learner discipline as referred to in the study should not be confused with punishment or viewed in a negative, rigid, and autocratic sense. Rather, it refers to the process of running an organized classroom with guiding policies designed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Many different views about what constitutes misbehaviour abound. Ramsey (1981) as cited by Adams (2004) speaks of unruly behaviour while Charlton and David (1993) as cited by Adams (2004) suggest that while some see misbehaviour as “maladjustment”, others see it as behaviour manifested verbally, or physically, which overtly challenges. They further argue that misbehaviour is simply a catalogue of comparatively minor misdemeanours which, whilst not immediately challenging the authority of the teachers, demand the expenditure of inordinate amounts of teacher time and energy.

### **1.8 Delimits of the study**

The school is located within a rural area setting approximately 95km from the nearest major city. The school has enrolment of approximately 154 learners, who are decreasing yearly due to lack of educational facilities. The school has limited structural capacity of classrooms which are in good conditions. There are no proper services such water, sewage system and teaching and learning resources.

### **1.9 Outlines of the Chapters**

#### **Chapter One:** Orientation

This chapter provides a general background, the purpose, the focus and the rationale of the study. The research questions to be answered are mentioned and a brief introduction of the research method and design of the study are presented. The chapter concludes with an overview of the chapter layout of the study report.

#### **Chapter Two:** Literature review

This chapter contains a review of relevant and related literature for the study. It begins with a broad view of what novice teachers’ experiences are and goes on to explore literature on learner discipline problems within school contexts. The last section of this chapter explains the theoretical framework within which the study was located.

#### **Chapter Three:** Research design and methodology

This chapter explains in detail the justification for the research design and methodology used for the study. The paradigm perspectives, the qualitative research approach and the case study methodology used during data collection are discussed. The rationale underpinning the methodology is explained. The use of observations and the semi-structured interview method as a tool for data collection are discussed and justified elaborately. Finally, the sampling techniques, ethical considerations, trustworthiness and validity of the study are discussed before concluding the chapter.

#### **Chapter Four:** Data analysis and discussion

This chapter presents answers to the research questions mentioned in Chapter one by analysing the data that were collected through observations and interviews as discussed in Chapter three. Emerging managerial patterns are presented. Furthermore, the rural school context where data were collected is described and an attempt is made to explain how this context impacts on the quality of teaching and learning. The findings on the various managerial patterns of the novice teachers and how they understand, identify and manage learner discipline within a rural school context are presented and discussed. The findings are discussed with reference to the related literature in Chapter two.

#### **Chapter five:** Conclusion and recommendations.

This is the concluding chapter of the study based on the findings as presented in Chapter four. The chapter also contains some important recommendations that were derived from the study.

#### **1.10 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced and presented an overall summary of the study. The discussion was presented under the following headings: background of the study, the purpose and focus of the study, the rationale of the study (which was drawn from personal and professional viewpoints), and the critical research questions. A brief overview of the conceptual framework of the study, the research design and the methodology employed was also presented, stating that it was a qualitative study within an interpretivist paradigm. The chapter concluded with a summary overview of the five chapters of the study report. In the following chapter, the researcher will discuss the related literature pertaining to how novice teachers manage learners' discipline within the school context.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **SECTION A: LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section discusses and explores various literature related to learner discipline problems and classroom management challenges faced by novice teachers in secondary schools, specifically rural secondary schools, within South Africa and the rest of the world. The aim is to acquire insight into what research claims about the nature of learner discipline problems that exist in schools and how teachers manage those problems in the classroom. This section will illuminate the discussion of topics: the place of discipline in the classroom, teachers' non-involvement in learners' discipline, categorization of learners' behaviour at school, and parental influence and their engagement with children's discipline problems. The second section of this chapter discusses the theoretical framework that was used to frame the study, namely the social learning theory by Albert Banduras.

#### **2.2. The Place of Discipline in the Classroom and teachers' Complaints**

A well-controlled classroom has positive outcomes as it will embark on certain techniques to overcome discipline problems. Holloway (2002) affirms that teacher quality is at the centre of the national agenda for improving students' achievements and monitoring classroom management. But the reality of classrooms is far from a theoretical stance. Maphosa and Mammen (2011) state that learners manifest unacceptable behaviours in classrooms and they are generally noisy and disrespectful to teachers. Every teacher expects learners to be cooperative when teaching and learning have to take place in their classroom. No meaningful learning occurs in a chaotic classroom environment. For this reason learner discipline problems become an epicentre in the process of teaching and learning. This therefore suggests that learner discipline problems can always be an issue in several schools. Adams (2004) argues that appropriate discipline has long been acknowledged as being one of the most important characteristics of an effective school and a crucial aspect of school and classroom management. However, Maphosa and Mammen (2011) state that 'disciplining learners these days is more dangerous and risky compared to the days before the democratic dispensation in South Africa. This is due to the legal implications of corporal punishment and children's groups that are against the use of any kind of disciplinary approach that may inflict physical pain to the child. In this regard, the abolition of corporal punishment has had a major

impact on the way learner discipline is dealt with in schools'. Many schools and teachers are still crying for it to be reinstated (Adams, 2004). Green (2006) affirms that learner discipline problems contribute significantly to the inability of novice teachers to engage smoothly into the teaching profession. Furthermore, Green (2006) argues that for many novice teachers, the first solo effect in the classroom is a sink or swim experience, meaning that novice teachers do not have mentors who guide them during in-service training and actual teaching in schools.

The views of different authors state it clearly that discipline has nothing to do with controlling disruptive or unacceptable, bad behaviour (Wiseman & Hunt, 2008). It has everything to do with ensuring a safe and valuing environment so that the rights and needs of people are respected, indicated and safe-guarded.

### **2.2.1 A Shift in teachers' priorities towards Trade Union Activities with regards to learner discipline**

The majority of South African teachers are affiliated to labour unions. However, due to their affiliation to these unions, teachers sometimes shift their attention away from their classroom to issues related to the teachers' unions where they are politically aligned (Sayed, 2004). Therefore, due to this affiliation, teachers tend to leave their classroom responsibilities when required to attend to union issues, leaving opportunities for discipline to be compromised. Such political party or union meetings are usually held during school hours and frequently on school premises. This has further compromised teachers' initial identity which was the total call for a non-racial, non-sexist, non-dominant and non-subordinate citizenry in the education sector (Samuel, 2008). This change in identity has brought about, amongst other things, a change in the priority of managing learners to priorities in attaining union objectives.

Hartley and Wekekind (2004) argue that teachers are now focusing on conditions of work, salaries, and promotional posts rather than on their daily duties as teachers. These daily duties will certainly involve learner discipline problems besides the obvious teaching and learning activities that usually go on in a school. It therefore seems that teachers' focus on political issues has decreased their commitment to classroom management (Hartley & Wekekind, 2004, p. 195). Sayed (2004) affirms this view by stating that teachers do not focus on learner discipline in the schools nowadays but concern themselves with teaching and learning, administration, and political issues, thereby allowing learner discipline to go down in the parking order of teacher priorities.

Hartley and Wekekind (2004) state that teachers are challenged to abide by the rules and regulations passed on and stipulated by education authorities. Moreover, societal values which are geared by a political spirit negatively impact on learner discipline. In South Africa, the school curriculum after 1994 has focused on political and not pedagogical projects. This means that discipline has been neglected by some teachers (Sayed, 2004). Learner discipline problems could also increase because when teachers in a school do not support the same political party, conflicts arise easily (Greenlee & Olgletree, 1993).

### **2.3 Categorisation of Learner Behaviour in Schools**

Learner behavioural problems may be due to various reasons and therefore it has become necessary to categorise them under separate headings. These headings will assist in understanding the reasons for learner discipline problems and how they can be effectively addressed. There are various factors which contribute to the uncontrollable behaviour of learners. The discussion will be based on psychological behaviour, emotional behaviour, social behaviour and lifestyles as factors which contribute to poor learner discipline. The focus will be on experiences of novice teachers in rural secondary schools.

#### **2.3.1 Psychological perspective of learner behaviour**

Children who have any kind of psychological behavioural problem as a result of intellectual, mental or physical disablement can be aggressive in the mainstream classroom and the child can be either too hyperactive or too docile Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2005). According to Adams (2004) an intellectually, physically or mentally disabled child should not attend an ordinary class in an ordinary school. Adams argues that physically disabled children often have a poor self-image which may result in the formation of a negative self-concept. The child who has a poor self-image feels useless and his/her intrinsic motivation is destroyed (Salem-al-Amarat, 2011). This poor self-image results in the learner being passive or withdrawn and s/he is often difficult to discipline. Therefore, these children can have a harmful effect on other learners, teachers and themselves as they need love when they feel insecure (Moodley, 2009)

Students who are restless in the classroom are problematic to their fellow students and to the teachers. They are the source of annoyance since they talk without permission. This hyperactivity might be caused by students' mental abilities (Salem-al-Amarat, 2011). Novice teachers find it difficult to address situations caused by such children since they have not yet mastered the skills required to discipline learners with behaviours of that nature. Although the



DOE has made it easier for all South African teachers by providing them with documents that stipulate alternative mechanisms to corporal punishment (DOE, 2007), novice teachers still find it challenging to have complete mastery of the contents of such documents simply due to their low level of experience in the profession. Furthermore, there is insufficient guidance provided to novice teachers by institutions of pre-service training (Moodley, 2007).

A continual curriculum change within the school education system has had some impact on novice teachers. Donald et al. (2005), for example, suggest that continuous curriculum change may have affected the implementation of the curriculum as most novice teachers divide their attention between the delivery of content material and learner discipline problems. Hence learner discipline problems that are related to the psychological conditions of learners tend to receive negligible attention in the management of their behaviour by novice teachers.

Since the abolishment of corporal punishment by the Department of Education in 1995, novice teachers have been reluctant to discipline learners with behavioural problems. Disciplining learners has therefore become risky and even more challenging for novice teachers because most of them are not well equipped with alternative methods of dealing with learner discipline problems other than corporal punishment (Moodley, 2009).

### **2.3.2 The emotional perspective of learner behaviour**

Wiseman *et.al.* (2008) state that behaviours or emotions that deviate from the norm could interfere with a child's own cognitive growth and development compared to that of his/her peers whose behaviours are at the norm. Such learners are characterised by inappropriate behaviours, unhappiness or depression, fears, anxieties, and trouble with relationships (Woolfolk, 2010). All of these will constitute the learner's emotional behaviour.

The most common types of the emotional behaviours students have are mood disorders, anxiety and disruptive behaviour. These learners seek attention as they are hyperactive. They are always oppositional and defiant with adults. More often than not, they disobey instructions given by the teachers, especially by novice teachers. Students with emotional misbehaviour can be among the most difficult to teach in a regular class, and they are source of concern for many prospective novice teachers (Woolfolk, 2010).

Wiseman, Hunt and Charles (2008) suggest that educators should manage discipline in such a way that it is seen as being positive and building their learners' esteem. Emotionally

disordered learners resist discipline. They may team up with their friends and may even attack teachers outside school. These learners bring dangerous weapons to school and teachers become scared to discipline them (Durodola, 2009). Durodola, (2009) further states that such learners sometimes become bullies and they become disrespectful, especially to novice teachers.

### **2.3.3 Social perspective of learner behaviour**

Learners' misbehaviours are sometime the result of social issues. These social issues range from poverty, drugs, and peer pressure to lifestyle issues such as fashion trends (Durodola, 2009). These social issues influence learners' behaviour both inside and outside the school.

Social behaviours that emanate from social influences include bullying (Ormrod, 2000) this kind of behaviour is sometimes referred to as anti-social behaviours and they have a detrimental effect on a child's interaction with teachers or fellow classmates. Anti-social behaviour is a type of behaviour that may cause harm or even compromise a child's safety as well as that of others. It may result in loss of or damage to school equipment or others' belongings. Student aggression towards persons is referred to as violence whereas aggression towards equipment is referred to as vandalism. Tungata (2006) states that all these unwanted behaviours namely anti-social behaviour, violence and vandalism may manifest themselves in the classroom and have the potential to greatly disrupt classroom teaching and learning. According to Ormrod (2000), many behaviourists believe that students' behaviour is largely influenced by environmental experiences. Therefore the social behaviour of the student involves the ability to relate to other people and the development of appropriate interaction patterns required in social situations (Ormrod, 2000).

### **2.4 Parental Influence on Learners and their Engagement with Discipline Problems**

Parents who are alcoholics, abusive to their children and absent for long periods of time often cause children's poor intellectual, academic and socio-emotional development (Ellof & Ebersohn, 2004). The educational level of parents also impacts on the social behaviour of the child. Many studies have shown that the socio-economic status, educational qualifications and academic outcomes of parents have a significant predictive impact on children's development and even on their educational attachment as adults (Ellof & Ebersohn, 2004). Berk (1997) as cited by Ellof and Ebersohn (2004) state that the harsh life conditions of lower income parents, the powerlessness they feel, the lack of confidence they have in their jobs, the authoritarian model presented by employers, and the lack of higher education that would

reform values onto abstract ideas, may result in such parents using authoritarian methods to enforce external characteristics in their children such as obedience, neatness and cleanliness. The children who grow up in such situation are likely to be troublesome at school and add to learner discipline problems.

Tungata (2006) claims that, due to a variety of family and economic difficulties, children who are disruptive at school sometimes behave in this manner because they have been subjected to distorted or inadequate care throughout their childhood. It is because of this neglect that they are now demanding attention in the classroom. Donald, et al. (2005) affirms that poverty and disrupted homes lead to the anti-social behaviour of the children. It changes the way the child handles himself at school which has a negative impact discipline. Learner behaviour problems affect a wide variety of people at school, especially novice teachers. The behaviours of such learners threaten the security and attainments of other learners and are a source of stress for the entire staff, sometimes leading to a confidence crisis or even depression in novice teachers (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009).

Tungata (2006) further argues that children coming from homes with no tradition of valuing education often develop learning problems. He says that such children mostly fail to see the value or importance of education which thus negatively influences the child's interest in education. Therefore, instilling discipline in schools becomes a problematic experience, especially for novice teachers.

Behaviour problems encountered by teachers in schools pose a threat to all stakeholders who are directly involved in the field of education. What seems to be confronting teachers most is the legal position of what was once believed to be an effective remedy for bad behaviour: corporal punishment. This form of "punishment" is no longer legal and may not be administered as a corrective tool. Many teachers find themselves in a position of not knowing what to do to discipline learners in the absence of corporal punishment (Tungata, 2006).

The child wants to belong. If the child displays pro-social behaviour yet feels excluded, he may resort to antisocial behaviour to address this need. A low self-esteem stemming from a feeling of inadequacy may thus result in problematic behaviour (Ormrod, 2000). Novice teachers often find themselves competing for students' attention. Since novice teachers do not have much experience in learner discipline, they tend to let "students do anything in class" (Flicker & Hoffman, 2006). Moodley (2009) disagrees, stating that novice teachers can bring about change in the school setting with the knowledge they gained in pre-service training.

Moodley (2009) further contradicts her views when she states that novice teachers experience problems in transferring their theoretical knowledge to practical measures in the classroom.

Edwards (2008) makes the point that a code of conduct is a consensus document and its drafting process should be characterized by involvement of parents, learners, educators and non-educators at the school, irrespective of where the school is located. However, in rural schools in South Africa, this type of consensus agreement cannot possibly be arrived at since most of the parents do not attend meetings whenever they are invited by the schools (Msani, 2007). Furthermore, it has been suggested that because most parents in rural areas are illiterate, they are also not well-equipped to make contributions with regards to the educational changes pertaining to them and their children (Edwards, 2008). Morrow (2007) therefore claim that the reason why most parents do not get involved with their children's discipline as stipulated by the school code of conduct, is because most parents still believe that the only way to punish children, be it at home or at school, is by administering corporal punishment.

## **2.5 Learners' Lifestyles and the Impact thereof on their Behaviour**

The situation of stressed parents, an impersonal school environment and disorganized communities that struggle to fulfil the most basic human need of belonging are caused by 21<sup>st</sup> century lifestyles (Salem-al-Amarat ,2011). Learners find themselves under pressure to conform to the demands of society. This struggle to conform does not only occur within the community, but also expresses itself in the life of these learners whilst they are at school. Therefore providing a holistic and comprehensive representation of the life style and their impact on their behaviour.

Tungata (2006) states that children seem to be ill-disciplined simply because of the lifestyle they engage with and grew up with in the community. As children grow up, they desire status and prestige and it means that they want to be well thought of by their friends (Salem-al-Amarat, 2011). It is at this stage that they also try to establish their own identities (Moodley, 2009). In this process they become hostile and aggressive towards their teachers and usually want to be supported by the whole class. Moodley (2009) goes on to say that learners are always critical of adult behaviour, especially that of novice teachers. As a result, novices teachers can no longer handle disruptive learners as they seem "fearful to address the behaviour problem [in a] straight-forward [manner]" (Brown, 2004, p. 283). Children do not

always look up at the novice teachers who cannot fulfil learner demands. They look upon novice teachers as failures who cannot fulfil their expectations (Tungata, 2006).

Donald et al. (2005) states that peer pressure plays a vital role in learner discipline. Children want popularity and a sense of belonging. Some therefore tend to disturb classroom activities and they disturb the teacher's lesson. They do not bother who teaches those lessons. Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke and Curran (2004, p. 28) argue that the classroom should be perceived as the creation of a learning environment in which students behave appropriately - not for fear of punishment or the desire for renewal, but out of a sense of personal responsibility". However, the escalation of poor learner discipline is observed in schools due to the lifestyle the learners are exposed at home and/or in their communities. Woolfolk (2010) states that some ill-disciplined learners seek to emulate identity roles. For this reason they resort to joining their peer groups who are unruly in the school, and they do this just because they want to conform to the peer group or to society.

The problem of disruptive behaviour in schools may have been around for some time, but it has recently resurfaced as a major social and political issue. As public concern has risen, so have expectations that this problem should be managed more effectively by schools. Tungata (2006) draws attention to the family lifestyle as a solution to learner discipline for unruly learners. He suggests, tongue in cheek, that some parents should be called to school to baby sit their unruly children.

Moodley (2009) affirms that the family lifestyle and environment will put its mark on controlling the behaviour of learners whose activities are unacceptable at school. Moodley argues that the level of unacceptable behaviour within the family and the way the family interacts may lead to unacceptable performance in the school (Tungata, 2006). Parents indirectly share in creating problems when they insist that their children's grades and achievements are always high. This form of pressure leads children to feel of angry and worried and creates student behavioural problems inside the classroom. Moreover, children like to imitate their parents, peers, other adults in the community and media celebrities who might be anti-social and corrupt (Ormrod, 2000, p. 172). All that have been imitated outside the school setting is then brought into the classroom just to seek attention from others and the teacher.

Tungata (2006) states that the lifestyle of the school plays a major role in learner discipline. Schools that lack proper planning to ensure focused classroom activities and management

give learners the chance to misbehave. As a result, they may find it difficult to respond effectively to learners' disruptive behaviour. The response to disruptive behaviour may be worse where there are no firm and fair codes of conduct that enforce consistency in dealing with deviant behaviours. As is the case with many other aspects of our lives, the effective inculcation of discipline in schools and the classroom is dependent on certain rules. Rules for behaviour are needed to set limits on what can or cannot be done. Adams (2004) affirms that a code of conduct must be drawn up by the school officials, i.e., the School Governing Body (SGB) which represents all the parents, the School Management Team (SMT), teachers, the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), and all stakeholders surrounding that particular institution. A code of conduct presents guidelines for positive learner behaviour and disciplinary measures and spells out various rules for learners and visitors.

## **2.6 Challenges Faced by Novice Teachers and the Implications for the Management of Learner Discipline Problems**

The gap between teaching theory and the reality of teaching practice is frustrating for novice teachers as they do not have sufficient knowledge of the policies of how to discipline learners for effective classroom management. In my experience as an educator, the negative experiences that novice teachers face in disciplining their learners are far-reaching and there is a need for such experiences to be examined. The experiences that will be examined are:

### **2.6.1 The professional development of novice teachers**

Edwards (2008) state that novice teachers are faced with the difficulty to define for themselves who they are in the teacher persona. It is difficult for novice teachers when they cannot define their identity themselves, yet it is their responsibility as novice teachers to develop themselves. It is only through their own will and dedication that their quality of teaching will be developed and improved. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (DOE, 2007) states that it is the responsibility of teachers themselves, guided by their own professional body, the South African Council of Educators (SACE), to take charge of their self-development by identifying the areas in which they wish to grow professionally, and to use all opportunities made available to them (Moodley, 2009).

### **2.6.2 Novice teachers' continuous adaptation to the curriculum**

According to Adams (2004), curriculum implies an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in a forum that is open to critical scrutiny

and capable of effective translation into practice. One of the most important characteristics of an effective classroom is good classroom discipline (Coetzee, van Niekerk & Wydeman, 2011). In this regard, novice teachers often struggle with the management of the curriculum and resources in the classroom. Holloway (2002) states that novice teachers cannot work independently. The novice teacher must be given expert teachers to work with. However, it is often difficult for expert teachers to help novice teachers since it is time consuming and they are not getting financial assistance to do so.

The Department of Education introduced a curriculum change from the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). This was not the first curriculum change in the short history of true democracy in the country. Like previous changes, this change has created some confusion as no timeous training was offered to teachers. Morrow (2007) affirms that educators are faced with problems when they have to teach a curriculum they have not been trained in. The ever-changing curriculum in South Africa makes it difficult for novice teacher to master the terminology used in teaching and learning.

Let us take a quick tour through some elements of education transformation in South Africa. At the bottom stands Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), originally marketed as the alternative to 'Apartheid' education. At the root of OBE was the entirely sensible idea that the way to assess the success of any teaching is in terms of its 'outcomes' for learners. What matters at the end of the day is what the learners learn. But this sensible idea suffocated educators as its implementation was wrapped in a range of other matters which were piled on top of each other and made the workload of teachers an impossibility (Morrow, 2007). Many teachers claimed that the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) and the resultant introduction of extensive group work exacerbated the discipline problems in schools.

The South African Education System further introduced new curriculum strategies which was underpinned by what would match the world-wide standards of education. The introduction of the National Curriculum Statement and the Revised National Curriculum Statement brought further frustration to teachers. Most teachers had been trained within certain policy contexts but they could not implement those policies since the field of teaching became totally different from what they had been trained for (Sayed, 2004). The new curriculum changes also seemed to favour ex-Model C schools in South Africa since they had the resources to facilitate the learner-centred approach [of OBE and the NCS] (Adam, 2004). Moreover, the

ever-changing curriculum brought more stress to novice teachers because they had to master the new knowledge each and every time. Novice teachers also did not have sufficient resources to bring about this change in rural areas.

Novice teachers encounter problems when they have to teach without resources such as computers, the internet, school library resources and a local environment they are not familiar with. This leads to learners becoming uncontrollable. Novice teachers also lack the skills of dealing with these challenges (Salem-al-Amarat, 2011). Flicker and Hoffman (2006) agree that learners might be ill-disciplined when the classroom environment is not conducive to teaching and learning and novice teachers become scared of confronting misbehaving learners. Furthermore, in a situation of too many learners clustered in the same classroom, there is the likelihood that disorganized and chaotic situations may occur, leading to learner discipline problems. Edwards (2008) further affirms that novice teachers are faced with the challenge of knowledge of the subject matter, which is the curriculum. They state that novice teachers endure difficulties because they believe that, ultimately, things will get better as the years go by, but the problems escalate when they face challenges presented by learners. Novice teachers then become frustrated.

While novice teachers were confused and frustrated by the ever-changing curriculum, there was limited training offered by the Department of Education to bring teachers abreast of these changes. Teachers had to support a curriculum in which they had had no part and had not invested in (Edwards, 2008). Moreover, limited resources were provided to novice teachers to cascade information and to impart knowledge to learners. To exacerbate the problem, workshops were arranged during holidays and in a short space of time. Moreover, teachers had to teach without adequate teaching knowledge. Evans (2000) affirms that novice teachers had to find their way through the new curriculum which they had not been taught in the higher institutions of pre-service training. Knight (2001) argues that for effective classroom and learner discipline, novice teachers have to master subject matter. Effective management of the classroom is therefore more difficult for new teachers who may not have received sufficient training and who may be assigned large percentages of at-risk students and students with behavioural problems (Olivier & Reschly, 2007).

### **2.6.3 Policy framework for teachers and its accommodation of novice teachers**

The principles underlying the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (Department of Education, 2007), as expressed in the Norms



and Standards for Educators (2000) require of a teacher to be a specialist in a particular learning area, subject or phase; a specialist in teaching, learning and assessment; a curriculum developer; a leader, administrator and a manager; and a professional who plays a community, citizenship and a pastoral role. It is therefore evident that teachers themselves are key role players in addressing the needs and discipline of learners as stipulated by educational policies. However, novice teachers who lack experience may be overwhelmed by the variety of educational and policies which do not provide meanings to them as opposed to experienced teachers (Moodley, 2009). Beginner teachers also need to fit into specific school contexts and learn the practices and traditions of the individual schools where they are employed. It is at this point where they have to inculcate the school culture (Edwards, 2008). Steyn (2004) affirms that novice teachers are in a reality shock as they are confronted by new policies and regulations. The gap between the theory and the reality of teaching practices creates frustration among novice teachers as they are unfamiliar with the policies of how to discipline learners for effective classroom management.

## **2.7 Classroom Management by Novice Teachers**

For as long as can be remembered, classroom behavioural problems in schools have always been an area of concern for teachers, educational officials and authorities, policy makers, and the general public (Tungata, 2006). A teacher's first year in the classroom is usually characterized by challenges and frustrations requiring novice teachers to find their way through classroom management (Evans, 2000). Peloyahae (2009) argues that the conditions that prevail in schools like large classes, ill-disciplined learners and ever-changing classroom rules and routines increase stress levels for novice teachers and therefore they do not perform at their best in terms of teaching, learning, and management of learner discipline. The bigger numbers of learners that teachers have to deal with in one classroom are a daunting and intimidating prospect (Tungata, 2006). People who take interest in the education of children are aware of this problem. Teachers agree that once the size of the class rises above 35, it is impossible to maintain discipline, or even an acceptable low noise level in the classroom (Trigwell & Prosser, 1997). Brown (2004) affirms that fear of students is another challenge facing novice teachers. The fearfulness of students endangers the academic progress of students. When teachers are intimidated by students they are unable to address behaviour straightforwardly because their fear is paralyzing and when students realise that their teachers fear them, they easily and quickly become eloquent or frequently exhibit misconduct (Steyn, 2004).

Since the abolishment of corporal punishment in South African schools in 2005 by the National Department of Education, most teachers have been left alone and have experienced feelings of insecurity in the management of learner discipline problems (Adams, 2004). Most teachers confess that they find it difficult to discipline learners without this method of punishment. Even now most teachers do not have a mastery of the other alternatives to learner discipline (Adams, 2004). Tungata (2006) affirms that the document (SASA and the constitution of South Africa) on alternatives to corporal punishment did not assist teachers to cope with learner discipline. The alternatives stipulated in the document do not cater for quick methods of punishment. Some of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment need specialized training for effective use and implementation. For example, a Departmental publication on alternatives to corporal punishment suggests that if a learner has displayed particular difficulties in the classroom such as aggressive behaviour, bullying, not doing school work, and so on, the teacher should seek help from a colleague and, if necessary, from professionals such as psychologists or community counsellors. The fact is that the professionals or psychologists to whom schools and teachers are referred are usually not available in most schools, especially in rural areas of South Africa. Moreover, colleagues are busy people who often struggle to cope with their own disciplinary challenges or heavy administrative loads and academic loads.

### **2.7.1 Classroom management style through democratic leadership**

Management style depends on the leader of the institution. “Leadership is central to the effective management of discipline” (Adams, 2004, p. 27). Although there are many styles of leadership, a proven method is that of allowing learners to become actively involved in decision-making and helping in management areas (Evans, 2000). This method is also referred to as a democratic or permissive method of leadership.

Democratic discipline approaches as stipulated in the SASA (84) of 1996 suggests that educators, learners and parents should become involved in the development and implementation of a code of conduct, classroom rules, government policies and guidelines. This guideline sets the context for learners and parents to become involved in managing discipline within the school context. The challenge for rural schools is that there is a serious lack of parental involvement in school matters (Joubert, 2010) and this compromises the guidelines suggested by SASA. Hence, if learners do get involved in the process of setting up the code of conduct without sufficient parental involvement, effective disciplinary measures may be compromised at the level of the school.

Democratic processes of setting up discipline are built upon the basics of democracy and participation as alluded to by Evans (2000) and Matseka (2008). According to Evans (2000), democratic teaching is compared and contrasted with autocratic and permissive teaching. The democratic educator helps learners to develop self-discipline and self-motivation. Matseka (2008) suggest that this approach reduces the level of learner indiscipline and they become corporative and participatory in almost every school activity they are engaged with. An autocratic educator on the other hand will dominate learners and inflict punitive consequences for breaking the school's rules and regulations. The permissive educator allows a learner to infringe rules with impunity and does not seek to foster a learner's self-discipline. The democratic classroom is one where educators and learners collaborate in determining classroom rules and the consequences of negative behaviour. Matseka (2008) affirms this view by stating that in a democratic classroom, educators provide firm guidance but do not promote rebellion. Learners are allowed to participate in making decisions about what is studied as well as in formulating rules.

Evans (2000) argues that a democratic educator helps learners understand that making decisions is firmly tied to responsibility. Learners are allowed freedom, but they are expected to assume responsibility for what they do. From this perspective the learners could be punished for not being responsible enough with their responsibilities and this method is believed to better help modify or reduce the level of learner indiscipline (Evans, 2000). Democratic educators have a way of establishing order and limits without usurping their learners' right to autonomy. This method is through dialogue, counselling and pardon. They are firm yet kind and they involve learners in cooperative learning experiences. Learners on their part are free to explore, discover and choose their own way as they increasingly assume personal responsibility of their behaviours. Matseka (2008) concludes that learners in a democratic classroom develop a sense of belonging to and having a stake in classroom management practices. Evans (2000) asserts that, conversely, autocratic educators are characterized as coercive, demanding, dominating, hypercritical and punitive. Educators' aim in such an approach is to force learners to behave in an acceptable manner and to deny them any freedom, whereas permissive educators do not set limits nor do they establish logical sequences for misbehaviour. Democratic educators are characterized as friendly, encouraging, helpful, willing to share responsibility and stimulating (Evans, 2000).

The democratic way of managing teaching and learning seems a complex process, especially to novice teachers who are at this stage of their profession struggling to adapt to their career.

Novice teachers will therefore require content and pedagogical knowledge of individuals and processes, and they should experience real teaching contexts in order for them to effectively manage their learners democratically. Tungata (2006) realises that the majority of such management skills are limited with respect to novice teachers as they are just settling down in the induction years of their teaching.

## **2.8 Induction Problems Faced by Novice Teachers**

Amongst other conceptions of induction, Moodley (2009) defines induction as a process that is comprehensive and coherent. It sustains professional development and is organized by a school or school district to train, support, and retain new teachers so that they progress seamlessly into a lifelong learning program. Steyn (2004) suggests that induction of newly appointed teachers does not receive the priority it deserves. He further states that many induction programmes have failed to guide and help beginner teachers in their transition into the profession. The induction process is important in acquainting newly appointed educators with job procedures, school policies, routines and required behaviour patterns for effective teaching (Peloyahae, 2005). Lack of induction makes it difficult for educators to adjust to the demands of their work. The problem which faces school management teams is that educators attempt to resist being inducted. Darling-Hammond (2006) suggests that some teachers believe that the knowledge gained from higher institutions is sufficient and that it is this knowledge which is most frequently used in the teaching field.

Steyn (2004) argues that beginner educators often experience a gap between the reality of teaching practice and their ideals as idealised during their pre-service training. They are often confronted by new customs, policies, formal procedures and laws. This leads to disillusionment and failure during their first year of teaching. Novice teachers find themselves in a dilemma as they have to understand unclear and confusing expectations of principals, colleagues, parents, and learners. Therefore, the mentoring system in schools is important for novice teachers. Teaching can be a frustrating, lonely job where educators spend much of their day alone with learners, isolated from contact with other adults. For the newly appointed educator, battling with discipline and unsure of the adequacy of his/her teaching, it can be a frightening and frustrating time (Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2005). Hence, the use of a mentor will help the educator to reduce frustration (Peloyahae, 2005). Moodley (2009) agrees that mentoring is useful since it provides support to newly appointed teachers in terms of school settings and expectations of the school.

However, the teachers who serve in the school management team find it difficult to provide induction programmes for novice teachers because they are also allocated to teaching and have heavy workloads due to post provisioning norms (Peloyahae, 2005). White and Moss (2003) agrees that teachers are not prepared for additional workloads encountered in schools since they are not paid overtime for extra work. Peloyahae (2005) believes that for induction to be successful, proper budgeting and planning must be done to support effective induction programmes.

Novice teachers are urged to contact the experts with any problems that arise. But some beginners are reluctant to bring problems to the attention of their providers; either because they are embarrassed or because they do not want to be a burden, especially if the novice teacher is aware that the providers are receiving little or no compensation for the services rendered (Edwards, 2008). Steyn (2004) states that an awareness of the problems experienced by novice teachers, and addressing their needs, can add to quality teaching in a rapidly changing dispensation. Therefore, novice teachers need to be paired with outstanding experienced teachers who will explain school policies and practices, share methods and materials, and help to solve problems, thereby improving the quality of teaching, teacher leadership and learner discipline management.

Orland-Barak and Yinon (2005) state that a one-on-one relationship between novice teachers and expert educators is not only vital for teaching and learning to be effective, but also for learners' discipline. These researchers claim that the emphasis should be on "reskilling" rather than "deskilling" practices, whereby the experienced teacher learns to disentangle one kind of practical knowledge from another. Poor novice-mentor relationships will result in poor knowledge and skills for the novice. As a result, effectively managing the classroom is more difficult for new teachers who may not have received sufficient training and who may have been assigned to classes with a large percentage of at risk students and students with behavioural problem (Olivier & Reschly, 2007).

The ability of novice teachers to organize a classroom and manage the behaviour of their at risk students is critical to achieving positive educational outcomes. Therefore, novice teachers are urged to contact veterans with any problems that arise. But some beginners are reluctant to bring problems to the attention of their providers, either because they are embarrassed or because they do not want to be a burden, especially of novice know that the providers are receiving little or no compensation (Knight, 2001). Orland-Barak and Yinon

(2005) warn that novice teachers might be misled by experienced teachers who might give them ambiguous information in unfamiliar situations. White & Moss (2003) affirm that misleading may occur as beginner teachers need to fit into specific school contexts and learn the practices and traditions of the school culture. In this regard, novice teachers revealed that they experienced frustration as a result of discrepancies between their training and their actual experiences (Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2005). It is at this point where the veteran teacher's intervention will enable the novice to cope with the realities of the profession (Edwards, 2008).

## **2.9 Concluding Comments on the Literature Review on Learner Discipline and Novice Teachers**

The above literature review presented a landscape of the complexities of learner discipline processes and problems encountered at the school level of education in SA. From this review, it seems that learner discipline problems are on-going and disruptive to the teaching, learning and management processes at school level. In addition, while the policy frameworks are in place to manage learner discipline problems, their effectiveness is compromised by several factors, including lack of parental participation, external influences and legal issues. Rural schools seem to have similar kinds of problems to urban and township schools with respect to learner discipline problems, but the rural context presents additional challenges related to rural education that make this context more vulnerable to learner discipline problems.

A review of the literature pertaining to novice teachers suggests that novice teachers are divided between settling into a teaching profession and managing difficult learner discipline problems. Induction processes for novice teachers are minimal and mentoring is difficult within the workloads and attitudes of teachers and school management towards induction and mentoring. Induction and mentoring are usually absent due to other more pressing demands on teachers and school managers.

## SECTION B: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

The theoretical framework used in the study was that of Albert Bandura's social learning theory. According to Henning *et al.* (2004), a theoretical framework covers the main features of a researcher's positioning and its presumed relationships. Social learning theory emphasises learning that occurs within a social context. Bandura's perspective on social learning has provided a broad-band explanation for both desirable and undesirable behavioural outcomes. These behavioural outcomes have included a broad array of theory and practice in learning and change and they encompass both cognitive and behavioural approaches. Therefore Bandura's framework moves beyond the narrow behavioural perspective defined by the early behaviourists such as Skinner<sup>3</sup> (1938, 1953) and include the cognitive perspective. Banduras' views recognise that many aspects of human behaviour are a result of the stimulus-response suggested by Skinner. Cognitive learning assumes that there are psychological factors that influence behaviour.

Furthermore, social learning theory also holds that learners' behaviour is influenced by environmental factors, and not just by psychological or cognitive factors. Thus, social learning theory assumes that psychological and environmental factors combine to influence the development of specific behaviours in learners. Ward and Gryczynski (2009) support this view by reiterating that social learning theory sees an interactive process between learners' cognition, their behaviour, and the influence of their environment. Therefore the theory stresses the importance of attending to and modelling the behaviours, cognitions (for example learners' attitudes and beliefs which may be as a result of the school culture) and emotions of others.

Bandura (1977, p. 22) argues that learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. The social learning theory of Bandura therefore emphasizes the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state that a

---

<sup>3</sup> Burrhus Frederic "B. F." Skinner (March 20, 1904 – August 18, 1990) was an American behavioural psychologist. He was a firm believer of the idea that human free will was actually an illusion and any human action was the result of the consequences of that same action. If the consequences were bad, there was a high chance that the action would not be repeated; however, if the consequences were good, the actions that lead to it would be reinforced.

theory could contain a combination of concepts and ideas which constructs an overt logical perspective of an event, behaviours or relationships with the aim of explaining or predicting a phenomenon under investigation. For this reason, social learning theory can be further explained by elaborating on human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, an environmental influences.

That notwithstanding, the distinguishing feature of Bandura's theory is the idea that most behaviours are acquired through observing others and modelling their behaviours after theirs. He terms this process 'observational learning'. Naidoo, Townsend and Carolissen (2010) advise that the term does not directly imply that learners would directly reproduce the observed behaviours in exactly the same way that they observed them; rather, they will extract common features from a number of behaviours they have observed and formulate their own rules of behaviour that allow them to go beyond merely repeating or mimicking what they have seen. The component processes underlying observational learning as proposed by Banduras are as follows:

**Attention process:** This process will include modelled events (distinctiveness, affective valence, complexity, prevalence, functional value) and observer characteristics (sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set and past reinforcement). When a person uses an attention process, s/he actively concentrates on a model performing a particular behaviour, taking in the relevant information and distinctive features of the model's behaviour that will be used in imitating the model. The adoption of the modelled behaviour is strengthened when the outcomes of that behaviour are valued, seen as important to the individual or lead to desirable and expected outcomes.

**Retention process:** This process will include symbolic coding, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, and motor rehearsal. When a retention process is used, the individual remembers what s/he has seen or heard in order to imitate the appropriate aspects of the model's behaviour when the model is no longer present. The model's behaviour must be transformed into either visual or verbal symbols and stored in the memory for retrieval at a later stage or when needed. The modelled behaviour is more likely to be integrated by the observer when the model has characteristics similar to the observer, there is a cognitive-behavioural connection with the model, the model is admired by the observer, and the behaviour that is adopted has practical or functional value.



**Motor Reproduction process:** This process will include physical capabilities, self-observation of reproduction, and accuracy of feedback. In a motor reproduction process the individual wishes to reproduce a model's behaviour, transforming the symbolic coded information into appropriate actions required.

**Motivational process:** This process will include external, vicarious and self-reinforcement. During motivational process, the individual is choosing to reproduce a particular behaviour. This process, however, requires sufficient incentives. As a result, a positively reinforced behaviour is more likely to be repeated and a negatively reinforced behaviour is less likely to be repeated.

Knight (2001) one of the prominent protagonists of social learning specifically through classroom management, outlines that there should not be a focus on rules when learners are disciplined in school. Rather, the focus should be on a student-centred management of learner discipline problems. Knight (2001) adds that for this reason disciplinary methods must be directed towards the goals of discipline and not on the act of discipline itself. The learners will learn through observing adults' behaviour and perform expected behaviour at school.

Social learning theory can be used to explain the development of deviant behaviour of learners, substance use and abuse. Theoretically, if an individual never observed these behaviours, then those behaviours would never be learned. If a child or adolescent was never exposed to substance use or to individuals committing crimes, then theoretically the individual would never adopt the behaviour. Once it is adopted, the behaviour leads to positive consequences or outcomes. For example acceptance by the group, sense of power, attention of peers, establishment of a group role that instils a sense of pride, etc. The degree of positive reinforcement will determine whether the behaviour is continued. Group norms become a power base for this reinforcement. Nevertheless, social learning theory has its limitations with respect to explaining certain behaviours learned under certain conditions. For example, it is conceivable that a child could commit a crime having never observed someone committing the said crime.

However, in today's world, that is quite unlikely. Observing and modelling behaviour can be very subtle. Certainly, many circumstances will determine the individual's exposure to potential models. The important factor is that once the behaviour is adopted, internally coded, and reproduced in such a manner that it leads to some kind of positive reinforcement, that

behaviour will continue to be reproduced. However, behavioural outcome may be perceived to be undesirable to the individual, decreasing the probability that the behaviour will continue.

Social learning theory has been applied extensively to the understanding of aggression (Bandura, 1973) and psychological disorders, particularly in the context of behaviour modification (Bandura, 1969). It also serves as the theoretical foundation for the technique of behaviour modelling which is widely used in training programs; for example, for teachers and parents. In recent years, the focus of social learning theory has been on the concept of self-efficacy in a variety of contexts.

### **The concept of self-efficacy**

The notion of self-efficacy as derived from Bandura's social learning theory is the belief in one's ability to perform the behaviours required to produce a desired outcome and is considered to be an important determinant of behaviour change (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, Bandura sees self-efficacy as a critical factor in cognitive and behavioural change since it determines the execution of learned cognitive and behavioural coping skills.

The view of self-efficacy holds that people are motivated to attempt behaviour that they feel confident in performing. Those with high self-efficacy who believe they can perform well are more likely to view difficult behaviour as something to be mastered rather than to be avoided. During the process, learners measure their behaviours against the standard expected behaviour and if they meet the standard, they are likely to reward themselves. People with a strong sense of self-efficacy view problems as challenges to be overcome and they recover quickly from setbacks. Naidoo *et al.* (2010) suggest that such learners have self-direction and they dictate which behaviour they will maintain, improve and/or discontinue, while people with a weaker sense of self-efficacy avoid challenging tasks, believing them to be beyond their capabilities. Bandura identifies four major sources of self-efficacy, the most important being performance mastery. Vicarious experience, social persuasion and emotional arousal are also sources of self-efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977).

Self-efficacy is of particular relevance to practitioners who are involved in parenting support work for learners with discipline problems specifically. Programme facilitators can implement and evaluate their practice through the application of parenting self-efficacy, which is parents' belief in their ability to manage and influence the behaviour and

development of their children. Through parenting programmes, an opportunity is provided for parents to raise their expectations as a result of mastering positive behaviours, experiencing the success of other parents, and through encouragement from programme facilitators and other parents. Self-efficacy is used in measuring parenting support for their children and this is an important stage in the application of theory to practice (Kendall, 1991). This initiative was developed in response to a need for a robust tool to evaluate parenting programs in the United Kingdom (UK). Because it encompasses attention, memory and motivation, social learning theory spans both cognitive and behavioural frameworks. Bandura's theory improves upon the strictly behavioural interpretation of modelling provided by Miller and Dollard (1941).

## **Conclusion**

Through the lens of the framework of social learning theory by Banduras, the researcher is guided as to how novice teachers manage learners with discipline problems at school. Furthermore, the framework also illuminates these teachers' understanding and identification of learners' discipline issues within the school context. In the current study, only aspects that were related to the management of learners' disruptive behaviours by the participants were of interest to the researcher as this facilitated a focus on their managerial practices. In addition, this framework enabled the researcher to focus on learner discipline problems encountered by novice teachers in rural secondary schools. The researcher therefore attempted, through the lens of the theoretical framework, to understand how novice teachers identified and managed disruptive behaviours from the perspective of where the learners learned or copied such behaviours from. For this reason the theory was chosen for the study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology of the study that was employed by the researcher to understand the various learner discipline problems faced by novice teachers and how these teachers managed the problems encountered in school. In an attempt to generate data to answer the research questions, the chapter discusses the research design, the research paradigm and the case study research methodology that the study adopted. The reason for a case study was to gain a detailed understanding of how novice teachers managed learner discipline problems as experienced deeply within the context of their teaching experiences. A detail description of the participants' context is therefore presented. Data collection instruments are fully explained in this chapter, together with the process of data analysis and the trustworthiness of the research. The chapter concludes with an outline of the ethical considerations that guided the research, validity and reliability issues, and the limitations of the study.

#### 3.2 Research Design

A research design is the specification of an adequate operation(s) to be performed in order to test specific hypotheses under the given condition or investigation (Mouton, 2001). It is a tool which "relates directly to the testing of hypotheses" (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2007, p. 77). De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) affirm that research design is all those decisions that the researcher makes in the planning of the study. It is the strategies, methods, traditions of inquiry and approaches that are used to conduct the given study. Therefore, research design is to study certain phenomena according to the certain formulas which are suitable for the specific research goals. In this study the researcher was interested in understanding how novice teachers understood, identified and managed learners' discipline within school.

##### 3.2.1 Interpretive paradigm

Cohen, *et al.* (2011) state that in the interpretive paradigm, the researcher interprets, observes events and views the social world in its natural state with the purpose of understanding this social world. This paradigm guides the researcher to explore participants' daily teaching in its natural state, which gives the researcher a rich and detailed understanding of the participants'

reality. Furthermore, using an interpretive paradigm generates understanding of the participant's world which may not be unique, but which is subjective to the participant. Therefore, this paradigm helps the researcher to examine the phenomenon under investigation through the eyes of the participants rather than through other sources. Cohen *et al.* (2011) argue that this paradigm is specifically noted for its characterisation of the individual's concerns. It is for these valid reasons that the current study employed the interpretive paradigm.

Historically, interpretive paradigm has its roots in hermeneutics, the study of the theory and practice of interpretation. It was developed in view of philosophical theory of meaning and understanding, and literary interpretation. Various theorists of hermeneutics (Pickles, 1992; and Thiselton, 1992) consider understanding to be a process of psychological reconstruction, where the reader reconstructs the original intention of the author. In this view, the text is the expression of the thoughts of its author, and interpreters must attempt to put themselves within the author's horizon in order to reconstruct the intended meaning of the text. Maree (2007, p. 59) believes that this enables the researcher to effectively interpret the thoughts of the participants. For this reason, using the interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to construct meanings of novice teachers' management of learner discipline from their perspective and not from that of the researcher.

Maree (2007) further states that the interpretive paradigm allows for assumptions which help the researcher to explore what is intended. Human life is understood from within, suggesting that it focuses on people's subjective experiences, on how people construct their social world by sharing meanings, and how they interact with or relate to each other. Therefore, by engaging in an interaction among novice teachers on learners' discipline problems, the researcher acquired socially constructed meanings as the participants were placed in their social contexts. Maree (2007) states that under such circumstance there is greater opportunity to understand the perception the participants have of their own activities.

### **3.2.2 Qualitative research method**

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher chose to conduct a qualitative research as opposed to quantitative research. This research approach explores the richness, depth, and complexity of phenomena, and it is associated with interpretivist paradigms in which the main indicator of meaning is content (Henning *et al.* 2004). This method was

employed to help the researcher understand how novice teachers understood, identified and managed learner discipline in their school.

Qualitative research draws the research into the phenomenological complexity of participants' world (Cohen et al., 2011). Maree (2007) affirms that the qualitative researcher believes that the way of knowing reality (epistemology) is by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon. Bless, Higson-Smith, and Kagee (2007) states that "the research methods and process hail greater flexibility with an emergent design and are in construct to a pre-established design, which is applied in qualitative research". This is therefore an attempt to see how others have constructed their reality by interrogating them about it. One of the objectives of qualitative research is an attempt to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing and understanding what is being observed or studied about the said phenomenon. It therefore focuses on how individuals and groups view and understand their world and construct meaning out of their experiences. Using qualitative research therefore helped the researcher to construct meaning regarding the experiences of novice teachers with learner discipline problems in a rural secondary school. Maree (2007) also states that a qualitative research approach focuses on people; how and why they interact with each other, their motives and their relationships. Therefore, the study was embedded in the notion that novice teachers' experiences of learner discipline problems in a rural secondary school would be suitable for the investigation. As the nature of the reality (ontology) of qualitative research is based on the assumption that the world is made up of multiple and subjective realities, these realities can be constructed for people in their respective contexts and it can also change with time.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) warn that in qualitative research, people are changing and this means that qualitative research is non-static. Moodley (2009) affirms that the qualitative researcher reflects on his/her own values and biases. In this regard, it is the researcher's perspective that the experiences and challenges of novice teachers regarding learner discipline in rural secondary schools must be noted and taken into consideration for policy amendments by the Department of Basic Education. Maree (2007) affirms that the qualitative research method is used world-wide by many disciplines compared to other research methods. "It has become a popular and important research method. The growth in popularity of and support for qualitative research approaches can also be seen as a logical parallel to the development of the philosophical theories of structuralism, post-structuralism,

constructivism and post modernism - all of which rely to a greater or lesser degree on the insights brought to the fore by an emerging world-view” (Maree, 2007, pp. 50-51).

The researcher’s main focus in the current study was on the discipline problems experienced by learners in rural secondary schools. The qualitative research method unpacked the reasons for poor learner discipline as the researcher was concerned with understanding the processes and social and cultural contexts which underlined various behavioural patterns. Moreover, the researcher was mostly concerned with exploring the ‘why’ questions of the research (Maree, 2007, p. 51); in this case it was why the novice teachers managed learner discipline the way they did.

The qualitative research methodology enabled the researcher to observe the participants in their natural environment and to focus on their meanings and interpretations. The qualitative research method typically studies people and systems by interacting with them in a given environment (Maree, 2007). Neuman (2006) affirms that qualitative research explores attitudes, behaviours and experiences through methods such as interviews or focus groups. It attempts to get an in-depth opinion from the participants. As it is attitudes, behaviour and experiences which are important, fewer people may take part in the research which is advantageous to the researcher (Rule & John, 2011). In this study two novice teachers were researched. They were required to tell of their educational experiences; that is, all matters around them relating to classroom management of learner discipline in a rural secondary school.

Furthermore, the qualitative research approach reveals the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relations, systems or people. It enables the researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts about that phenomenon, and discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon. In this study the researcher observed learners in their setting which enabled him to gain more insight about learners’ behaviour related to discipline. In addition, qualitative research is about “deeper meanings of social action; how these are interpreted, understood and appreciated by individuals” (Maree, 2007, p. 54).

### **3.2.3 Case study as the research methodology**

In order to understand how novice teachers managed learner behaviour problems, the researcher used a case study methodology to carry out the investigation. Rule and John (2011) define case study as a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge. The phenomenon of the management of learner

discipline can likewise be studied as a case study. Cohen *et al.* (2005) argue that a case study probes deeply into a phenomenon and analyses intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit being investigated. In this research, the case of the study was a rural secondary school in the Port Shepstone region (Hlokozi area) on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal, approximately 120 km from Durban. The unit of investigation or analysis within this case was how novice teachers understood, identified and managed learner discipline within their school. Maree (2007) affirms that a case study describes the unit of analysis as well as the research method. Furthermore, it is a systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain a phenomenon of interest. It is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context-when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly evident. Although Cohen *et al.* (2005, p. 253) note that case studies are conducted in specific temporal, geographic and institutional contexts, the school selected by the researcher was meant to optimise the existing experiences of novice teachers on how they managed their learners' discipline. From the perspective of the interpretive paradigm, a typical characteristic of case studies is that they strive towards a comprehensive understanding of how participants relate and interact with each other in a specific situation and how they make meaning of a phenomenon under study.

The advantage of the case study is that it is especially suitable for research that deals with a little known or poorly understood situation. With novice teachers entering into a profession with little experience on how to manage learner discipline problems, a case study would be a suitable method of investigating their experiences in the teaching profession. Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 137) support this proposition by stating that the use of the case study "...is useful for investigating how an individual or program changes over time, perhaps as a result of certain circumstances or interventions". On the other hand, the disadvantage or the weakness of a case study method of investigation is that, when a single case is involved, we cannot be certain that the findings could be generalised to other similar contexts or schools.

According to Cohen *et al.* (2011), a case study is a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle. Furthermore, a case study is an in-depth study of a particular situation rather than a sweeping statistical survey which is quantitative. It is a method used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic. This method therefore applies to the management of learner discipline problems by novice teachers. Rule and John (2011) support this view by stressing that a case study is a systematic



and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge.

The researcher therefore chose a case study methodology because a this methodology allowed him to gain a deep understanding of how novice teachers within a rural school context identified, understood and managed learner discipline problems. The case study methodology also allowed the researcher to understand the phenomenon within the specific rural school context.

## **DATA COLLECTIVE TOOLS:**

### **3.3 Semi-structured Interviews**

Marshall and Rossman (2006) state that interviews are conversations with a purpose where the researcher or interviewer conveys his attitudes and gains all that he wants from his or her participants during the interview. An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions to collect data and to learn about ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participants. The major aim of qualitative interviews is to see the world through the eyes of the participants. They can be a valuable source of information, provided they are used correctly (Cohen *et al.* 2005). The aim is always to obtain rich descriptive data that will help to “understand the participants’ construction of knowledge and social reality” (Maree, 2007, p. 87). For the purpose of this study, the researcher gathered data from the participants on the nature of the learner discipline problems they experienced and how they as novice teachers identified and managed learner discipline problems. Interviews helped the researcher to seek “a great deal of information by asking about facts, feelings, present and past behaviour and the participants’ beliefs” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 148). Furthermore, an interview is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research. Interviews can be regarded as conversation since there is a discussion between the interviewer and interviewee. Interviews are a method of data collection that helps the researcher to undertake or view the world from the participants’ perspective, to unfold the meanings of people’s experiences, and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (De Vos *et al.*, 2005). For these reasons, the researcher used semi-structured interviews which took the form of open-ended questions, which allowed the participants to explain learner discipline problems in a rural secondary school from their own perspective and experiences. The semi-structured interviews also assisted the participants to explicitly explain the various ways in which they identify

disruptive behaviour and disciplined learners as a method of classroom management. Moodley (2009) affirms that semi-structured interviews allow participants flexibility in the presentation of data for elaboration through probing. The use of probing also allows the participants to tell their stories and to clarify for the researcher some questions that arose during the discussion. This method was used in the current study to check if my misunderstanding or understanding of what had been said was accurate and understood. This was done by reiterating what I had heard or noted.

There are both advantages and limitations with individual interviews. According to Chilisa and Preece (2005), one problem with the individual interview approach normally exists in the power relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. The question centres around whose knowledge is constructed during the interview, in addition to whose language and vocabulary are being used. In this study, the interviewer played a dominant role in the process. I could have used other interview techniques such as structured and focus group interviews, but they would not have been either appropriate or possible for the study because the structured interview would not yield sufficient in-depth data and the focus group interview was not practically possible since only one school with two respondents had been selected.

### **3.4 Observation of Participants**

Maree (2007) asserts that observation is a systematic processes of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them. He further argues that observation as a qualitative data gathering technique is used to enable the researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being observed. Observations are an everyday activity whereby the use of the senses is emphasized, but intuition together with the bit of data also plays a role. In the current study the researcher observed the participants at the school under study to understand how they managed discipline throughout the day. The risk is, of course, that observation by its very nature is highly selective and subjective. Researchers seldom observe the whole of a situation but tend to focus on a specific event or object within the whole, thereby cutting us off from the whole. For this reason the researcher was conscious to avoid biases in the observation of learner discipline (Maree, 2007).

Observations in a qualitative study are intentionally unstructured and free-flowing. The researcher shifts from one thing to another as new and potentially significant objects and

events present themselves (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Therefore, as the researcher I was all around the school observing the participants whilst looking for potential discipline approaches that they might use. This was possible as observation techniques are quite flexible. Participants were observed while they were in the staff room, in class or anywhere else around the school premises.

An observation checklist was generated where important aspects pertaining to the focus of the study were outlined. This gave the researcher an explicit account of how the novice teachers managed learner discipline problems. Chilisa and Preece (2005) argue that researchers conduct observations to enable an elaborate discussion of specific issues, to corroborate findings and to triangulate or complement data gathered through interviews. A field note book may also be used to record salient points observed during data collection. Maree (2007) maintains that the recording of observations may be jotted down in key phrases or short descriptions of actions. Each teacher was observed for many days to identify consistency in management styles. To reduce the effects of the researcher's presence in the classrooms on the children and participants alike, the researcher took the time to socialise with the learners and the teachers, thereby familiarising them with and desensitising them to his presence. In order for the researcher to be as unobtrusive as possible during observation, he usually sat at the back of the classroom. The participants were well schooled in the ethical nature of the study and therefore were advised to be as natural as possible without any behaviour modifications simply because they were afraid to be reprimanded for or identified as being unprofessional.

### **3.5 Sampling of Participants**

Maree (2007) defines sampling as the process used to select a portion of the population which would be used in the study to collect data. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) affirm that sampling is when the researcher chooses the materials and objects to collect data. The researcher decides on specific participants, objects and systems to collect data for a study (Neuman, 2006). As this study was based on learner discipline problems as experienced by novice teachers, the researcher used novice teachers in the study to determine how they managed learner discipline in a rural school.

A purposive strategy of sampling was used as the participants to be included in the sample were handpicked. This was done on the basis of my judgments of their typicality; i.e., the sample was chosen for a specific purpose (Moodley, 2009, p. 37). Maree (2007) argues that

qualitative research is generally based on non-probability and purposive sampling rather than on probability or random sampling approaches. Purposive sampling means that the researcher selects participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to the research questions to be answered by the study.

The sample for the research was two novice teachers from one secondary school in the Hlokozi rural area in KZN. This rural area is approximately 95 km from Port Shepstone. The sample consisted of one male and one female teacher. Each of these two novice teachers had less than three years of teaching experience. The selection of these teachers helped the researcher to gain insight into the problems they encountered as new teachers. Purposive sampling is seen as an appropriate sampling method in qualitative research. Researchers rely on their experiences, ingenuity and previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain is regarded as being representative of the relevant population (Neuman, 2006). The choice of gender was to emphasise gender equity, as there were one male and one female teacher. Both participants were Black Africans since the school is situated in an area which is predominantly populated by Black Zulu-speaking South Africans. The selection of the school was based on its geographic position in the Hlokozi area which is divided into three regions. The researcher picked out one school in the region as it was accessible by road.

### **3.6 A Brief Description of the Research School Site**

Since this was a case study it is important that the site of the study be briefly described. This will give the reader a vivid understanding of the school context and other related issues concerning the study.

The school is situated in the deep rural area of Hlokozi in Highflats. Highflats is a small town where most of the people purchase their goods. The administration of the school falls under Highflats Ward, Scottburgh Circuit, Ugu District. The school consists of two main building blocks; these blocks accommodate all the classrooms and the administrative office.

At the time of the study the school was in desperate need of basic resources. The staff consisted of four educators, including the principal. It had a total of ninety nine learners from grades 8 to 10. The educators taught across several learning areas as there were not enough educators to teach individual learning areas. The school faced enormous challenges in terms of learner discipline. This was not only due to the teacher to learner ratio, but also because the learners were from different home backgrounds and some lived very far away

from the school. Therefore class attendance of all the learners in the mornings was a serious problem.

The available resources were desperately limited and ranged from learners' needs to administrative needs. The situation in the school left the teachers with a battle on many fronts which included limited resource, dealing with overcrowding and managing learners' discipline problems.

### **3.7 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness**

Validity is an attempt to check whether the meaning and interpretation of an event is sound or whether a particular measure is an accurate reflection of what the researcher intended to find out, whereas reliability is about the consistency of a measure, score or rating that was concluded by the said study (Vithal & Jansen, 2010).

The researcher used a tape-recorder which was repeatedly played back to ensure that all that had been said by the participants had been heard correctly and that the transcriptions were accurate. This was necessary to ensure the validity and reliability of the data (Moodley, 2009). Furthermore, the researcher took notes in order to “harness some of the contextual factors that [were] not in talk, such as gestures, facial expressions, tone of speech and general body language” (Moodley, 2009 p. 38). The transcripts were given to the participants peruse in order to ensure that all that had been said had been correctly transcribed. Furthermore, triangulation of the data that were collected by means of interviews, observations and notes was done to ensure the validity of the findings.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher applied for and received permission and ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct the research. Permission to conduct the study in the school was also granted by the principal prior to the commencement of the data collection process (Appendix One and Appendix Two respectively). After pledging their participation, an informed consent form was signed by the participants. The purpose of the study was made clear to the participants and they gave their consent for the use of a voice recorder during the interviews.

According to Wilig (2001), participants should be fully informed about the research procedures prior to giving their consent to participate in the research. The participants were guaranteed of the confidentiality of their information and their anonymity. The rights of the

participants were made known to them and they were informed that they were free to withdraw their participation at any time if they no longer wished to do so. The researcher personally handled each participant's consent letter and took the time to explain the content of the letter. Both participants signed the consent form.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

According to Mouton (2001), the aim of analysis is to understand the different elements in one's data and to identify patterns or themes. In an attempt to answer the critical research questions, the raw data collected were coded and categorised into themes in order to produce a meaningful and trustworthy conclusion that was supported by evidence as to how it was reached. Maree (2007) states that data analysis involves working with data by organizing and breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others. The data were first organised and presented according to each participants' case study, and the responses of each was considered before proceeding to the next example. By so doing, the coherence and integrity of each individual response was preserved and facilitated a holistic view of the case (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The narrative data was read line by line, and substantive codes were identified and named. The emerging issues from both participants were then categorised, where patterns of responses, similarities and differences raised were analysed and were given different names according to their respective categories. De Vos (2005) states that qualitative data analysis involves a search for statements about the relationships among identified categories of the data obtained from participants. In addition to the interview transcripts, data from the observation schedule for each of the novice teachers was also coded and categorised to match the emerging themes. The data collected from the participants were analysed in relation to the various ways in which the participants managed their learners' discipline problems. Lichtman (2006) concludes that it is the role of the researcher to bring understanding, interpretation and meaning to the data; therefore, the data should be analysed in an explicit and descriptive manner. However, Braun and Clarke (2006 p. 86), explain the nature of thematic analysis by stating that it "involves a constant moving forward and backwards between the entire data set, the coded extracts that you are analysing, and the analysis of the data that have been produced. Writing is an integral part of analysis, not something that takes place at the end as it does with statistical analyses."

### **3.10 Limitations of the study**

Although the strength of qualitative research lies in its focus on extracting meaning, like quantitative research, it still has serious limitations. In particular, these limitations include researcher prejudice and bias, observer effects, and writing about the findings so that readers can replicate the study. Due to the evaluator being the key instrument in qualitative research, the evaluator's prejudice and bias could be introduced into the findings and results of the study (Msani, 2007). The current study concentrated on one school in the Hlokozi area. It paid no attention to the surrounding schools or schools in neighbouring areas. The school selected was accessible and had novice teachers. The findings cannot be generalized to the whole Hlokozi area, but may be an indication of the learner discipline problems within the area of Hlokozi, possibly the whole of KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, the results of this study were not a reflection of all schools within the KZN province. However, some readers might identify with the classroom managerial patterns of learner discipline by the novice teachers of the study sample. It is acknowledged that using a wider range of rural schools could have elicited wider-ranging conclusions on the existing nature of novice teachers' management of learners' discipline.

Furthermore, the research did not investigate other aspects related to novice teachers such as administrative support to the teachers, negotiation of contextual challenges and transitional adaptation from being a learner to teacher professionalism.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

This chapter explored the research design and methodology used for the study. The study was situated within the interpretive paradigm and followed a qualitative approach which focused on how novice teachers identified, understood and managed learner discipline problems in a rural secondary school. The research was conducted as a case study in one rural secondary school. This school was selected on the simple criteria that it was located in a rural area, had novice teachers, and was accessible by road. Two participants took part in the study. The methods used for data generation were interviews and observations of the participants. The participants were fully informed of the aims and nature of the research and their rights as well as the anonymous nature of their participation were also made known to them and guaranteed respectively. The limitations of the study were identified in this chapter to acknowledge the areas of the study that could affect its credibility. In the next chapter, the findings will be presented and analysed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the profiles of the participants and a discussion of the data collected from the two novice teachers. The discussion analyses how these novice teachers managed the learner discipline problems that they encountered in their school. The chapter commences with a brief presentation of the participants as would be expected of case study methodology. This is followed by the presentation and analysis of themes that were identified from the data collected. Three main themes emerged which were: the nature of discipline problems that the novice teachers experienced; novice teachers' perceptions of the reasons why these learner discipline problems occurred within the school; and mechanism that these novice teachers used in the management of these learner discipline problems. Sub-themes were also derived from the analyses. These subthemes include: school cultural practices; collective approaches to learner discipline; learner rights discourse; punishment acts and processes; and society and its influence on learner discipline.

#### **4.2 Profiles of Participants and a Thick Description of the Research Site**

The novice teachers were newly appointed male and female teachers. The female teacher had a Diploma in Financial Accounting and also obtained a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at UNISA, while the male teacher has Diploma in Agriculture and was studying towards obtaining a PGCE through UNISA as well. The female teacher was twenty four years of age and the male was twenty four. To protect their identities, the pseudonyms for the novice teachers were Soffie for the female and Mafa for the male. Mafa was appointed in January 2010 while Soffie was appointed in May 2010. The participants taught in the same school and lived within the community where the school is located. Apart from their posting as novice teachers, neither had lived in such a deep rural area before. Although they travelled to Port Shepstone to visit family and friends, this separation posed a serious challenge in their settling in process both in the school and in their new community. Both teachers were yet to have a car of their own and were offered lifts from their colleague during the week. However, they were compelled to use a taxi to travel at weekends. As is expected in the rural areas of South Africa, teachers are relatively neatly dressed and this was the case with the novice teachers. They were remarkably fashionable when compared to their colleagues; much to the admiration of the researcher. Furthermore, these teachers had not had



any prior work experience since they graduated from their respective fields of study and this circumstance was the underpinning motivation for them to get into teaching through PGCE via UNISA to be qualified to teach.

The school is located within a rural setting, approximately 95 km from the nearest major city. The school has an enrolment of approximately 154 learners, largely from within a 2 Km radius of the school. The school has limited structural capacity in terms of the number of classrooms and toilet facilities. No services such as electricity, a water-borne sewer system and telephone are available to the school. Key facilities like a library and computers are not available at school, and neither are other teaching resources. Teachers seldom use teaching resources, especially those that require technology. The school does not have a perimeter fence or access gates. There are no security personnel in the school. The road leading to the school is a farm road. The school is located between two villages and acts as a thoroughfare between these two villages. There are limited facilities like shops near the school. Access to amenities is usually by means of local taxis or taking very long walks. Groups of people, some who are learners and some, who are not in school, are always hanging around the school premises. During school hours, vendors set up their stalls on the outside perimeter of the school. There is a small taxi rank near the school as taxis assist with learner transport paid for by the learners. Although gangs are not usually seen around the school, they sometimes drive around the school in their car(s) with very loud music distracting the learners. School management has done everything possible to eradicate the presence of drugs at school but social gatherings outside the school premises do serve as sales points for drugs. There are some churches located between the two villages but they are mostly and frequently visited by elderly members of the community.

## Contextual Analysis of Participants

Location of school	Rural area	
Pseudonym of participants	Soffie	Mafa
Gender	Female	Male
Age	24	27
Ethnicity	Black	Black
Qualification	Diploma in financial accounting and PGCE	Diploma in agriculture (presently studying at UNISA for PGCE)
Years of teaching experience	3 years	3 years
Level and number of grades being taught by teacher	8 and 9	7 and 8
Number of learners in class	24 and 26	20 and 24

Table 4.1 presents a summary of the contextual information about the participants.

### 4.3 Data Presentation

While the focus of this study was on novice teachers' management of learner discipline problems within a rural secondary school, this case study allowed the researcher to explore the data from the two participants through two common processes. The first process was to categorise the data into three themes. These three themes are common to understand and are perhaps to be expected when one considers the focus of the study. These themes were also supported by the themes that emerged from the literature review on learner discipline problems, i.e., the nature and type of learner discipline problems that teachers experience; the reasons for such learner discipline problems; and the actions that teachers take to address learner discipline problems. Hence, the three themes selected for the management and presentation of the data obtained by this study were: The nature of discipline problems that the novice teachers experienced; novice teachers' perceptions of the reasons why these learner discipline problems occurred in the school; and the mechanisms that these novice teachers used in the management of these learner discipline problems. These three themes form the framework for the data presentation and analysis in this chapter.

The second process in exploring the data involved an abstraction of sub-themes from the interviews and observation data. These sub-themes allowed the researcher to engage in a deeper analysis of what had been said and perceived by the participants with a view to illuminating factors and issues that can be addressed so that learner discipline issues can be

minimized within class and school interactions. This second process presented the following sub-themes that individually and collectively related to each and across some of the above mentioned broad themes. These sub-themes were: school cultural practices; collective approaches to learner discipline; learner rights discourse; punishment acts and processes; society and its influence on learner discipline. These sub-themes were abstracted from the data through a process of highlighting and grouping responses into meaningful illuminations worthy of further and deeper research to explore the extent to which novice teachers experienced these kinds of learner discipline problems and to understand these issues with a view to finding ways of addressing them.

#### **4.4 Thematic Presentation of the Data and the Analysis Thereof:**

**The three major themes that were identified from the data are presented below:**

##### **4.4.1 The nature of learner discipline problems that novice teachers experienced**

Learner discipline is a major challenge facing all sectors of school life nationally and internationally and its relevance cannot be ignored due to its probable impact on the future of learners and that of the society (Brown, 2004; Tungata, 2006). Although learner discipline will vary from one context to the next, the most common forms of discipline problems prevail in almost most schools. The findings of this revealed the following learner discipline problems:

Classroom disruption by learners who stand up unnecessarily and walk across the classroom; shouting; learners do not listen to commands or instructions by the teacher; walking in and out of the classroom at will; incomplete learning activities, either in terms of class work or homework; absenteeism and late coming to school; smoking and drug- taking in and out of school; violence in and out of school; disregard for school property; improper use of school uniform; and vulgar language and insults aimed at teachers and fellow learners.

Similar findings have been noted in the literature on learner discipline problems (Adams, 2004; Peloyahae, 2005; Jackson, 2012). Each of these types of learner discipline problems experienced by these novice teachers will be discussed below. Note that the transcriptions form the interviews are presented verbatim.

##### **➤ *Classroom disruption by learners***

Classroom disruption seems to be the most common form of learner discipline problem experienced by teachers (Woolfolk, 2010; Masekoameng, 2010). This kind of learner discipline problem is easily noticed by the teacher as well as anyone who observes the class. Both novice teachers have noted this form of discipline problem and commented on it. During my observations this form of learner discipline problem was omnipresent, suggesting that it seems to be a way of classroom life and apparently very difficult to eliminate and challenging to manage.

Mafa indicated:

*“...we really cannot control all of them at all the same...”*

With regards to movement within and between the classroom and the toilets, Mafa said: *“They think that they can do as they please. Learners move across the class when they please and have disregard for what instructional activity is taking place. They also go to the toilets, bang the doors on exit or entry into the class without consideration for the instructional activity or respect for the teacher.”*

Soffie added:

*“... They shout across the room unnecessarily, fight a lot with their books, desks and even friends. Eish! They just do many things not related to learning activities. I just expect anything now when I’m teaching; these learners really disturb [the class] at any time and for any reason”.*

The implication of this major challenge that these teachers faced in trying to bring discipline under control is that they spent so much teaching time in trying to manage the learners and less on teaching time. With very little teaching taking place, it is no wonder that the performance of these learners was low, as indicated by Mafa: *“... the rate of failure is one of the major problems; they do not do work”.*

Gender issues featured quite prominently in classroom disruptions, both from the perspective of the teacher. The female teacher felt very intimidated and vulnerable during the disruptions while the male learners flaunted their macho valence. Moreover, the disruption of teaching time by learners manifested in many forms, such as:

Attitude of learners: *“Some male learners they (sic) have got an attitude towards teachers who are female” (comment by Soffie).* This suggests that the much attitude that male learners

demonstrated as their perceived right to dominate over women, gave them the right to do as they pleased and no one could do anything about it. This attitude by male learners and sometimes by learners in general demonstrated that they perceived that they had rights which were extremely difficult to manage by teachers, especially female teachers.

Mafa remarked: *“They are ruled by their rights...because they believe that they have rights”*.

While the literature on learner discipline suggests that classroom disruptions are a common feature of classroom life for all teachers in general, novice teachers do feel more pressure. Soffie said: *“The challenges I got as a teacher in school... first is how to understand ...err... the understanding between the learner and the teacher – how to discipline the learners as I am a new teacher and the challenges to be an educator at school”*. These remarks suggest that these novice teachers were expected to cope with learning to be a teacher and managing learner discipline problems at the same time, just as any other seasoned teacher would be expected to do. This dual challenge is not uncommon as the literature on novice teachers recognises this dual challenge (Edwards, 2008; Coetzee, *et al.*, 2011). The concern that emerges from this longstanding issue of dealing with the dual challenge of novice teachers' settling in and of dealing with classroom disruptions, is that despite knowing about this challenge, no workable solutions have been found as yet, both in the induction perspective for novice teachers as well as in pre-service teacher development programmes. It seems that this dual challenge is firmly lodged in the comfort zone of illumination and recognition, as there are no workable solutions available. These teachers therefore try to understand their learners' behaviour as a means of better managing them. Sometimes the disruption levels are manageable and teachers can continue with the lesson, but at other times teaching is simply disrupted for the rest of the lesson period.

#### ➤ ***Incomplete learning activities***

Incomplete learning activities such as homework and class activities do compromise what learners learn and need to learn. The curriculum for the subject is pre-determined and teachers prepare lesson plans, hoping to accomplish the outcomes set for a lesson within a particular time frame. When learners do not complete expected tasks, the learning outcomes are compromised and this impacts on the quality of learning and the performance of the learners. The discipline issue related to this factor is that some learners have little interest in doing any learning activities and are thus excluded from the learning process.

Mafa commented: *“They do not want to submit the work because they know that there is no corporal punishment anymore. And number two, the rate of failure is one of the major problems, they do not do work.”*

This suggests that the teachers had very few sanctions at their disposal that could be employed to compel their learners to do the expected work. This nonchalant behaviour of the learners with regards to completing their school work affected these teachers negatively. They had spent whole lot of time planning for their lessons, only to realise that they could not complete their daily task: *“When these learners disturb in class it becomes difficult to complete what you planned to teach them for the day,”* commented Soffie. One could deduce an understanding that these teachers got frustrated when they were faced with the problem of managing continuous and persistent classroom disruptions. Furthermore, these teachers faced another dual challenge, which was to do extensive lesson planning only to realise that they could not translate their planning into teaching activities because of classroom disruptions related to learners not allowing the teaching activities to continue according to plan.

Mafa explained:

*“This thing is very confusing; you prepare to teach, they disturb and the day you don’t prepare to teach few of them are in school and then they are quiet because they are small in class”.*

This dual challenge created a planning dilemma in its own right, resulting in novice teachers struggling with planning issues, limited available teaching time due to classroom disruptions, keeping a coherent flow of learning as planned, and catching up with teaching and learning that were lost due to disruptions. The study therefore revealed that the incomplete management of classroom activities was largely determined by the learners’ habitual disruptive and interruptive behaviours.

#### ➤ ***Absenteeism and late coming to school***

This problem seemed to be on-going at the school. The learners were expected to be at school at 8:00 in the morning; but hardly did one find more than 70% of the learners on campus at that time. Late coming therefore was not only experienced as a challenge by the novice teachers alone, but also by the rest of the staff.

Mafa stated:

*“I don’t always have all my learners in class and it’s hard to teach like that when you know some of the learners are not going to come to school at all.”*

Soffie indicated:

*“I have a learner who comes to school once a week and some of them go missing for two weeks.”*

The behaviours of these learners clearly made it very difficult for these teachers to do their job. There was no assurance of learner continuity since they did not attend school consistently.

The problem of late coming poses a lot challenges to teachers in general (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009); however, this is a more acute problem for novice teachers who are still trying to get acquainted with measures to implement their daily lesson plans. Soffie said:

*“Sometime you get into class and you find learners coming one after the other.”*

This tardiness had an impact on learning and teaching, as Mafa explained:

*“... it becomes hard for me to continue teaching when I know some learners are still coming”.*

The implications of absenteeism and late coming had negative ramifications for the school. However, these issues challenged novice teachers to the utmost as they forced them to take stock of their ineffective ability to be flexible in implementing their lesson plans.

### ➤ ***Smoking and drug taking in and out of school***

Learner discipline is a behavioural manifestation that is presumed to have been learned rather than being acquired. The manifestations of disruptive behaviours are, most often than not, the result of smoking and the use of drugs by some of these learners both inside and outside the school premises.

Soffie explained:

*“Eish, some of these learners I am scared of them because what they do you come to class after break and you find a learner looking at you with their eyes so red and their body smelling with all kinds of drugs.”*

She clearly indicated how her teaching was affected by such behaviours. Such learners sometimes turned very violent and posed a difficult challenge for the teacher when they were identified in class. Soffie explained:

*“Whenever I notice such learners I just avoid going to where they are or to ask them any questions. If I have to tell you the truth, I will prefer that they stay out of class because it is not safe having them in class.”*

This fear for some learners had a huge impact on her teaching because she is a female teacher and most learners, including female learners, became disrespectful. Mafa added:

*“You will not find a learner who has taken drugs in the morning. Most of them take them during break or after school.”*

This fact therefore extended learner discipline problems outside the school premises and made it difficult for the teacher to teach whenever learners under the influence of drugs were identified in class.

➤ ***Violence in and out of school and disregard for school property***

When learners are involved with smoking and the use of drugs, delinquent behaviour is almost impossible to be dissociated from them. Most of the time such behaviour distracts the drug users’ attention from studying and making good grades for themselves. Violence in and out of school was found to be common in this rural area.

Mafa said:

*“The school is located between two neighbouring villages and they use the school premises to settle most of their disagreements....”*

It became apparent that violent behaviour was not isolated from the community and that the school only became a place where it was most conveniently manifested, as suggested by Soffie:

*“... since the school is the only place all the learners meet”.*

It was difficult for the learners to use weapons such as knives, guns, or bottles at school during any violent confrontation as the school administration had made a lot of effort to make sure that no weapon was brought onto the school premises. They carried out random searches



and also searched the bags of learners as they arrived at school. Nevertheless, these efforts were not successful in giving the novice teachers courage or reducing the risk of managing the learners' delinquent behaviours.

Soffie said:

*“These learners ... eish! ... they scare me. Some of them are very violent, too aggressive, it gets me scared.”*

The severe nature of the violence at the school disrupted most specifically the novice teachers' conformability in doing their job. These teachers were amazed by the level of some of their learners' aggressiveness and the courage they demonstrated in manifesting such violent behaviours. During such aggressiveness, school property became the best and only available weapons with which to carry out their violent actions.

➤ ***Improper use of school uniform***

Learners were expected to present themselves neatly, well dressed and always organised at school. But some of them did not always comply and sometimes they deliberately did not wish to dress in a manner that was appropriate and acceptable.

Mafa indicated:

*“Some of these learners just take out their uniform and walk around the school with something else on, mostly the boys.”*

Soffie added:

*“... some of them do it many times. In terms of school uniforms some didn't wear it. Some are wearing black on Wednesday while they have to wear the full school uniform which is like blue and white.”*

The improper use of uniforms was not entirely the learners' fault. Although some of them seized opportunities to become recalcitrant, *“... some of the learners have not been given their complete set of school uniforms; but some just take this advantage to dress anyhow,”* explained Mafa.

Although the improper use of school uniforms did not directly disrupt teaching and learning, it was expected of teachers to caution or call to order learners who dressed improperly. Their lack of respect for their school uniform reflected a low level of self-respect and discipline.

➤ ***Vulgar language and insults aimed at teachers and fellow learners***

The use of polite and appropriate words is usually considered to be an indicator of a good and well behaved learner, more specifically in a rural context where moral values and politeness are regarded with high social esteem. However, even in this rural school learners sometimes used vulgar and insulting words aimed at their teachers and peers.

Soffie remarked:

*“When some of them, especially the boys, get angry they just swear at you. Eish! This usually gets me angry but there is little I can do”.*

It was revealed that the use of such language was intentional and the learners used profanities to get back at their teachers who remained helpless in disciplining such unwanted behaviours. Such language had an effect on the inexperienced teachers’ mood as they were still inexperienced in managing their mood swing abilities. However, the use of vulgar words was not aimed at the teachers alone. Some learners would disrupt lessons by insulting their peers in a loud voice that would distract everyone in the classroom. Mafi stated:

*“Sometimes in the middle of a lesson, you will just hear a learner swearing in a loud voice at another learner.”*

Although these learners were aware that their behaviour was inappropriate, they seemed to do it since they knew that the teachers could not use corporal punishment on them as reported by both participants. This ideology concurs with literature identified by Mokhele, and Jita, (2011); Oliver & Reschly (2007).

**4.4.2. Novice teachers’ perceived reasons on why these learner discipline problems occurred within the school**

There are numerous reasons why learners get involved with discipline problems. Some of them may be conflicting whilst others complement each other; this will nevertheless depend on the position one takes. The position taken by these novice teachers as to why there were learner discipline problems included the following: disrespect of the school code of conduct

by the learners; the influence of drugs on learners; and the effect of class size as a source of learner discipline problems.

➤ *Disrespect for the school code of conduct*

Each school should have a code of conduct from which the school rules should emanate SASA 84 of 1996. A school that has no code of conduct is poorly disciplined (Edwards, 2008), because the teachers might use incorrect disciplinary measures to address ill-discipline among learners. A school's code of conduct serves as a guide not only for disciplinary issues, but also for all school related activities, although it is predominantly dominated by a framework to curb learner disciplinary problems within the school (Adams, 2004; Edwards, 2008). The participants stated that the learners did not adhere to the rules as stipulated by the school's code of conduct. Learners came to school late almost on a daily basis despite the fact that the school rules stated the time the school started.

Mafa indicated:

*“The gate is closed at eight o'clock, if the learner comes after eight o'clock; teachers leave the learner at the gate and lock it up. These late comers are allowed to get in at school during the break time. The Department official told us as educators that we should send the learners back home as the Minister of Education in KwaZulu-Natal always say in the media. The intention is to let the parents aware of their learners late coming.*

**THE SECOND PARTICIPANT (SOFFIE) AGREED AND ADDED:**

*“Ja, late coming is in alarming rate at school especially during winter seasons.*

Most of these learners did not stay close to the school which was located between two neighbouring villages. This implies that many learners had to get up early enough to make it to school on time. However, it seemed that most of them did not give education the priority it deserves, and therefore coming early to school was not an objective for most of these learners, irrespective of what was stipulated by the school's code of conduct.

Mafa explained:

*“This is due to the long distances learners travel from. As we know that in winter the sun rises very late, these learners say that they wait the atmosphere to clear up its darkness since they travel in the forests. They wait for each other in order to go in groups.”*

The teachers strongly held the belief that the learners were absent from school unnecessarily and claimed that their reasons were neither justifiable nor acceptable with respect to the school code of conduct.

Soffie stated:

*“In the case where the teachers went to fetch a learner it was because that learner was absent from school for two weeks, she never came back after the school re-opened in July holidays”.*

There was an indication that some of these learners did not take education seriously and as a consequence they did not obey the school rules and regulations. Such behaviours are exacerbated by the fact that the majority of the students lived with their grandparents, who find it very difficult to discipline these teenagers. Although the school’s code of conduct stipulated an acceptable number of times a learner could be absent (this had been well communicated to the learners), most of them did not take this into cognisance, simply because they were fully aware of their rights. This attitude was exacerbated by the abolition of corporal punishment. The teachers understood so well that the classroom rules and regulations were important in disciplining learners which would result in improving the quality of education these learners received.

➤ ***The influence of drugs on learners***

The use of drugs and banned substances such as alcohol was identified by the teachers as one of the most destructive aspects of the learners’ indiscipline. The use of these substances, as could be expected, severely influenced these learners to misbehave at school. Substance abuse like smoking cigarettes and dagga has been earmarked as the most commonly used by learners (Durodola, 2009).

Mafa mentioned:

*“Some problems that we experience, violence is a very serious problem in our school, drugs too are serious problems”.*

Some learners became uncontrollable after taking drugs. The teachers came to an instinctive understanding that learners’ behaviours would probably change after break, which was when they took drugs.

Mafa said:

*“Eish! They are troublesome, after they smoke dagga.”*

The teachers believed that after break their learners were no longer the same, as their behaviours would be influenced by drug inducement. They argued that this was the reason for the most serious cases of lack of discipline, especially violent and aggressive behaviours. It is a well recorded fact that the effects of drugs and other abusive substances have profound repercussions for the process of teaching and learning (Adams, 2004 Coetzee, 2009 & Durodola, 2009).

➤ *The effect of class size as a source of learner discipline problems*

The Department of Basic Education has a stipulated teacher to learner ratio which is one teacher is to thirty learners. In situations where the ratio is exceeded, the management of classroom activities becomes a very difficult challenge for teachers. Beginner teachers are faced with the challenge of a heavy daily work load, the management of the classroom during teaching and learning, as well as understanding the daily requirements of the curriculum itself.

Mafa explained:

*“My class I have got few learners who are girls most of them are the boys. It’s a huge class about 50 learners. So when I am inside the class about the discipline I found it is more challenging to me to do discipline especially learners who are males. Sometimes you find that some male learners they have got an attitude towards the teacher who is a female. It is where I found it is hard for me to discipline the male learner.”*

The study revealed that the teacher-learner ratio presented a challenge in this small rural secondary school. One novice teacher had to monitor over fifty learners as a class manager whereas he also had to teach more than five learning areas. The teachers stated clearly that learning did not take place as planned since there were frequent instances when the teaching was interrupted by disturbances due to insufficient attention being given to all the learners. Furthermore, some of the learning areas that they had to teach were new to them. Consequently they struggled with the learning content, which resulted in the learners not gaining trust in them while the lesson was being delivered.

#### **4.4.3 The mechanisms that novice teachers used in the management of learner discipline problems.**

The management of learner discipline problems has reportedly become problematic for many South African teachers in recent decades, and even more acutely so for novice teachers (Durodola, 2009). As the focus of the study was to gain understanding of how novice teachers manage learners' discipline problems, the mechanisms that the novice teachers employed in managing their learners' discipline problems are elaborated below. Note that the narrative transcriptions are presented verbatim.

##### **➤ *Reciprocity of respect through communication***

A poor communication pattern alone can be a source of conflict between interlocutors. Although the relationship between teachers and learners can be described as mutual within the confines of respect, the participants demonstrated that the lines of communication were mastered at school to address learner discipline problems. Positive learner discipline is observed through interaction between learners and educators. Learners are disciplined when they talk to teachers, and this process is positive when they show respect at all times. Porteus and Vally (2001) believe in democratic discipline in the classroom; this type of discipline enables teachers to be approachable and accessible at all times to learners.

Soffie explained:

*“There is a mutual understanding with learners. As teachers, we use to talk to the learners telling them we are their parents. They may come and talk to the teachers anytime with their problems”.*

*“... as a teacher and a mother I just have to talk freely with my learners some of them interesting to talk with”.*

Mafa concurred, stating:

*“If you do not talk well with these learners, that in itself is a problem.”*

This perspective of teacher professionalism is also supported by the literature as Evans (2000) believes that democratic teachers are characterised as friendly, helpful and willing to share responsibility with their learners. It was evident that these teachers, although new in the profession, had an easy understanding of the implications of good communication with their

learners. Communication, however, is not only limited to the classroom, but is important outside the school milieu as well.

*“I show my learners some concern as I always make sure that I listen to them and I believe that it’s only through this method that I can know their problems. Some of them are shy to just come and explain their problems to you but if you talk to them like a friend they will tell you everything,”* said Soffie.

Soffie added:

*“Okay, firstly what I can say is that as teacher or as a learner must not supposed to be fear of talking to a teacher because once the child is fear talking to the teacher, whatever problem the child has, she or he won’t be able to express this feelings.”*

This approach to communication benefited these teachers in managing their learners’ discipline problems. It seemed to be a proactive as well as a preventive approach. Such a method in its own right suppresses the expression of unexpected behaviours from the learners and the process of teaching can run smoothly and the recommended teacher-centred approach can easily survive under such circumstances.

Nevertheless, the lines of communication are not only limited to helping teachers to discipline learners proactively to prevent impending disciplinary problems, but it takes time to convene meetings for the stakeholders involved in learner discipline problems.

Mofi indicated:

*“Sometimes the SMT and the DSSC may not be available immediately to sit for the misbehaviour of a learner. The HODs are also teaching, when you send the learner to them, they tell you that they are busy. Then as a newly appointed educator you sometimes learn from the old teachers.”*

### ➤ ***Inculcating self-discipline***

Learners’ self-discipline is a behavioural virtue that, when properly inculcated into the minds of learners, does not only help the process of teaching and solving learner problems, but it also builds the learner as an efficient, lifelong learner. Through this mechanism, learners need not always be monitored for any behavioural problem that may arise as they may rather be

left on their own. However, learner discipline challenges sometimes happen when the learners are left alone in the classroom.

Mofi explained:

*“It happens that at school there is no teacher in class the learners cause conflict, as a class teacher, you go to the class and talk to learners. You ask the names of those who were shouting and standing, moving up and standing. You take their names and give them punishment”.*

In most South African schools control and monitoring duties are assigned to RCLs. These learners therefore learn not only to have self-respect and respect for their peers, but also to behave properly without the presence of their teacher. One of the respondents was stated:

*“I sometimes realise that when a learner who was once punished for say making noise in class in the absence of their teacher. Each time that learner see you passing, they will just stop being funny.”*

Learner self-discipline contributes to academic performance which also solves most of the learner discipline problems identified such as late coming, frequent classroom disruption during lessons, incomplete learning activities, smoking and drug taking, violence, and the improper uses. When learners exercise self-discipline, teachers have enough time to improve their effectiveness with regards to the curriculum without having to bother themselves with learner discipline problems.

➤ ***The use of punishment to curb behavioural problems***

The use of punishment as a mechanism to curb ill-discipline is not always an easy option for novice teachers. As the use of more professional skills has not been acquired by the majority of novice teachers, they are left with the use of corporal punishment as their best and most effective option in the management of learner discipline. However, this option is prohibited by law and may not be used, even in extreme cases. With respect to minor offences, Soffie explained:

*“Late comers sometimes are given punishment like they have to clean school after or pick up papers around the school after school hours.”*



Minor offences were therefore properly managed by the novice teachers. But as time went on, such methods became less effective and the teachers no longer got the correct behavioural response when punitive methods were instituted.

Mafa stated:

*“Sometimes when you ask a learner to clean the classroom after school, hoping that they will not commit the crime again, they just do the same thing again”.*

The learners obviously understood that the teachers had limited options to effectively punish them. The participants revealed that there was little knowledge of other alternatives of learner discipline. Moreover, they were not sure about the ways of administering alternative disciplinary measures.

Discipline was taken seriously by most of the teachers who made sure that the learners received the best possible education they deserved.

Soffie said:

*“...in that case, the teacher went to fetch a learner it was because that learner was absent for two weeks, she never came back after the school re-opened.”*

Although the learners might have run away from school because they were afraid of punishment, the teachers still prioritised education by attempting to understand why they were not present.

Tungata (2006) believes that detention after school and the revocation of privileges like break times are more enlightened and constructive than beating learners. Detention is a problem in rural areas since most learners depend on the feeding scheme provided by the Department. Therefore, while sitting detention, these learners are starved and cannot concentrate on the learning process. Detention is also a problem for teachers because they have to monitor learners at a time when they should be dealing with matters concerning their other duties (Tungata, 2006). Moreover, as learners in rural area travel long distances between home and school and due to a lack of readily available transport, it is not easy to detain learners as missing their transport poses serious repercussions.

With regard to detention, Mafa stated:

*“Sometimes we warn them about not wearing uniform properly or by taking to gardening or washing toilets or some detention to them or clean to class.”*

In the school under study, using disciplinary measures to control the use of drugs did not show any serious effects. Once the learners had picked up papers or washed the toilets, they went back to smoking.

Soffie commented:

*“We make them clean the toilets and back yard of the toilets; it’s where we find the pieces cigarette. We make them clean so that they will run away, they stop running.”*

The participants also stated that they were fearful when administering punishment for unacceptable behaviour. They highlighted the fact that the teachers most affected when disciplining learners who were intoxicated were female teachers.

Mafa said:

*“The males try to talk to those learners who are suspected that they intoxicated by the drugs, telling them they are disrespectful to female teachers. We tell them that they should treat all teachers equally irrespective of gender. The perception of boys is that female teachers are weaker when controlling the learner discipline problems.”*

#### ➤ ***The role of parents and the community?***

According to Maphosa and Mammen (2011), parental involvement in learner discipline is one of the measures used by novice teachers, although it is not successful in rural areas. The teachers complain that this is a strategy which sometimes works properly, but the negativity about it is that it takes them some weeks trying to involve the parents of a learner who has misbehaved. Similar experiences were reported by the participants in the current study, as stated by Mafa

*“I write the letter to the parents to come to school in order to discuss the learners’ problem. The problem is that some parents do not stay at home because of work. The learners are staying with the old people. But there are parents who phone to make arrangements to see us at school.”*

The novice teachers preferred to involve a learner’s parents when dealing with his/her misconduct as it helped to give a deeper understanding of the learner’s background. This

concur with what Edward (2008), who believes that learners often bring problems to school which originated in the areas where they live. Therefore, it is good to deal with parents so as to gain insight into the behaviour and circumstances at home.

The next section of this analysis chapter will present the sub-themes from the data that were abstracted from the interviews and observations.

#### **4.5 The Analysis and Discussion of Sub-themes**

This second section presents a deeper analysis of what was said by the participants with the view of illuminating some of the disciplinary factors that one needs to pay particular attention to. This done with a view of understanding how these issues can be addressed so that learner discipline issues can be minimised, particularly within schools in a rural context. These sub-themes are individually and collectively related to each other and also cut across some of the above mentioned broad themes. They are as follows: school cultural practices; collective approaches to learner discipline; gendered issues related to learner discipline problems; learner rights discourse; punishment acts and processes; society and its influence on learner discipline; and corporal punishment as a means of addressing learner discipline problems.

##### **4.5.1 School cultural practices**

It seems almost a predisposition when one examines school cultural practices that patterns of educational outcomes are related to school culture and, to a broader extent, to ethnicity or context. Schools organisations, particularly with respect to extra-curricular activities, have been a reflection of the community where the school is located (Adams, 2004). Such a relationship is also being reflected in the educational outcomes of the school (Durodola, 2009), which is most probably an expression of how the said community values the importance of education.

In the current study, it was found that novice teachers had not been inducted with regards to learner discipline problems by the school management team, nor were they aware of the dynamics of school cultural practices and their interrelationship with the community. However, the problem faced by the school management team was that the novice teachers were reluctant to be inducted. Induction is very important and is required to orientate newly appointed educators.

Mafa said:

*“... I do as other teachers do. I was never inducted or told by the member of the SMT the ways of disciplining the learners. It is hard for us as newly appointed to maintain discipline.”*

The school seemed to have its own school-based culture with regards to the management of learner discipline problems. These practices by the institution did not assist the novice teachers in improving their managerial skills in terms of learner discipline problems. Furthermore, the discipline policies were not in place in the school and could therefore not be studied by newly appointed teachers.

Soffie stated:

*“There is no written policy which was given to me by my superiors, but there is a way of disciplining the learners by following on what the older teachers do.”*

It was suggested by the novice teachers that the principal and the SMT should call meetings related to the learner discipline challenges they faced. The SMT should also thoroughly unpack the challenges which were school related rather than generalizing. It was felt that the learner discipline problems which occurred in urban areas might not be the same as those that plagued rural schools.

Learners from areas of ethnic minority such as the one chosen for this study are often faced with a number of stressors such as witnessing school or community violence, being victims themselves, and their daily experiences of discrimination. These factors of course contribute to their low educational attainment (Orland-Barak, and Yinon, 2005). Therefore school violence and the use of drugs are parallel to occurrences in the community. As a result, learner discipline problems encountered in the school are a direct product of community enculturation of the use of drugs and the rate of violent behaviours.

#### **4.5.2 Collective approaches to learner discipline**

Any substantial attempt to manage learner discipline problems should be a collective effort of those who are involved in the upbringing of the learner. This synergic approach to learner discipline will not only improve the learners' behaviour, but will also have a positive impact on learners' educational outcomes. The inclusion of parents by the teachers in learner discipline is believed to be good and reduces the risks that teachers might take. It will also facilitate a deeper understanding of the family background of the learner. The challenge is that some parents are protective of their children when they committed misdemeanours, and this may create conflict between parents and teachers.

Nevertheless, parental educational level contributes a lot to the behaviour of the learner (Olivier & Reschly, 2007). Many studies have shown that the socio-economic status and educational qualifications of the parent are extremely important predictors of a child's development (Ellof & Ebersohn, 2004). The data of the current study revealed that novice teachers complained of the nonchalant approach of parents to their children's discipline. Some parents went as far as contradicting the South African Constitution and the South African Schools' Act on the use of corporal punishment. The participants stated that almost all the parents still believed that corporal punishment was the only solution to the problem of learner discipline and that it was the sole responsibility of the school and teachers to deal with learners' discipline problems at school. The participants pointed out that it was difficult to deal with parents in rural areas when they were called to come to school for a matter pertaining to their child's behaviour.

Soffie stated:

*“Jah, we do consult parents sometimes but there's no response from them.”*

Therefore, getting the parents involved in their children's discipline was usually a challenge for these novice teachers. The non-compliance of parents with the school rules and requirements created problems in the management of learner discipline. The school could not administer any form of effective discipline if the parents did not come to school or collaborated with the teachers. The parents' delay in taking the matter of learners' misbehaviour seriously was a profound challenge for this rural school.

Furthermore, it was also difficult to locate parents whose learners were attending the school as most of the learners stayed with their grandparents who could not walk long distances to school to attend to their grandchildren's disciplinary problems. Therefore, calling parents to discuss the needs of the learner in terms of discipline was a futile managerial approach in the rural school under study. Msani, (2007) affirms that parental involvement in schools is a challenge. This author further argues that parents need to be represented by the SGB who might also not be available since the members are committed to personal work responsibilities at times when disciplinary problems need to be addressed at the school.

The study found that there was a collective approach to dealing with discipline challenges amongst the teachers irrespective of whether they were new or experienced in the management of learner discipline problems. This level of collegiality amongst the teachers

and the school administration helped the novice teachers to acquire first hand managerial skills in dealing with learner discipline problems. For this reason, the only outstanding challenge faced by these teachers appeared to be that of parental involvement in dealing with learner discipline problems. This was the weakest link in the management of learners' discipline. This was also demonstrated by the fact that learners did not do their homework due to the absence of their parents or to the fact that grandparents were mostly illiterate and therefore unable get involved with the learners' discipline and learning processes.

#### **4.5.3 Learner rights discourse, punishment acts and processes**

The laws and policies in South Africa also create confusion for newly appointed teachers. These laws and policies are communicated to learners through the media and other means of communication. However, thus far there have been no campaigns by the Department of Basic Education or courts of law to train the public in these laws. The mistake that has occurred in all these years is that the stakeholders wait until there is a case in court and then they find out that there are laws and policies to implement.

With regards to corporal punishment, the National Education Policy Act (1996) states: "*No person shall administer corporal punishment, or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any education institution*". The South African Schools Act (1996) reads: (a) *No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner*, and (b) *Any person who contravenes this is guilty of an offence, and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault*. The Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act 33 of 1997 repealed all legislation that authorized the imposition of corporal punishment by courts, including courts convened by traditional leaders. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child are the most important laws which protect the children from being assaulted in the form of corporal punishment. These legislations were imposed on teachers by the jurisdictions of the South African Constitution without proper consultation at all levels and by all stakeholders. This is proved by the fact that learners do not know that rights go hand in hand with responsibilities (Msani, 2007). The effects of these laws on novice teachers are that they do not know how to use alternative methods of corporal punishment and are left with no disciplinary strategies in the management of learners' discipline. Unfortunately for these novice teachers, the learners know all too well that corporal punishment has been banned not only from school, but from society. The abolition of corporal punishment from school did not seem to be the major concern for these teachers; what concerned them most was the Departments' reluctance to

come up with appropriate strategies to improve learners' sense of responsibility both at home and at school. The Departments' reluctance has resulted in learners' irresponsible claim of self-entitlement.

#### **4.5.4 Society and its influence on learner discipline**

Rural areas such as the one where the study was located are usually characterised by the simple fact that everyone knows one another. For this reason learners easily suffer from peer pressure, the use of drugs, become victims of violent behaviours, or are witness to them. The communal life style of children makes it difficult for the school to modify its learners' behaviours in isolation. The community plays a vital role in shaping the character of the child. Ormrod (2000) concurs that learners' behaviour is largely influenced by the social environment in which they grow up. The data of the current study revealed that the learners coming from rural areas lacked discipline because they had been schooled about their rights, but it was clear from the way they behaved that they misinterpreted rights and responsibilities. In this regard, Mafa explained:

*“Firstly, children who are coming from the rural areas think that they are ruled by their rights. They do things otherwise because they believe that they have rights.”*

Although the relationship between the school and the community was entangled, there was evidence that there had been no thorough educational processes to educate the community about the rights and responsibilities that their children ought to know and have respectively. Tungata (2006) confirms that the understanding of and knowing the difference between rights and responsibilities enhance discipline in schools.

The school under study was located in the middle of two villages, so the learners from one village struggled to make friends with those from the other village as it was traditional to remain loyal to their own clan. This was manifested at the school during community instigated violence when the learners started fighting one another. This spat eventually erupted into a serious conflict involving one set of learners from one community fighting the other. I was told that, more often than not, the reason for the conflict starts on the school premises and the fighting is brought into the school itself. This usually disrupts the teaching and learning process. Sometimes it may go on for a week and the police must be invited to ensure the return of effective peace.

The novice teachers could not discipline the learners who were coming from different backgrounds and traditional settings since they feared their violent behaviours. These teachers were scared of some learners because they thought they sometimes carried dangerous weapons to school. The learners' home environment and upbringing dictated how they conducted themselves at school. For these reasons educators should have knowledge of learners' home background which would assist them when dealing with the learner. Educators need to acknowledge that the school is an institution of a society and that the attitudes and behaviours of the society can sometimes be reflected in the learners' behaviour and attitudes. The teachers voiced that community involvement was vital for the school, mentioning especially tribal authorities since they are the people who can stop the community fights.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter data was analysed and discussed from the two novice teachers through interviews and observations. The chapter started with a brief description of the participants and this was immediately followed by the themes which were the nature of discipline problems that the novice teachers experienced; novice teachers' perceived reasons for why these learner discipline problems occurred within schools; and finally the mechanisms that these novice teachers used in the management of learner discipline problems. After analysing these themes, sub-themes were also discussed. These sub-themes were also derived from an in-depth analysis of the data and they were: school cultural practices; collective approaches to learner discipline; learner rights discourse; punishment acts and processes; and society and its influence on learner discipline. The next section presents the conclusion of the study and also suggests recommendations for further research.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This is the concluding chapter of the study entitled: Novice Teachers' Management of Learner Discipline Problems in a Rural Secondary School of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The purpose of the study was to understand how novice teachers managed learner discipline problems within a rural context. Considering the inexperience of novice teachers in the field and the high level of delinquency that frequently emanates from rural areas, this study was a necessity not only to engage with knowledge production, but also to find out how the problem of learner discipline could be understood from the perspective of novice teachers. The key research questions that the study sought to answer were: What are the various learner discipline problems novice teachers experienced at school? How do novice teachers manage these learner discipline problems at school? This chapter is therefore divided into two sections. The first section will elaborate on the findings presented and discussed in Chapter four and the last section will suggest some recommendations for further research on how the problem faced by novice teachers in the management of learner discipline problems could be address.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The summary of the findings is based on the analyses and discussions presented in the previous chapter. The summary will be presented under the following headings: The blame game in the management of learner discipline problems, and gender related issues in the management of learners' behaviour.

##### **5.2.1 The blame game in the management of learner discipline problems**

Learner discipline was located externally and internally. The external location of the learner discipline was when by the novice teachers shifted the blame for behavioural problems to the community, parents, learners themselves and the school. This suggests that the novice teachers blamed the above-mentioned people and the institution when learners were ill-disciplined and therefore posed a challenge in managing their behaviours. The internal location of the management of learners' discipline problem was directed to the novice

teachers themselves. Fortunately or unfortunately, these two teachers provided the only voice for the study through the data collected during the interviews.

These novice teachers tended to shift the blame for learners' poor discipline to the community, learners and school itself as the major contributors to learner ill-discipline. They argued that learner discipline could be internalized; this suggests that the teachers themselves were not to be blamed for learner discipline problems. Therefore it was difficult for them to successfully and effectively manage a learner whose behaviour was not as a result of environmental influences but as a result of hereditary factors. Such learners were constantly being troublesome and strategies to manage these behaviours such as detention, cleaning the school and/or classroom after school, or cleaning the toilets (which they detested doing) did not work. This persuaded some of the novice teachers, out of frustration, to ignore the rule which forbids the use of corporal punishment and to use it on some learners in an attempt to help them to effectively manage discipline problems.

These teachers also argued that most learners spent only about eight hour a day at school but they were disruptive as they were in and out of the classroom all the time. Therefore, according to them, the school and other community stakeholders should be more actively involved in addressing learners' discipline problems. They felt that the time learners spend at different locations within the community during his/her growing up stage can be effectively used if parents and the community prioritise the need for the learners to have a good sense of mature and community acceptable behaviours. This will provide synergy that will help learners to take their homework seriously, just as they do with their class activities. These novice teachers therefore lamented the fact that community involvement and parental concern were weak in the school under investigation. This weakness contributed to the poor academic outcomes of the learners as revealed by the participants.

Despite the fact that novice teachers blamed the community and parents for their lack of involvement in the management of children's discipline problems, the teachers themselves should carry a fair share of the blame. One of the reasons for this conclusion is that professional teachers should assume their responsibilities and not transfer them to externalize the problem. These teachers did not have much knowledge on administering alternatives to corporal punishment. Novice teachers need to fit themselves into a specific context and learn the practices and traditions of the individual school where they teach. There are schools that have policies which are contradictory to the National Education policies. The issue of

corporal punishment creates a problem for most novice teachers since they are in favour of it, yet the law forbids it.

There was evidence that the novice teachers had not been given any formal training regarding the management of learner discipline problems. These educators believed that learner discipline should occur only when the learner does something wrong. Perceptions of this nature bring only negative thoughts when the term discipline is mentioned; therefore, such perceptions must be corrected with the best possible method to eradicate this unwanted behaviour. Steyn (2004) affirms that the training of [novice] educators does not receive appropriate priority in schools. Most training with regards to learner discipline problems is highlighted in management meetings.

### **5.2.2 Gender issues related to learner discipline problems**

There is no clear cut guidance given to educators by most educational institutions regarding learner discipline. The teachers failed to adequately assist each other in learner discipline as they would have wanted. The male respondent remarked that it seemed easier for him as a male to take the initiative to discipline learners, but that he thought female were more reluctant to discipline learners. This comes from a remark by Mafa. The consequences are that male teachers may become the victims of aggressive learners who misbehave because they feel he is very strict, whereas female teachers become victims because they are too scared to deal with aggressive, violent learners, as was stated by Soffie. The educators suggested that the school should have a strong DSSC which comprises of all stakeholders of the school, i.e., learners, educators, parents and members within community structures.

The learner discipline problems experienced by the novice teachers cut across both genders. Nevertheless, these problems were not evenly distributed between the two groups. The male learners were more prone towards violent disciplinary problems and drug related misbehaviour whilst very few female learners were involved in such types of behaviours. On the periphery, some girls seemed to have been influenced towards violence by their boyfriends or siblings. Lesser types of violent disciplinary problems were experienced by the novice teachers and were more common for the female teacher, like disturbance during a lesson, late coming and disrespect.

The male teacher believed that he managed learner discipline problems better than his female counterpart. The male teacher got involved with the more violent learners and made sure that they were on par with their behaviour and sometimes he provided relevant follow-up

measures for the learners to deal with their problems. The male teacher would sometimes move around the school looking for learners who were smoking or taking drugs. He also made sure that learners' school bags were searched on a regular basis.

Although the female novice teacher also got involved with the management of learners' problems, she was more passive and reluctant to get involved with those learners that were violence orientated, irrespective of the gender of the said learner. That notwithstanding, the female teacher supervised measures like detentions, and cleaning of the toilet and classrooms, which were strategies that she herself instigated.

### **5.3 Recommendations for Future Studies**

The researcher suggests that all levels of education officials should make sure that the education laws are distributed to the schools each year and addressed at school and community meetings. Posters ought to be created that are displayed in areas where they are visible to learners, parents and the community. The reason for this is that most teachers and community members are ignorant of the fact that learner discipline problems have a huge effect on learners' educational outcomes.

The researcher further suggests that when the Department of Basic Education employs educator in the level of districts and circuits, they ought to be trained meaningfully and in a focused manner in learner discipline problems in school settings. Such training should be localized, taking into cognizance the school vicinity and community. It is only when they have been comprehensively trained that newly employed staff will improve learners' behaviour as some of the latter just need proper counselling to completely change their behaviours to what is more appropriate and acceptable for the school, their peers, and the community at large.

The researcher also suggests that parents should be invited to the school regularly in order to discuss the problems that occur at home and in the school. This will provide the teachers with background knowledge of the type of domestic problems that these learners are capable of provoking at their home. Such knowledge can help solve the problem of their behaviour, which may be as a result of what is happening at home in the learners' life and is affecting him/her at school. However, the study revealed that the availability of parents to visit the school is limited.

There should be a school-based mechanism as work-forum, workshops, etc to assist novice teachers. These teachers battle with the management of learners who are ill-disciplined in their classrooms, and they are left alone in this struggle until they can be assisted by a more experienced teacher. This situation is more precarious for female novice teachers than for males due to the male teachers' ability to handle violent learners' discipline problems more effectively.

#### **5.4 Conclusions of the study**

This study focused on gaining an understanding of how novice teachers manage learners' discipline problems. The study was presented in chapters beginning with an introductory chapter that provided an overview of the study. The second chapter was divided into two sections; the first covered an elaborate and comprehensive literature review on issues related to learner discipline and how it is managed by novice teachers and teachers in general. The second section presented the theoretical framework within which the study was located, namely Albert Bandura's social learning theory. The third chapter described and explained the research methodology that was used to find answers to the research questions introduced in Chapter one. Chapter four discussed and analysed the data gathered through the data collection instruments which were interviews and observations of participants.

The overall findings indicated that the management of learner discipline is a huge problem for novice teachers. It was revealed that female novice teachers use a much more cautious approach than their male counterparts. Moreover, novice teachers have not fully understood the requirements for teacher professionalism and therefore resort to the blame game by blaming everyone except themselves for discipline issues. Personally, as the researcher I have gained much insight into how novice teachers manage learner discipline problems in rural areas and the type of discipline problems that exist in such areas.

## REFERENCES

- Adams, A. P. C. (2004). *An investigation into learner discipline at Silverlea Primary school*. Unpublished thesis. Cape Peninsula University of Technology. South Africa
- Amin, N. & Ramrathan, P. (2009). Preparing teachers to teach in and for diverse context. *Perspectives in Education*. Vol 27(1), pp 69-77
- Bandura, A. (1969). *Principles of behaviour modification*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Bandura, A. (1973). *Aggression: A social learning analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1977) Self-efficacy: Towards a unifying theory of behaviour change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2), 117-148.
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (1996). Multifaceted impact of self-efficacy beliefs on academic functioning. *Child Development*, 67(3), 1206-1222.
- Barret, J, Jones, G., Mooney, E, Thornton, C., Candy, J. Guinee, P. G Olson, J. (2002). Working with novice teachers: challenges for professional development. *Journal of Education* (4) 15-27
- Bell, B. (1996). *Teacher development: A model from science education*. London: Falmer Press.
- Bless, C. Higson-Smith, C. & Kagee A. (2007). *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Brown, D.F. (2004). Urban teachers' professional classroom management strategies. Reflections of culturally responsive teaching: *Urban Education*, 39(3) 266 – 289. West Chester University: Corwin Press, Inc.

- Brown, D.L (2003). *Challenges of Rural America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania state: University Press.
- Chilisa, B. and Preece, J. (2005). *Research methods for adult educators in Africa: African perspectives on adult learning*. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Coetzee, M.J (2009). An exploration of effective classroom management in three different phases of a primary school in a small town in Southern KwaZulu-Natal. Unpublished thesis. University of KwaZulu-Natal
- Coetzee, S.A. Van Niekerk, E.J & Wydeman, J.L (2011). *An Editor's Guide to effective Classroom Management*. Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2005). *Research methods in education*. (5th ed). London and New York: Routledge-Falmer.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. (7th ed). London and New York: Routledge-Falmer.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 300-314.
- De Vos, A. Strydom, H. Fouché , C,B; & Deport, CSL(2005). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Sciences Professions*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers
- Department of Education South Africa. (2007). *The national policy framework for teacher education and development in South Africa*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Donald, D., Lazarus, S., & Lolwana, P. (2005). *Educational psychology in social context*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cape Town, Oxford university press.
- Durodola, S. (2009). Teachers Management styles two case studies from a school in the Pinetown area of KwaZulu Natal: Edgewood Campus. Pinetown.
- Ebersohn, L., & Eloff, I. (2006). Identifying asset-based trends in sustainable programmes which support vulnerable children. *South African Journal of Education*, 26(3), 457-472.

- Edwards, L. H. (2008). *Classroom discipline and management*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). U.S.A.: Brigham Young University.
- Eloff, I & Ebersöhn, L (2004) *Keys to Educational Psychology*. Formeset Printers (CT) UCT Printers. Cape Town
- Evans, L. (2002). What is teacher development? *Oxford Review of Education*, 28(1), 123-137.
- Flicker, E. S., & Hoffman, J.A. (2006). *Guiding children's behaviour: Developmental discipline in the classroom*. New York: Columbia University.
- Green, K. (2006). No novice teacher left behind: Guiding novice teachers to improve decision-making through structured questioning. *Penn GSE Perspective on Urban Education*, 4(1), 1-9.
- Greenlee, A.R., & Ogletree, E. J. (1993). Teachers' attitudes toward student discipline problems and classroom management strategies. *Journal of teacher Education*, 46(6), 650-735
- Hart, C. (2009). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the social science research imagination*. London: Sage.
- Hartley, K., & Wedekind, M (2004). *Political change, curriculum change and social formation, 1990 to 2002*.
- Henning, E., Ronsburg, W., & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria: van Schaik.
- Hill, M. W., Ramsey, E., & Gresham, F.M. (2005). Heading off disruptive behavior: How early intervention can reduce defiant behavior and win back teaching time. Retrieved from [www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/winter0304/walker.cfm](http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/winter0304/walker.cfm) on 1/7/2013.
- Holloway, D.L. (2002). Using research to ensure quality teaching in rural schools. *Journal for Teacher Education*, (17) 3, 138-153.
- Huberman, M. (1993). *The lives of teachers*. New York: Teachers' Cambridge College Press
- Jackson, H. (2012). *Effective classroom management: Models and strategies for today's classroom* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Pretoria. Van Schaik Publishers.



- Joubert, J. (2010). Multigrade schools in South Africa: Overview of a baseline survey conducted in 2009 by the Centre for Multigrade Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology.
- Kendall, S. (1991). A home visit by a health visitor using Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. In A. While (Ed.). *Caring for children: Towards partnership with families*. London, Arnold.
- Knapp, M. S. (2003). Professional development as a policy pathway. *Review of research in education*. American Educational Research Association and SAGE.
- Knight, P. (2001). A systematic approach to professional development. *Learning as practice*, 18, 229-241.
- Lichtman, M. (2006). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Maphosa, C., & Mammen, K. J. (2011). Maintaining discipline: How do learners view the way teachers operate in South African schools? *Journal of Social Sciences*, 29(3), 213-222.
- Maree, K. (Ed). (2007). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Masekoameng, M. C. (2010). The impact of disciplinary problems on educator morale in secondary schools and implications for management. Unpublished dissertation. University of South Africa.
- Matseka, J. B (2008). Discipline in a secondary school at Winterveldt, North West Province. Unpublished dissertation. University of Tshwane University of Technology
- Miller, N., & Dollard, J. (1941). *Social learning and imitation*. New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press
- Mokhele, L. M., & Jita, L. C. (2011). South African teachers' perspectives on continuing professional development: A case study of the Mpumalanga Secondary. *Science Initiative*, (9) 1762-1766.
- Moodley, S. (2009). *Identifying and meeting the development needs of the novice teacher*. *Masters dissertation*. Unpublished thesis. Durban: UKZN, Edgewood Campus.

- Morrow W. (2007). *Learning to teach South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Mouton, J. (2001). *How to succeed in your master's and doctoral studies: A South African guide and resource book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Msani, M. C. (2007). *Discipline in a KwaZulu-Natal secondary school: The gendered experience of learners*. Unpublished dissertation. University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Naidoo, P., Townsend, L., & Carolissen, R. (2010). Mainstream theories and non-mainstream approaches to personality. In L. Swartz, C. de la Ray, N. Duncan, & L. Townsend (Eds.). *Psychology: An introduction*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Cape Town Oxford University Press. South Africa.
- Namibia, G., Kapenda, L. Tjipueja, G & Sichombe, B. (2009). A presentation of findings on survey study investigated professional development needs of novice teachers and mentor teachers in Namibian schools: National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) Professional and Resource Development Research Unit.
- Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Pearson International, Inc.
- Oliver, R. M., & Reschly, D. J. (2007). *Effective classroom management: Teacher preparation and professional development*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Centre for Teacher Quality.
- Olivier, R. M., & Reschly, D. J. (2007). *Effective classroom management: Teacher preparation and professional development*. PhD Thesis. *Van der Bijlt University*.
- Orland-Barak, L., & Yinon, H. (2005). Sometimes a novice and sometimes an expert: Mentors' professional expertise as revealed through their stories of critical incidents. *Oxford Review of Education*, 31(4), 557-578.
- Ormrod, J. E. (2000). *Educational Psychology: Developing learners*. University of Northern Colorado. New Hampshire.
- Peloyahae, T.H. (2005). *The Management of Induction Programme for newly appointed educators in the Ekurhuleni West District*.
- Pickles, J. (1992). Texts, hermeneutics and propaganda maps. *The Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation*, 400-406.
- Piek, G. C. (1994). *School management 1*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.

- Porteus ,K., Vally, S., & Ruth, T. (2001). *Alternatives to corporal punishment. Growing discipline and respect in our classrooms*. Cape Town : Heinemann Publishers.
- Rule, P., & John, V. (2011). *Your guide to case study research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Salem al-Amarat, M. (2011). The classroom problems faced by teachers at the public schools in Tafila province, and proposed solutions. *Journal of Education*, 3(1), 37-48.
- Samuel, M. (2008). Accountability to whom? For what? Teacher identity and the force field model of teacher development. *Perspectives in Education*, 26(2), 3-16.
- Sayed Y. (2004). *The case of the teacher education in post-apartheid South Africa*. Pretoria: Van Schaik
- Shulman, L. S. (1997). Professional development: Learning from experience. In B.S. Kogan (Ed.). *Common schools, uncommon futures: A working consensus for school renewal*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Steyn G. M (2004). Problems of and beginner educators, School of Education: University of South Africa. *Africa Education Review* 1(1) pp 81-94 Unisa Press
- Thiselton, A. C. (1992). *New horizons in hermeneutics: the theory and practice of transforming Biblical reading*. NY. Zondervan.
- Trigwell, B. & Prosser, P (1997). *Understanding learning and teaching: The experience in higher education*. London: Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Tungata, M (2006). Maintaining Discipline in Schools in the Post – corporal punishment era. Unpublished thesis. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.
- Villegas-Reimers , E. (2003). *Teacher professional development: An international review of the literature*. Paris: International Institute for Planning Educational Planning.
- Ward, B. W., & Gryczynski, J. (2009). Social learning theory and the effects of living arrangement on heavy alcohol use: Results from a national study of college students. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 70(3), 364.
- Weistein, C. S., Tomlinson-Clarke, S., & Curran, M. (2004). Towards a conception of culturally responsive classroom management. *SAGE* (55), 25.

- White J. G & Moss, J (2003). Professional Paradoxes context for development of beginning teacher identity and knowledge. Curriculum Teaching and learning Unit. University of Melbourne.
- Wilig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method*. Great Britain: Open University Press.
- Wilson, S. M., & Berne, J. (1999). Teacher learning and the acquisition of professional knowledge: An examination of research on contemporary professional development. *Journal of Education* 24(6),173-209.
- Wiseman, D. G. Hunt & Charles c. (2008) Bert Practice in Motivation and Management in the classroom. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thomas Publishers LTD.
- Woolfolk, A. (2010). *Educational Psychology* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). Global Edition. The Ohio state University. Pearson Educational International.

## **APPENDIX ONE: ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

01 August 2012

Mr Godfrey Khululekani Sihle Memela 211542808  
School of Education

Dear Mr Memela

Protocol reference number: HSS/0616/012M

Project title: The novice teacher management of learner discipline problems in rural secondary school.

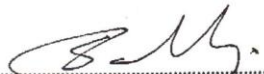
**EXPEDITED APPROVAL**

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

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

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

Yours faithfully



.....  
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor Professor Labby Ramrathan  
cc Academic leader Dr D Davids  
cc School Admin. Mrs S Naicker

Professor S Collings (Chair)  
Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee  
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 3587/8350 Facsimile: +27 (0)31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

Inspiring Greatness



## APPENDIX TWO: PERMISSION TO VISIT SCHOOL



Bhanoyi Secondary School  
P.O Box 425286  
Highflats  
3306  
Telefax: 039- 835 8300  
Cell No :082 7648 618  
04 July 2012

The Principal

Gidela Secondary School

Dear Sir

### Re-Request for permission to conduct a research for the study purposes

I, hereby, request permission to conduct a research at the school, the details of which are as follows:

- (a) The research title is Novice teacher management of learner discipline in rural secondary schools.
- (b) The aim of the research is to explore the management of learner discipline problems in rural secondary schools. The topic will explore what learner discipline problems exist among rural secondary schools and how these problems dealt with by novice teachers.
- (c) I am presently employed by the Department of Education and presently completing my Masters in Education (M.Ed.) degree through University of KwaZulu- Natal (Edgewood Campus) and as part fulfillment for the completion of the degree, I am required to complete a dissertation.
- (d) The school is selected geographically as the study is based on the secondary schools of Hlokozi area. The participants are the teachers who are less than three years teaching experience and teaching in rural secondary schools.
- (e) It has been observed that learner discipline is a problem among schools. The participants will be visited twice in a month. The observation will be done during these sessions: during controlling late coming, during teaching and learning, during controlling absenteeism and during supervision of the study. The participants will be interviewed in sessions, the first session will focus on what problems exist in learner discipline and the second session will focus on how the learner discipline problems managed by the teachers. There will be no disruptions at all to the school. Interviews will be done on teacher's spare time. Observations will be paired with the IQMS Programme of the school.
- (f) I am prepared to share my research findings with the hierarchy of the Department of Education and participating schools.

- (g) I will be using the tape-recorder to ensure that the data collected is accurate during the data analysis.
- (h) The data that will be collected would be disposed by the university.
- (i) Fictitious names of the schools and participants will be used in the study and anonymity of participants will be kept for the sake of ethics and other considerations
- (j) The participation in the study is voluntary and the participants are free to withdraw from the study at any stage and for any reason.
- (k) The participation in the study does not credit any participants in the Department of Education and does not disadvantage any participants.

I A.B. BIYASE ..... (Full names of the participants) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

  
.....  
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE 20-07-2012

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

  
.....  
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT DATE 20-07-2012



## APPENDIX THREE: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS AND CONSENT FORM



Bhanoyi Secondary School  
P.O Box 425286  
Highflats  
3306  
Telefax: 039- 835 8300  
Cell No :082 7648 618  
04 July 2012

Dear Educator

Re-Request for permission to conduct a research for the purpose of the study.

I G.K.S. Memela am currently a Principal in a secondary school. As part of my professional development, I am presently enrolled for a Master in Education Degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. In order to complete my studies successfully I am required to do a dissertation.

My research will focus on learner discipline problems encountered by novice teachers in rural secondary schools. In order to understand this I will be exploring the management of learner discipline problems by the novice teachers in rural secondary school. My intention is to identify and understand learner discipline problems and how novice teachers manage these problems. My study entails interviewing novice teachers. Interviews will be audio-recorded. Observations will be done during the control of late coming, absenteeism, supervision of the study and classroom teaching. There will be no disruption at all at school. Interviews will be conducted on teacher's spare time.

Before conducting the research written consent would be obtained from the Department of Education. As one of my selected respondents you and the school would be ensured of confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity during all stages of the research. You are free to withdraw from this research process at any stage of the research. I give you my undertaking that I will follow research ethics in handling all data collected. Data collected will be locked in a cabinet for five years as per university rules and will be later destroyed through a process of shredding of printed copies and incineration of audio cassettes. I am also of the view that information received from the study will contribute to school effectiveness and school improvement.

I hope that you will consider my request favorable and grant me permission to harness your participation for various aspects of the study.

I look forward to your kind reply and thank you for time and consideration.

Yours faithfully

CONSENT

I.....Thamsanqa Mzimela..... (full names) hereby consent to participate in the above research. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may change and refuse to participate at any stage without penalty. I may refuse to answer any question or I may stop the interview. I understand that some of the things I say may be directly quoted in the text of the final dissertation, and subsequent publications. I consent to the interview being audio-recorded. I consent to the observation.

Educator (Print name).....THAMSANQA.....

Signature..........

Date.....06-07-2012.....

Researcher..........

Date.....06-07-2012.....

Address : Bhanoyi Secondary School

P.O. Box 425267

Highflats

3306

Telephone: 039-835835800

Cell Number: 0827648618

Email Address: [sihlememela@vodamail.co.za](mailto:sihlememela@vodamail.co.za)

## **APPENDIX FOUR: INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

#### **SESSION ONE: PROBLEMS EXIST IN LEARNER DISCIPLINE**

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself
2. How long you have been teaching?
3. What challenges did you experience when you start working as a teacher?
4. Describe the composition of your class.
5. What is the official time the school starts?
6. Can you comment on learner behavior problems encountered at your school?
7. Is absenteeism and late coming a problem at your school?
8. How attendance registers dealt with at your school?
9. Is there any late coming and absenteeism policy at your school?
10. How do you perceive learner discipline at your school?
11. Is there a common understanding among the staff regarding learner discipline at school?
12. What, in your opinion, are the main causes of disciplinary problems?
13. Who is responsible for learner discipline at your school?
14. Do you struggle with learner discipline problems at your school?
15. How, if it all, does poor learner discipline problems impact on you as teacher?

#### **SESSION TWO: MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE**

1. Have been trained on learner discipline problems?
2. What are the coping mechanisms that you employ in dealing with disruptive class? How do you deal with learner discipline problems?
3. How does learner discipline problems impact on quality of education at school?
4. What do you do to ensure that the high levels of learner discipline problems are maintained and received high priority?
5. Are the parents and other stakeholders responsible or interested in learner discipline problems at the school?
6. How do you deal with the following:
  - Learners work not done
  - Disrespect toward teachers
  - Classroom disorderliness while teacher is in classroom
  - Disorderliness while no teacher in classroom
  - Learners being noisy in their lines
  - Learners not obeying teachers instructions

## **OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

### LATE COMING

1. Approach to learners
2. Mechanisms used to stop late coming
3. Response by learners who are late

### ABSETEEISM

1. Registers
2. Parental involvement
3. Class rules

### SUPERVISION

1. Time-table
2. Classroom set up
3. Control measures

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

1. Arrangement of desks
2. Work schedules
3. Lesson Plan
4. Teaching Aids
5. Lesson Presentation
6. Learner-Teacher interaction
7. Disciplinary Measures

## APPENDIX SIX: EDITOR'S REPORT

RESEARCH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES cc

### DECLARATION OF PROOFREADING

<b>CC reg. no CK /16841/23</b> <b>Name: N.D. Coertze</b> Tel. 0833440706 <b><u>Postal Address:</u></b> <b>P.O. Box 5432</b> <b>Winklespruit</b> <b>4145</b>	<b>Tax (VAT) ref. no. 9249/355/20/8</b> <b><u>Residential Address:</u></b> <b>8 Dreyer Street</b> <b>Panorama Park</b> <b>Illovo Beach</b>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, NICOLINA D. COERTZE, declare that I have carefully checked the following dissertation for linguistic errors. I have, to the best of my knowledge, identified typographical, syntactical, idiomatic, punctuation and convention errors and made recommendations to the author for their review and correction.

**Author:** GODFREY KHULULEKANI SIHLE MEMELA

**Email:** sihle khululekani [sihlekhululekani@gmail.com]  
School of Education  
College of Humanities  
University of KwaZulu-Natal

#### **Title of Dissertation:**

Novice Teachers' Management of Learner Discipline Problems in a Rural Secondary School in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)

Respectfully submitted on the **11<sup>th</sup> day of December 2013.**

N.D. COERTZE

B.A (English and History), THED, B.Ed.