TEACHERS CULTIVATING RESILIENCE IN LEARNERS ATTENDING SCHOOL

IN RURAL CONTEXTS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

BY

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SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE

OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION – TEACHER DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (TDS)

IN THE

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

EDGEWOOD CAMPUS

DURBAN

DATE: JANUARY 2017

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR DAISY PILLAY

DECLARATION

I, Sindisiwe Maxentia Ndlovu declare that:

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2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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19 January 2016

Mrs Sindisiwe Maxentia Ndlovu 97030069
School of Education
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Dear Mrs Ndlovu

Protocol reference number: HSS/1707/015M
Project title: Teachers cultivating resilience in learners attending rural school context: A narrative inquiry

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 23 November 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

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 discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanitities & Social Scinces Research Ethics Committee

/pm

Cc Supervisor: Dr Daisy Pillay
Cc Academic Leader Research: Prof P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Ms T Khumalo

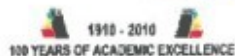Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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This thesis is submitted with/without my approval.

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PROF. DAISY PILLAY

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Nandisa Ndlovu, and my grand-daughters Zenande, Melokuhle and Ziyanda. I have started the journey, yours is to reach the destination.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to genuinely express my gratitude to:

- Almighty God, for giving me the strength to complete this work.
- My parents, Marcus, and Bashakazi Mdladla; my parents-in-law, Bernard and Annatoria Ndlovu and my grandmother, Geraldine Mbatha, for encouraging me.
- My supervisor, Professor Daisy Pillay, whose guidance, support and generosity has been invaluable to me. Thank you for your insight and vision for this study to become a success. May God bless you.
- Professor Labby Ramrathan, for your support.
- My husband, Zwelithini Emmanuel Ndlovu, for being supportive, encouraging, understanding and for being my pillar of strength.
- My critical friend, Maud Donda, for your support throughout this study.
- My participants, for sharing your stories with me. Without you this study would not be possible.
- My sisters, Tholakele, Ziyalile and Nomfundo, and my brothers, Lili, Phanyana, Maqhawe and Halalisani, for your support.
- My children, Mzamo, Lindokuhle, Futho and Nandisa, for understanding me while I was putting this work together.
- My principal and colleagues, for your encouragement and support.
- My friends, family and neighbours for motivating me.

ABSTRACT

This study explores teachers' stories of lived experience and their capacity for cultivating resilience in learners attending schools in rural contexts. Through the storied lives of the three teachers, Saint, Maria and Faith, I was able to develop a deeper and more insightful understanding of the everyday challenges that teachers' who work in rural context face. I also understand the perspectives that teachers adopt to negotiate the challenges in order to open up possibilities for thinking and acting differently inside and outside of their classrooms.

The methodological approach for this study is narrative inquiry, and it is located within the interpretative paradigm. The data sources were personal stories of participants. Various arts-based methods were employed for generating the data which included collage inquiry, artefact inquiry and unstructured interviews. Through these multiple data sources, I was able to reconstruct stories of the personal and professional lives of the teacher participants to respond to the research questions in my study.

The study has employed the triple lens theory that combines the Broaden and Build theory, resilience as multidimensional and complex process, and the generative theory of rurality. This triple lens framework enabled me to understand rurality as a social space that is complex and dynamic; and teachers and the practices they adopt to open up possibilities to sustain their commitment and to strengthen their capacity to develop resilience in learners.

The study shows the importance of personal and cultural values and routines in broadening their lives as teachers to become life-long learners and activists campaigning for a different life as men and women. As teachers, these individuals are able to adopt unique and personally meaningful approaches and methods that are contextually relevant to learners attending school in a rural context. Opening up opportunities through both curricular and extracurricular activities, they draw on particular personal and cultural knowledge to develop social, emotional and intellectual skills in learners so that they may think and act differently.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ABET   Adult Basic Education and Training

AIDS   Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AMESA   Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa

BED   Bachelor of Education

CASME   Centre for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education

CPTD   Continuing Professional Teacher Development

DoE   Department of Education

HIV   Human Immune Virus

IOL   Independent Online

KZN   KwaZulu-Natal

LCM   Learners Christian Movement

LTSM   Learner Teacher Support Material

MRTEQ   Minimum Requirements for Teacher Qualifications

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

NSE   Norms and Standards for Educators

OVC   Orphan and Vulnerable Committee

PPT   Private Paid Teacher

PTD   Primary Teachers Diploma

SACE   South African Council of Educators

SASA   South African Schools Act

SASFA   South African Schools Football

SEL   Social and Emotional Learning

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CHAPTER ONE: PLANNING MY JOURNEY

Personal interest in the study

Figure.1.1: Photograph of myself standing on stage at a debating competition

My narrative is extracted from my journal entry (February 2015) in my first year of the Masters Programme in Education. I was asked to select an artefact at the beginning of my first year as a Masters student, as a way to explore my research interests as a teacher in a rural school. I chose to discuss an old photograph of myself as a learner accepting the winning prize in a debating competition.

As a girl growing up in a rural context, I remembered the reluctance my parents expressed when it was time to send me to school. They wanted me to take care of my younger brother since they were both working in the nearby farm. As a result, I started school when I was eight years old. The distance that I had to walk from home to school was very long, approximately six kilometres to and from school, and this was a hindrance to many school-going children living in my rural community.

My teacher, Mrs. Roman (pseudonym), encouraged us to 'try and fail rather than failing to try'. She valued our personal interests and backgrounds; she was thus able to provide support. She arranged morning and after school classes and motivated us to do our school work. She

introduced different sporting codes and cultural activities, although the school did not have equipment or a proper school ground, and she taught us to improvise.

Mrs. Roman also encouraged us to speak English in class. I was always punished by other teachers for being a talkative learner: it was construed by them to be bad behaviour. Against these odds, Mrs. Roman acknowledged me and my ability to express myself with confidence. She saw this as potential. As a result, she chose me to chair the Debating Committee. I represented my school in the provincial debating competition, which I won! This was a special moment in my life as a girl attending a school in rural context. Standing up on the stage as the winning speaker was a turning point in my life and influenced my choice to be a professional teacher.

Day and Gu (2010) emphasise that it is impractical to expect learners to succeed against all difficulties if their teachers, who are their role models, do not show resilient qualities. Therefore, when teachers display resilient qualities, it is likely that their learners follow, because most of the time learners regard their teachers as role models.

I am presently a practising teacher at Lutheran Primary School (pseudonym) in the rural Ngonyameni area. My experience as a learner influenced my choice to become a teacher. Ebersohn and Ferreire (2006) emphasise that schools, teachers, learners and the community experience problems in South Africa and even more so in rural setting. In this study, I want to explore what teachers do to cultivate resilience in learners who attend school in rural contexts, understanding that there are many adversities facing teachers and learners in the rural school context.

Teachers as resilience builders

Henderson (2013, p.25) states that learners are exposed to many social ills such as "poverty and domestic violence", which are worse in rural contexts. This prevents learners from performing to their maximum level; teachers play a most important role in developing learners to cope with the challenges of life. Baum and Cardozo (2013, p.348) conducted a quasi-experimental study in which their aim was to assess the success of the short term resilient building teacher mediation on decreasing post-traumatic grief in learners. The findings revealed that teachers "play a major role in minimising post-traumatic exposure to learners, therefore teacher training and development in building resilience in learners was suggested". According to Lantieri (2013, p.45), teachers are encouraged to learn approaches and stress management skills such as "taking the moment of silence, meditation, heart and

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soul time and a peace corner", because research shows that these techniques help learners to reboot when they feel overwhelmed.

Henderson (2013, p. 24) says that "resilient kids credit their teachers; teachers are credited because of their support and caring relationship which builds resilience in learners". Furthermore, Lantieri (2008) argues that teachers emulate strengths in learners rather than imposing labels. This idea is supported by Hegney et al. (2007) and Dass-Brailford (2005), who believe that teachers and families are important for altering negative effects in learners.

In this study, I want to understand how teachers who teach in the rural context are able to broaden and build up educational opportunities in learners; how they will display optimistic actions and are more likely to handle difficult life challenges and achieve success despite of the social realities that are prevalent in rural contexts.

What does rural mean?

The concept rural is a contested concept because it has multiple meanings. This means that there is no single and agreed definition of the concept. Most authors define rural by what it is not (not urban). Greenough and Nelson (2015, p.323) define rural as an "endlessly diverse collection of residual (not urban) places". Greenough and Nelson (2015) use three dimensions to define rural. These are population size, density and distance from urban centres (remoteness), lack of basic infrastructure and poverty. Crosnoe (2005) states that the further away the rural area is from urban areas, the worse the experiences of rural problems. Oomen (2000) explains that in South Africa, rural areas are associated with traditional authorities where the chiefs and headmen lead. Given these multiple meanings, Cromartie and Bucholts (2008) argue that a suitable meaning of rural will be that which meets the goals of the endeavour. For the purposes of this study, I refer to rural as a place which is not urban and is under the leadership of traditional leaders.

Rurality and schooling

In the 1980s, it was normal for young children living in rural contexts not to "attend school or to finish primary schooling and then drop out of school" (Collins, 2014, p.38). According to Woldehanna (2008, p.136,), many female children "stayed at home" and did the house chores, while "boys left school to work". These normalised practices institutionalised a life of poverty for many households, where the woman had to ensure that her family was fed, while

men continued to head the household. Many other rural women in KwaZulu-Natal were subordinated under deeply contested and yet powerful gender and cultural roles, in which male privilege loomed large (Bhana, 2010). These traditional ways blocked better ways of being and doing for many interested boy and girl learners.

Internationally, there is a chronic teacher shortage in rural schools (Mulken 2005). This is attributed to the fact that the way of living in rural contexts is not as good as in the urban areas. Education in rural contexts keeps on facing unique challenges due to among other issues, the geographical location of the school, diverse learners' background and different learning styles (Nkambule, Balfour, Pillay &Moletsane, 2011). With these challenges, many teachers prefer to teach in urban areas.

The social realities in South Africa in the context of HIV and AIDS have resulted in many orphans (Meintjes, Hall, Marera & Boulle, 2009). Indeed, many children in child-headed homes are forced to provide for themselves. As a result, they drop out of school and seek employment while some of them get pregnant (Maqoko& Dreyer 2007). Teenage pregnancy is prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal, since over 59 percent of teenage pregnancy is reported in this province (Bhana and Mcambi, 2013). Even though the study was conducted in Durban, which of cause is not rural, it is located in KwaZulu-Natal which is mostly populated by rural inhabitants. According to Goldblatt (2005), many girls fall pregnant just to receive a social grant as a source of income in order to alleviate the poverty that is rife in rural contexts. In addition, these rural residents are facing significant challenges such as lack of resources, impoverished social situations, crime, drug abuse, violence, and migratory labour, resulting in the breakdown of traditional family units (Normand, 2007). In addition there is a lack of proper infrastructure and job opportunities in rural contexts.

In rural contexts, it is difficult for learners schooling in this context to attain education that is of the same quality as their peers who attend school in urban areas. Schools in rural settings are characterised by a "lack of resources such as human resources (lack of qualified teachers) and Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM)", according to Weeks and Erradu (2013, p. 4). Teachers teaching in rural schools need to improvise because of the lack of teaching and learning resources. Rogan (2006) argues that there is lack of transport to take learners to school and as result learners, walk long distances to schools, contributing to learner absenteeism. Finally, learners drop out of school, thus preventing them from access to education for all.

Gasa (2013) states that there are children- and grandparent-headed families due to the HIV and AIDS epidemic that is dominant in most families. This affects the daily routine of teachers because they need to adapt and negotiate this special reality and take on different responsibilities in order to support and motivate learners to continue with their schooling responsibilities and with related challenges, in the best way possible.

My experience as a rural learner who was able to slip through(the social challenges that are prevalent in rural contexts) because my teacher instilled in me a love for school and hope for a different life from other women, is the most memorable experience in my life. While Bloch (2009) claims that education in rural areas produces barely literate and numerate learners, Mrs. Roman was open-minded and beat the dominant discourse of what it means to be a learner in a rural context. She had a broader understanding of rural learners. She was able to recognise the potential of rural learners and therefore she opened up opportunities for rural learners like me. She did not limit the opportunities for learners attending school in rural contexts. Chisholm et al. (2005, p. 105) emphasise that "education is key to further opportunity". Mrs. Roman used to say, "Think of success so that you are going to be more successful". This inner desire to inspire learners to work against all odds and maximise their unique capacity is my passion as a Masters student and as a teacher teaching in the rural context. In this study, I am interested in teachers. I want to understand what roles teachers can play to challenge the system that barely makes one literate.

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers teaching in rural school contexts promote resilience in learners to maximise their potential. While many studies present rurality in a very negative way, I align myself with Balfour, Mitchell and Moletsane (2008), who argue that rurality has the capacity to transform and change the behaviour of a person. Given this transformative nature of rurality, teachers need to negotiate the complexity of their work in a productive way and think beyond the traditional role of being deliverers of the curriculum. The Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) document states that teachers must see themselves as lifelong learners because the context is changing; they need to be able to continue to negotiate these challenges by improving themselves.

 In this study, I focus on primary schools and teachers who work there and the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they draw on to broaden and open up educational opportunities for learners. Primary schools are a critical site for this exploration because of the Zulu proverb which says "umuthi ugotshwa usamanzi": this means that the best time to instil values in children is when they are still young. In primary school is where we find young children.

Most teachers in rural schools are unqualified; others are professionally unqualified and yet others are under-qualified. Pillay and Saloojee (2012) confirm that rural schools have been the dumping sites for those who want jobs. For this reason, schools in rural contexts are categorised as dysfunctional because poor matric results are attributed to the lack of qualified teachers. In this study, I want to focus on the role of teachers who teach in the rural schools. I want to know what role teachers can play to change the behaviour of children in the context of social adversities, so that children do not drop out of school.

Contextual imperatives

In South Africa, there are many policies that were put in place post-1994 to respond to the complex social realities facing South African schooling system. The intention of these policies was that teachers do not just teach the curriculum but are also able to manage diversity such as HIV, poverty and single-headed households, among all racial groups. Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) is an important dimension of the Minimum Requirement for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) that actually considers how teachers in South Africa have to think about themselves and their work. The plan is that when one is in the process of becoming a teacher, it is ensured that the university prepares one for that, and that when one is already in the system as a practising teacher, it is ensured that one engages in life-long learning so that one extends oneself in terms of knowledge, skills and values.

Initially, the Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE), 2000,was designed to address the challenges that were prevailing in the education system and it offered seven roles of educators as an attempt for teachers to manage this diversity. This NSE policy has been revised several times, and recently it was replaced with the Minimum Requirement for Teacher Education Qualifications 2014 (MRTEQ). Among others, the following are MRTEQ objectives (MRTEQ, 2014: p. 8).

- Requires all teacher education programmes to address the critical challenges facing education in South Africa today – especially the poor content and conceptual knowledge found amongst teachers, as well as the legacies of apartheid, by incorporating situational and contextual elements that assist teachers in developing competences that enable them to deal with diversity and transformation.

- Brings the importance of interconnections different types of knowledge and practices into the foreground, as well as the ability of teachers to draw reflexively in a variety of contexts.

However, the MRTEQ policy is so generic that it talks about all teachers generally. It does not distinguish between teachers working in the rural context and those who work in urban context. The rural context is a particular context; therefore, contextual knowledge is critical for teachers who work there. According to the literature, rurality and rural schooling has certain peculiar characteristics in terms of infrastructure. Teachers who work there live there or away, need to understand the context in order to negotiate it. There is a policy that articulates very clearly the requirements for becoming a teacher and being a teacher, but it does not prepare the teachers for the complexities they face. Even though there is the MRTEQ policy, teachers do not address the diversity of contexts in which they work.

There are so many other policies that were put in place in South Africa to redress the imbalances of the legacy of apartheid. However, I am focusing here on the MRTEQ. As a consequence of our complex educational terrain, this policy stipulates that teachers need to develop and serve different roles in their work as teachers. This is critical in my study because in rural schools there are particular kinds of issues that teachers face daily and conditions in which they work. I want to know what is it that these teachers are doing to enable them to change the behaviour in learners. What roles and responsibilities are they taking up, to be different?

Research questions

This study is framed by three critical questions which are as follows:

(a) **Who are teachers who cultivate resilience in learners who attend school in rural contexts?**

I want to find out who these specific teachers are and what makes them the kind of teachers they are. Through teachers stories this question will be answered.

(b) **What personal and professional experiences shape teachers' meanings of resilience?**

With this question I want to explore how the personal and professional selves of these teachers are intertwined. The collage activity was done to answer this question and the

question for the collage activity was "Who am I as a teacher?" This gave me an understanding of personal and professional meanings that shape teachers.

(c) How do teachers enact practices that cultivate resilience in learners who attend rural schools?

With this question I want to explore what knowledge and practices these teachers act out that I want to learn about. Information in this question will be obtained through unstructured interview artefact retrieval and collage.

Location of the Study

This study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal in the Durban South region, at uMlazi district in the Mbumbulu circuit. The study was conducted in public primary schools. Generally, learners of the surrounding environment come from socio-economically disadvantaged families. Most parents are unemployed and a large number of parents depend on social grants for survival. Fortunately, the school is a no-fee school. The government provides a feeding scheme to the learners and most learners benefit from the Orphans and Vulnerable Children Program.

Theoretical framework

To respond to the critical questions, I draw on the positive emotions theory called Broaden and Build Theory (Fredrickson, 1998) as my theoretical stance. This theory is from the discipline of psychology and it states that when people are exposed to positive emotions, it is likely that new possibilities open up and which lead to their growth and development. I want to combine this theory with Day and Gu's resilience theory (2007). This theory describes resilience as a psychological construct and as a multidimensional and complex process. The above theories are combined with the view of rurality as transformative and capable of transforming the behaviour of a person (Bhana, Mitchell and Moletsane, 2008). Teachers need to broaden their understandings of rurality and see rural schooling as generative, so as to transform and change what they think and do as teachers that will enable change in the behaviour of learners. Teachers need to question their values and knowledge and acquire new perspectives in order to be able to negotiate the educational experience of schooling in a rural context. CPTD and MRTEQ are important, as well as contextually situated and experiential knowledge relevant and appropriate to working with learners in rural contexts. In this study, I

want to focus on the relational aspect between the teacher's lives and rurality. Exploring how teachers negotiate their everyday lives relational to the structural and material conditions of rural settings will enable me to develop a deeper understanding of the perspectives and priorities that shape their decisions as teachers in a personally meaningful and positive way.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach within an interpretivist paradigm. The qualitative approach is able to provide "complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue" (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest &Namey, 2005, p. 1). The methodology that I am using in this study is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is a very naturalistic method that permits one to speak freely about one's life (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Retelling stories helps people to remember their previously lived experiences thus helping them to remember their history and make meanings out of it (Clandinin, 2006). In this study, I am interested in the stories of lived experiences of the three teacher participants Maria, Faith and Saint, who have the experience of working in the rural school context. It is these participants' stories that allow me as a researcher to explore and understand teachers' personal and professional experiences of broadening and opening up educational opportunities in learners attending school in rural contexts. Narrative inquiry allows a variety of data generation methods: in this study I used an arts based method and the unstructured interview (this is discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

Organisation of this research study

In Chapter One, I explained the background and rationale that is the driving force of this study. I have outlined the focus and purpose of the study, which explores how teachers cultivating resilience in learners. In addition, I have elaborated on the personal-professional and contextual imperatives, rurality and schooling in South Africa. Furthermore, I have highlighted my key research questions, and my methodological approach. I conclude this chapter by giving an overview of this dissertation.

Chapter Two of this study focuses on the relevant literature relating to my research focus. The scholarly conversations generated key themes, debates and discussions that inform my study. This also allowed me to understand where my study is located as well as different theoretical perspectives that can be used to study teacher identity. This chapter also includes

the theoretical framing for my study (triple lens theory). I want to see the relational aspect between the teacher, psychological perspective and rurality.

In Chapter Three, I address the research methodology. Here I elaborate on narrative inquiry and the use of it within this study. In addition, I provide details on the setting of this study, selection of teacher participants and data generation methods and techniques employed within the study. Unstructured interviews collage and artefact activities are discussed as data production activities. Furthermore, I consider the limitations of the study, including trustworthiness and ethical issues.

In Chapter Four I present the textured, complex, lived teachers' experiences who teach in a rural context, in the form of reconstructed stories. The narratives provide insight into the lived experiences of the teachers who teach in the rural schools context. From the narratives, we get a glimpse of their personal-professional lives. This allows me to present the narrative analysis in a way that offers a complex understanding of the teachers' experiences as lived.

In Chapter Five, I address my first research question, which explores the personal professional experiences of the teacher participants in the form of vignettes. The vignettes offer an understanding of the meanings of self that these teacher participants adopt in shaping their meanings of self.

Chapter Six presents an understanding of teachers' enacted practices that cultivate resilience in learners. I draw on poetic inquiry to come up with themes to answer this question.

Chapter Seven presents my theoretical understanding of teachers as it cites the methodological reflections on the study; the theoretical contributions of the study; implications for policy and for practice; the chapter concludes with recommendations for further research.

Introduction

My intention in doing literature review is to give an overview of the studies that have focused on teachers and their work in the rural context, more specifically studies on teachers cultivating resilience in learners who live and attend schools in rural contexts. According to Aveyard (2014, p.5), the "literature review provides an overview of research in a specific area". I want to add to my knowledge and understanding of current work and perspectives in the research field (Frank &Hatak, 2014). This chapter is separated into three sections: Section A presents the themes of rurality and schooling, teachers' work, and teachers working in rural contexts; Section B offers understand resilience under the following themes: Resilience from a psychological perspective, resilience as multidimensional and culture, context and cultivating resilience, and Section C presents the theoretical framework for this study.

SECTIONA

Rurality and schooling

Internationally, rural contexts are categorised as backward (Sandberg, 2013). According to Lee and Hawkins (2015), rural areas are referred to as undeserving contexts. This is because rural areas are characterised by high rates of poverty and a lack of basic infrastructure. Crosnoe (2005) and Greenough and Nelson (2015) share the same view that "schools in rural context inherit this backwardness". For (Rank, 2015) and (Kawachi, Kennedy &Wikinson, 1999), rural areas have been marked by structural deficiency, high prevalence of HIV and Aids, joblessness, poverty and under-development. Greenough and Nelson (2015) assert that rurality is characterized by a high poverty rate. Many people in the rural context are unemployed and depend on social grants for survival. Crosnoe (2005) says many societies are exposed to crime substance abuse and violence. This contributes to the youth to become demoralized despite the government attempts to improve the quality of education as the learners eventually drop out of school. This contributes the high rate of poverty and backwardness of people living in the rural context. Segregation of schools was dismantled post 1994, 25 years ago, but still there is evidence of schools' segregation along racial lines and along geographical location. Although the Government of National Unity, from 1994 has made attempts to focus on rural settings to improve infrastructure, not all rural areas have been improved. Rural schools, occupied mostly by

Blacks, involve more problematic contexts than any other schools (Crosnoe, 2005). In some rural schools there is still no running water and electricity (Wu &Peng, 2014) and learners still walk long distances to schools. Issues of "lack of resources, low academic achievement and less supportive connection between learners, teachers and parents are experienced in rural areas" (Ebersohn and Ferreira, 2006, p.3).

However, some researchers have moved away from the Euclidean understanding of spaces that states that spaces unilaterally influence people's behaviour, to a generative theory of rurality (Balfour Mitchell and Moletsane, 2008). Such a theory proposes that rural spaces influence people, and people in turn also influence rural spaces as they respond to current local and international trends and beyond rural experiences, moving in and out of rural areas. Aldrich and Smith (2015) contend that people from rural contexts have social capital; he defined social capital as a network of connections among people who live in a particular society. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) affirm that rural inhabitants have shared values that bind them together by strong relationships and common interests. When children are raised by everyone in the community, it is likely that they will display a resilient trajectory. It is pertinent to understand how teachers relate, work, function and mostly maximise potential in learners in rural contexts.

Teachers' work

Internationally and locally, debates on teachers work mostly revolve around the issue of identity (Danielewicz', 2014). Teachers' personal lives play a major role in their practice as professionals. As Samaras, Hicks and Burger (2004, p. 906) observe, who we are as individuals, influences who we are as teachers and as a result, our learners learning. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) claims that identity is dynamic. In addition to this, teachers' identities shift over time as one negotiates a range of factors both internal and external. Teachers working in difficult contexts normally have painful memories of their own schooldays; they frequently deal with hurtful events most of the time (Pithouse-Morgan, Khau, Masinga & van de Ruit, 2012).

Morrow (2007) cited Shulman (1983, p. 151) in claiming that: "Teaching is impossible. If we simply add together all that is expected of a typical teacher and take note of the circumstances in which those activities are so carried out, the sum makes a greater demand than any individual can possible fulfil". Morrow (2007) is of the view that teachers have a lot to do while they are faced with the social realities of the schooling context in which they work and this make it impossible for them to function effectively. Teachers often play a role as

mentors, instructors and surrogate parents, yet they still need to perform their duties as employees of the institution (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This shows that teachers are so overwhelmed with their work (Chemiss, 2016), in that they see teaching as impossible

Teachers' working in rural contexts

In rural schools, teacher turnover is often high (Bartow, Gillette, Hallett, Johnson, Madda, Salazar & Valle, 2015). Getting qualified teachers can be difficult because rural schools tend to have a low economic capacity, thus causing difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers. Teachers in rural schools teach less than their colleagues in urban areas because it takes them long to visit a doctor, collect pay, attend workshops, or visit families who reside far away from where they work. Also some teachers walk very long distances thus teaching and learning starts late and finish early (Mulken, 2005). Ebersohn and Ferreire (2006) emphasise that teachers teaching in rural contexts do not have time to set plans and to monitor improvement in schools because they cannot spend after school time to strengthen relationships with the community; therefore, partnership between teachers and parents is not possible. This causes teachers stress and burnout (Baker & Moore, 2015). In North Carolina, a study was conducted to examine the causes of stress and warning signs of burnout in rural and urban schools. The findings were that unfavourable working conditions and time demands contributed to burn out in teachers working in schools in rural contexts (Abel & Sewell, 1999). Digest (2002) argues that resilient people have the capability to withstand, conquer, or pick up from serious threat. According to Hegney (2007), resilience is the capability to rebound from unpleasant condition. In this study, I am using this word to look at the ability of teachers to promote resilience in learners who are exposed to different stressors but do not indulge themselves in, substance abuse or youth criminal behaviour.

Given the challenges and realities that are prevalent in schools in rural contexts, there are lower numbers of children coming from rural contexts into universities. This makes it difficult to recruit and keep high quality teachers who will teach in rural school contexts (Monk, 2007). However, research shows that rural graduates see education as a ticket out of the rural context (Zambezi, 2013). Dolea (2010) claims that graduates who originally come from rural contexts possibly go back to work in rural contexts.

This debate is important in my study because this study is looking for teachers who, irrespective of all the challenges that are prevalent in schools in rural contexts, choose to work there as qualified teachers. It is important that teacher graduates go back to work in rural schools where many graduates are leaving (Dolea, 2010). In this study, I want to know

who these teachers are, what teachers do to sustain their commitment to work in such dynamic and challenging contexts; and what they bring to their work that enables them to cultivate resilience in their learners.

SECTION B: RESILIENCE

Understanding resilience

Drawing from disciplines like psychology, nursing and education, I have come to identify the following factors are key sites for cultivating resilience: the individual, the family and the external support (Walsh, 2015; Ecclestone& Lewis, 2014). Day and Gu (2007) referred to these factors as two trends of understanding resilience, that is, resilience as a psychological perspective and resilience as a multidimensional and complex process. Resilience as a psychological construct deals with the individual. Resilience as a multidimensional and complex process deals with the family and the external support system. In this study, understanding both the individual (psychological perspective) and the multidimensional (sociological perspective) is important for understanding the individual in relation to the context.

Resilience from a psychological perspective

The individual

Resilience as a psychological construct involves the study of personal or individual factors, such as, self-efficacy, inspiration, self-esteem and creativity (Raath& Hay, 2016). Hegney, Buikstra Baker, Rogers-Clark Pearce, Ross, King, Watson (2007), Castro et al. (2010), refer to these factors as intrapersonal factors. They consist of cognitive factors (cleverness, cheerfulness, creativity, humour and competences), coping plan, social skills, and educational ability. Castro et al. (2010) state that individuals who display all the above positive traits are more likely to be resilient. This is where my study fits in. The positive factors are believed to assist individuals to become tougher in the face of adversity. When the individual experiences positive emotions, his or her state of mind will bring about growth and development. Dass-Brailford (2005), in her study, focused on how the majority of Africans who experienced poverty, achieve academic achievement and demonstrate a resilient trait. She argued that individuals themselves may change the negative effects of adverse conditions by adapting themselves in how they respond to stressors (Castro et al. 2010).There are also important areas of agreement in the literature that I have engaged with regarding the relationship

between adaptability and individual resilience. It is said that people who are able to adapt themselves are more likely to decrease the risk of being exposed to risks.

Resilience as multidimensional

Support from family.

Resilience as a multidimensional and complex process includes a range of protective factors or a defence that lessen the impact of an adverse condition. Protective factors involve not only personal factors, but also external support systems. Steward (2004) classified these protective factors such as family and teachers, friends, community and institutions as social settings that play an important role in reducing stressors or challenges and developing resilience.

Although Hegney (2007) and Dass-Brailford (2005) believe that families are important for modifying negative effects by nurturing an individual's positive life and a resilient trajectory, Plomin (1989) and Rende (1993) cited in Condly (2006), contend that family may not always display a positive and resilient trajectory, but may also be abusive to the individual and may also hinder the individual's resilience. They use words such as proximal and distal risks. Their argument is that parents are sometimes abusive to their children. This is referred to as a proximal risk because the child is directly affected, unlike the distal risk where the illiteracy status of parents or family will affect the level of income in the family and then affect the child, who cannot have all the materials she or he needs such as school books. The common agreement in the literature that I have engaged with is that the upbringing of the child also plays a crucial role in resilience. If the child is socialised in a manner that promotes resilience in children, it is likely that the child plays a crucial role in the development of resilience. In this study I want to understand what makes teachers who grew up in challenging contexts such as rural contexts succeed despite the challenges that are there. I also want to understand how these individual teachers manage to get access to higher education and how they negotiate this challenging context, develop resilience and graduate.

The external support

In this factor most researchers pay more attention on the external support system from health professionals, people, friends, teachers and institutions other than the individual and the family. For the purposes of this study, I am going focus more on teachers than the rest of the external support system. The reason is that as a teacher I am more interested in the discipline of education.

Dass-Brailford (2005) conducted a study to understand how a group of black youth coming from socio-economic disadvantaged community demonstrates resilient characteristics. The study found that the learners looked at their teachers as role models and a source of encouragement, and achieve academic success. However, Hegney et al. (2007) in their study found that not everyone demonstrates resilient characteristics. According to Palmer (1998), it only takes those teachers with courage to teach and those that move beyond subject teaching to be resilient for their learners to succeed.

Hegney et al. (2007) contend that the level of resilience varies among people within the community. The findings further state that resilience is not a fixed state within an individual, but it varies from time to time. This is evident to the work of Day and Gu (2007) where they used Huberman's (1993) model of the professional life phases of teachers. This model states that the first few years of teachers' professional lives is underpinned by their impetus and dedication to provide the best education for their students, compared to the later stages where they sometimes experience stress and burnout, causing them to be less resilient.

Culture, context and cultivating resilience

Theron and Theron (2013) assert that this phenomenon of resilience has been studied by many researchers but less attention has been given to cultural and contextual factors. In the qualitative study that was conducted to assess how culture and context contribute to resilience, the findings revealed that the nature of intervention that is made available to children should consider the child's culture and context. Theron and Theron (2013) argue that culture generally is an explanation of beliefs, values, and behaviours. Culture plays a major role in cultivating resilience. Ebersohn and Ferreira (2012) in their study argued that schools in rural contexts compared to other schools are taking a very long time to implement plans that enable learner support. Furthermore, Ebersohn and Ferreira (2012, p.39) assert that "time, space and place are connected forces that hinder resilient initiatives in rural schools". The findings suggest that "place and agency need to be restructured" so that teachers will be able to overcome the challenges of "space and time" in order to cultivate resilience in learners. In this study, I want to understand how teachers who teach in rural contexts consider both culture and context, and how they negotiate culture and adopt strategies that are contextually situated.

SECTION C: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws on two theories: Day and Gu (2007) theory of resilience and Fredrickson's (1998) positive emotions theory called the Broaden and Build theory. The pioneer of positive emotions theory is Barbara Fredrickson (1998). This theory states that positive emotions play an important role in human psychological growth, development and survival. In this theory, "positive emotions, like love, joy, interest, contentment, and the likes help the individual to be more open-minded" Fredrickson (1998, p.3). When an individual feels open-minded, he or she is likely to promote positive thinking and creative actions, ideas and social connections. According to this theory, when people feel positive emotions, their minds broaden and they open up to ideas and opportunities. Understanding teachers lived experiences (personal and professional) will enable me to make sense of their psychological and emotional well-being and how this shaped their thinking and actions as individuals and as teachers teaching in schools in rural contexts. More importantly drawing on teachers who lived and attended school in rural contexts will open up what and how they negotiated the complex and multidimensional forces(socio-cultural, personal, institutional) to become resilient and become teachers who are able to think and act differently.

 On their resilience theory, Day and GU (2007, p, 1305) says that:

> Resilient qualities can be learned or acquired and achieved through providing relevant and practical protective factors, such as caring and attentive educational settings, positive and high expectations, positive learning environment a strong supportive social community, and supportive peer relationships…The social dimension of teachers' resilience recognises the interactive impact of personal, professional and situated factors on teachers work and lives and contextualises teachers' endeavour to sustain their professional commitment.

This resilience theory offers a complex understanding of the process of cultivating resilience. Combined with the generative theory of rurality, I create a triple lens theory of understanding teachers who work in the rural context. The generative theory (Balfour, Mitchell and Moletsane, 2008) states that rurality as a space is dynamic and transformative because rurality can change the individual as the individual can change rurality.
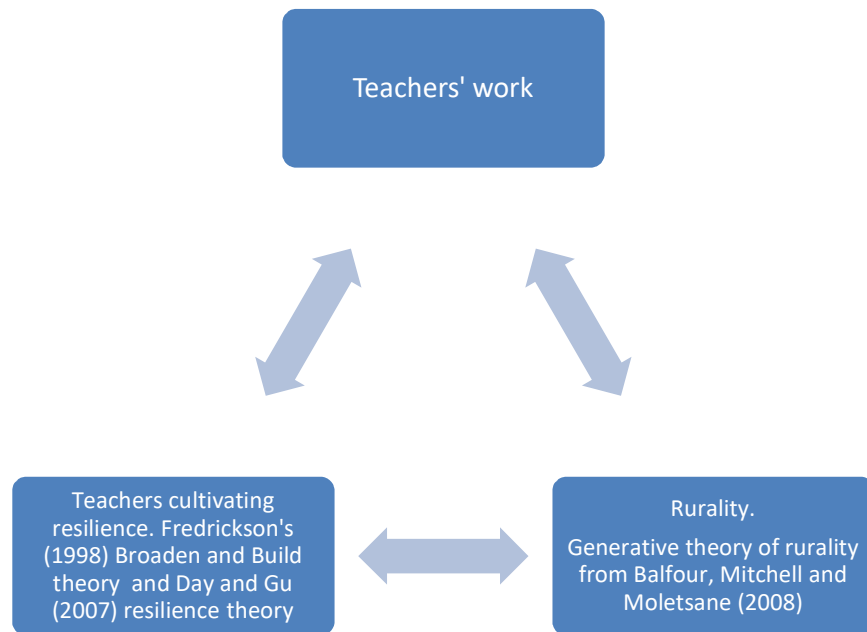
Figure 2.1: Triple lens theory of understanding teachers' work (2017)

In this study, I want to understand how teachers as individuals broaden and build. I want to understand the lived experiences of individual teachers and what protective factors they draw on for themselves, families and communities, to capacitate them as teachers to work in rural contexts with so many challenges. I want to understand how teachers who teach in the rural context are able to broaden and build up educational opportunities in learners, how they will display optimistic actions and are more likely to handle difficult life challenges, and how they achieve success despite of the social realities that are common in rural contexts.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature in order to gain insight into the current debates about teachers' work and teachers cultivating resilience in learners'. I have combined the resilience theory (Day and Gu, 2007) and the broaden and build theory (Frederickson, 1998), as well as a generative theory of rurality to understand the relational aspect between teachers work and the context in which they work.

The next chapter outlines the research methodology and the research plan used to answer the three research questions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that I employed to explore teachers' stories of cultivating resilience in learners attending schools in rural contexts. This chapter is separated into three sections: Sections A, B and C.

Section A

In this section the following aspects are discussed:

- Why a qualitative approach
- Why I chose narrative inquiry
- Understanding stories in narrative inquiry
- Limitations of narrative inquiry
- The selection of my research participants

SECTION B:

In this section I discuss the research plan, including:

The data production methods and tools employed in this study. The teacher participant's meaning-making was facilitated using unstructured interviews, collage and artefact retrieval. These tools assisted me to obtain data about my participants' personal and professional lives.

SECTION C:

In this section I discuss the analytical framing and production of the storied narratives:

- The data analysis
- Trustworthiness, validity and reliability

SECTION A

Why a qualitative approach

In this study, the research approach that I used is the qualitative approach. East et al. (2010, p.17) assert that the "focus of a qualitative approach is to gain insight into peoples' experiences, so personal stories of people are valued". In this study, I used lived stories of

teachers to explore to what extent they maximise potential learners. The paradigm that I used in this study is the interpretivist paradigm. My understanding of a paradigm is a way of thinking, understanding and explaining or way of doing things (Kuhn 2012).

In doing this study I am going to use an interpretive paradigm. According to Nieuwenhuis (2012), an interpretive paradigm is where reality is understood as being many and comparative, with the numerous truths which depend on other structures for sense. This means that there are many realities that exist for an individual. As a teacher myself who is teaching in a rural context, I am also experiencing these realities. Kuhn (2012) argued that there is an element of subjectivity of the researcher in the use of qualitative approach. As a researcher, I found it so hard to detach myself from the issue of subjectivity because it became more and more relevant as I could relate to some of the experiences as my participants told their stories O'Brien (1998). However, I endeavoured not to let my own experiences, thoughts and emotions influence my participants' stories of their experiences.

The advantage of using the qualitative approach is to be able to obtain rich data. (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) contend that both verbal and non-verbal data may be collected. It is for this reason that I used the unstructured interview, collage and artefact retrieval because these data collection activities work well with qualitative research. They will be discussed in the next section.

Why I chose narrative inquiry

My understanding of narrative inquiry is explained through my use of data in the form of stories, as well as the story itself as a phenomenon (Caine, Estefan &Clandinin (2013). Narrative inquiry is appropriate for my study, as through the experiences of few teacher participants, as a researcher, I can draw assumptions about experiences of more individuals. The uniqueness of narrative inquiry as a research methodology enabled me to "dream in narrative, day dream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, plan, revise, criticize, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative" (Bell 2002, p. 213). As a result, I choose narrative inquiry as a researcher because I want to learn how stories of teachers shape their teacher being; therefore, through teachers; stories, I will gain an understanding of the lived experiences of teachers.

Webster and Mertova (2006, p.47) contends that narrative inquiry offers "researchers with a rich framework through which they can explore the ways people experience the world depicted through their stories". Likewise, Bell (2002, p. 208) argues that "in teacher education, narratives look at the ways in which narratives of teachers shape and inform

teacher practice". As a narrative inquirer, I want to learn how teachers teaching in primary school in the rural school context are able to cultivate resilience in learners. I anticipate that narrative inquiry is the method that will take me through the understanding of my participants' experiences. As stated in Clandinin and Caine (2008), narrative is a way of understanding people's experiences and make meaning of those experiences through conversation, dialogue and participating in the ongoing lives of research participants.

Understanding stories in narrative inquiry

 Every part of the story must have "temporality, sociality and space "Caine et al. (2013, p. 575). Similarly, Chiu-Ching and Yim-mei-Chan (2009) state that temporality means that events and people have the past, present and a future and are always changing. Sociality deals with personal nature of experience including judgment and moral disposition in which the events and people exist. Caine et al. (2013) emphasise that every event must have time place and space. In this study, as a narrative enquirer I am creating a special relationship with my participants. I created the atmosphere that is ideal and very conducive for discussion: for example, during my ice-breaking session with my participants This is a very important detail which was a collage activity, we met at the new building in the staffroom. We were the first people to use this special venue because the school is being renovated. This made each and every one of us feel very special. In addition to that, there was a creation of good rapport between me and my participants. According to Clandinin and Caine (2008), a special place may allow me as a researcher to get information that I would not get from the participant if we were at home or in the public space. The choice of the venue was an important issue when generating field texts with my participants.

When a person is comfortable enough, he or she can start to tell a story. Clandinin and Murphy (2009) emphasise that when the participant tells a story, as a narrative inquirer I need to enjoy the story, get sense of it, and show connectedness in such a way that I lived the experience. Dewey (1938), Schwab (1973), Connelly and Clandinin (1988) and Eisner cited in Chiu-Ching and Yim-mei-Chan (2009), agree that narrative inquiry is about retelling and reliving experiences of the story. This means that the story must be so alive that each person reading it must forget that he or she is reading the book and start to live it instead. Caine et al. (2013) state that as a narrative inquirer, I need to bring the story to life, I also need to be very careful of my own personal motives. As a narrative enquirer, in this study I need to be able to deal with my own emotion and thoughts. The participant may tell a story that resonates with me but I still need to uphold my professional standard. According to Chiu-Ching and Yim-mei-Chan (2009), a narrative enquirer needs to be trustworthy and show

responsibility to the participants. I have created trust with my participants. I do not need to turn around the participant's story in such a way that when the participant reads the story she or he cannot recognize that it is her or his story. Caine et al. (2013, p. 581) refer to this as "taming and sanitizing" the story. Even though Caine et al. (2013) acknowledge that one story can be retold in many different ways, it is very important to tell the story in a simple natural way without "taming and sanitizing" it.

Limitations of narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry like any other method has some limitations. Bell (2008) contends that participants usually tell stories that suit themselves or that make them out to be good people, and tend to suppress those stories that damage their identities. During my fieldwork, I was exposed to different people with different identities. One participant's personal identity clashes with her professional identity. I had to find ways to discontinue using that person as my participant. Bell (2002, p. 209) argues that narrative inquiry allows researchers to get at information that people (participants) are not aware of themselves.

While I was collecting data from my participants, I also encountered another limitation during fieldwork which is the issue of time. Bell (2008) asserts that narrative inquiry requires more time than other methods of collecting data because participants tell their stories at their own pace. Also, the unavailability of time is a major factor that contributed to the participant's failure to turn up. I made myself a time frame for my fieldwork, but due to the fact that I work with some people especially elders, I had to make some changes in my time frame because some of them kept postponing our meetings, with valid reasons for the postponement of the meetings. I had to display a happy and understanding face even though I knew that this would cause a delay on my plans, but I did not want to pressurise any of my participants because they may withdraw from the study.

Selection of participants

In selecting my participants, I used a snowballing technique. Streeton and Campbell (2004, p.35) say that "snowballing come out through a process of reference from one person to another quickly building up and enabling the researcher to approach reliable and relevant participants.

In this study, I had to liaise with the school principals. Because of my selection criteria, I had to be referred to the teachers (who are known that they work beyond the book knowledge) by principals. I am new in the school where I am currently working. I liaised with my principal

who referred me to my two participants, Saint and Faith, who are my new colleague. I was struggling to get the third participant but while I was chatting with other students in the research commons on campus, I happened to chat to a lady who is a principal in a school in a rural context. This lady referred me to the third participant, Maria. Since I was not familiar with my participants, I had to organise the meet and greet session with all of us together.

The reason for selecting three teachers is that I considered experience, gender and context. I have participants who have more than five years teaching experience, I also have a male participant in order to hear from the male perspective. Lastly, all the participants work in a rural school context. Pseudonyms are used in order to ensure that my participants remain anonymous. I also reassured them that I will keep all matters arising from our conversation confidential. I gave my participants freedom to name themselves via a pseudonym. I did this because I wanted them to feel comfortable using the names that they chose. Maria-Magdalene is a pseudonym given to a 55-year-old lady who has been teaching for 26 years in the primary school in the rural school context. Faith-Mission is pseudonym given to a 33-year-old lady who is a teacher participant with 6 years teaching experience. Last is a 44-year-old male teacher participant whose pseudonym is Saint-Francis; he has been teaching for the past 21 years. All these teacher participants are Africans and they are all teaching in primary schools in a rural context. I arranged a time and date to meet my participants. They were very keen and enthusiastic, especially because they were chosen from other educators.

During the meet and greet session, I explained the procedure to them and I gave them consent forms. They read, understood and signed the consent forms. I explained that participation in this study is voluntary and no financial incentive would be rewarded. Participants were reminded that they were free to withdraw at any stage during the research process. As a Masters student and a researcher, I learnt to be honest and to abide by the ethics of being a narrative researcher. I had to tell my participants that they were at liberty to discontinue from participating in the study any time they wanted, even though I knew it would be a very disappointing and disrupting process on my side as a researcher because I would have to start afresh and get participants, which would definitely delay me; regardless I had to tell them the truth.

The following is a table that illustrates the profile of my participants.

Table 3.1: Profile of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Qualification	Context	Experience of teaching	Phase
Maria	55	Female	African	PTD, Bed, ABET, Bed Honors	Rural	26years	Intermediate Phase
Faith	33	Female	African	Bed	Rural	6 years	Intermediate Phase
Saint	44	Male	African	Bed and Bed Honors	Rural	21 years	Senior Phase

SECTION B

Data production and generation

 Understanding of people and events changes, Connelly and Clandinin (2006, p.479) state that "events under study are in transition". The sociality, temporality and space as discussed above contribute to this transition. Participants may say something that is totally different from what they said when they are asked the same question sometime later. It is for this

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reason that as a narrative inquirer I chose to use a variety of strategies in this study to collect data. I have used memory-work, an arts-based method and the unstructured interview.

Memory work, according to Cole (2011, p.225), is where the individual will "reflect on the past experiences" and artefact retrieval is used as a data source to prompt memory. I have also used unstructured interviews in getting participants to reflect on their stories of lived experiences and use certain prompts so that our conversation expands simply. Arts-based method is where art is used to express past experiences (Butler and Kisber, 2008). In this study I have used a collage inquiry as a data source in order to get stories of teachers lived experiences. Each of these data sources will be briefly discussed in the following subtopics.

Artefact Inquiry

Figure. 3.1: Example of my artefact (my certificate and trophy)

Riggins (2006) cited in Turkle (2007, p. 308) says that "we live our life in the middle of things, just as we are the collectors of things, things are collectors of meaning". In this study I have also used artefacts as a data source because I believe artefacts carry social and historical narratives.

According to Cole (2011, p.227) artefact are "objects that remind us of the past". Some artefacts may be associated with memories that bring positive emotions while others may be associated with negative emotions. In this study, I asked my teacher participants to come with one artefact of their most memorable experience that they were willing to share, because they will be discussing their artefact in a group. This is a more relevant approach in narrative enquiry because participants will reflect on their lived experiences. As a narrative enquirer I did not convince my participants which artefact to choose. I brought my own artefact (refer to the above table) to the group so that my participants will feel free to discuss their artefacts

and not see me as an independent observer but as part of them. I also share some important photographs with the group (including the photograph discussed in Chapter 1). I explained why the photographs are important to me.

My participants were very excited about artefacts and Maria stated that it is amazing that there are many artefacts in her house and at school that are abandoned in the cupboard and she said as from that day she will keep all these objects in a safe place. The artefact retrieval was the most interesting activity because Saint and Faith brought very old object and you could see that some of these objects were not taken care of. Saint brought his Standard 5certificate that he obtained in 1984. Faith brought the wall frame with flowers and the writing "10 commandments of love". The frame was a gift from his father who passed away in 2004. Maria brought a glass shield which was a gift from a parent. The shield is inscribed "The most wonderful teacher". When the participants brought these artefacts they were all laughing, giggling and happy, and they said that they did not realize the value that was in these artefacts.

Collage inquiry

Figure.3.2: Example of my collage

There are many means of finding the truth, as I am aware that participants may tell a story differently few hours later when asked. According to Clandinin (2006) the construction of self through stories is always changing and fluid. As a researcher, I tried to make sense of how stories are relational to time place and space. I then used multiple ways to generate data. I also used a collage as a data source. Bustler-Kisber (2008, p.265) define a collage as an artistic way of "cutting and sticking words and pictures" on a paper or canvass where an

individual expresses self. Bustler-Kisber (2008, p.269) states that "images enable meanings to travel in ways that words cannot". In this study, the collage was used as a data generation activity. The collages will be presented (in chapter five) in the vignettes section. My participants made and presented their collages. A collage was as an ice-breaking activity. The collage topic was "Who am I as a teacher?" During the collage activity my participants were more relaxed and more things happened because a collage making activity was a different way of expressing and complemented the interview process which was a one on one activity and more formal than the collage and artefact activity. I selected a wide range of magazines in order to provide my participants with a wide choice to select words and pictures. I bought charts, colour pens, glue sticks and scissors so that they could work smoothly without any interruption caused by the lack of resources when they made their own collage.

 I am using a collage as a data source in this study because Bustler-Kisber (2008) argues that when a collage is construed, it tells a story. This is in line with my methodology of narrative inquiry, and which gives data in the form of stories. My role as a narrative enquirer in the collage-making is that I must be able to maintain the collegial relationship between me and my participants so that participants will not feel inferior and as my subordinates, but as colleagues. In order to maintain this collegial relationship, I also made my own collage with the group but my participants said they wanted to present their collages before I presented mine (they said that they will not feel comfortable if they did not present and do a collage that is similar to mine. I guess the reason for this is that I did not tell them exactly what I wanted from them as they were asking me to tell them what I was researching).

As a narrative enquirer I did not interfere with what my participants' choices (words and pictures). As I have mentioned, in narrative enquiry the enquirer does not need to put the story in his or her own puzzle, so my participants had freedom to choose their own words and pictures without being influenced by me as an enquirer. All my participants enjoyed the collage-making activity especially as they were making a collage for the first time. Saint used to say he wants to make another collage, and he also wants to design an activity in Maths that will require his learners to use a collage as he is teaching Maths (For the prompts of the collage activity, please refer to the attached appendix for the collage activity).

Unstructured interviews

According to Fontana and Frey (1994, p.371), an unstructured interview is an interview without any set of pre-established questions'' It is held like a daily conversation. It is not formal and is more open-ended. The fact is that in an unstructured interview, the interviewer has certain topics in mind that he/she wishes to cover but they should not directly ask the

interviewee those questions. I asked my participants to tell me as far back as they could remember about their lives as teachers. I subdivided the questions into themes, personal and professional experiences. (For prompts please refer to the attached appendix for unstructured interview).

During the interview I tried to uphold my professional standard as a researcher. Even though I am a talkative person, I tried by all means not to influence my participants' thoughts by using any gestures. The prompts that were prepared for unstructured interviews assisted me because I was doing this for the first time in my life. Honestly, I had the fear of the unknown. When I had to ask for clarity I would think twice because part of me did not want to cross the border line and maybe upset the participant; however, I had to ask the question for clarity. I believe if I were to be given a chance to redo the unstructured interview with my first participant, I would be more relaxed. However, I think I was much better with my second and third participant.

As a researcher, my role is to listen so as to get more information correctly. In order to ensure that I was paying attention to my participants' stories, I was not taking notes when the participants were talking during the interview. Instead I used a voice recorder to capture the conversation between me and my participants. This was discussed with my participants and they all agreed for the audio notes to be used. My participants were willing to share confidential information with me especially after I explained to them that I would keep all matters confidential. All three participants seemed more relaxed during the unstructured interview because we engaged one-on-one in that session.

Today I learnt about a tanka poem, first time to hear about it. At the beginning of this year I learnt about a phantom poem. I think I am interested in using poems for my analysis. Why not?

Supervisor…… "Sindy, there is no recipe for doing a research; you can come with your own style."

Journal entry: August 2016

SECTION C

Data analysis

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) assert that data analysis is a difficult and time-consuming process despite whether a researcher uses software or not. In this chapter I am going to employ the complex traditional method of analysis without using any software. After I had finished the data collection activities, and obtained all the data from the artefact, collage and unstructured interviews, I transcribed the data. According to Polkinghorne (1995) "Configuration" means that the data is grouped in "themes" called "plots". I colour coded the data using different colour pencils for different themes. In the data, I was more interested in the stories of cultivating resilience that would fit in my study

Figure 3.3.The process of colour coding the data

The process of coming up with a story is narrative analysis. I struggled a lot when I was reconstructing the stories of my participant. However, my supervisor introduced me to the use of a story board. A storyboard is a plan, a way of figuring out the story of the film before you put in the enormous amount of work of the animation itself (Walmsley, 1997). I created a movie for each participants drawing from their storied narratives. Storyboard was part of my analysis. It is one way of coming up with the story and it helped me to select the data that I needed. I used my own pictures to think about the data and understand it. Storyboard helped me to develop the themes in an unbiased way.

Storyboard for Saint-Francis (male participant)

Growing up I grew up in 1970s from a very big family. My family was not a wealthy family. My father had two wives. And more than twenty children. 	**Cultural lad** I am a very traditional person. I enjoy taking part in traditional activities. As a young boy I learned different indigenous games including stick fighting.
Soul Buddies	**Referee** **I** am a referee and my game is fair.
Cattle and goat herder I started herding cattle and goats when I was a boy. No matter how bad the weather was but I still had to take the cattle to the fields. 	**A pedagogy** As pedagogy, beyond teaching, I also play my pastoral role and ensure that I assist these children in any way possible.

Figure 3.4 an example of a storyboard

From the storyboards I used vignettes to make sense of my participants' stories. Vignettes take the form of a "snapshot scenario or a story that unfolds through a series of stages" (Jenkins, Bloor, Fischer and Berney, 2010, p. 176). Pillay (2003, p. 81) recommend that "the storied vignette offers a space to provide a critical perspective in the interpretation, through a process of excavating and making visible those subtle silences and muted experiences embedded in the life story, that have shaped, and continue to shape teachers lives". Vignettes were used to focus on one of the teachers' multiple identities that I had chosen from the data that was generated at a specific point in time. Adopting an analytical lens to interpret and represent my stories of lived experience of teachers who cultivate resilience in learners who live and attend schools in rural settings.

Data analysis was the most complex activity that I experienced as a Masters student. I used theories as my analytical lenses in order to better understand both my research questions. In Chapter Five I used the Resilience Framework by Poulo (2007) as a lens to answer the research question. In Chapter Six, I used Social and Emotional Learning Theory as my analytical lens (refer to Chapter 6).The use of poetic analysis made it easier for me to come up with themes for discussion as an attempt to answer my research questions. I learnt to create a tanka poem which assisted me in coming up with themes (refer to Chapter 6). I also learnt to write a pantoum poem which assisted me to synthesis of my work easily. I created three pantoum poems for each participant and from the pantoum poem I created a tanka poem as a summative poem. I created pantoum poems using the three stanza format (Furman, Langer and Taylor, 2010, p. 63)

Stanza 1

Line 1

Line2

Line3

Line 4

Stanza 2

Line 5 (repeat of line 2)

Line 6

Line 7 (repeat of line 4)

Line 8

Stanza 3

Line 9 (repeat of line 6)

Line 10 (repeat of line 3)

Line 11 (repeat of line 8)

Trustworthiness, believability and reliability

We conducted the second data generation activity in a very unique and popular "place'' at

> *Today's session was the most difficult session that I ever had in my life as a student; we were discussing analysis. I was really out of my mind, frustrated, lamenting, blaming myself for non-stop studying. The way I was stressing I did not even take cool drink and the juice that was offered. I think analysis is the most difficult part of this study. Professor Pillay, (my supervisor) saw that we were frustrated as she said, "Students, you will do this… I know you. As long as you are working consistently you will make it. Should you need a one-on-one session, please let me know". I am not a quitter anyway; I will make it.*
>
> *Journal entry: 20 August 2016.*

uMlaza because my participants stay around that place. When we left from school I called my husband to remind him that I was meeting my participants. I did this because I was unable to introduce the male participant to my husband so I wanted to free the male participant from doubting his safety when he is with married woman! I also reminded my participants to notify their families that we were meeting. I did this because I believed that when they are set free I would get rich thick data.

While I was generating data, I also observed that as a female searcher, I connected better with females than a male. I observed that my male participant talked less than the females (Holmes, 2013). As a traditional woman there are some questions that were not easy to ask from a male participant and I had to employ some strategies to ask the male participant those questions. For example, Saint raised the point that he *abstained until it was a right time to indulge himself in sexual activities.* I had to make him explain all that in writing so that I would get as much information as I wanted when he was not directly talking to me.

In generating lived stories of teachers' experiences of working in rural schools, I used different methods of collecting data because there is no "one size fits all" method. According to Golafshani (2003), in order to maintain validity and reliability, researchers need to use multiple ways of establishing the truth. In this study I used different methods of collecting data; this allowed me to use different lenses to get to the phenomenon that I am studying. In

order to strengthen trustworthiness and believability of the unstructured interviews, I "transcribed the interview" (Morse, Barrett and Mayan, 2002, p.32) and read the transcripts back to participants so that they could confirm whether what was written was not "sanitized". Also I used my participants' direct quotes to strengthen believability. Recordings and photographs of artefact and collage were done to improve the authenticity of teachers' lived stories. My responsibility as a researcher was to create trustworthiness with my participants; I explained all the procedures to my participants before we did all the activities. As a researcher, I did all the activities with my participants and I presented in the group just like them. This allowed my participants to see me as at the same level as them and not as their superior. I needed to maintain the relationship with my participants even after these data collection activities are finished. I continued to keep in contact with them. This assisted me a lot because I contacted them through Whatsapp, smses telephone calls, twitter and Facebook when I needed clarity on something, especially when I was busy with the analysis.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued for my choice of narrative inquiry as a methodology for this study. I have presented the data generation methods and activities that were used in this study. I have also provided information on how participants were selected. Furthermore, I discussed how I created themes for analyzing the data using the storyboards. Lastly, I discussed trustworthiness, reliability and believability. The following chapter presents the reconstructed narratives of my three teacher participants.

CHAPTER FOUR: A JOURNEY THROUGH NARRATIVES

Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented the methodology that I used to come up with the narratives of teachers who teach in a rural school context. As I have used the narrative inquiry as a research methodology in this study, I have generated data in the form of stories. This chapter explores the relationship between the personal and professional experiences of the teachers who teach in a rural school context. I have reconstructed the storied narratives that emanated from the data (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). After I had reconstructed the stories, I sent the reconstructed copy to each participant so that they would be able to alter, add or remove any statement that they felt was not appropriate.

The stories in this chapter were produced through a variety of data generation activities such as a collage-making; artefact retrieval and unstructured interviews (refer to Chapter 3). The stories told are critical encounters in these teachers' lives. Through these stories I was able to enter into the world of these teachers' lives where they share their frustrations, interest and concerns that have a profound effect on their personal and professional lives.

As a researcher I ensured that I had to maintain the anonymity of my participants. As a result, and as mentioned, participants were given a chance to name themselves through pseudonyms. Maria, Faith and Saint are the pseudonyms that my participants chose and throughout this study I will be using these pseudonyms.

Faith's story

My principal told me that I am chosen to become a participant in a research study. She told me I will meet the researcher in her office. I walked into the office and there was my colleague. I am very happy that I will have a chance to share my story with her and I feel very special that I am chosen to participate in the research study because I never had this opportunity before. Even though my colleague explained the reason for using pseudonym, I feel I should have used my name because people will not recognise that it is me who will appear in big books when my name is disguised… anyway my name is Faith, I hope my story will make sense to policy-makers.

Early childhood

I am a female; I grew up in 1980s in the thorniest area of Ngonyameni, a rural village at Mbumbulu tribal authority. I come from a poor family background where both parents were uneducated and never had a proper job. This made life really difficult for me. My mother was a domestic worker and my father was a builder, but I regard them as my pillar of strength. As a girl growing up in a rural village, I had to do all the house chores and also take care of the children, as most girls were doing that in the area. Because my mother was working, I had to be the one who needed to be responsible for all the household activities. My parents motivated me to learn and they stated that I must be the first one to turn things around in my family. They made every effort to ensure that they supported me. They insisted that I go to school so that I don't work in the farm like other girls in the area. They wanted me to be a better person in future than them. The kind of support that they offered to me was only verbal. They motivated me to learn but they did not have money. They stated I must be the first one to turn things around in my family so as to have a better life. The support and motivation kept me going in order to fulfil their dream. Unfortunately, my father passed away and my mom had to be the only one to support us. Mom used to work at Chatsworth as a domestic worker and earned R15 to R20 daily yet she managed to build us a home. We grew up very poor (I cannot express the way we were poor, we were severely poor, we were the poorest of the poor in this area)… my mother raised us like that and she managed.

There were seven of us and I am the third one. The first one died at a very young age. The second one died at the adolescent stage. Now I am the first born because of these incidents. At times I think I am next but God is still on my side. I did not have many responsibilities when my first two siblings were still alive because I was not the eldest child. I used to be taken care of by them; by the time both siblings died everything turned out so quickly and I found myself having to deal with a loss and moving away from the comfort zone of being Miss Nobody with fewer responsibilities, to being an elder sister with many responsibilities. I started to take care of my younger siblings. I was the older child and I was overwhelmed and faced with many household responsibilities which I was not familiar with. I dedicated myself to handle the situation well.

God-fearing person

I am a child of God. I sing and pray a lot, even if it means waking up midnight and praying. I strongly believe in God. I also believe that there is power in a prayerful woman and that prayer unties all the tied up things. When everything is impossible I kneel down and pray, I encourage other people to use prayer as a weapon to succeed. I conquer all the challenges

facing me and my family through prayer. In this artefact that my father gave to me, I like Commandment 10 which says "Remember to pray to God. He will solve your problems". I have been holding up in this artefact since my father passed away and from this artefact I learnt a lot. My father presented me with this frame with commandments because he knew that I am a very spiritual person.

Figure 4.1: Faith's artefact

My schooling life

I started my primary schooling at Lutheran Primary school where I am working as a teacher today. I did grades one and two in this school. When I was in grade 3 which was standard 1, the faction wars began. I remember vividly when I was at school and I heard the noise of the gun. Boo! Boo! No-one told us to run away. We got outside the classes and we all ran. Nobody told us to run but the noise at school took all of us out of class. I ran far away toward Chatsworth where there is Mlaza River. There were many people there who were hiding in the river including children, women, men, and adults. I ran in the wrong direction because I was still very young. I slept there in the river and my mother did not know where I was because at the time of the gunshot she was at work and I was at school. I slept there in the river wearing my school uniform. While we were in the river I was surprised by elderly people who were hiding there as well. They did not know me and some of the kids who ran into the river, but the kind of care that these people provided to us was amazing. What left a remarkable mark in my heart is that I was pierced by a broken bottle which left me with a deep laceration and I was limping. I did not have shoes by then, remember we were poor.

Because of the faction wars in the community, we had to move to UMlazi Township and we continued with schooling there but as the situation got better, we went back to Ngonyameni and I completed my primary schooling there. A few years later, I started high school at the Judaism high school. I was a very quiet and polite girl; even now I am still a very polite person. I hate arguing. As a result, my teacher and my school mates used to compliment me for being polite. I also learnt to be punctual because mom used to wake us up in the morning when she left to work. At school I was clean and I did not want anything that would cause quarrel between me and my teachers because mom told me that I must behave myself as she did not have time to go to school to discuss cases of misbehaviour, she was working.

Teenage pregnancy

The biggest setback in my life is when I fell pregnant when I was doing grade 11. I had to leave school and take care of the baby. I felt I disappointed everyone, especially my most supportive and caring teacher who influenced me to consider teaching as a career, that was Miss Duze. By falling pregnant I disappointed my father and my family. Problems are part of life but they are not there to break me down but to make me stronger. I felt I neglected and disobeyed my father who used to say "You need to keep your virginity", so I felt I did not keep the promise. I tried my best to make every effort to succeed. A year later, after delivery I went back to school, but not at the same school I attended when I got pregnant. I went to a different school because I was shy and afraid to see my teachers and my ex-school mates. I went back to school to complete matric and at the same time I used to work on weekends as a domestic worker. My teacher, Miss Duze, was the reason I went back to school because she used to call me a teacher and she believed that I was able to solve any mathematical problem. She inspired me to become a teacher.

I am a rural girl

I took part in all cultural activities that were happening in the community such as virginity testing. I attended the Goddess Nomkhubulwano festivals which helped me to abstain and delay to be sexually active when my peers who were not attending these cultural events were already sexually active. I attended all the traditional wedding vibes where I was doing the traditional dance and wedding songs. Even today I still participate in cultural activities happening in my area. I like to do sports and cultural activities with my learners to develop talents. I remember my high school teacher who used to say sport and cultural activities are important because not every child is gifted academically so we need to participate in these

activities. Through cultural activities I wanted to mould learners who are proud of themselves and able to participate in cultural deeds.

My NGO

I am a founder of an NGO. This NGO is based in my community of rural Ngonyameni where I was born and raised. My NGO provides learners information on how to enter universities and how they can get funding from different organizations and from the government. I started this NGO because I was once a victim of lack of information, I was unable to get funding at school. I still run the NGO but it is not a large-scale thing as it used to be. Continuing with this NGO gives me an inner strength and intrinsic motivation, no matter how small it is now, but I will never let go of this NGO - it's my baby. I want to be recognized one day because of this NGO. The NGO is now less effective because it lacks the funds to run certain operations to keep it active. Therefore I ask for sponsors from companies and some respond negatively while others respond positively.

A general worker

After completing matric, I started to work in Chatsworth as a domestic worker and later as a security guard in Pinetown. I wanted to raise the money for university to further my studies and support my family. I had to leave home at 3:00 am. My mom had to accompany me every day from Ngonyameni to uMlazi station to take a train to Pinetown where I worked as a security guard. I worked there for six months and the company liquidated. In the community there was a construction company that was restructuring pipes for water. I was identified as a needy person from the community by the authorities. Therefore I was called to work in this company. I committed myself to my work and worked very well and the leaders noted me. As a result, when the contract was terminated, I was called to work for Masifunde Campaign (program that helped teach elderly people in the community to read and write), which landed me in teaching.

Becoming a teacher

I started to work as a teacher in the campaign and I received the status and recognition as a teacher. At first I did not have many people. I had only three elders and I taught them. It was very difficult to teach them because they never went to school. They would take an eraser and write with it on the exercise page and complain that "my thing'' is not writing. I had to respect them. I learnt lesson planning as a Masifunde educator. My elders were able to read, write and count. I recruited more and more elders until I eventually had 29 in my class. I was the top achiever and I was rewarded. This is how I began my journey as a teacher. I studied

through distance learning and I was employed at a school in my area while I was doing my second year. I worked as a governing body, paid teacher.

I am a lifelong learner. I like studying even if it means finishing one course before the next. That is why you see a picture of books in my collage. I like to have new information every time because technology is upgrading every time. I graduated for my BEd degree, and then I was employed permanently. I am a role model and example to my learners. I influence them with certain values such as punctuality; as you can see in my collage, I am a time keeper. I lead by example. I demonstrate good behaviour and respect by adhering to my professional code of conduct.

As a young female teacher, I find myself faced with many challenges. As a woman, I relate with children. I find myself having to deal with learners who are heading families because of HIV and AIDS. At times I have to understand the causes of learner absenteeism because some of the learners absent themselves when they are collecting their treatment, yet the curriculum has set up for me what needs to be covered during the week, without taking into consideration the needs and conditions of the learners that I serve. Therefore, I organise morning classes with them to catch up where we left off. As a teacher, I build strength to the learners and I empower and motivate them - they can be something in future. As a teacher, I am also a specialist in guidance and counselling and I also teach life orientation. As a life orientation educator, I organi**se** career guidance and expos just to keep my learners updated. I empower my learners to be able to attain many skills such as conflict resolution skills and other essential life skills. I instil in my learners respect since most of them stay with their grandparents for various reasons. I organise career dress up day at school in order to enhance the learners' interest in their choices of careers.

I am the chairperson of Orphans and Vulnerable Children and the safety and security committee. I have dealt with abused children and vulnerable children. I teach these children many skills such as   interpersonal and decision-making skills because some of these learners stay in homes that are headed by them.

Family and community role model

I keep a light on and I always have a smile on my face. You cannot predict whether I am happy or sad or when something breaks my heart. I am able to control my emotions and I teach my learners not to swear and fight with each other but to control their emotions. I am exemplary in my family and in the community because I am a leader and a role model. I practise what I preach. I fell pregnant when I was young but I have proved that it was a

mistake and a lack of information. I am very helpful in this community. Many people depend on my assistance for survival. I have orphans that mostly rely on me. They are most important, next to my household that I also take care of. I have succeeded against many obstacles such as poverty, and as a result, my family and the community look at me as their role model. I am an example of a child who has beaten the shackles of poverty and that is why I always tell my learners that they can also change the situation in their homes.

Maria's story
This section offers Maria's story.

> *When my learner told me the principal wants to see me in the office I was wondering what I have done. Even though I was told that I need to come during break but I could not wait. I went there, in the office and she laughed. She told me that there is a lady researcher who wants to see me and she is interested in my story. I was very happy, what came into my mind was an opportunity to get greener pastures. When I met the researcher after some time she explained that there are no financial incentives for becoming a participant in the study. I understood and I was still interested because I am the only person who is chosen in my school. My name is Maria, listen to my story.*

Growing up rural

I grew up in 1960s in the rural place called Emalangeni at Mzinto. I am the second born out of ten siblings. There are four girls and six boys. I grew up in a very poor family. Dad worked as a gardener in the garage and mom was unemployed. Growing up was not good because there were too many of us at home. We were all living in one small rondavel. This rondavel was used as a multi-purpose room; as a kitchen, lounge and a bedroom by all of us including mom and dad. My mother used to plough vegetables to raise us. As an elder child I had to help my mother in the garden, do all the house chores including fetching water and firewood in the bush, and sell the vegetables before I go to school. Sometimes we did not have food to eat and we were eating sugar cane for supper because it was always available in winter and in summer.

I grew up from a family with a very strong Christian background. My father was a preacher at church; as a result we all inherited Christianity. I remember the priest's wife who used to do most of the things for us such as providing us with food and clothing. Even though we were

Christians, we also strongly believe in cultural and traditional rituals and I am still practising those rituals. Sometimes I find myself caught in between culture and religion, because I believe in both spiritual and traditional things.

My mother was my role model

I have always been looking at my mother as my role model. My mother is a very hard rock. The saying "you strike a woman you strike the rock" refers to my mother. She had been through lot of stressful situations, such as being denied by her in-laws, especially her mother in law. They did not like her saying she was a township girl and they labelled township girls and associated them with prostitution, but she did not stop respecting them. They wanted my father to marry a rural girl. We suffered a lot because of this argument but my mother did not give up on the family. She proved to my father's family that she is not just a girl from Durban but she was a unique individual who has her own values and her own identity. Inspite of all the problems from my family, my parents were very fond of each other. They were friends and they tend to do everything together. Another aspect that contributed to looking at my mom as a role model is when she worked at a creche as a teacher although she was uneducated. She was employed by the pastor's wife because she saw my mother carrying many children every day, since we were ten, and that turned out to be a job opportunity then my mother started to work at the creche. My mother was able to improve the situation at home. Everybody including myself, wanted to be a teacher like her. It was for the first time we ate eggs curry. As a result, I developed a commitment to study and be a better person in future.

Passion for school

In 1960s and 1970s, there was political unrest and it was mostly felt by us the people who were poor. As a result of this political unrest, I studied Bantu education. There were very few schools and these schools were far away from home. We had to walk a very long distance to school barefooted. Many children from the community did not finish schooling and some did not even finish primary schooling because of the distance they had to travel. Then there were few of us on the way to school. Among those few I was there because my teacher used to call me her memorandum and failing to go to school it means she will not have a memo. I was the second eldest child, so I had to take care of my siblings on our way to and from school.

The policies of the then schools were not as those nowadays. Most teachers were using corporal punishment so severely, we were beaten to death, like donkeys, and you would think twice if you have to wake up to go school. But there was Miss Mtambo who was not beating

us, we all loved her and she used to motivate us to learn. For her sake, I respected my teachers and continued with school. Also because of severe corporal punishment, many children left school and went to work in the sugar cane fields. Me and my siblings continued with school because we were passionate about school, I did not have a proper school uniform. I used to wear dad's safaris when it was cold and some of my siblings would also wear mom and dad's clothes. Although I was poor I was performing to my ultimate level best and I was among the top ten students.

I remember one incident that happened when I was in high school doing standard eight. I did not have the money to pay for my school fees. I wrote examinations and the results were withheld. I and my siblings did not get the reports because of the school fees we owed. This is how some of my younger brothers left school. My teacher called me and he whispered to me, "You got position one, tell your parents to pay for you". I went home crying but I could not tell my parents because I knew they did not have the money. I digested this reality and I decided to go and register in another school which was further away from the school we were. I was accepted in that school but it was very painful because I knew that I passed yet I had to repeat the class because I did not pay the school fees. While I was in the new school I started working in the butchery so as to be able to pay for my school fees.

A teenage mom

I fell pregnant when I was a teenager. I was impregnated by a teacher. I struggled very badly when I was trying to raise my child alone because the father ran away. I worked very hard to raise my daughter. I had to do some menial jobs on weekends and holidays and I managed to raise my daughter alone. Some years later her father came to my daughter's life and supported her, but he had no interest in me and he dumped me.

Becoming a sangoma

I was once very sick. As a result of this sickness, my parents took me to the doctor who did all the tests but could not found any abnormalities. My parents then decided to take me to a sangoma (traditional healer). This sangoma told my parents that I need to be initiated as a sangoma. Believe it or not, it is very difficult in the initiation. I used to wake up at four in the morning, to collect fire wood. I had to come back from the bush and fetch water from the river until I filled the container (drum). I started cooking so that by the time the sangoma who is my mother sangoma wakes up, her food will be ready. I did all the house chores and the garden as well. If you are initiated as a sangoma, sometimes you need to make homemade bricks that are made of mud and build the house for the sangoma who is the mother sangoma.

I did all that. It was very difficult there but I had to persevere because of the calling that I had and also because I wanted to be healed.

A professional and life-long learner

After completing school I was admitted to a college of nursing in one of the provincial hospitals. I had to leave because the stipend that was given while training as a nurse was so small compared to what teachers were getting. I started working as a private, paid teacher for many years because I was unqualified. Later I decided to continue with my studies and I registered at Mbumbulu College for a special course in order to improve myself as a professional. After obtaining my special course, I became very keen to learn   I registered for my primary teachers' diploma and I graduated. I was motivated and also felt very important in the family because everybody was looking at me as an example. I also did my further diploma in education and graduated. Most of the time, I regard myself as an eagle because an eagle rises above the rest. I wanted to rise above all teachers in the former school, and I registered for the BEd Honours at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I also graduated. I started an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) class at the school where I was teaching. The reason was to assist many children and adults who dropped out of school to improve their literacy levels so that they are marketable in the world of work. After that, I saw a need to be an ABET specialist and I also did a Diploma in Adult Basic Education. I graduated with ABET too.

I like to try out new things such as attending the gym and jogging just to meditate because there is a lot that I have to deal with as a professional. These include attending to my personal problems, family colleagues and my learners as well. I had dealt with a number of students and novice teachers entering the teaching profession -sometimes in the most effective way while with others in the most ineffective manner. My aspiration is to mentor young adults who enter the teaching profession and also to learn more about mentoring.

Becoming a teacher

As a teacher, I sometimes help children without realising that I am helping them. I help them without being told about their problems. At times I help children when I have planned to help them and when I am aware of their stories. Sometimes, when I look at them suffering, I relive the experiences of poverty that I had been through. I encourage my learners to pray, connect and to trust in God. They know that without God nothing will ever go right. As a result, we hold the Learners Christian Movement (LCM) every Monday and Friday morning even

though we have a problem with diverse religions. I make our learners take turns with prayers for different religions to cater for all learners.

I started teaching with great energy. I taught Maths and Natural Science when there were no resources. I had to improvise or borrow from other schools. I produced learners who went an extra mile to write the national papers when they were coming from rural schools. I was awarded a trophy by the Department of Education. I entered many competitions with my learners and we always succeeded. I initiated the Scouting camp in the school that I first taught in and I went places. I was chosen as the best teacher in the school by parents because of the change they saw in their children, especially the girl guides. The parents awarded me with a glass shield (see the attached artefact).

Figure 4.2: Maria's artefact

Scouting teaches youth to behave well and it motivated them. I wanted to shape responsible children who will be able to take decisions without the influence of others since most children are influenced by their peers. The most painful thing in scouting is that some people in the community do not value our effort as teachers because of the abduction practice that is still practised in some communities. In scouting we encourage children to abstain, and then people from the community see them as good wives, and parents to agree that their children can get married as long as they will get the full amount of 'lobolo'. Sometimes the members of the public abduct the girls with the intention of marrying them.

I like to expose my learners to different sporting codes and cultural activities. The biggest challenge with these activities is that they are time-consuming. The school wants me to finish the curriculum and parents do not want children to remain after school for practice and rehearsals. I make arrangements to work with learners in the morning before school.

In my first few years of teaching, I once challenged a colleague of mine who use to have intimate relationship with girl learners. By then there were more grown up girls in the rural primary schools compared to nowadays. I had that "Women can do it attitude" and I stopped that action with the help of my colleagues. This was a very challenging incident because I was fighting with the then principal of the school. This also made me very unpopular with him.

A Visionary

I hope to have been settled all my debts before I retire so that I will buy myself a splendid villa of my vision. I like to visit different places, as you can see in the picture in my collage. I think this is Mauritius because I wish I could visit Mauritius one day. At school I usually organize excursions, both educational and vacation. I do this because I understand some of our pupils cannot go anywhere with their parents because some of them will not afford it. So the best time to take out children is when there is an excursion at school. I usually organize these trips so that our learners go there just to relax and think outside the box. The year before last we went to Mpumalanga province with the entire grade sevens but it was a very stressful task even though it was successful. The stress was with fundraising activities because we agreed with the staff that all grade seven learners should go and we promised the learners that we would raise funds for them.

Saint's story

> *I knew my colleague is studying toward the attainment of her Master's degree, but I did not know that I will be honoured by my principal to participate in her study. I am happy that I am given this opportunity because I have worked in the Department of Education for two decades but I have never been granted such an opportunity. Participating in this study motivates me to further my studies as well. My name is Saint and this is my story.*

Growing up as a rural boy

I am a rural boy born some four decades and a few years ago. I grew up in the 1970s. I was born at Mbumbulu and I was raised there. I grew up along Zimbokodweni valley upstream in the foot of kwaNqetho cliff. I am from a very large family. My father is a polygamist and he had two wives and more than twenty children. I am a twin. I grew up in a family that was not wealthy at all. Growing up was very challenging since there were too many of us. Also, it was challenging in the way that my father practised polygamy. Sometimes I think of polygamy as the survival of the fittest because you would want or need something from dad and he would tell you that it's not the most important thing compared to what other children want.

Schooling in Mbumbulu

I started schooling at Mbumbulu when it was impossible because of the faction wars and political unrest in the 1970s. We had to hide in the evening far away from home in the caves and go back home in the morning. I had to take the cattle to the kraal before I went to school. This routine was too much; as a result, many children of my age left school, but I did not give up because I was under a supervision of very strict parents who motivated me to learn. School was far from home and I had to walk long distances without any school shoes to and from school wearing short khaki pants. Still, I enjoyed every moment of my primary schooling because the principal planted in us many things. Apart from academic achievements he also planted skills. In those days we were doing craft work and we were taught skills such as knitting, gardening and other skills that were important for survival after exiting primary school.

A passionate gardener

At school we used to do gardening with the school principal. He instilled in me gardening skills. We had a school garden at school and I also had my own garden at home. This made me work-oriented. I used to grow vegetables at home when I was a young boy. I was able to support my family with my garden and also sell to the people to get money to cater for my needs. The principal chose me to monitor the garden. If the situation was so intense such that I would want to leave school, I would think of my position as a monitor. I learnt to arrive early at school because as a monitor I had to arrive first to see to it that everything was in order. As a teacher, I instil gardening skills in my learners. At school I have a gardening project. I teach my learners all the gardening skills and also give them the responsibility to take care of the school garden. I arrive early at school with my learners to do the garden

before the morning class starts. We grow all sorts of vegetables. I know that one is able to survive and support the family with gardening skills. I still do gardening with my learners because it gives me inner strength and a sense of pride; above all it brings back memories of my marvellous teacher who taught me this skill.

I became a cattle herder

While I was a young boy I became a cattle herder. Herding cattle gave me a taste of the real world. This is absolutely not an easy job. No matter how bad the weather is outside, my father wanted his cattle to be taken to the field in the morning and returned in the evening. I was the youngest boy so the herding duty was mine because my brothers were older than me. I would wake up early in the morning at 4:00 to send the cattle to the deep which was very far from home I learnt perseverance from being a cattle herder and to do things no matter how bad the situation is.

As a boy growing up in the rural areas, I also learnt many things in the field during herding. I was exposed to many things that rural boys do, such as making wire and wooden cars. I also learned to play different indigenous games such as mlabalaba and stick fighting. Stick fighting was not my favourite game because it is a dangerous game, but I ended up becoming so fond of it. If you were not doing stick fighting, you were labelled as a "mommy boy" (*umnqolo*). Young boys would not want to be called mommy boys. In order to prove that you are not a mommy boy, the older boys would make you fight using sticks. I once sustained a deep laceration and I bled a lot. This is how I learned stick fighting; as a result, there is no any other person in my area who does stick fighting better than I do.

Being a sports referee

I am a referee. The code of ethics that I learnt as a referee keeps me going and has empowered me to ignore all the temptations such as bribes and to stand out for truth no matter what the conditions are. I used to work for the South African Schools Football Association (SASFA). I'm a coach and a team player. I take everyone into consideration when I am doing something. My game is fair no matter what the circumstances are, but I treat everyone with respect. Whether the learner is capable or not, as a teacher I respect each and every learner's dignity and I make sure that where there are hiccups in the learner's life, I try and empower the learner if it is within my capacity to assist. As a referee I am expected to provide guidance to learners and mediate when there is a problem or when there are quarrels. I became a referee because of my interaction with learners through sport. I teach my learners

different sporting codes, I empower them through sport. I believe they have different talents. Some may not be good academically but they are excelling in sport and the school relies on them. I have produced learners who are winners and they have won many sport competitions.

A man of cultural morals

When I look at this certificate (artefact) I think of the imbalance caused by culture because I have sisters who were older than me but my father took them out of school because they were girls. Then it was believed that girls would get married and never return all the costs that were incurred during the time when the girl was sent to school. Just because I am a boy, dad decided that I should be the one who must continue with school because I will take care of the family. I am a man of cultural morals, unlike other boys. I conformed to the cultural values although it was funny for my friends. I respected the cultural principles. I abstained until it was a right time for me to start my own family and I got married.

Figure. 4.3: Saint's artefact: (1985) Standard five certificate.

Becoming a teacher

Post matric I knew that my parents would not afford the money for university. However, with a hope that God provides to all, I applied for a bursary to the African Council of Churches and I was awarded the bursary. I enrolled at University of Zululand for the Secondary Teachers Diploma. Life was very difficult there because the bursary only catered for my tuition and residence but not the meals. I had to sell sweets and cigarette and wash cars to be able to earn cash. I formulated myself a routine to work until I completed. I was the first one

to graduate at home. I felt like a king, I felt so great and I decided that I will never stop studying. I did the Bachelor of Education and BEd Honours in 1995and I also graduated.

A committed teacher

I struggled a lot when I was doing grade two and grade eleven because of the type of teachers who taught me. They were very punitive. As a result, I made a decision that in my life I want to be a good teacher and never inflict any form of corporal punishment in my learners. The kids that I taught had the same background like me because we were from the same community. Some of the children who attended school with me did not go beyond grade nine not because they were not willing to finish school, but they were faced with terrible circumstances.

The place where I was born and raised had in fact degenerated from what it used to be during my times because of the faction fights that occurred, leaving many vulnerable children and orphans. Also the pandemic disease such as AIDS contributed to this degeneration of the place, causing many children and families to suffer. As pedagogy, beyond teaching, I also play my pastoral role and ensure that I assist these children in any way possible by organizing food, uniforms, emotional support and all the support mechanisms that will make them feel positive in life. I teach Mathematics, which is a very important subject. I support my learners to achieve their best result by organizing morning classes. Sometimes I even teach these learners on Saturday. I try my best to engage with any individual learner who needs special attention in order to ensure that they do not experience problems in my subject. I also attend workshops organised by the Department of Education, CASME and AMESA. With the support that I receive from these bodies, I produced learners who enter Olympiads and have won in many Olympiads.

There are some frustrations that we sometimes encounter as teachers. Even though we are working for the wealthy government, we are not paid what we deserve. However, these frustrations will not interfere with the way we interact with all the stakeholders, especially with the learners because we chose teaching for the love of empowering these young stars. There are many frustrations that our kids face, and it is for this reason that I am a co-ordinator of Soul Buddies in my school so as to lessen the tensions and frustrations through self-enhancement activities that are offered by Love Life. We also run campaigns with Soul Buddies on communicable diseases and alcohol and drug abuse so that our learners understand these conditions and can act against them. As an OVC member, I need to intervene and provide these learners with nutritious food and school uniforms. I find it so

difficult to provide all these learners because the resources are limited, yet there are many of them.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the reconstructed stories of teacher participants who teach in the rural schools settings. These stories are an explanation of the way these teachers see their lives. The teachers' lived experiences assisted me in understanding how their personal-professional selves are negotiated within the context in which they work.

The following chapter responds to my second critical question, which asks what personal and professional experiences shape teachers' meanings of resilience.

CHAPTER FIVE: CREATION OF TEACHER SELVES

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I offered storied narratives of three teachers where they share their stories of lived experiences of cultivating resilience. The purpose of this chapter is to present the analyses in response to the question, **what personal and professional experiences shape teachers meanings of resilience.**

This chapter presents the three vignettes of Maria, Faith and Saint. Jenkins, Bloom Fischer and Berney (2010) described a vignette as "a snapshot scenario of a story that unfolds through a series of stages". Using the snapshots for each of these participants I want to understand their critical encounters that enable them to be the kind of individuals they are and the meanings of resilience they adopt in their everyday lives. I use vignettes to make sense of the selected data that is drawn from each participant's storied narrative (in Chapter 4). I draw on the resilience framework by Poulou (2007) as my analytical framework to help me explain the data about personal and professional meanings of resilience.

Poulou (2007) describes protective factors as: **the individual, the family and the community.** For one to grow up being resilient, one has to develop and acquire particular characteristics: Poulou (2007, p. 92) "positive attitudes, positive peer and adult interaction, an elevated level of social awareness, a high level of self-esteem, optimism, personal purpose, determination and persistency... Family protective factors include: warm, supportive, cohesive pattern of family interaction; parenting style, parental involvement and expectations for the child's education... Community protective factors include influences from peers and adults outside the family".

1t is important to offer each participant's personal perspective since it is important to understand who these individuals are, outside their lives as teachers, and how these other subject positions and their experiences within these, inform their meanings of resilience. Connor (2008) claims that there cannot be any professional identities without personal identities because personal identities shape professional identities.

This chapter presents the vignettes of each of the three participants, and each vignette begins with the collage that presents the personal and professional meanings. The vignettes are as follows. Vignette 1 from Maria: "From poor traditional girl to a qualified independent woman"; Vignette 2 from Faith: "From poor farm girl to a qualified teacher" and Vignette 3 from Saint: "From poor rural herd boy to a skilful teacher".

Vignette 1- Maria: From poor traditional girl to a qualified independent woman

Figure 5.1:   Maria's collage: Women can do anything

Maria is a female teacher who was born and raised in the 1960s at Mzinto in Emalangeni, a rural context in KwaZulu-Natal. She grew up during the apartheid era where many black people lived in poverty and had very low levels of formal education. Mitton (2000) asserts that the apartheid era left the South African people, particularly those residing in the rural areas, with problems such as poverty and lack of basic services. Maria is the second eldest daughter out of ten siblings, six girls and four boys. She was born in a very poor family where both parents did not have a proper job. Maria's mother was unemployed and she depended on subsistence farming. O-Mertz, Wadley and Christensen (2005) affirm that subsistence farming is a way in which local rural people enable themselves to respond to their poverty. Maria's father worked as a gardener at a petrol station at Mzinto village and the whole family depended on him for income. Maria attended schools in rural contexts throughout her life. She grew up in a patriarchal family where she had to do all the household activities as a girl. Dodson and Dickert (2004) declare that in traditional African culture it is the role of a woman to take care of the family and girls are socialised in that way.

My parents my guide

Masiglia and Holleran (1999) state that mothers should play a role beyond that of being a mother and influence the identity formation of their daughters. Maria regards her mother as her role model and she was inspired by her mother as she narrates.

> *I have always been looking at my mother as my role model. She worked at a creche and she was called "teacher". She was able to improve the situation at home. Everybody including myself wanted to be a teacher like her although she was uneducated but she*

encouraged me to learn. As a result, I developed a commitment to study and be an educated and a better person in future.

Maria's mother was a positive role model to Maria as a child. The inspiration that Maria drew from her mother who worked as an unqualified teacher in the creche aroused feelings of hope for a better life for Maria. This alternative experience to what most families in rural villages experience, motivated and encouraged Maria. Cruess, Cruess and Steinert (2008) emphasise that positive role modelling is an influential and encouraging teaching tool for passing knowledge, skills and values to other people.

Christianity and hope

Maria was socialised into Christianity as a young child, as she says.

> *I grew up from a family with a very strong Christian background. My father was a preacher at church. Although we were the poorest family, my dad used to encourage us to have hope and believe that God will make our lives better. I believe I am what I am today because of God.*

Maria's family was steeped in Christianity, and it developed in Maria inner strength, hope and encouragement for a better life. Growing up in a family where both parents were present in her life was important for Maria. Her father was a preacher at church and both the father and the mother acted as role models who instilled in their children hope for a better life. Unlike other people growing up in rural contexts, Maria had both her parents present when she grew up as a child in the rural context. This was different because Smit (2001) states that there had been a conjugal breakdown and desertion and a decline in paternal families in rural contexts because of migrant labour Bassett, Lloyd and Tse (2008) affirm that religious living and a sense of hope serve as a protection against many problems. *Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem,* (1977) places the church in the community. Therefore, in this study Christianity is the community's protective factor that buffers Maria's adverse condition.

Being a Learner, Mother, Worker

Growing up in a poor rural context where there were few and poorly developed schools did not stop Maria's passion for school. The Human Science Research Council, Mandela Foundation and Education Policy Consortium (2005, p. x) emphasise that rural areas are characterised with "the highest level of poverty and unemployment and lowest levels of educational attainment". Barnett, Whiteside and Whiteside (2002) reiterate that in rural areas girls hold an extremely big load of domestic responsibility compared to boys; therefore girls

are prone to leave school. However, Maria was able to work against these odds. Paying school fees was one of the major stumbling blocks that Maria had to endure as a learner:

> *We had to walk a very long distance to school barefooted. My teacher used to call me her memorandum and failing to go to school means she will not have a memo... I did not have proper school uniform. I used to wear dad's safaris when it was cold and some of my siblings would also wear mom and dad's clothes. Although I was poor but I was performing to my ultimate level best and I was among the top ten students. There was extreme punishment but Miss Mtambo motivated us to learn.*

Having teachers who were able to motivate her as a learner developed in Maria determination to succeed. She was determined to be the best student despite the harsh conditions she was facing. Siraj-Blatchford (2010) maintains that underprivileged kids have positive aspirations for the future.

The dominant forces that permeated the lives of rural families and girls in particular did not escape Maria. Achaya, Rabi, Amudha, Edwin and Glyn (2010) maintain that teenage pregnancy and parenting is common in girl learners residing in the rural context. Maria fell pregnant when she was a teenager doing grade eleven and was impregnated by a teacher. Coombe (2001) verifies that learners fall in love with teachers for various reasons; to some learners it is because of maintaining status and financial support while some learners fall in love with teachers because of the fear of being sidelined, reprimanded and failing. Maria reports:

> *I fell pregnant when I was a teenager doing standard nine. I was impregnated by a teacher. I struggled very badly when I was trying to raise my child alone because the father ran away. I worked very hard to raise my daughter. I had to leave school and do some menial jobs. I also worked on weekends and holidays. I managed to raise my daughter alone.*

Maria gave up to the traditional pattern of what girls do in rural settings like most studies show; she had to take responsibility solely to raise her child. According to Achaya et al. (2010), there are many unpleasant results of teenage pregnancy such as unhealthy infants due to lack of support and single motherhood. Maria experienced many adversities in her life such as motherhood and being a worker who does odd jobs. She used this mishap in a productive way and made every effort to turn around and continue schooling, which was opposite to what rural girls do. Grant and Hallman (2008) declare that most girls from rural areas fell pregnant and dropped out of school. She had multiple roles to play: learner, mother and worker at a very young age.

There are three types of protective factors that buffer the situation when people are exposed to adverse conditions: the individual, family and the community. Maria was faced with the adversities of growing up as a young African girl in the rural context in conditions of poverty and oppressive traditional gender practices. Inspite of these adversities, Maria's meanings of resilience come from the protective factors. It was important for Maria to have a positive role model because it influenced her to choose an alternate path for herself, even though she gave up the traditional pattern of what girls do in the rural context; she also looked at her mother as a role model. Christianity was the community's protective factor that buffers Maria's adverse conditions. Through Christianity she hoped for a better life as a girl growing up in the rural context.

Moving into teaching

Being an unqualified teacher

Maria was not satisfied with just having a matriculation certificate. She wanted to go beyond and find a job to further her studies and not fall victim to what most girls end up doing because they do not have the financial resources to further their studies. Amin, Diamond Naved and Newby (1997) elaborate that most girls work in factories and some work as domestic workers, while Nkosi (2014) states that in rural areas some girls are abducted and get married.

Inspite of all the challenges Maria faced as a girl and a mother, she realised that her life had to go on. She found employment as a teacher in the rural context just after completing standard nine. Unqualified teachers were a common phenomenon in rural schools. Weeks and Erradu (2013, p. 4) explain that in South Africa, there is a lack of qualified teachers and many teachers teach without any formal teacher qualification. Maria fell into that trap of working without any formal qualification:

> While I was raising my daughter, I started initiation as a sangoma (traditional healer) at the end of Standard nine. After the initiation, I was employed as an unqualified teacher with Standard nine. I worked as a private paid teacher (PPT) for five years. Because I was unqualified, I decided to go back to school to complete matric and I did. I am a lifelong learner. I decided to continue with my studies. I registered at Mbumbulu College for a special course in order to improve myself as a professional.

At the end of standard nine, Maria fulfilled her cultural values and became a traditional healer. She took up a job as an unqualified teacher (PPT), which is a traditional pattern in rural contexts, namely, you can still work as a teacher even if you did not finish school.

A qualified teacher

I registered for my primary teachers' diploma and I graduated. I also did my further Diploma in Education and also graduated. I registered Bed honours at the University of KwaZulu Natal. I also did a diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and I also graduated.

Maria's determination to become a qualified teacher so that she could improve her life and her responsibility as a teacher signalled the possibilities for positive educational aspirations, motivation and optimism for her life as a teacher.

Through being a mother, Maria had to take responsibility and do menial jobs to raise her child. As a result, she found alternate ways to get a better life by taking up a job as an unqualified teacher. She continued with schooling and later becoming a qualified teacher. According to Chocan and Langa (2011), many school going girls who had dropped out of school, come back and dedicate themselves to learning and achieving better results. These girls become more serious of their school work because of the shift to adulthood.

Synthesis

Adversities of rural life

Poverty

Oppressive gender practices

Christianity a better life

Poverty

Role modelling an alternate path

Christianity a better life

Unqualified to qualified teacher

Role modelling an alternate path

Oppressive gender practices

There are different types of adversities that Maria faced as a girl growing up in a rural context. However, while she had her mother as a positive woman role model who valued education, her father was a preacher at church. Living in a family and the community which is well grounded in strong Christian beliefs cultivated in her the values that enabled her to negotiate the adversities of growing up as a girl in a rural context and made her resilient to the adversities of growing up.

Vignette 2- Faith: From poor farm girl to a qualified teacher

Figure 5.2: Faith's collage: Tuned in to God

Faith is a female educator who grew up in the 1980s in the thorniest area of Ngonyameni, a rural village at Mbumbulu tribal authority. She comes from a poor family background where both parents were uneducated and never had a proper job, which made life really difficult. Both parents were domestic workers. Faith's mother used to work at Chatsworth as a domestic worker and her father worked as an unqualified builder. Faith is the third child out of seven siblings, but became a first born because both siblings passed away. She moved from the comfort of being nobody with fewer responsibilities to being an elder with many responsibilities. Faith attended schools in a rural context and she values the education that she attained while she was a learner in the rural context.

My parents, my pillar

Even though her parents were not educated, they were very supportive of her desire to be educated:

My parents were not educated. My mother was a domestic worker. My father was a builder, but I regard them as my pillars of strength... It was very difficult to grow up and to attend school because we were very poor. However, my parents motivated me to learn. They stated that I must be the first one to turn things around in my family. They made every effort to ensure that they supported me. They insisted that I go to school so that I don't work in the farm like other girls in the area. They wanted me to be a better person in future than them.

Unlike many girls who ended up dropping out of school to work on the farms, Faith's parents were non-traditional. They were able to support and motivate Faith to learn. The meaning that Faith draws from her parents is that of support and motivation. Because her parents supported and motivated her to study so that she becomes a better person in future and need not work in farm like other girls in the community.

A powerful Christian woman

Faith is a very spiritual person. She believes that everything is possible with God, as she narrates.

I am a child of God. I sing and pray a lot, even if it means waking up in the middle of the night and pray. I strongly believe in God. I also believe that there is power in a praying woman and that prayer unties all the tied up things. When everything is impossible I kneel down and pray. I encourage other people to use prayer as a weapon to succeed. I conquer all the challenges facing me and my family through praying.

Spirituality opens up particular beliefs in Faith and encourages her to persevere. Alawiya, Bell, Pyles and Runnels (2011) affirm that spirituality, faith and religious belief have been identified as vital coping instruments that can enhance resilience to survivors of adversity. It is for this reason that Faith also encourages other people to pray in order to succeed.

My cultural contradiction

Faith was exposed to the practice of virginity testing as a girl growing up in a rural context. Faith affirms this.

I took part in all cultural activities that were happening in the community such as virginity testing. I strongly regard my culture as my strength. I attended the Goddess Nomkhubulwano festivals [virginity testing] *which helped me to abstain and delay to*

be sexual active when my peers who were not attending these cultural events were
already sexual active and fell pregnant.

By indulging herself in virginity testing, Faith draws strength from her culture. She was also showing a positive self-concept and the ability to think and act independently without being influenced by her peers. Roux (2006) declares that the practice of virginity testing is most prevalent in KwaZulu-Natal. The advantages of virginity testing include avoidance of teenage pregnancy and the increase of HIV/AIDS and it helps identify children who are victims of sexual abuse by adults. Faith was proud of virginity testing and through virginity testing there was a possibility for her to get a better and different life than other rural girls.

Resisting the good Christian virgin girl

Faith fell pregnant when she was in grade 12. She felt that her pregnancy was initiated by virginity testing. Every man wanted to fall in love with her because she was a virgin. According to Madlala (2003), virgins are at risk of being raped and attract male Perpetrators. Faith says...

> *I fell pregnant and I disappointed my father and my family. Problems are part of life*
> *but they were not there to break me down but to make me stronger. Even though I fell*
> *pregnant at a young age, there was a lesson that I learnt as well... I tried my best to*
> *make every effort to succeed. I went back to school to complete matric, at the same*
> *time I used to work on weekends as a domestic worker.*

There were many opportunities of prosperity that Faith tried, but still she gave away to what most girls in the area do, when she fell pregnant. However, she was very determined to make up for this to herself and her parents. For Faith, teenage pregnancy was a wake-up call to work hard and fulfil her educational aspirations. Jansen and Nielsen (1997) assert that pregnancy causes many girls in rural areas to leave the school system early. However, Faith broke this norm and she was able to go back to school to study and be a better person unlike other girls in the village.

My teacher, Miss Duze was the reason I went back to school because she used to call me
teacher. She believed that I am able to solve any mathematical problems; she inspired me to
become a teacher.

Faith fell pregnant at a very critical point when she was doing matric. In this stage she had to decide to finish school first but she gave up to the dominant discourse of getting pregnant as a normal routine for African woman. Chocan and Langa (2011) state that despite the challenges

of being a teenage mother, young girls are able to persevere to achieve their academic goals and future aspirations. Therefore Faith was very determined and she completed matric.

A turning point

Faith employed the means to empower herself financially so that she would be able to support and care for her family. She also wanted to mitigate the situation by studying further. She had to work hard in order to succeed and this meant working as a domestic and in other menial jobs. Dill (1988, p. 34) says "the majority of domestic workers had completed eight years of schooling. Approximately half had mothers who had done some kind of domestic work and most had fathers who worked as farmers or labourers They had limited opportunities for education, and many had begun working when quite young". This is noticeable in the South African context, particularly in rural areas. Faith states:

> *After completing matric, I started to work at Chatsworth as a domestic worker. I committed myself to my work. Later I worked as a security guard in Pinetown. I wanted to support my family because in that time my father passed away. I also had to raise the money for University to further my studies and become a teacher.*

Faith followed in her mother's footsteps and she also worked as a domestic worker. She was able to support her family and was also raising the money to study. According to Kehler (2001), women in rural areas live in very poor socio-economic conditions which give them limited access to education. This leads them to work as domestic or farm workers. Even though Faith worked as a domestic worker, deep down her heart she wanted to be a teacher as she was influenced by her teacher (Miss Duze) that she would make a good teacher. She looked at Miss Duze as a female figure and she was motivated that she would not remain like other girls in the area who end up as domestic workers. Ridge (2004) states that poor children are self-conscious because of their background; therefore, they make every effort to make their dreams come true. Faith was faced with many adversities in her life as a young African woman growing up in the rural context. These adverse conditions include poverty, teenage pregnancy, loss of her father and when she had to take care of the family by seeking employment, working domestic worker and later as a security guard.

Through growing up in a supportive family and community with strong Christian and cultural values, she had the intrinsic motivation to pursue school. However, she became responsible for reproducing a practice that many girls in rural communities fall into. Faith went against strong family and community values and she fell pregnant. This unpleasant incident developed resilience in Faith when she had to take care of the child. This experience shaped her meanings of resilience

as she learnt a lesson that doing all the things that are against good values, means you pay a price and become a domestic worker. Inspite of all the adversities she experienced, Faith still remained positive and she was a provider and a caregiver who take responsibility for herself, her child and her family.

Moving into teaching

Becoming an unqualified teacher

> *I was identified as a needy person from the community by authorities to work in the company that was renovating water pipes. I committed myself to my work and I worked very well. The leaders noted me, as a result when the contract was terminated. I was called to work for Masifunde program* (program that helped teach elderly people in the community to read and write).

To be identified as a poor person in the community was a turning point for Faith. This is where she realised that there could be a better life for her as a domestic worker. Working in this literacy project reminded Faith of the alternate possibilities becoming a teacher and her hope started again. She drew her resilience from values of being able to persevere and the ability to train the elderly until they were able to write.

> *I had only three elders and I taught them. It was very difficult to teach them because they never went to school. They would take an eraser, write with it on the exercise and complain that "my thing" is not writing. I had to persevere and train them until they were able to write. I recruited more and more elders until I eventually had 29 in my class. I was the top achiever and I was awarded.*

The meanings of self that Faith draw show that she has the potential to teach others. Through this experience there is a construction of self that is coming through when she saw herself as a particular kind of a person.

> *The awards that I received as an unqualified teacher developed in me the love for teaching: this is how I began my journey as a teacher. I studied through distance learning... I graduated with my BEd degree, and then I was employed permanently.*

Faith was also determined to educate herself as a young African woman and this was against the normal practice of what girls do in the rural context; she completed formal schooling and became a qualified teacher.

Synthesis

Poverty and teenage pregnancy

I learnt a lesson

Supportive family and Christianity

Intrinsically motivated

I learnt a lesson

Provider and caregiver

Intrinsically motivated

Becoming a qualified teacher

Provider and caregiver

Supportive family and Christianity

Becoming a qualified teacher

Poverty and teenage pregnancy

Faith was faced with adversities such as poverty and teenage pregnancy when she grew up as a girl in a rural context. Because of a strong Christian belief and a supportive family, Faith was intrinsically motivated. She was able to negotiate these adversities of rurality in a positive way. She became responsible as a provider and caregiver. This developed resilience in her to become a qualified teacher.

Vignette 3- Saint: "From poor rural herd boy to a skilful teacher"

Figure 5.3 Saint's collage: Sharing skills with others

Saint was born in the 1970s at Mbumbulu in the kwaNqetho rural context. He was born during the apartheid regime. This rural context was severely stricken by political unrest in the late 70s and early 80s. This revolt led to faction wars in this area which eventually left many people homeless and poor. Bornman and Van Eeden (1998) reiterate that political violence had an impact on the economy and left many people poor and homeless. He is a twin and a middle child out of more than twenty children. Fortunately, Saint did not suffer the middle child syndrome because his parents chose to send him to school over his sisters just because he is a boy. Lavy (1996) maintains that the education for girls lags because it has a minor net return. His father worked in the factory in Durban and his mother was a house wife. Saint's father was a polygamist. Zeitzen (2008) claims that polygamy is culturally accepted for a traditional man. Growing up was financially challenging. According to Al-Krenawi and Graham (2006), the implications of polygamous families include poverty and financial distress. Saint grew up dominated by traditional patriarchal values and as a boy he had to herd his father's cattle.

Strict patriarchal family values

Herbert (1996) contends that parents make every effort to motivate and support their children to learn inspite of all the adversities they are facing. Likewise, Saint's parents were visionary about their child's future and they motivated him to learn so that he did not remain a cattle herder like many boys in the rural settings. Saint affirms this.

> *I started schooling at Mbumbulu when it was impossible because of the faction wars and political unrests that were there in 1970s. We had to hide far away from home in the caves and go back home in the next morning. This routine was too much as a result many children of my age could not continue with school, but I did not give up because I was under a supervision of very strict and visionary parents who motivated me to learn.*

Although Saint is from a traditional and poor family, was a cohesive pattern of family interaction. The parenting style that his parents displayed shows that they had a vision for their child's future. As a result, they were strict and had a vision for their child to be educated and not remain like other boys in the area.

Cattle herding responsibilities

Growing up in the rural context exposed Saint to cattle and goat herding. Traditionally, it is the responsibility of boys to take care of the cattle.

As a young boy I herded cattle and goats. Herding cattle gave me a taste of a real world. This is absolutely not an easy job. No matter how bad the weather is outside, but my father wanted his cattle to be taken care of and be sent to the field in the morning and returned in the evening. I still had to do my job in the garden and go to school. I learnt perseverance and responsibility from being a cattle herder and to do things no matter how bad the situation is.

Saint was actively engaging with cultural values like herding. He learnt to take care when he was a young boy herding cattle. Herding cattle is not an easy job because even if the weather is terrible, you still need to do this daily routine of sending and fetching cattle in the field. He was also able to allocate time for school and his garden. As a result, he learnt to be responsible and to persevere no matter how terrible the situation was. Valdivia (2001) says that boys were taught perseverance when herding cattle, that they should not stampede cattle. They were taught responsibility such as spraying and dipping cattle. Saint is a very active person because back in the days in remote areas, according to Valdivia (2001), cattle herders were not attending school, but he wanted to challenge the norm and he went to school and learned.

Saint started school in a rural context. The rural context is characterised by a lack of infrastructure. Greenough and Nelson (2015) claim that there is a big gap between rural and urban schools. Schools in rural contexts are characterised by shortage of infrastructure and resources. As a result of this gap, children in rural settings have to walk long distances to school because there are few schools. Saint declares:

School was far from home and I had to walk long distance wearing short khaki pants without any school shoes. I enjoyed every moment of my primary schooling because the principal planted in me many things apart from academic achievement, he also planted skills such as knitting, gardening. We had a school garden, the principal chose me to monitor the garden. I also had my own garden at home, and I was able to support my family with my garden and also sell to the people so as to get money to cater for my needs.

Saint negotiated his cultural values and he chose to do gardening which is a woman's job in the rural context. He employed measures that led to self-reliance. As a result, he was willing to work hard in the garden in order to accomplish his desired outcome, which was to have income so as to cater for his needs for school. Saint was influenced by the principal of the school when he was chosen as a monitor in the garden. Zimmerman (2002) points out that self-reliance can be learned from training and modelling by teachers. While Saint was

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upholding the practices of rural life, he also resisted some cultural practices that prevail in the rural context: that is why he was doing gardening because he did not regard it as a woman's job.

If the situation was so intense such that I would want to leave school, I would think of my position in the garden and I had to arrive early to see to it that everything was in order.

Saint enjoyed every moment of going to school, and because of the position he had, he learnt to be punctual at school.

Resisting dominant cultural practices

Saint grew up in the rural context where traditional practices are still very dominant. Cloke (2006) maintains that traditional and moral values are associated with rurality. Saint feels that his adherence to traditional practices made him withstand the influence from his friends, as he recounts:

> *I am a man of cultural morals. Unlike other boys, I conformed to the cultural values although it was funny for my friends but I was patient and respected the cultural principles. I abstained until it was a right time for me to start my own family and I got married.*

According to Malebranche (2003), having sex with many girls proves the masculinity of boys. However, Saint draws patience and respect from his cultural values. The values of being a man come from his cultural morals. Saint did not give up to what boys do, such as having children before marriage and before he finished school. Sabia and Rees (2008) contend that the benefits of abstinence include prevention of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. He conformed to the cultural practices and abstained until it was a right time to start his own family and then he got married. Saint's meaning of resilience comes from gender and patriarchy because he resisted the dominant discourses of what patriarchal and masculinity is all, about especially in the rural context.

Growing up in a rural context within a poor patriarchal family where his father was a polygamist who had too many children was not easy for Saint. Desai (1992) argues that this is due to the fact that the husband's income is shared by a higher number of family members, thus causing the family to suffer. Through being a cattle herder and a gardener, Saint learnt responsibility and perseverance. In traditional families, gardening is a woman's job, but, Saint negotiated this patriarchal practice and challenged it by doing gardening. Saint learnt to do hard jobs and he devised for himself a routine in order to survive. Saint draws meanings of

resilience from his cultural values. He did not want to be responsible for reproducing oppressive patriarchal dominant practices, but he was accepting of practices that promoted a better quality of life.

Moving into teaching

Saint knew that his parents would not afford the money for university as they were poor but he made attempts to further his studies.

> I applied for a bursary to the African Council of Churches and I was awarded the bursary. I enrolled at University of Zululand for secondary teachers' Diploma. Life was very difficult there because the bursary only catered for my tuition and residence but not the meals. I had to sell sweets and cigarette and wash cars so as to be able to earn cash.

Developing a routine

> I formulated myself routine to work until I completed. I was the first one to graduate at home. I felt like a king, I felt so great and I decided that I will never stop studying. I did Bachelor of Education and BEd honours in 1995and I also graduated.

The determination to become a qualified teacher meant that he had to develop a routine to work so as to be able to complete his degree. Klassen and Dwyer (2015, p. 34) state that "most of us need to plan our time and schedule. Time is the most precious commodity that a busy university student has, that's why using it well is so important. Here are tips to avoid wasting time: make yourself follow a routine".

Guided by code of ethics

Saint was also trained as a referee for the school's soccer programme.

> I am a referee. The code of ethics that I learnt as a referee guides, keeps me going. It has empowered me to resist all the temptations such as bribes and taught me to stand out for the truth no matter what the conditions are. I used to work for South African Schools Football Association (SASFA). My game is fair no matter what the circumstances are but I still remain loyal.

Saint draws loyalty and trustworthiness from the code of ethics he learnt as a referee. As a teacher and a referee, he still endures what he learnt as a referee and he ensures that he stands out for truth and is fair in all respects. Kaptein and Wempe (1998) point out that loyalty, honesty, and fairness are core values of the code of ethics.

Through being passionate about education, Saint also continued with a better life on which he was focussing, and he studied further and graduated as a teacher.

Synthesis

Patriarchal family practices are not easy

Cattle herding and gardening

Responsibility and perseverance

Devising routine

Cattle herding and gardening

Negotiating cultural values

Devising routine

For better life

Negotiating cultural values

Responsibility and perseverance

For better life

Patriarchal family practices are not easy

Saint grew up as an African boy in a strict family in a rural context, where patriarchal practices dominated his life as an African male. Through herding and gardening, he developed responsibility and perseverance to negotiate cultural values in order to have a better life as a boy growing up in a rural context.

Conclusion

There are many adversities that the three teachers who participate in this study faced as a result of growing up in the rural context. These include poverty and oppressive gender practices. Family spaces and particular community practices played an important role in these teachers' lives. Growing up in a family where both parents were present in the life of these participants is important. A supportive family and community that are grounded in Christianity was an alternate path for these participants to negotiate the dominant and oppressive cultural discourses prevailing in rural contexts and to have a better life.

CHAPTER SIX: REALITIES IN SCHOOLS THROUGH THE EYES OF TEACHERS

Introduction`

In the previous chapter, I presented storied vignettes of my participants, Maria, Faith and Saints. Each vignette explores personal and professional experiences that shape these teachers' meanings of resilience. I have also gained a deeper insight into what makes these teachers who they are, and what it means to be the kind of teachers that they are.

This chapter responds to the critical question which asks how teachers enact practices that cultivate resilience in learners. In this chapter, I have identified the common and unique practices teachers enact daily with their learners by using Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) theory as my analytical lens. SEL is a theory from the psychology discipline presented by Ellia, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenburg, Heynes, Kessler, Schwab-Stone and Shriver (1997, p. 2).

> "SEL is a process of helping young people develop character that is knowing, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty compassion, responsibility for self and others... SEL places more emphasis on the development of social decision-making and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many situations...SEL helps children develop attitudes, behaviours and cognitions to becoming healthy and competent overall-socially, emotionally, academically and physically because of the close relationship among these domains... SEL of children may be provided through a variety of diverse efforts such as classroom instruction, extracurricular activities, a supportive school climate and involvement in community service... SEL increases the academic achievements, incidents of problematic behaviour decreases and students become productive and contributing members of the society that we all want"

This theory provides me with analytical tools that help explain these processes that are presented by the theory in relation to how teachers enact practices that cultivate resilience in learners who attend school in rural contexts. SEL does not explicitly distinguish between what is social and what is emotional. For this reason I am also drawing on Illeris (2009) to support my understanding of social, emotional and learning. Illeris (2009, p. 8) states that "Learning implies the two different processes namely; the external interaction process between the learner and his or her social, cultural or material environment and an internal psychological process of elaboration and acquisition". In this chapter, I select data from the teacher's storied narratives that foreground internal desires and interests as well as external forces shaping what teacher's learn.

Poetic analysis of the selected data offers me an interesting way to synthesise data and develop potential themes for analysis. Furman, Langer, Davis, Gallardo and Kulkarni (2007) argue that poetry is an evocative way of developing themes; Poindexter (2002) confirms that poems are a tool to analyse and represent the data.

This chapter is separated into three sections. Section A employs poetic analysis to come up with potential themes and the discussion about teachers' enacted practices in particular schools in rural contexts. Section B presents the everyday challenges that these teachers experience in particular schools. Section C presents the unique practises that these teachers adopt and perform which sustains their commitment as teachers and how these teachers negotiate the everyday challenges that they encounter as they work in rural contexts.

Section A: Enacted practices

From the participants' storied narratives I select excerpts that respond to what teachers do to cultivate resilience in learners by colour coding the data. After colour coding the data I selected key statements from each participant, which I felt captured the practices enacted by these teachers. I shared these with my supervisor and after some discussion we worked with the six key phrases/statements to create the phantom poem that best captures the unique practices for each participant (see Section C). The three phantom poems are used as the basis for creating summative poem. The format for the summative poem is called the tanka. The tanka is a Japanese poetic design. I selected words and phrases from the three phantom poems that would best allow me to create my tanka poem, using the format that has five lines, with a 5/7/5/7/7 syllable count in the lines. With the help of my supervisor, I was able to create a tanka poem after struggling with the syllables (given that I am not an English first language speaker). According to Furman et al. (2006), by using the tanka format, I am able to evocatively present a lot of information in just a few words to understand the common practices are appearing from these teachers' experiences. In this way, I was capable to convey the ideas that are in the three phantom poems in only five lines of the tanka poem. The tanka poem is represented below.

TANKA POEM

Role model respect

Support and self-enhancement

Control emotions

Providing information

Pastoral care and strength

Developing a tanka poem has assisted me in developing the following five themes for the analysis which focuses on teachers enacted practices to cultivate resilience in learners: **Role model respect,** which this explores how these teachers lead by example and role model respect in their learners; **Support and self-enhancement**, which this explores how these teachers employ different strategies to support their learners so that new possibilities that promote self-enhancement of their learners are created; **Control emotions,** which explores how these teachers use different activities that teach their learners to control their emotions and their own; **Provide information,** which explores how teachers use extra-curricular activities to provide information to the learners, and **Pastoral care strength,** which explores how teachers assist with the welfare of their learners at school. Each theme will be discussed below.

Theme1: Teachers role model respect

There are different ways in which these teacher participants role model respect that earns them respect, as particular kind of teachers in the school.

Punctuality

Faith elaborates: *I am a role model and exemplary to my learners. I influence them with certain values such as punctuality...I demonstrate good behaviour and respect by adhering to my professional code of conduct... I instil in my learner's respect since most of them stay with their grandparents for various reasons.*

Faith is a role model to her learners and she also leads by example. Respect, according to Hoppernbrouwers, Proper and van der Weide (2005), is one of the fundamentals of role models. In order to show respect, Faith acts in a very professional manner and punctuality is an important attribute that she demonstrates. Faith learnt punctuality when she was working as a domestic worker. As a role model she is able to influence the learners with certain values that are positive in life, such as respect and punctuality. Instilling values in learners is also a fundamental trait of role models, as Lumpkin (2008, p. 44) argues: "…schools and teachers should educate for character especially through teaching respect and responsibility''.

 Saint, the male teacher, believes in encouraging respect and fairness in his learners as he narrates.

Exercising fairness

> *I'm a coach and a team player. I put everyone into consideration when I am doing something. My game is fair no matter what the circumstances are; I treat everyone with fairness and respect. I also encourage my learners to exercise fairness.*

Saint is teaching respect through sport. In each sporting code there are conventional rules which need to be respected. Gould, Collins, Lauer and Chung (2007) remind us that sport encourages respect for others. Saint treats everyone with respect no matter what the circumstances are.

These teachers role model respect in different ways, such as through punctuality and exercising fairness. They do not do as they please just because they work in rural contexts far away from authorities. It is important for teachers to cooperate with their students and serve as role models Lumpkin (2008). Teachers express the desire to exercise responsibility as role models who value respect and who want to develop good values in learners.

Theme 2: Teachers offer support for self-enhancement

There are different ways that teachers like Maria, Saint and Faith, show support to enable self-enhancement in learners who attend schools in rural settings. According to Barley and Beesley (2007), rural schools' success is influenced by a supportive relationship that the teachers have with their learners.

Saint explains:

Soul Buddies as a social space

> *There are many frustrations that our kids face, it is for this reason that I am a coordinator of Soul Buddies in my School so as to lessen the tensions and frustrations through self enhancement activities that are offered by Love Life. We also run campaigns with Soul Buddies on communicable diseases and alcohol and drug abuse so that our learners understand these conditions and can act against them.*

In order to minimise the frustrations facing the learners, Saint employs strategies that will enhance learners' self-enhancement through his involvement in the Soul Buddies program. .Schmid, Wilson and Taback (2011) contend that Soul Buddies enhances the lives of children, predominantly those who are coming from poorly resourced areas. The Soul Buddies program offers life skills to school going children especially in primary schools. Support and creating awareness in learners about the social ills that affect children in these

communities and empower (Soul Buddies) children to take precautions and act against these social ills in order to improve themselves mentally, physically and psychologically. Faith emphasises this.

Sport and cultural activities

> *I like to do sports and cultural activities with my learners to develop talents. I remember my high school teacher who used to say sport and cultural activities are important because not every child is gifted academically, so we need to participate in these activities. Through cultural activities I wanted to mould learners who are proud of themselves and able to participate in cultural deeds.*

Similarly, Saint articulates:

> *I became a referee because of my interaction with learners through sport. I teach my learners different sporting codes. I empower them through sport. I believe they have different talents. Some may not be good academically but they are excelling in sport and the school relies on them. I have produced learners who are winners; they have won many sport competitions.*

These teachers try by all means to provide support and self-enhancement in their learners through extra-curricular activities. As Siraj-Blatchford (2010) claims, that there is a shortage of facilities in rural areas. Nevertheless, these teachers do not give up and they are very persistent in finding ways to support the development of emotional and social well-being in their learners. Van der Merve (2014) emphasises that extra-curricular programs develop optimal benefits in learners residing in underdeveloped areas and enable the holistic development of a child.

Social and Emotional learning may be provided through variety of strategies. These teachers demonstrate a supportive school climate by indulging in different activities such as Soul Buddies to teach their learners about healthy social competency so that learners will grow up as responsible citizens with good morals and values that will make them well-adjusted human beings. Sport is a social space for social development. Through sport, social, emotional and physical well-being is cultivated. Not all the schools in rural areas offer scouting and sport activities because of the lack of resources and equipment, but it takes teachers with courage and determination to do all these activities in rural contexts. Thus, creating opportunities for learners to develop resilience is through these non-formal activities.

Theme 3: Teachers' capacity to cultivate emotional intelligence

The teachers have developed ways to maintain healthy emotional and mental well-being and are able to manage their emotions, especially in the challenging context of schools in the rural areas. These teachers demonstrate strength and the ability to support and motivate learners and in that way assist in developing emotionally healthy learners who are in control of their emotions. According to Barry (2009), emotional well-being is the ability of the individual to function in the community and meet the daily.

Organising a motivational speaker

Maria says:

> *Recently, I organised the motivational speaker to present to our learners because the way some of the learners behave shows that some of them are not emotionally stable and are not motivated in their homes.*

Maria promotes emotional well-being in learners through motivation and she organises motivational speakers to ensure that she cultivates resilience in learners through developing their emotional well-being.

Internal stability

Faith affirms that:

> *...I always have a smile on my face. You cannot predict whether I am happy or sad or when something breaks my heart. I am able to control my emotions and I teach my children not to swear and fight with each other, they must be able to control their emotions. I am exemplary in my family and in the community because I practice what I preach.*

As a teacher, Faith is able to control her emotions, and as a result she teaches her children to be able to control their emotions as well. This leads to a mutual relationship between teachers and learners and it promotes a supportive teacher student relationship. Sutton and Wheatley (2003) explain that when teachers and learners are able to control their emotions, it is likely that they will have free minds and the classroom environment will be ideal for learning.

Teachers try by all means to keep their learners psychological well-being stable by organising motivational speakers. This is very important for these teachers because not every teacher in rural contexts organises motivational speakers. It takes those who are committed, who want to go an extra mile in maximising potential in their learners, to do so. Even though something

has gone wrong, these teachers have learnt to keep themselves grounded so that not everything falls apart.

Theme 4: Providing information

Teachers provide information every day in different ways. The information that is provided is not only about the curriculum. Providing information includes all the activities that teachers enact to bring about effective teaching and learning.

Faith tries hard to ensure that her students are kept well-informed in terms of their future career opportunities, as she states.

Organising career guidance

> *I organise career dress up day at school in order to enhance the learners' interest on their choices of careers. As a Life Orientation educator, Iorganise career guidance and expo just to keep my learners updated.*

Moogan and Baron (2003) argue that youth tend to experience complexities when they have to extend their education and decide on their careers; curiosity and their selection can change given the information that teachers make available to them.

ABET specialist

Maria is more concerned with the learners who experience academic problems. She employs strategies to ensure that learners who drop out of school have access to education. She started an adult literacy program so that the learners who cannot continue with school get the opportunity to study in the program that is intended for adults. Maria remembers that she completed school when she was older and after she had worked as an unqualified teacher, so she does not want other people to fall on that trap again.

> *I started Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) class at the school where I was teaching. The reason was to assist many children and adults who dropped out of school to improve their literacy level so that they are marketable in the world of work.*

According to Baatjes (2003), ABET is intended to provide illiterate South Africans with the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their quality of life. Maria started ABET to ensure that she challenges the normal practices in rural contexts where the youth does not finish school and they start working without progressing to higher levels of education. Therefore, Maria makes every effort to ensure that the learners who experienced problems and dropped

out of school for various reasons have access to education. She started ABET in her school in order to ensure that these learners have access to education.

Extra classes

Saint, in contrast, provides additional information about the Maths content by working additional hours and sacrificing his personal time in order to equip his learners with the knowledge and confidence to excel in his subject. Furthermore, he creates opportunities for learners to enter and participate in Olympiads:

> *I teach Mathematics, which is a very important subject. I support my learners to achieve their best result by organizing morning classes. Sometimes I even teach these learners on Saturday. I try my best to engage with individual learner who needs special attention in order to ensure that they do not experience problems in my subject. I also attend workshops organised by the Department of Education, CASME and AMESA. With the support that I receive from these bodies, I produced learners who enter Olympiads and have won in many Olympiads.*

Sapire and Reed (2011) declare that learners in rural areas perform very badly in Maths and this situation demands a new solution, and Saint ensures that he deals individually with learners who experience problems. He enhances his own learning and development by attending workshops.

Maria also explains how she works with learners who experience particular learning barriers:

> *I deal individually with learners with barriers to learning to see to it that these learners are coping with the curriculum.*

As the above excerpts indicate, these teachers go beyond their classroom teaching to assist learners with different needs, and to enable their academic, emotional and social well-being.

Educational excursion

The analysis of the excerpts also shows that the teachers do not only believe in formal teaching and learning, they also make attempts to create opportunities for learners to engage through participating in educational excursions, as Maria narrates:

> *I usually organise excursions, both educational and vacation. I usually organise these trips so that our learners go there just to relax and think outside the box.*

Ritchie and Coughlan (2004) explain that field trips can have a positive impact on learning of facts and concepts and they are proven to be very successful. Maria's desire to develop learners' creativity and new ideas through excursions is noteworthy.

There are different ways in which teachers provide information to their learners. These are not only about the curriculum. Teachers provide information through extra-curricular activities such as excursions, organising extra classes and organising career guidance days. Teachers provide information beyond the book or subject teaching. They teach beyond their teaching time in the morning and also after school because they work in a rural school; they dedicate themselves to do beyond what they are expected to do. According to the DoE, teaching time starts at 8:30 and ends at 15H00. However, these teachers are doing something differently: they find a way to be early at school and also arrange excursions when most teachers do not want to take learners for excursions.

Theme 5: Pastoral care and strength

The word 'pastoral' in schools concerns the welfare care of learners. All teachers in all schools provide pastoral care, but this is very important for teachers working in rural contexts because it develops agency in the learners. Whatever kind of pastoral care that teachers provide in learners helps the learners to build strength and promotes their welfare.

Feeling positive in life

Saint maintains:

> *...The pandemic disease such as AIDS also contributed to this degeneration of the place causing many children and families to suffer. As a teacher, beyond teaching, I also play my pastoral role and ensure that I assist these children in any way possible by organizing food, uniform, emotional support and all the support mechanisms that will make them feel positive in life.*

Saint's pastoral care revolves around developing learners psychological, physical and emotional 'needs.

Similarly, Faith also plays her pastoral role, as she affirms:

> *Decision-making*
>
> *I am a chairperson of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and safety and security committees. I have dealt with abused children and vulnerable children. I*

teach these children many skills such as interpersonal and decision making skills because some of these learners stay in the homes that are headed by them...As a teacher, I build strength in the learners. I empower and motivate them that without anything they can be something in future.

As a teacher, Saint does not only focus on teaching book knowledge but he also ensures that particular support mechanisms are in place to ensure learner well-being– emotional and psychological. Similarly, Faith plays her pastoral role by teaching learners interpersonal and decision-making skills so that these learners are not vulnerable but have the necessary skills to strengthen and motivate them.

Another way of exercising pastoral care is through encouragement. Breines and Chen (2012) agree that encouragement is one aspect of personal well-being. Maria states:

I encourage my learners to pray, connect and to trust in God. They know that without God nothing will ever go right. As a result, we hold Learners Christian Movement (LCM) every Monday and Friday morning. Even though we have a problem of diverse religions, I make our learners take turns with prayers for different religions so as to cater for all learners.

Maria encourages spiritual diversity. She started the LCM at her school, and her students take turns to hold the assembly, and this provides a platform for learners to feel acknowledged that their religions are valued. Subedi (2006) suggests that there is a need to include religious topics in teacher education programs, since teachers will undoubtedly teach learners who come from diverse religious backgrounds. The Norms and Standards of Educators (2000, p. 54) affirms that... "The educator will demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators...one critical dimension of this role is HIV/AIDS". These teachers demonstrate compassion and care, and find creative ways to cultivate in learners' inner strength (emotional, mental and spiritual) to negotiate the diverse challenges and constraints they face daily in schools in rural contexts.

Through decision-making, these teachers ensure that learners in rural areas have the necessary skills to make decisions for themselves and to be responsible. Their interpersonal skills are also cultivated so that they are able to relate well with other people. Through the Learners Christian Movement, learners' psychological well-being is cultivated and they feel acknowledged, with a sense of belonging.

Section B: Challenges

This section focuses on the challenges that Maria, Faith and Saint encounter daily when they are working with learners in the rural context. From the storied narratives, I selected the data that responds to the challenges that these teachers face. These teachers confront a wide range of community and school related challenges. There are **unsupportive parents**, who do not involve themselves in matters concerning their children at school and it this makes it difficult for teachers working in rural context to function. There are **health related challenges,**where teachers are working with learners who are affected with HIV/AIDS and some of these learners are heading families. **Contextual challenges**exist because of the context in which these teachers are working; they also experience many challenges and they have to negotiate ways to minimise them. **Financial constraints are challenges**, as these teachers often experience non-payment of fees by parents. Each of these challenges will be discussed below:

Unsupportive parents

Teachers play their role by exposing learners to different sporting codes and cultural activities. These teachers experience problems both in the school and outside school. Teachers feel that they do not have enough time to explore their learner's capacities through these activities, as Maria reports:

> *The biggest challenge with these activities is that they are time consuming. The school wants me to finish the curriculum and on the other hand parents do not want children to remain after school for practice and rehearsals. I make arrangements to work with learners in the morning before school.*

According to Durlak, Weissberg and Pachan (2010), after school programs enhance the learners' personal growth and adjustment. Maria is willing to take the learners for rehearsals after school in order to foster their growth and development, yet the parents do not want children to remain after school. Therefore, in order to manage the situation, Maria makes arrangements to work with the learners in the morning before teaching and learning starts.

Improvising resources

Maria started teaching in a school in rural context where the conditions were unfavourable regarding teaching and learning equipment.

> *I taught Maths and Natural Science when there were no resources and I had to find the ways to win where impossible. I made every effort to improvise teaching*

resources in order to succeed. Because of my ability to improvise teaching and learning resources, I used to obtain good results.

Because of her role as a teacher, Maria had to improvise the resources. Ndirangu, Kathuri and Mungai (2003) establish that purchase of teaching material has been left to parents who have been unable to carry out this role effectively because of increasing poverty levels in rural areas. Maria is very persistent and she has the ability to find ways to succeed when it seems impossible.

Health related challenges

People living in rural contexts find it so difficult to access health care facilities because they need to get the transport to go to town in order to access health care.

Considering the needs of the learners

Saint stresses that:

…Because of the AIDS epidemic, many children are heading families. As an OVC member I need to intervene and provide these learners with nutritious food and school uniforms. I find it so difficult to provide for all these learners because the resources are limited yet there are many of them.

The Orphans and Vulnerable Children's committee (OVC) in schools provides uniforms and all sorts of assistance to orphans and vulnerable children. This shows a supportive school climate that cultivates resilience in learners.

Faith experiences challenges, as she says:

> *I find myself having to deal with learners who are heading families. Some of these learners are affected with HIV and AIDS. At times I have to understand the causes of learner absenteeism because some of them do not come to school when they have to collect their treatment, yet the curriculum has set up for me what needs to be covered during the week, without taking into consideration the needs and conditions of the learners that I serve. Therefore, I organise morning classes with them.*

Faith makes arrangements so as to be able to cope with the challenges she is facing. She decides to sacrifice and come early to school because she will not use the instructional time that is allocated for the curriculum.

Contextual challenges

There are challenges that teachers experience as a result of working in the rural context, such as that of abduction. Maria says:

> *The most painful thing in scouting is that some people in the community do not value our effort as teachers because of the abduction practice that is still practised in some communities. In Scouting we encourage children to abstain. Then, people from the community see them as good wives, and parents agree that their children can get married as long as they will get the full amount of 'lobolo'.*

In order to cope with this situation, Maria teaches the learners decision-making skills so that they are not influenced by other people. She also negotiates with an NGO to ensure that learners acquire skills that will empower them to make independent decisions. This will make the school-going children able to resist all the abduction practices that are normal in the place where they live. Kaschula, Huisamen, Moster, and Nosilela (2013) report that in traditional rural areas, abduction of young school-going girls is a norm. Maria is very protective of girl learners because of her previous experience as a girl child when she was impregnated by an older person. She goes an extra mile to ensure that this trauma does not happen to her learners.

Financial constraints

Teachers organise excursions and vacations for learners and they then experience non-payment of trip fees by parents, as Marias recounts:

> *Most parents are not supportive when it comes to payment of trip fees and they state that since they do not pay school fee, they cannot spend more on trips when the school is free. As teachers we do fund-raising activities.*

Maria tries by all means to ensure that they successfully take out their learners for excursions. As a result, they embark on fund-raising activities so that the trip is a success. Inspite of parents failing to pay for the trip fees, they work as a team to raise funds. According to the South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996), schools are allowed to raise funds so as to cater for their needs, especially those that have to do with teaching and learning.

Faith has an NGO. This NGO is now less effective because of the lack of funding she used to get from the government, she states:

The NGO is now less effective because it lacks the funds to run certain operations so as to keep the NGO active. Therefore, I ask for sponsors from the companies and some respond negatively while others respond positively.

Faith resorted to the formation of the NGO because she did not want her learners to experience complexities and be victims of ignorance and fall into the trap that she was victim to; instead she wants to provide them with information.

There are many constraints and challenges facing teachers in South Africa; nevertheless, the challenges are worse in rural contexts. For example, the community related challenge of abduction is a practice that is predominantly rural. What makes these challenges specific to rural contexts is that in rural contexts, there are many woman-headed families because of migrant labour (Schatz, Madhavan& Williams, 2011), which caused a breakdown in the family. Health related challenges are mostly experienced by people residing in rural contexts because here people still experience problems of accessing health care services. These people need to pay for transport to town to access health care facilities. The literature states that some people in the rural context come back home without getting help from the health care professionals. Parents in the rural context are unsupportive, especially with regard to finance. This is due to the poverty rate that is rife in the rural context because many people in rural contexts work as domestic workers. Maria, Faith and Saint ensure that they go an extra mile in order to ensure that they minimise these challenges and bring about learners' emotional well-being and positive aspirations for the future.

Section C: Unique practices

This section presents the unique practices of each individual teacher and explores how these teachers negotiate the everyday challenges that they encounter. In this section, I am not presenting all the themes, but I will only focus on the themes that foreground the unique practices that these teachers perform and which sustain their commitment to ensure that they enact practices that maximise potential in learners who attend school in rural contexts.

This NGO, it's my baby…Connecting with self and with learners through the NGO (Project NGO Leader): Faith

Faith remembers that as a learner she did not have access to information about tertiary institutions post matric because of the lack of information. She believes if she had information on how to apply and get funding in the university, she would not have ended up working as a general worker trying to raise money to further her studies.

My NGO provides learners the information on how to enter universities and how they can get funding from different organizations and from the government. I started this NGO because I was once a victim of the lack of information, I was unable to get funding at school. I still run the NGO but it is not a large scale thing as it used to. Continuing with this NGO gives me an inner strength and intrinsic motivation, no matter how small it is now, but I will never let go this NGO- it's my baby. I want to be recognised as a community icon one day because of this NGO.

Faith finds it important to continue with the NGO in order to sustain her inner strength impetus to support learners and ensure that they are motivated to pursue further education. Kuvaas and Dysvik (2009) emphasise that the benefits of intrinsic motivation in people include positive behaviour, persistence, good performance and high productivity. According to Niemiec and Ryan (2009), when teachers are intrinsically motivated they are also able to motivate learners. In addition to this, they feel very strong and they can tell their learners that it is ok to be alone as long as they have a passion about what they are doing and are happy about it. She also continues with the NGO because she wants to be recognised in the community as an icon.

Synthesis

My NGO work

Support and motivate learners

Feel strong

Passionate and happy

Support and motivate learners

Sustain inner strength

Passionate and happy

Community icon

Sustain inner strength

Feel strong

My NGO work

Faith as a teacher in the rural school is passionate about NGO work. This provides her the space to be a community icon as well as to experience inner strength to support and motivate learners to be strong.

Gardening with my learners gives me inner strength and a sense of pride: Saint

The Gardener

Teachers play their role and maximise potential in their learners. Saint maximises potential in learners differently. He teaches his learners basic skills such as gardening skills.

> *As a teacher I instil gardening skills in my learners. At school I have a gardening project. I teach my learners all the gardening skills and also give them the responsibility to take care of the school garden. I arrive early at school with my learners to do the garden before the morning class starts. We grow all sorts of vegetables. I know that one is able to survive and support the family with gardening skill.*

Within the school, Saint also teaches gardening skills to the learners because he was taught this skill by his former school principal when he was a learner. He was able to support himself and his family with gardening skills. Zimmerman (2002) repeatedly argues that gardening skills promote self-reliance.

> *I still do gardening with my learners because it gives me inner strength and a sense of pride; above all it brings back memories of my marvellous teacher who taught me this skill.*

Inspite of all the problems Saint is facing such as working with OVCs and too much content to cover, he still does gardening at school with his learners. The gardening skill was taught to Saint many years ago, yet even today after three decades, he still does gardening with his learners. He feels very proud when he works with learners in the garden.

Synthesis

A non-traditional teacher

Doing gardening

Developing routine in learners

To manage their school work

Doing gardening

Developing responsibility and perseverance

To manage their school work

For better life

Developing responsibility and perseverance

Developing routine in learners

For better life

A non-traditional teacher

Saint as a male teacher in the rural context engages himself in a gardening project with his learners. Through this project, he is able to develop in learners a routine to manage their school work and gardening. In this way, the learners develop responsibility and perseverance that open up the possibilities for a better life.

'Woman can do it': Maria

Maria supports and promotes the self-enhancement of her learners through the Scouts in her school in order to ensure that learners, especially girls, attain life skills. These skills will guide the learners to make informed decisions.

Scouting as a space for self-enhancement

> *I initiated the Scouting camp in the school...I wanted to shape responsible children who will be able to take independent decisions because most children are influenced by their peers. I was chosen as the best teacher in the school by parents because of the change they saw in their children, especially the "Girl Guides". They know how to behave if you are a girl. Scouting teaches youth to behave well and it motivated them to abstain. There are many things that are taught in scouting such as life skills.*

As scouts we also visited many places where children mingle with other children from different places, play different games and debate issues.

Maria believed that through engaging learners in the Scouting program, they will learn how to behave, especially the girls. In Scouting they also teach learners essential skills such as life skills and how to make decisions.

Being an activist

As a novice teacher in a school in a rural context at uMzumbe, Maria was very brave to challenge her senior with a paedophile tendency. According to Heystek and Lethoko (2001), it is a serious offence for teachers to date their learners. Maria maintains:

In my first few years of teaching, I once challenged a colleague of mine who used to have intimate relationship with girl learners. I was very sad about this I had that "woman can do it attitude" and I stopped that action with the help of my colleagues. This was a very challenging incident because I was fighting with the then principal of the school. This also made me very unpopular with him.

Maria believed that what happened to her as a girl child should not happen to others and she employed strategies to reduce abuse of learners by teachers, such as initiating scouting and girl guides in school. She ensured that she challenged the paedophile practice that is most common in schools that are situated in rural contexts in order to protect the learners, and she succeeded.

Synthesis

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Informed decisions

Girl guides and scouting

A gender activist

Challenging paedophile practice

Girl guides and scouting

Protecting the learners

Challenging paedophile practice

</div>

Brave

Protecting the learners

A gender activist

Brave

Informed decisions

Being a teacher opens up a space for Maria to be a gender activist. Her engagement with learners particularly through scouting and girl guides develops in learners the capacity to be brave in order to protect themselves.

Conclusion

Through knowledge skills and values, the three teachers in my study, Maria, Faith and Saint, are able to intrinsically motivate themselves to continue to develop in learner's, inner strength, the capacity to be brave and responsible, and to persevere. Developing these capacities and values in learners opens possibilities for an alternate and better life for children who live and attend school in rural contexts. It is important for teachers to develop particular social and emotional skills and values in learners that will make them resilient.

The SEL theory that I used as my analytical lens has helped me to understand how teachers enact practices that cultivate resilience in learners who attend schools in rural contexts. This study contributes to SEL theory, adding a new management dimension, which highlights organisational knowledge and skills and time management as essential elements in teachers' everyday practices that open up opportunities for cultivating resilience in learners attending schools in rural contexts.

Introduction

My curiosity to explore and understand the lives of teachers who daily find ways to cultivate resilience in learners attending schools in rural contexts was inspired by my Standard five (Grade seven) class teacher. She motivated me to succeed despite all the challenges that I faced as a learner who lived and schooled in a rural setting. Dass-Brailford (2005) refers to this capacity as resilience. Rurality is also a critical dimension in this study and teachers who work in rural spaces have to negotiate particular structural and material conditions.

Post 1994, many policies that were put in place for our transition from different forms of inequality to a period of redressing the imbalances and injustices of apartheid education. More specifically, formal schooling, offered the appropriate space for redressing many imbalances. However, 22 years later, studies show that the quality of schooling in rural contexts is still under threat. Moletsane and Ntombela (2010, p. 4), state that "Many people in the country are still waiting for the promised social change to come. In particular, the situation is even grimmer for those living in rural contexts in the country".

The systemic issues in rural contexts are oppressive and thus a huge problem. For example, the lack of infrastructure and basic services are still evident in most rural contexts. It is still very thorny issue for some learners who have to access school. Some learners walk long distances to school and some do not even attend school on rainy days because they need to cross rivers where there are no bridges. This compromises the quality of teaching and learning. In rural contexts, there is still a dilemma of teachers who teach without a formal teacher qualification; some of the teachers in rural contexts are unqualified. This is supported by Balfour, Mitchell and Moletsane, 2008, p.101who state that "the dominant discourses about the rural context are often concerned with poverty, backwardness and neglect". Life is very difficult for teachers and learners who interact daily within this context. However, despite the systematic issues and oppressive traditional practices that permeate the lives of people who live and work there in the rural contexts, Balfour and Moletsane (2008) emphasise that rural contexts are not fixed, but a dynamic space in which individual teachers are able to negotiate their work productively.

Through the research process, I was able to understand what and how Maria, Faith and Saint negotiate the varied constraints that are prevalent in rural contexts (Ebersohn and Ferreira, 2006), in order to maximise potential in learners. According to the Independent Online (IOL) news (6 January 2016), Lindokuhle Mazibuko of Amangwane High School in Bergville is the first

pupil in KwaZulu-Natal rural schools to receive nine distinctions in matric. This does show that possibilities for rural learners to learn and develop opportunities for different kind of life are possible. This research shows that some teachers draw on their own personal, professional, social and cultural resources to negotiate the school curriculum and to work beyond the school curriculum in order to maximise opportunities to develop resilience in learners.

Methodological reflections

By using narrative inquiry, I was able to understand what particular teachers are doing differently to cultivate resilience in learners. Narrative inquiry has deepened my understanding of the lived experiences of the three teachers who teach in rural contexts. This methodology offered me alternative ways to explore these teachers complex, lived experiences. This research study is located within the interpretivist paradigm where I could understand teachers' experiences through the narratives. Working with narrative inquiry is productive since it allowed for the difficulties, wishes, anxieties, practices, meanings and interests to be explored. I found the use of stories to be an interesting and easy way to understand and explore glimpses of my participants' daily lives and experiences.

In this study, I used unstructured interviews and arts-based methods to generate data about critical moments in these teachers' lives. Clandinin and Murphy (2009) emphasise that events change and have a "past, present and future". These teachers focused on critical experiences in their lives, including important people who influenced them in different ways. Using a variety of data collection strategies such as a collage and artefact retrieval (arts-based) allowed me to further generate rich data about teachers who work in rural contexts. The varied methods assisted me to gain entry into the personal (beliefs) and professional (practices) worlds of the three teachers. Narrative inquiry also helped me understand my role as a researcher. I became seriously aware of my ability to listen rather than talk. Through this experience I learnt new ways of how I can manage myself as a professional.

Using these strategies, I was able to produce data that could stimulate the deepest thoughts and feelings of the teachers by capturing complex ways of remembering the past, and their personal and professional experiences. I found that by using collage and artefact retrieval, I was able to bring the teachers' memories to life.. In addition to their stories and collages, Maria, Faith and Saint shared their most valued items with me during the artefact retrieval exercise. This added to the data generation process, making the data more believable and

authentic. Therefore narrative inquiry is an important methodology to understand who and what these teachers are and do.

The studies conducted in rural contexts reveal that teachers are still struggling, but in this study, I have selected teachers who teach beyond curriculum and are able to cultivate resilience in learners. I focused on teachers who are qualified, resourceful and work beyond the classroom and book knowledge. In focusing on teachers who are able to work beyond their scope of practice with some sense of fulfilment this study contributes to how we can think about enhancing the quality of education within the constraints and adversities that are systemic in rural contexts.

Meanings of self that shape the lives of teachers who teach in rural context

In this study, I drew on the resilience framework by Poulou (2007) as my analytical lens to respond to the critical questions. I have explored the meanings that shape the lives of each of the teacher participants. Maria, Faith and Saint all grew up in South African rural contexts. South Africa is characterised by many adversities which are worse off in the rural context. This study points out that, among other things, there are adversities such as poverty and traditional cultural and patriarchal practices that are dominant and oppressive in the rural context. The resilience framework states that there are three protective factors that act as buffers against the adverse conditions: individual, the family and the community.

The literature states that in rural contexts most children grow up without both parents because of the migrant labour system (Smit 2001), which caused a breakdown in the family system. However, the teachers in my study grew up in families where both parents were present in their lives as children. Maria and Faith's family were traditional, but they also have an element of being non- traditional because of the support, motivation and positive aspirations that their parents inspired in them to complete schooling in order to have a better life. The teachers also grew up in communities that are well grounded in strong cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices that offered an alternate path for individuals like Saint, Faith and Maria (self-discipline, responsibility, determination) to negotiate particular dominant and normalising practices around gender and work. Importantly, as individuals Saint, Maria and Faith were able to negotiate these adversities and socio-cultural forces to make choices that enabled them to develop resilience.

Saint

Saint's meanings of self were quite different from other boys in the rural context. Cultural values shaped his sexual behaviour and his role as a male. While in some males masculinity is around sexual behaviour (Smith, Parrott, Swartout, & Tharp 2015), forSaint,masculinity was not around sexual behaviour, but was about learning to be responsible. Saint did not want to reproduce what other boys were doing in the area; therefore, he abstained until he got married. Instead of playing around with boys in the community, he started a garden which kept him occupied meaningfully and he developed a routine in terms of his time.

Maria

The meanings of self that Maria was able to cultivate were different from other girls in the rural contexts. Even though she fell pregnant, she chose not to remain at home like other girls and look after the baby. Instead she took up menial as well as part time jobs in order to complete matric and pursue a career. She wanted to have a different life as a girl and not drop out of school (Chanda 2014) and remain as a domestic worker. Maria did not want women to be submissive and oppressed. As a result, she became a gender activist and she started a Scouting program with the intention to develop awareness in girl learners.

Faith

Faith's desire to be a professional teacher started from a time she was a learner. She valued herself not as a domestic and a menial worker but as a professional teacher. Her interest, love and passion to become a teacher kept her going until she succeeded. She started an NGO in order to ensure that the youth from her community accesses information that will assist them to pursue their careers too.

There are certain cultural practices that are relevant to rural contexts such as virginity testing; initiation rites as a sangoma; farming and gardening, and cattle herding that were illuminated in the storied vignettes. These cultural ways contribute to individuals growing up valuing the importance of routine, responsibility and restraint that was critical to their development and being resilient. These particular values teachers draw on to negotiate these complex forces serve as protective factors, that sustain them as teachers and enable them to continue to think and act differently.

Teachers enacted practices that cultivate resilience in learners

In this study, I drew on the Social and Emotional Learning Theory as my analytical lens in answering the critical question on how teachers enact practices that cultivate resilience in learners. The theory has helped me to analyse the practice that teachers enact daily with their learners. Through the range of different practices, curricular and extra-curricular programs, teachers develop social, emotional and physical well-being in learners. Maria, Faith and Saint were able to `negotiate the daily complexities in personally meaningful ways to support learners who live and attend schools in rural contexts.

Drawing on particular knowledges (practical -gardening; spiritual knowledge and life skills) to intrinsically motivate themselves to persist despite the contextual constraints, they are able to open up opportunities for learners to participate in activities and develop inner strength, responsibility and perseverance. Developing these capabilities and values in learners opens up possibilities for an alternate and better life for children who live and attend schools in rural contexts. It is imperative for teachers to develop particular social and emotional skills and values in learners that will make them resilient. This study points out that skills such as organisational and time management skills is important. This study illuminates the need for more than just emotional and social development, it emphasises the need for intellectual and practical knowledge and skills as well to develop values that are important in cultivating resilience in learners.

My theoretical position

In this study, the Broaden and Build Theory (Fredrickson 1998) has been used as my theoretical framework. This theory states that when people are exposed to positive emotions and positive thinking, their minds broaden and build; they open up to new ideas, opportunities. Through his research study I am able to understand the relational aspect between the teacher, the social context and the work teachers do in schools. Teachers play a major role in cultivating resilience in learners.

Policy imperatives

Teachers who teach in rural contexts and work in South Africa are guided by the policies and procedures that govern the South African schools. The Norms and Standards of Educators (NSE), currently known as MRTEQ, guide teachers on what kind of learning teachers should engage in. However, the role of teachers like Maria, Faith and Saint, are quite unique. The policy does mention the roles of educators, but not specific to rural contexts, where teachers can enact in dynamic and personally meaningful ways to develop resilience in learners..

Teachers draw on particular cultural and community resources to actively challenge cultural and gender stereotypes in order to improve their lives and the lives of learners residing and attending schools rural contexts.

Practical imperatives

This study has pointed out that personal and social life is essential for one to have an alternate life and build resilience. The seven roles of educators are important, as stated in the policy. However, these roles only focus on the professional aspect and not the personal and the social aspects. In order to perform their duties as a teacher, one does not only need to have content knowledge, but to be engaged in learning that helps to take up other roles as well. The Continued Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) initiatives must focus on developing the personal and the social aspects so that teachers themselves know what their passion is, and where their intrinsic motivation comes from. Teacher training and development programmes should also consider preparing individuals who interact with the rural context in a way that it enables the individual to broaden and build in that context.

Suggestions for further research

There are many practices that are prevalent in rural contexts. Some of these practices are traditional and people still observe them. The oppressive traditional system in the rural contexts remains prevalent. However, there are people who act in non-traditional ways as activists to ensure that these traditional practices. There are potential areas of research that this study highlights. Doing this research has raised the following questions:

- What is the role of teacher activism in rural contexts?
- School as a space to challenging cultural and gender stereotypes in rural context: What are the possibilities for teachers and learners inhabiting classrooms in rural contexts?

Conclusion

I come to the end of my journey, learning more about myself and my role as a teacher in a school in rural context. The following poem captures my learning experience:

Negotiating adversities and socio cultural forces

Drawing on particular knowledge

Curricular and extra-curricular

Discipline, responsibility intrinsic motivation

Drawing on particular knowledge

Develop social and emotional skills

Discipline, responsibility intrinsic motivation

Thinking and acting differently

Develop social and emotional skills

Curricular and extra-curricular

Thinking and acting differently

Negotiating adversities and socio cultural forces

This study has taught me that as a teacher who teaches in the rural context, I need to negotiate the adversities and socio cultural forces that are prevalent in rural contexts, by employing both curricular and extracurricular knowledge to develop social, emotional and intellectual skills in learners so that they think and act in better ways.

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Appendix 1: Request for permission to conduct research study

Y211

No 66 Bambakahle street

Philani valley

UMlazi

4066

04 September 2015

The principal

………. primary school

Ngonyameni area

Request for permission to conduct research

My name is Sindisiwe Maxentia Ndlovu. I am currently doing Masters (M.Ed.) in the College of Humanities – School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am specializing in teacher development studies; as a result, I am required to undertake a research to complete a dissertation.

Title of the study: *'Teachers cultivating resilience in learners attending school in rural context: A narrative enquiry'.*

Schools within South African context have been categorized in terms of quintile rankings (urban, rural, townships). This categorization causes a division in the education system. Schools that are situated in rural context are characterized with poverty, lack of resources, backwardness in implementing initiatives, poor performance of learners and lack of infrastructure (Greenough and Nelson, 2013). However, despite all these adversities, there are teachers who are enthusiastic and able to assist learners to succeed inspite of all odds. This study explores who these teachers are who are able to cultivate resilience in learners schooling in quintile 1 schools, and how do they cultivate resilience in learners. This study focuses on teachers teaching in primary schools in rural context.

Your school has been selected as one primary school at uMlazi district under Mbumbulu circuit to participate in the study. In this study, teachers are my participants and they will be selected through

snowballing criteria; no learners will be used in this study. Participation would include a series of research methods that will take place over a period of two months from commencement of data collection activities. The research methods will be of a conversational type (unstructured interview), making reference to object (artefact retrieval) events and activities (collage). The interviews will take place at a time convenient to you and will not disrupt your day-to-day functioning and will be conducted out of your instructional time.

Please note that:

- Confidentiality of the school is guaranteed as I will use a pseudonym for the school and participants, and their inputs will not be attributed to you in person or to the school.
- There are series of data collection activities that will take place. I will meet with participants for about 1-2 hours per day for approximately four days in two months upon commencement of the data collection process
- Any information obtained cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for the purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and will be destroyed after 5 years.
- The participants have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research and they will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your school involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- The following equipment: audio recording, video recording and photographic imaging, will be used to validate collected data and participant's names and the school's name will not be used in any presentation or publication of this study that may enable anyone to identify who the participants and the school are.

I hereby request a letter of permission from you as a principal that permits me to conduct this study at your school. Attached is a consent letter that needs to be signed by you, the principal.

I can be contacted at:
Email: sindlyndlovu@gmail.com
Cell: 0723828628/ 0723804935

My supervisor is Professor. Daisy Pillay, who is a senior lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, School of Education. Her contact details follow:
Email: pillaygv@ukzn.ac.za,

Telephone: 031-2607598

Cell: 0827765751

For more details you may also contact the Research Office through:

Ms Phumelele Ximba

Ethics office 031 260 3587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours in Education,

Sindisiwe Maxentia Ndlovu (Mrs)

Appendix 2: Principals' declaration

PRINCIPAL'S DECLARATION

I………………………………………………………………………… (Full names of
principal) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of
the research project, and I do give consent for the study to be conducted in my school.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL ………………………………………

DATE………………………………

Appendix 3: Request for permission to conduct research (KZN) Department of Education

Y211

No 66 Bambakahle street

Philani valley

UMlazi

4066

04 September 2015

The Head of Department

KZN Department of Education

Pietermaritzburg

3200

Request for permission to conduct research.

My name is Sindisiwe Maxentia Ndlovu. I am currently doing Masters (M.Ed.) in the College of Humanities – School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am specializing in teacher development studies; as a result, I am required to undertake a research to complete a dissertation.

Title of the study: *'Teachers cultivating resilience in learners attending school in rural context: A narrative enquiry'*.

Schools within South African context have been categorized in terms of quintile rankings (urban, rural, townships). This categorization causes a division in the education system. Schools that are situated in rural context are characterized with poverty, lack of resources, backwardness in implementing initiatives, poor performance of learners and lack of infrastructure (Greenough and Nelson, 2013). However, despite all these adversities, there are teachers who are enthusiastic and able to assist learners to succeed inspite of all odds. This study explores who these teachers are who are able to cultivate resilience in learners schooling in quintile 1 schools, and how do they cultivate resilience in learners. This study focuses on teachers teaching in primary schools in rural context.

Your school has been selected as one primary school at uMlazi district under Mbumbulu circuit to participate in the study. In this study, teachers are my participants and they will be selected through snowballing criteria; no learners will be used in this study. Participation would include a series of research methods that will take place over a period of two months from commencement of data collection activities. The research methods will be of a conversational type (unstructured interview), making reference to object (artefact retrieval) events and activities (collage). The interviews will take place at a time convenient to you and will not disrupt your day-to-day functioning and will be conducted out of your instructional time.

Please note that:

- Confidentiality of the school is guaranteed as I will use a pseudonym for the school and participants, and their inputs will not be attributed to you in person or to the school.
- There are series of data collection activities that will take place. I will meet with participants for about 1-2 hours per day for approximately four days in two months upon commencement of the data collection process
- Any information obtained cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for the purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and will be destroyed after 5 years.
- The participants have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research and they will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your school involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- The following equipment: audio recording, video recording and photographic imaging, will be used to validate collected data and participant's names and the school's name will not be used in any presentation or publication of this study that may enable anyone to identify who the participants and the school are.

I hereby request a letter of permission from you as a principal that permits me to conduct this study at your school. Attached is a consent letter that needs to be signed by you, the principal.

I can be contacted at:
Email: sindlyndlovu@gmail.com
Cell: 0723828628/ 0723804935

My supervisor is Professor. Daisy Pillay, who is a senior lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, School of Education. Her contact details follow:

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Telephone: 031-2607598

Cell: 0827765751

For more details you may also contact the Research Office through:

Ms Phumelele Ximba

Ethics office 031 260 3587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours in Education,

Sindisiwe Maxentia Ndlovu (Mrs)

APPENDIX 4: Department of Education's declaration

Department of Education's declaration

I………………………………………………………………… (Full names of the Department of Education representative) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I do give consent for the study to be conducted in my school.

SIGNATURE OF DoE REPRESENTATIVE ……………………………….

DATE …………………………

APPENDIX 5: Request for consent to participate in a research study

Y 211

No 66 Bambakahle street

Philani valley

UMlazi

4066

04 September 2015

Dear Teacher Participant

Request for consent to participate in a research study.

My name is Sindisiwe Maxentia Ndlovu. I am currently doing Masters (M.Ed.) in the College of Humanities – School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am specializing in teacher development studies; as a result, I am required to undertake a research to complete a dissertation.

Title of the study: *'Teachers cultivating resilience in learners attending school in rural context: A narrative enquiry'.*

Schools within South African context have been categorized in terms of quintile rankings (urban, rural, townships). This categorization causes a division in the education system. Schools that are situated in rural context are characterized with poverty, lack of resources, backwardness in implementing initiatives, poor performance of learners and lack of infrastructure (Greenough and Nelson, 2013). However, despite all these adversities, there are teachers who are enthusiastic and able to assist learners to succeed inspite of all odds. This study explores who these teachers are who are able to cultivate resilience in learners schooling in quintile 1 schools, and how do they cultivate resilience in learners. This study focuses on teachers teaching in primary schools in rural context.

Your school has been selected as one primary school at uMlazi district under Mbumbulu circuit to participate in the study. In this study, teachers are my participants and they will be selected through snowballing criteria; no learners will be used in this study. Participation would include a series of research methods that will take place over a period of two months from commencement of data collection activities. The research methods will be of a conversational type (unstructured

interview), making reference to object (artefact retrieval) events and activities (collage). The interviews will take place at a time convenient to you and will not disrupt your day-to-day functioning and will be conducted out of your instructional time.

Please note that:

- Confidentiality of the school is guaranteed as I will use a pseudonym for the school and participants, and their inputs will not be attributed to you in person or to the school.
- There are series of data collection activities that will take place. I will meet with participants for about 1-2 hours per day for approximately four days in two months upon commencement of the data collection process
- Any information obtained cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for the purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and will be destroyed after 5 years.
- The participants have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research and they will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your school involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.
- The following equipment: audio recording, video recording and photographic imaging, will be used to validate collected data and participant's names and the school's name will not be used in any presentation or publication of this study that may enable anyone to identify who the participants and the school are.

I hereby request a letter of permission from you as a principal that permits me to conduct this study at your school. Attached is a consent letter that needs to be signed by you, the principal.

I can be contacted at:
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Cell: 0723828628/ 0723804935

My supervisor is Professor. Daisy Pillay, who is a senior lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood Campus, School of Education. Her contact details follow:
Email: pillaygv@ukzn.ac.za,
Telephone: 031-2607598
Cell: 0827765751

For more details you may also contact the Research Office through:

Ms Phumelele Ximba

Ethics office 031 260 3587

Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours in Education,

Sindisiwe Maxentia Ndlovu (Mrs)

APPENDIX 6: Participant's declaration

PARTICIPANT DECLARATION

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

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I also understand and give permission for the use of the following recording devices during the interview and data production process.

	Willing	Not willing
Audio recording: Interviews		
Collage Inquiry – and transcribe Data		
Artefact Inquiry – and transcribe Data		

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT…………………………………..

DATE………………………………

APPENDIX 7: Collage

The first research question says: **who are teachers that cultivate resilience in learners?**

In attempting to answer this question I will use a collage and an unstructured interview.

The collage question will be: "who am I as a teacher".

1. **Collage (refer to methods)**

Butler-Kisber, (2008, p 265) the following may be used to prompt the participant when choosing a collage as a data source:

- How did you feel doing this activity?
- What did the activity mean for you?
- Explain your collage
- What part of this collage represents you as the teacher and you as the individual?
- Do any of the pictures or words on the collage signify a critical moment or incident that may have occurred in your life?
- Is there any picture or word that stands out from your collage

APPENDIX 8: Unstructured interview

I will also use unstructured interview to answer the question which says "who are teachers that cultivate resilience in learners". By asking this question I am interested in knowing about personal and professional meanings of self for the three teacher participants. As a researcher I don't need to give my participants my research question as it is. For unstructured interview the question will say "tell me as far back as you can remember about your life as a teacher". The following are the prompts themes.

Personal:

- Contextual background
- Family
- Community
- Basic education and
- Tertiary education

Professional:

- Choosing teaching as a career
- Teaching life

APPENDIX 9: Artefact retrieval

I will use this data source to answer the second question which says: "how do teachers enact practices that cultivate resilience in learners?" (This question will not be asked from the participants as it is but the artefact activity will answer this question).

Artefacts may hold positive or negative emotions. Participants will be asked to bring artefacts that they will be comfortable to share in the group. The following prompts for discussion of artefact are adapted from Samaras (2011, p.105)

- Explain why you chose this artefact.
- Share what the artefact represents or symbolize about your teaching
- What is the time period of this artefact?
- Does culture play a role in this artefact?
- Are other people involved in this artefact influence on your thinking? What role do they play? What is their influence on your thinking? Do they see things the way you do?
- What metaphor would you choose to represent, symbolize, and reinforce the significance of this object to you?
- Express an emotion that this artefact brings forth to you. Describe where that emotion generates from and might extend to in your teaching

Appendix 10: Permission to conduct research

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Mrs SM Ndlovu
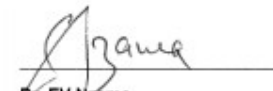Y211
Philani Valley
uMlazi
4031

Dear Mrs Ndlovu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"TEACHERS CULTIVATING RESILIENCE IN LEARNERS ATTENDING RURAL SCHOOL CONTEXT: A NARRATIVE ENQUIRY"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 09 January 2017 to 07 June 2019.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

uMlazi District

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 13 January 2017

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